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# OFFICIAL REPORT

(HANSARD)

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Attwood, Alex (West Belfast)  
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Wilson, Brian (North Down)  
Wilson, Sammy (East Antrim)

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# NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY

Friday 25 September 2009

## Written Answers to Questions

### OFFICE OF THE FIRST MINISTER AND DEPUTY FIRST MINISTER

#### Central Freedom of Information Team and the Information Commissioner's Office Northern Ireland Regional Office

**Mr D Kennedy** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail (i) the date; and (ii) the topics discussed at the most recent meeting between the Central Freedom of Information Team and the Information Commissioner's Office Northern Ireland Regional Office. (AQW 16/10)

**First Minister and deputy First Minister (Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness):** The Central Freedom of Information team and the Northern Ireland Regional Office of the Information Commissioner last met on 26 February 2009. The topics discussed were: the performance of the Northern Ireland Departments in processing requests under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004; the investigation of complaints against Departments by the Information Commissioner; the implementation of the new model Publication Scheme by the Departments; the training of Civil Service staff in handling requests for information; and the public consultation concerning the designation of additional public authorities under section 5 of the FOI Act.

#### Maze Site

**Mr G Savage** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the progress of the Development Corporation formed to investigate options for the Maze site; and the costs incurred to date. (AQW 29/10)

**First Minister and deputy First Minister:** We refer the Member to our previous responses to AQW 8858/09 and AQW 8457/09 dated 29 June 2009.

We can confirm that no costs have been incurred to date as OFMDFM officials are currently progressing the necessary legislation to establish and empower the Development Corporation.

#### United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

**Dr S Farry** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, pursuant to AQW 8996/09, whether Northern Ireland officials were invited to attend the meeting of the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights to examine its report of 22 May on the United Kingdom; and what decision was taken in relation to any invitation. (AQW 68/10)

**First Minister and deputy First Minister:** OFMDFM officials were invited to the examination. OFMDFM has agreed to co-ordinate any questions specific to here which the UN Committee might have following this examination and to co-ordinate an Executive response to the Concluding Observations Report .

### Private Consultancy Firms and Events Organisers

**Mr P McGlone** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister how much has been spent by their Department in each of the last five years on (i) private consultancy firms; and (ii) events organisers. (AQW 74/10)

**First Minister and deputy First Minister:** Table 1 details how much the Department has spent in the last five financial years, on both private consultancy firms and events organisers.

The cost of 'private consultancy firms' is deemed to be the cost of 'external consultancy' for the last five financial years.

The cost of 'events organisers' is deemed to be the annual expenditure incurred by OFMDFM on companies categorised as event organisers.

OFMDFM has taken the lead in organising all events managed in this five-year period. The invoices supplied by event organising companies engaged by OFMDFM also include the costs of services provided by the companies' sub-contractors for services such as catering, seating, etc. These sub-contractor costs are included in the expenditure figures set out in Table 1

TABLE 1

Description	2004/05 (£'000s)	2005/06 (£'000s)	2006/07 (£'000s)	2007/08 (£'000s)	2008/09 (£'000s)
Private Consultancy	404	830	1,193	2,758	1,017
Events Organisers	275	28	20	33	7

### Integrated Development Fund

**Mr M Durkan** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister (i) what projects have received financial assistance from the Integrated Development Fund; (ii) how much has been allocated to each Integrated Development Fund project; (iii) which projects have been completed; and (iv) when any unfinished projects will be completed. (AQW 300/10)

**First Minister and deputy First Minister:** The information requested is set out for the four pilot areas in the tables below.

#### NORTH WEST / ILEX

Project (Lead Department)	IDF Allocation £m	Project Completed	Estimated Date of Completion
Limavady / Strabane Civic Project (DSD)	£0.773	Yes	
Walled City Destination Signature Programme:- Tower Museum (DETI/NITB)	£0.611	Yes	
Cultural/ Business Animation (DETI)	£0.316	Yes	
An Gaeláras. (DCAL)	£0.500	Yes	
Faughan Valley (DARD)	£0.300	Yes	
Enterprise Park (Skeoge Development) (DETI / INVEST NI)	£1.051	Yes	
Centre Of Excellence in Intelligent Systems (DETI / INVEST NI)	£6.115	No	November 2011
Expansion of Nerve Centre (DCAL)	£0.393	Yes	

Project (Lead Department)	IDF Allocation £m	Project Completed	Estimated Date of Completion
3 of the 6 elements of the Built Heritage Programme:- (DETI / NITB)			
The Playhouse	£0.674	Yes	
The 1st Derry Presbyterian Church	£1.387	No	December 2010.
St Columb's Cathedral	£2.032	No	December 2010.
The ABC - RIF Project (DETI /INVEST NI)	£0.464	Yes	

**WEST BELFAST GREATER SHANKILL**

Project (Lead Department)	IDF Allocation £m	Project Completed	Estimated Date of Completion
Development of Business Units Lanark Way (INVESTNI/ DETI)	£0.111	Yes	
Support to Enhance the Role of the Employment Services Board (DEL)	£0.274	Yes	
Provision of Suffolk Retail Units (Social Economy Fund) (DSD)	£0.555	Yes	
Social Economy Fund (INVEST NI/DETI)	£0.977	No	March 2010
Shankill "If Walls Could Talk" (DCAL)	£0.340	Yes	
The Spectrum Centre (DCAL)	£0.315	Yes	
Workforce and Economic Development Centre (DEL)	£1.252	Yes	
Arterial Routes (1) & (2) (DSD)	£4.064	No	March 2010
Establishment of an Enterprise Council (INVEST NI)	£0.200	Yes	
Implementation of Workforce Buddies (DEL)	£0.125	Yes	
Extension of Whiterock Children's Centre (INVEST NI/ DETI)	£0.436	Yes	
Colin Gateway - Consultancy (DSD)	£0.150	Yes	
Colin Gateway – Capital element of project (DSD)	£3.110	No	March 2012
Development of Gaeltacht Quarter (DCAL)	£0.995	No	Initial project proved unaffordable. Revised Business Case being prepared. DCAL advise that it is not possible, at this point, to determine a completion date.
Provision Of Tourist Information Facilities Greater Shankill (DETI/NITB)	£0.161	No	November/December 2009
Conway Mill (DSD)	£0.730	No	March 2011
Taskforce Education Initiative (DE)	£7.000		
Colin Project (SEELB)	£2.000	No	March 2010.
Integrated Services for Children and Young People (BELB)	£5.000	No	March 2011.

**SOUTH DOWN FISHING VILLAGES**

Project (Lead Department)	IDF Allocation £m	Project Completed	Estimated Date of Completion
Comprehensive project containing a range of individual elements across 6 Fishing Industry support themes (DARD)	£6.110	Yes	

**PORTADOWN**

Project (Lead Department)	IDF Allocation £m	Project Completed	Estimated Date of Completion
Implementation of Portadown Development Framework (DSD)	£0.607	Yes	
Portadown Public Realm (DSD)	£3.102	No	March 2011

**Sustainable Development Strategy**

**Mr J Spratt** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister when a new Sustainable Development Strategy will be in place. (AQO 51/10)

**First Minister and deputy First Minister:** We have agreed a draft of the new Sustainable Development Strategy for Northern Ireland and recently wrote to the Committee for OFMDFM seeking its views on the draft Strategy.

We intend to seek Executive agreement to begin the public consultation process that will lead to the publication of a Strategy which is now, we believe, more effectively aligned with the Programme for Government.

Additionally, we have recently approved the process to appoint a Commissioner to the Sustainable Development Commission. This is an important step as it will provide us with a strong representative voice in the Commission alongside the other devolved administrations. It will also allow access to expert resources.

We anticipate that the Commission will continue to be heavily involved in the ongoing development and implementation of the new Sustainable Development Strategy. In this context the appointment of a new Northern Ireland Commissioner will be particularly welcome.

**International Day of Older Persons**

**Mr T Buchanan** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister how they intend to mark the contribution our elderly citizens make to society, in light of the forthcoming Older Person's Day. (AQO 52/10)

**First Minister and deputy First Minister:** This year the United Nations International Day of Older People will take place on 1st October. As in 2007 and 2008, we intend to use the day to:

- underline the Executive's commitment to addressing older people's issues;
- celebrate improvements in the well-being of older people and their contribution to social, economic and cultural life; and
- meet with representatives from a range of older people's groups from the voluntary and community sector.

In 2007 and 2008, the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister organised events in Belfast and Cultra and this year an event is being organised on behalf of the Junior Ministers, in the Everglades Hotel, to again celebrate the day with older people from all over Northern Ireland.

It is our intention to shortly launch the consultation document on the powers and duties of the Commissioner for Older People.

The United Nations International Day of Older People offers a unique opportunity for those Departments and organisations who provide key services for older people, to publicise and inform on relevant issues such as benefits, Community Safety and transport.

These 'Information Stands' have proved a popular feature in previous years and will again be provided at this year's event.

## Cohesion, Sharing and Integration Strategy

**Dr S Farry** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what steps have been taken to agree a draft policy on the Cohesion, Sharing and Integration Strategy over the past three months. (AQO 53/10)

**First Minister and deputy First Minister:** The draft Programme for Cohesion, Sharing and Integration was originally meant to have been brought forward before the end of last year. That and subsequent commitments on timing were made in good faith and it was our expectation that these would be met. It was not possible to meet that date. However, reaching agreement on CSI remains one of the top policy priorities in OFMDFM.

Whilst we continue to work intensively towards an agreed strategy that will benefit all our people now and over the longer term; work to promote community relations and good race relations has continued over the past two years, led and supported by OFMDFM Ministers and the whole ministerial team.

There are many examples of that commitment:

- We have invested £29m in good relations work in the current CSR period – to build a shared and better future – that is not insubstantial!
- Additionally, we provide match funding to EU funding under the PEACE III Programme. As the Accountable Department for three Priorities within the Programme we are strategically placed to ensure co-ordination of local activities at the local level.
- Junior Ministers continue to chair the North Belfast Working Group focusing on interface issues in Belfast and across Northern Ireland. We have spent £500,000 this summer on resourcing work on summer interventions programme.
- In Coleraine we have been working proactively with our key partners both statutory and non-statutory following the death of Mr Kevin McDavid in May and we have provided an additional £23,000 to Coleraine Borough Council for diversionary work on top of the £86,000 awarded to the Council for good relations activities. Junior Ministers will meet with our key partners again on 23rd September as part of our ongoing commitment to the area.
- Similarly in Craigavon, the Junior Ministers have been chairing meetings with all our key partners on the issues and tensions there and we are supporting and facilitating diversionary work on a multi-agency basis.
- Flags monitoring has been undertaken on our behalf since 2006 by the Institute of Irish Studies at Queen's University and the last survey will be conducted at the end of this month and we expect to receive the report by the end of this year.

## Presbyterian Mutual Strategy

**Rev Dr R Coulter** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what progress has been made in negotiations with HM Government and HM Treasury regarding compensation for savers with the Presbyterian Mutual Society. (AQO 54/10)

**First Minister and deputy First Minister:** We are very aware of the anxiety and distress caused to members of the Presbyterian Mutual Society by the prevailing uncertainties around their savings. The Administrator is scheduled to provide members with an update report this month and the Ministerial Working Group chaired by HMT is required to produce its report to the Prime Minister in September.

We are encouraged by the fact that the Officials group has so far met 6 times and progress has been made in exploring the possible options for government help.

We have also received a report from a working group of the Presbyterian Church and this is being considered.

We do recognise, however, that there are significant commercial and other sensitivities associated with some options for resolving the PMS difficulties. Therefore, at this point, we cannot elaborate on the options. To do so may jeopardise or compromise a resolution.

We want to assure Members of this Assembly and of the Presbyterian Mutual Society that this matter is still very much receiving our close attention.

## Cohesion, Sharing and Integration Strategy

**Rt Hon J Donaldson** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the progress made in agreeing the revised strategy for Cohesion, Sharing and Integration. (AQO 55/10)

**First Minister and deputy First Minister:** The draft Programme for Cohesion, Sharing and Integration was originally meant to have been brought forward before the end of last year. That and subsequent commitments on timing were made in good faith and it was our expectation that these would be met. It was not possible to meet that date. However, reaching agreement on CSI remains one of the top policy priorities in OFMDFM.

Whilst we continue to work intensively towards an agreed strategy that will benefit all our people now and over the longer term; work to promote community relations and good race relations has continued over the past two years, led and supported by OFMDFM Ministers and the whole ministerial team.

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- Junior Ministers continue to chair the North Belfast Working Group focusing on interface issues in Belfast and across Northern Ireland. We have spent £500,000 this summer on resourcing work on summer interventions programme.
- In Coleraine we have been working proactively with our key partners both statutory and non-statutory following the death of Mr Kevin McDaid in May and we have provided an additional £23,000 to Coleraine Borough Council for diversionary work on top of the £86,000 awarded to the Council for good relations activities. Junior Ministers will meet with our key partners again on 23rd September as part of our ongoing commitment to the area.
- Similarly in Craigavon, the Junior Ministers have been chairing meetings with all our key partners on the issues and tensions there and we are supporting and facilitating diversionary work on a multi-agency basis.
- Flags monitoring has been undertaken on our behalf since 2006 by the Institute of Irish Studies at Queen's University and the last survey will be conducted at the end of this month and we expect to receive the report by the end of this year.

## Executive Office, Brussels

**Mr S Neeson** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister when their Department last used the Executive Office in Brussels. (AQO 56/10)

**First Minister and deputy First Minister:** Regular use of the Executive Office in Brussels is made by OFMDFM Ministers as well as other Executive Ministers and officials from their Departments. The uses of the office range from advice and briefing on European policies and programmes, facilitation of operational and technical meetings and representational meetings in Brussels on issues of local concern.

The Office is currently facilitating a two-day visit by Junior Minister Kelly, during which he will chair a plenary meeting of the Barroso Taskforce Working Group, present the report of the 2008/09 work of the Task Force and hold a series of profile-raising meetings. The Office planned and facilitated two other Ministerial visits during September 2009, one for the Minister for Social Development and one for the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment. Both Ministers met institutional and diplomatic contacts at a high level in Brussels to enable them to discuss matters of interest and concern to their respective Departments.

We last visited the Brussels office on 31 March and 1 April 2009, and Junior Ministers held a series of high-level meetings to raise issues of concern including the State Aid application by Bombardier for its C-Series project.

Executive Ministers and their Departments work through the Brussels office to progress their implementation of the recommendations of the European Commission Taskforce.

## Legislation

**Mr J Dallat** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to outline the number of Executive Bills that they anticipate being tabled before Christmas recess. (AQO 57/10)

**First Minister and deputy First Minister:** Three Bills have already been introduced in this session, on Rates, the Department of Justice and, earlier today, Water and Sewerage Services. We are also aware at this time of a further five Bills which Ministers propose to introduce before Christmas recess subject to consultation with the relevant Assembly Committee and agreement by the Executive.

## North/South Implementation Bodies and Tourism Ireland

**Mr J Craig** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what action is being taken to ensure that the taxpayer in Northern Ireland is getting value for money from the North/South implementation bodies and Tourism Ireland Ltd. (AQO 58/10)

**First Minister and deputy First Minister:** In connection with the examination of the efficiency and value for money, the North South Implementation Bodies and Tourism Ireland Ltd operate under the overall direction of the North South Ministerial Council (NSMC), with accountability lines back, not only to the Council, the Oireachtas and the Assembly, but also to Finance and other Departments responsible for their funding.

Each Body is required to:

- comply with the provisions of a Financial Memorandum drawn up for it by Sponsor and Finance departments;
- submit a report on its activities in each year to NSMC;
- prepare a statement of accounts in respect of each year. The Comptroller and Auditor General for Northern Ireland and the Irish Comptroller and Auditor General, in co-operation, examine and certify the accounts; and
- lay their Annual Reports and statements of account before the Northern Ireland Assembly and both Houses of the Oireachtas. Tourism Ireland Ltd operates under similar controls.

When called upon the Bodies will, if so requested, appear before, or otherwise co-operate with a Northern Ireland Assembly Committee. There are similar arrangements in relation to the Oireachtas.

The North/South Bodies, like all other public bodies, are required to deliver their objectives and programmes more efficiently, particularly in the current economic climate. Each Body is therefore required to identify 3% per annum cash releasing efficiency savings in their 2009 and 2010 Business Plans.

In addition, the St Andrews Agreement provided for the establishment of a Review Group with a remit that included; 'examine objectively the efficiency and value for money of existing Implementation Bodies.'

The Review Group consists of senior officials and an advisory panel of four experts/advisers. Work is ongoing and it is hoped that the review will be concluded by December 2009.

## Coleraine: Vulnerable Communities

**Mr G Campbell** asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what progress has been made in assisting vulnerable working class communities in the Coleraine area following the inter-communal problems which preceded and followed the killing of Mr. Kevin McDaid over the summer. (AQO 59/10)

**First Minister and deputy First Minister:** Junior Minister Kelly and former Junior Minister Donaldson met with elected members and statutory bodies from the Coleraine area on 16th June to discuss these problems and responses to them. Ministers undertook to meet again after the summer recess.

To that end Junior Ministers Kelly and Newton will meet with this grouping again on 23rd September to follow up on a number of issues such as developments on events over the summer period; diversionary activities over the summer; progress on appointment of a consultant to develop a community plan; and a report of a meeting of elected members with the Chief Executive of the Community Relations Council.

We have provided additional funding of £23,000 to Coleraine Borough Council for summer diversionary work on top of the £86,000 awarded to the Council for the 2009/10 good relations programme.

The additional monies include funding for a children's camp at Corrymeela between 10th-13th July; additional Dialogue and Identity Programme work and the development of a 3-month Cross Sectoral Development Strategy to address wider issues in the Coleraine area such as youth and community provision.

## DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

### Slurry Spreading Deadline

**Mr I Paisley Jnr** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development if she has had any discussions with the Minister of the Environment regarding the possibility of extending the slurry spreading deadline for this year. (AQW 40/10)

**Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development (Ms M Gildernew):** I and the Minister for the Environment are fully aware that farmers are having practical difficulties with spreading slurry due to the poor weather this summer. I have provided the Minister of the Environment with details of the advice my Department has been able to offer to farmers recently and explained some of the difficulties that farmers are having with managing slurry.

I welcome the fact that farmers have avoided the risk of causing water pollution by not spreading slurry when conditions have been unsuitable over the recent months. However, this means that many farms have significant amounts of slurry in storage tanks and now need a suitable opportunity to spread slurry ahead of the winter housing period.

Without this opportunity, I recognise that some farmers could face practical difficulties in complying with the Nitrates Action Programme Regulations. The closed period for slurry spreading is a regulatory requirement under the Nitrates Action Programme Regulations. The NI Environment Agency is responsible for inspection and enforcement of these Regulations. Therefore, any regulatory matters are primarily for the Minister of the Environment to consider.

### DARD Direct Offices

**Mr I Paisley Jnr** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what progress has been made on the final location of the DARD Direct offices; and when she expects to make an announcement on this. (AQW 42/10)

**Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development:** In January this year, I announced that a network of 12 DARD Direct offices would be established to deliver services to customers across the north of Ireland. At that time I identified the locations of 10 of these offices. These are Omagh, Dungannon, Armagh, Newry, Downpatrick, Newtownards, Ballymena, Coleraine, Claudy and Magherafelt. (These are in addition to the Enniskillen office, which was established as the pilot DARD Direct office). In July, I confirmed that the 12th and final office would be located in the centre of the South and East Antrim area (eg, between Mallusk and Antrim).

With respect to identifying actual office accommodation, my officials are working in partnership with DFP (Department of Finance and Personnel) to determine this, as they are responsible for providing office accommodation to meet the needs of all Government Departments. They are working through a range of steps to assess the suitability of existing accommodation and/or identify alternative accommodation that will optimise alignment with the DARD Direct specification. It is a process of elimination and at this stage, for the majority of locations, there is no final decision on what accommodation we will occupy.

So far, decisions have been taken to refurbish accommodation currently occupied by DARD at Newry, Dungannon and Coleraine. It is envisaged that this work will be completed by March 2010. As suitable buildings are identified and secured at other locations, they will be made known.

## Support for the Dairy Industry

**Mr I Paisley Jnr** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what representations she has made to DEFRA and the European Commission regarding support for the dairy industry. (AQW 43/10)

**Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development:** When milk prices fell sharply last October I and my Executive colleagues worked tirelessly to support the dairy industry. We lobbied hard to secure the re-introduction of export refunds which have been so important to it over the years. In particular –

- I spoke to the Defra Secretary of State, Hilary Benn, on 23 October to underscore the dependence of our dairy industry on milk powders and to ask him to support the re-introduction of export refunds for dairy products.
- On 19 November Arlene Foster and I wrote to Hilary Benn to alert him to the fact that our dairy industry was facing a crisis and to seek his support in forthcoming discussions in the EU Dairy Management Committee. We emphasised that there was an urgent need for the UK to request the European Commission to reintroduce export refunds for milk powders. We urged him to take positive action that would help our dairy industry through these difficult times.
- On 26 November I wrote again to Hilary Benn saying that I was bitterly disappointed that Britain appeared set to oppose a request from the Polish authorities for the re-introduction of export refunds. I assured him that the global downturn was for real for our dairy sector and asked him to re-consider Britain's position and along with Poland and other Member States to put pressure on the Commission to reintroduce export refunds.
- On 27 November, at my behest, the First Minister and Deputy First Minister wrote to the Prime Minister outlining the crisis for our dairy industry which was being damaged by exceptionally difficult market conditions in a disproportionate way compared to the situation in Britain. We emphasised that the immediate introduction of export refunds would boost returns, restore confidence and help tide the industry through an extremely difficult period.
- On 27 November I also spoke with the Defra Minister, Huw-Irranca Davies, attending the EU Agricultural Council meeting in Brussels on 28 November to again emphasise the importance of the issue and express disappointment that so far there had been no movement at EU level on export refunds.
- On 10 December Nigel Dodds and I, along with David Dobbin of United Dairy Farmers and a senior DARD official met with Hilary Benn to present the case in support of the re-introduction of export refunds. At the end of the meeting he acknowledged the strong case we had made and accepted the greater relative contribution of the dairy sector to the overall the north of Ireland's economy than is the case in Britain.
- On 11 December, at my behest, a senior DARD official wrote to the Director of Dairy Policy in Defra covering the salient points covered at the meeting on the previous day.
- At this stage Arlene Foster and I also sought a meeting with the European Commissioner, Mariann Fischer-Boel, to ensure that she was aware of the seriousness of the situation. This was arranged for 11 February (when the First Minister, deputy First Minister and I planned to attend) but this agenda item was cancelled following the European Commission's announcement on 15 January that export refunds were to be re-introduced.
- On 20 January Arlene Foster and I again wrote to Hilary Benn urging him to instruct his officials to support the re-introduction of export refunds. As a result he instructed his officials to abstain in the vote on the matter. This important change was only realised following intensive lobbying.
- As the dairy industry continued to face difficulties stemming from the downturn in global markets I urged the Commissioner Fischer at the Balmoral Show to continue to do what she could to help in the dairy sector in the months ahead.

I would welcome a higher level of export refunds to help the dairy industry through the current difficult period stemming in large measure from the economic downturn. However, I was disappointed to note that at the EU Management Committee meetings Defra officials continue to resist proposals which would benefit the dairy sector. In particular at the meeting on 18 June they voted against a Commission proposal to increase export refunds for milk powders; on 23 July they voted against an emergency measure to extend intervention for butter and skimmed milk powder until 30 November 2009; and on 3 September, following the increase in prices at the Fonterra auction asked if the Commission would reduce export refunds for whole milk powder. In view of these developments you may wish to press Hilary Benn to follow a more helpful line for the good of our dairy industry.

More recently, the Commission produced a "Dairy Market Situation 2009" communication. At my behest officials wrote to Defra on the matter and asked Defra to take a more measured approach at the September Council of Ministers meeting when other Member States ask for help. In the letter it was emphasised that while

the current measures taken by the Commission have been helpful, prices are still not adequate to secure the long term future of the dairy sector and it is not sufficient for Defra to say that the market will sort it out.

I was pleased to note that at the 7 September EU Council of Ministers' meeting Commissioner Mariann Fischer-Boel used our industry as an example of a region that has been hard hit by the depressed world market. In addition Hilary Benn referred to the difficulties faced by our local producers. These references confirm that the message regarding the difficulties faced by our industry has registered in both London and Brussels.

The situation is being carefully monitored and I will continue to press Defra and the European Commission to act in the best interests of our dairy industry. Our mutual aim is to secure outcomes on issues which are in the best long term interests of the local dairy industry.

### Private Consultancy Firms and Events Organisers

**Mr P McGlone** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how much has been spent by her Department in each of the last five years on (i) private consultancy firms; and (ii) events organisers. (AQW 73/10)

**Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development:** Expenditure incurred by the Department on consultants in the last five years is as follows:-

#### YEAR TOTAL SPEND

04/05	£1,820,000
05/06	£340,000
06/07	£780,000
07/08	£480,121
08/09	£488,450

Expenditure incurred by the Department on events organisers in the last five years is as follows:-

#### YEAR TOTAL SPEND

04/05	£0.00
05/06	£0.00
06/07	£0.00
07/08	£0.00
08/09	£0.00

### Brucellosis in Cattle

**Lord Morrow** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, in relation to brucellosis in cattle, to detail (i) the cost of testing; (ii) the cost of veterinary fees for testing; and (iii) the number slaughtered, but found to be disease free, to date in 2009. (AQW 98/10)

#### Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development:

- (i) The laboratory testing costs for brucellosis for financial year 2008/2009 have not been supplied by AFBI (Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute) to date. For calendar year 2008, the laboratory costs were £2,088,928. This includes serological testing of blood samples; bacteriological culture; testing of milk samples and the cost of the test kits.
- (ii) Veterinary fees for brucellosis, i.e. fees charged to herd owners by private veterinary practitioners, are a feature of private testing and pre-movement testing only (or post movement testing, if the pre-movement test has not been carried out). These fees are a commercial matter between the PVPs and their clients.

For all other routine and risk testing for brucellosis, Animal Health and Welfare Inspectors, employed by DARD's Veterinary Service, visit farms to take the blood samples for laboratory testing. These staff are not veterinarians and they carry out brucellosis programme tasks as well as other animal health and welfare duties.

- (iii) From 01/01/2009 to 07/08/09, (the last reactors for which there are culture results available) a total of 60 serological reactor animals had glands taken post slaughter for culture.

Of the 60 samples that were cultured, 41 were culture negative, 19 were culture positive.

A percentage of infected animals will show a negative culture.

### Welfare of Animals Bill

**Mr T Elliott** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to outline the reasons for the delay in introducing the Welfare of Animals Bill; and if she foresees any further delay. (AQW 109/10)

**Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development:** My Department consulted with stakeholders on a review of animal welfare legislation in 2006. As this consultation was carried out during Direct Rule, I wanted to take the time to engage directly with key stakeholders to hear at first hand their concerns. Since taking up office in 2007, my officials and I have engaged extensively with a wide range of welfare interests, from here, the south and Britain. This has taken time, but I want to get any new Animal Welfare Bill right. I also want to draw on lessons learnt in England, Wales and Scotland since the introduction of their new legislation in 2006 and 2007 respectively. In addition, I want to take account, as far as possible, of developments in the south as they bring forward new welfare legislation.

A new Animal Welfare Bill is one of my key ministerial priorities and it is my intention, subject to Executive approval, to progress a new Welfare Bill through to enactment during the lifetime of this Assembly.

### New IT Systems

**Mr S Hamilton** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail (i) all new IT systems installed within her Department in the last 5 years; (ii) the initial budget; (iii) the actual cost; (iv) the estimated start date; and (v) the actual start date. (AQW 128/10)

**Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development:** The following table details new IT systems installed within the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (excluding corporate NICS systems installed by the Department of Finance and Personnel).

TABLE: NEW IT SYSTEMS INSTALLED IN DARD

Year	System	Initial Budget (£k)	Actual Cost (£k)	Estimated Start Date	Actual Start Date
04/05	Grants and Subsidies Geographic Information System	1,786.4	1,651.8	Nov 04	Jan 05
	Forest Service Geographic Information System	525.0	523.8	Jun 04	Jun 04
	Forest Service Geographic Positioning System	80.0	76.4	Mar 04	Jul 04
	Science Service Laboratory Information System	53.1	61.3	Sept 03	Apr 04
	CAFRE Student Recording System	91.6	61.3	Oct 04	Nov 04
05/06	Rivers Agency Geographic Information System	59.4	58.6	Oct 05	Oct 05
06/07	Rural Payments & Inspection Scheme Management (Single Farm Payment, Agri-environment, Customer Information System)	734.3	500.6	Jun 06	Aug 06 (Ongoing)
	Mobile Computing Milk Hygiene Inspections	35.0	22.5	Jul 07	May 07
07/08	Single Farm Payment Scanning Application	187.0	168.0	Mar 08	Apr 08
	Agri-environment Geographic Information System	82.0	75.0	Mar 08	Jun 08
08/09	Mobile Computing (SFP Inspections)	338.2	398.9	Mar 09	Jun 09
	Rivers Agency/Forest Service Fleet Management System	25.0	27.3	Jul 08	Feb 09
	Office Communication System	52.8	53.5	Aug 08	Aug 08

### Farm Modernisation Scheme

**Mr G Savage** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how many Farm Modernisation Scheme applications were (i) received; (ii) approved for payment; and (iii) of those approved, how many applicants took up payment. (AQW 224/10)

**Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development:** 9,269 Farm Modernisation Programme applications were received.

1,268 applications have been made an offer of financial support.

As of 16th September 2009, 1,024 farmers had indicated they would be taking up their offer of support.

Payments to farmers are only approved when the project has been completed, a valid claim submitted and the expenditure verified as being eligible. To date 20 projects have been approved for payment.

### Brucellosis

**Mr G Savage** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how many cattle have been tested for Brucellosis in the past (i) three months; (ii) six months; (iii) nine months; and (iv) twelve months. (AQW 227/10)

**Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development:** For accuracy, Official Veterinary Service statistics are published with a 5 week time lag. Therefore, the following were calculated from finalised statistics available for period ending 31/07/2009.

The number of cattle tested for brucellosis was:

- (i) 159,114 for period 01/05/2009 to 31/07/2009
- (ii) 476,844 for period 01/02/2009 to 31/07/2009
- (iii) 774,531 for period 01/11/2008 to 31/07/2009
- (iv) 913,992 for period 01/08/2008 to 31/07/2009

### Sheep

**Mr S Moutray** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what discussions she has had with her colleagues across the UK about the introduction of electronic identification of sheep. (AQO 61/10)

**Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development:** I, and my officials, have worked closely with Defra and Devolved Administration Ministers on the issue of sheep electronic identification, or EID. Such discussions have taken place as part of my regular meetings with Defra and Scottish and Welsh Ministers. I also spoke to my Ministerial colleagues by phone on several occasions in the run up to critical negotiations in Brussels.

I have also discussed the issue of sheep identification and movement with Commissioner Vassiliou and Commissioner Fischer Boel as I have always believed that we in the North should move directly to EID, rather than introducing double-tagging of sheep, as was the case in Britain. I believe that changing the system more than once in a short period of time would have been confusing for keepers. My efforts have been widely acknowledged and supported by the industry here.

Through negotiations at EU level we had already secured a two year delay in the implementation of EID and the phasing-in of individual recording of tag numbers. In July this year we secured further important concessions from the Commission which allow markets and meat plants to read and record tag numbers on behalf of keepers. This will significantly reduce the burden on keepers here.

I have also had discussions with my Ministerial colleagues in Dublin.

My officials and I have been working closely with industry representatives to design a sheep EID system that will strike the right balance between the cost of tags and the administrative burden that will be placed on keepers. My Department published a consultation on the new rules for sheep EID on 11 September, and I would encourage all those involved in the sheep industry to submit their views.

### Duplicate Fields

**Mr T Elliott** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what is her Department's position on the Duplicate Fields court ruling and what are the implications for affected farmers. (AQO 64/10)

**Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development:** Firstly, I would like to remind Members that the judgement in this Court Ruling was that 2 of the 4 cases involved should be returned to Panel for consideration of the "not at fault" provision. These cases have now been cleared with penalties withdrawn and interest paid. In the other 2 cases, there was no action for my Department and the penalties in these cases remained unchanged.

Since the judgement, my Department has been taking advice about its impact on other duplicate field cases. We have been advised that, from a legal perspective, we have fulfilled our strict obligations in respect of the Judicial Review.

However, as I recognised that this is an area of great sensitivity and concern to the farming industry, I asked my officials to see whether it is possible to allow other cases the opportunity for review.

My officials have been considering the options and are now working with the UFU and NIAPA to determine how the remaining penalty cases can be handled. One thing that has become clear is that there is no "one size fits all" solution, cases will have to be considered on their individual merits against a set of defined criteria. In addition, any action taken has to be defensible from a legislative perspective.

Good progress has been made and I will be keeping the ARD Committee advised of developments.

### Food Processing: Contracts

**Mr J Dallat** asked of Agriculture and Rural Development what steps she has taken to ensure that Northern Ireland based food processing companies will continue to have equal opportunity when bidding for contracts from Irish Government departments. (AQO 68/10)

**Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development:** I understand that the Member is referring to the recent Irish Farmers' Association press article calling for all future public procurement contracts to be focused on Irish produce.

As members will be aware all public procurement contracts are subject to strict EU procurement law to ensure that there is a fair, open and transparent process. In this particular instance the Irish Defence Department awarded Crossgar Poultry to supply poultry products to the south. My personal view is that produce from the north of Ireland is "Irish Produce" and the fact that this particular company has plants across Ireland, north and south illustrates that point.

I subsequently wrote to Willie O'Dea, Minister for Defence, on 2 July seeking clarification of the public procurement policy in the South and he has assured me that all contracts will be awarded in line with the requirements set out in the EU procurement rules.

### Rural Development Programme

**Mr D Kennedy** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what discussions she has had with the Minister of Finance and Personnel and Her Majesty's Government following legal developments regarding the conacre ruling in the McClean case. (AQO 70/10)

**Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development:** The decision in the McClean case, which denied Business Property Relief in respect of land let in conacre, has concerned me greatly. I commented publicly on this issue following the British House of Lords refusal to grant leave to appeal the decision. Since then, I have written to the Minister of Finance and Personnel about the matter and we have agreed to seek a joint meeting with the Chief Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Liam Byrne). Subsequently, I have written to the British Treasury outlining my concerns at the potential impact of this ruling on conacre letting and the likelihood of enforced sales of agricultural land. I am pleased to say that the Finance Minister and I have common views on this issue and officials from both Departments are working very closely on the matter.

### Livestock and Meat Commission

**Mr I Paisley Jnr** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for her assessment of the Strategic Review of the Livestock and Meat Commission. (AQO 71/10)

**Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development:** I welcome this independent strategic review of the Livestock and Meat Commission (LMC) which I announced on 18 August 2009. The review's aims are to address the LMC's functions, structural and funding arrangements. This strategic review will help identify a model which will deliver the best results, for those stakeholders who pay a levy to the LMC. It will also need to take into account changes in the marketplace and effective and value for money arrangements to meet the needs of levy payers.

The review is being carried out by Pricewaterhouse Coopers (PwC), who have been seeking the views of a full range of stakeholders as part of their consultation process and I have encouraged all those involved to engage fully, to help ensure that we get the best outcome for our industry.

I expect to receive the Review's Report before the end of this year. Therefore, it is too early to provide an assessment of the Review, which is still underway. As such, I do not want to pre-empt the findings of the Review's Report before I receive them. At that stage, what I can say is that I will give full consideration to all of the recommendations and their implications, before deciding on the best way forward, in the interests of all those involved.

### Rural Development Programme

**Mr B McCrea** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how many projects have been approved under Axis 3 of the Rural Development Programme being delivered through local council clusters. (AQO 72/10)

**Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development:** With your permission Mr Speaker I will answer questions 13 and 15 together.

I am pleased to say that just over sixteen hundred applications have been recorded on the database for the measures under Axis 3 of the Rural Development Programme. These can be broken down into cluster areas as follows:

SWARD	616	(Fermanagh, Dungannon, Magherafelt and Cookstown)
LRP	108	(Lisburn, Castlereagh and Belfast)
GROW	95	(Antrim, Carrickfergus and Newtownabbey)
NER	109	(Ballymena, Ballymoney, Coleraine, Moyle and Larne)
DRAP	198	(Ards, North Down, Banbridge and Down)
ARC	330	(Omagh, Strabane, Derry and Limavady)
SOAR	183	(Armagh, Craigavon and Newry & Mourne)

I would point out that not all areas have opened all their measures yet.

Following eligibility checks and site visits nearly eight hundred of these applications have now been considered as eligible for assessment by the Local Action Groups. To date over one hundred and thirty projects have achieved or exceeded the pass mark for assessment marking them eligible. Indeed the GROW group made up of Antrim, Carrickfergus and Newtownabbey council areas issued letters of offer worth over four hundred thousand pounds last week, a quarter of a million of this to farm diversification projects. I have been told that at least three more areas will be in a position to issue letters by the end of the month and this will inject much needed investment into our rural areas.

### Rural White Paper

**Mr D Ford** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for her assessment of the work of the stakeholder forum on the Rural White Paper. (AQO 73/10)

**Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development:** The Rural White Paper Stakeholder Advisory Group is currently undertaking work in sub-group format on the five themes - Rural Vision, Rural Governance, Rural Services, Rural Places and Rural People.

I recently met with the chairpersons of the five stakeholder sub-groups and was provided with a progress reports on the work of each of the sub-groups. I am satisfied with the progress made by the sub-groups to date and am particularly pleased that the representatives of the various rural sectors are working effectively together to ensure that there are meaningful and achievable outcomes to the stakeholder work.

The sub-groups have initially been focussing on researching those rural issues which fall within their terms of reference and are now in the process of identifying measures which will help to ensure the future sustainability of rural areas. The sub-groups are scheduled to report back on the outcome of their work later in the autumn and I am confident that the experience and expertise of the sub-group members will ensure that the Stakeholder Advisory Group makes an important contribution to the final overall Rural White Paper.

### Rural Development Programme

**Mr A McQuillan** asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how many applications have been made to the Rural Development Programme for each of the seven council clusters; and how many have been granted. (AQO 74/10)

**Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development:** With you permission Mr Speaker I will answer questions 13 and 15 together.

I am pleased to say that just over sixteen hundred applications have been recorded on the database for the measures under Axis 3 of the Rural Development Programme. These can be broken down into cluster areas as follows:

SWARD	616	(Fermanagh, Dungannon, Magherafelt and Cookstown)
LRP	108	(Lisburn, Castlereagh and Belfast)
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Following eligibility checks and site visits nearly eight hundred of these applications have now been considered as eligible for assessment by the Local Action Groups. To date over one hundred and thirty projects have achieved or exceeded the pass mark for assessment marking them eligible. Indeed the GROW group made up of Antrim, Carrickfergus and Newtownabbey council areas issued letters of offer worth over four hundred thousand pounds last week, a quarter of a million of this to farm diversification projects. I have been told that at least three more areas will be in a position to issue letters by the end of the month and this will inject much needed investment into our rural areas.

## DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE, ARTS AND LEISURE

### Metropolitan Arts Centre

**Mr D McNarry** asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure if he has approved the funding pledged by his Department to develop the Metropolitan Arts Centre. (AQW 53/10)

**Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure (Mr N McCausland):** The Metropolitan Arts Centre is one of a small number of the Department's strategic arts infrastructure projects. Scrutiny of the Business Plan has been completed and the Department is moving towards a letter of offer. Outstanding issues are being addressed by DCAL officials in liaison with the Arts Council and project promoters.

### Private Consultancy Firms and Events Organisers

**Mr P McGlone** asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how much has been spent by his Department in each of the last five years on (i) private consultancy firms; and (ii) events organisers. (AQW 72/10)

**Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure:** The Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure spent the following amounts on (a) private consultancy firms and (b) events organisers in the financial years 2004-05 to 2008-09:

Year	Private Consultancy Firms (£)	Events Organisers (£)
2004-05	244,661	12,191
2005-06	197,378	3,712
2006-07	1,178,042	0
2007-08	3,373,393	0
2008-09	172,832	2,679

### Freedom of Information Act

**Mr D McNarry** asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what action is being taken to improve the Department's compliance with section 10 of the Freedom of Information Act. (AQW 94/10)

**Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure:** The Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure received a total of 523 Freedom of Information (FOI) request in 2008. 116 (22%) sought access to active Departmental records and 407 sought access to transferred records held in the permanent archive managed by the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI).

- The Department responded to 112 of the active requests on time i.e. 96.5%. This compares favourably with clearance figures in other Departments.
- PRONI responded to 344 requests for access to permanent archive records on time i.e. 84.5%. This was an improvement of 4% on the previous year.
- PRONI carried out a review of its FOI procedures in February 2009 and the following actions were implemented
  - Appointment of additional curatorial staff.
  - Prioritisation of complex requests.
  - Application of permitted extension to time-limits for public interest consultation with originating Department

### Hunger Strike Commemoration Rally

**Mr M Storey** asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure if he intends to raise with the GAA the use of the ground in Galbally for a commemoration of deceased members of the Provisional IRA. (AQW 123/10)

**Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure:** I have publicly called on the GAA to carry out a full investigation into the activities of 16 August at Galbally. I understand the Central Council of the GAA have remitted the Ulster Council to establish the exact circumstances surrounding the use of the Galbally Pearses ground for a commemoration of deceased members of the Provisional IRA. I am awaiting the outcome of their findings and look forward to receiving a report when it is completed.

Sport makes an important contribution to a shared and better future, one in which terrorism and sport cannot be mixed. I should hope and expect

that no sports facility in Northern Ireland would be used to commemorate or celebrate terrorism or any other illegal activity.

## Salmon

**Mr M Storey** asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure for his assessment of the effectiveness of measures taken by his Department to address the fall in numbers of salmon caught in Northern Ireland.

(AQW 124/10)

**Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure:** Compliance against salmon conservation targets in the former Fisheries Conservancy Board area has improved in recent years following the introduction of:

1. A voluntary net buyout scheme in the Fisheries Conservancy Board area which reduced fishing effort by 90% from 2000 – 2002
2. A carcass tagging and logbook scheme in 2001 which improved records of commercially and recreationally caught fish
3. Byelaws that require release of rod caught fish from the start of the season to 31 May and that impose a bag limit of 2 fish per day thereafter

A detailed scientific assessment undertaken in 2007 has indicated that the buyout has conserved around 460 River Bush salmon each year from 2002 - 2007 representing 42% of the rivers conservation target.

DCAL officials will continue to work with the scientific advisers in the Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute to seek robust and effective measures which will make significant impact in the drive to conserve salmon in the former Fisheries Conservancy Board area of Northern Ireland. The Department intends to seek measures for restrictions rather than a total ban.

## GAA Clubs

**Mr M Storey** asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure, what consideration he has given to the potential funding ramifications of the GAA naming (i) clubs; (ii) grounds; and (iii) competitions after deceased members of the Provisional IRA.

(AQW 125/10)

**Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure:** Sport Northern Ireland (SNI), an arm's length body of my Department, is responsible for distribution of sports funding in Northern Ireland. The GAA and its affiliated clubs are entitled to apply for funding on the basis that they are voluntary sports organisations within the meaning of Article 2 of the Recreation and Youth Service (Northern Ireland) Order 1986. As a public body, SNI has a statutory obligation under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 to ensure that it continues to promote (1) equality of opportunity and (2) good relations. To meet this obligation, SNI funding programmes have an equality clause as a standard condition of their grants and SNI may suspend, reduce or stop payments or reclaim the grant in full if this clause is breached. Whilst not constituting a breach of this clause, I believe there is no place in sport for the naming of clubs, grounds and/or competitions after deceased terrorists and this practice is certainly not in keeping with the promotion of good relations as required under the equality legislation. I have asked officials to review the equity clause in the current terms and conditions and to advise if changes should be considered. Any change should reflect that sport makes an important contribution to a shared and better future, one in which terrorism and sport cannot be mixed.

## New IT Systems

**Mr S Hamilton** asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail (i) all new IT systems installed within his Department in the last 5 years; (ii) the initial budget; (iii) the actual cost; (iv) the estimated start date; and (v) the actual start date.

(AQW 129/10)

**Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure:** The relevant costs and dates for DCAL systems costing more than £100,000 are set out in the table below.

System	Initial Budget	Actual Cost	Estimated Start date	Actual Start Date
Digitisation of Will Calendars and Wills	* Not available	252,360	31 -03-2004	18-3 -2006
OS Historical Maps	213,545	448,406	20-03-2006	10-11-2008

System	Initial Budget	Actual Cost	Estimated Start date	Actual Start Date
eCATNI – Archival Management System	£1,346,010	1,446,010	30-06-2006	26-08-2008
eCATNI – On-Site Public Access System			30-06-2006	10-11-2009
eCATNI – Internet Search Engine			30-06-2006	05-01-2009

\* The business case for phase 1 (electronic index of will calendars and digitisation of Londonderry wills) had an estimated cost of £100,000 and an actual cost of £113,480. The total cost of the project which was done in 4 phases was £252,360

## Special Olympics

**Lord Morrow** asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how much funding his Department has allocated to the Special Olympics in each of the last three years. (AQW 206/10)

**Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure:** The total amount of funding awarded to Special Olympics in each of the last three years by my Department is as follows:

2006/07	£531,800
2007/08	Nil
2008/09	Nil
<b>Total</b>	<b>£531,800</b>

In addition, Sport Northern Ireland has awarded Special Olympics £11,815 through the Awards for All Programme.

## Historical Re-enactments

**Lord Morrow** asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what funding and performance opportunities are available for historical re-enactments depicting events important to the Protestant culture and heritage. (AQW 207/10)

**Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure:** Funding and performance opportunities for historical re-enactments are available through the Ulster-Scots Agency and Northern Ireland Screen, bodies sponsored by my Department. For example:-

- The Ulster-Scots Agency's Financial Assistance Scheme enables Voluntary and Community Groups to apply for funding towards drama projects including pageants and re-enactments which have an Ulster-Scots dimension.
- Northern Ireland Screen would consider supporting professional film or television productions. Northern Ireland Screen has previously supported the production of a short film entitled 'A Right Royal Lodge'.

## Specialist Sports Training

**Lord Morrow** asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure if he would consider hosting specialist sports training days for young people using professional players and coaches. (AQW 208/10)

**Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure:** Sport Northern Ireland (SNI) is responsible for the development of sport in Northern Ireland including the distribution of funding. SNI does not host sports specialist sports training days but can provide financial support to a range of sports organisations, including sports governing bodies, sports associations and sports clubs, that wish to do so. SNI is currently designing an Awards for Sport Programme from which assistance in this area may be obtained. This programme is presently expected to open for applications before the end of the 2009/10 financial year.

### Maze Stadium Project

**Mr D McNarry** asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail the redistribution of monies that are no longer required for the Maze stadium project. (AQW 248/10)

**Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure:** Last year, 2008/09, £10m was allocated under the Multi Sports Stadium budget line. The full amount was declared as an easement in the Monitoring Round process.

This year, 2009/10, £28.92m was allocated. £1.979m was declared as an easement in the June Monitoring round and £1.1m is being declared as an easement in September Monitoring. As permitted under the acceleration and slippage arrangements in the Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland (ISNI), it is proposed at this point in the year to reallocate the remaining £25.841m as detailed in the attached table. This proposed reallocation will be regularly reviewed throughout the year and adjustments made where necessary.

This proposed reallocation is subject to the September Monitoring process which is scheduled to be considered at the Executive meeting on 24th September.

### Hunger Strike Commemoration Rally

**Mr D McNarry** asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what steps he is taking to secure a guarantee that events such as the hunger strike commemoration rally at Galbally Gaelic Athletic Club will not happen again at any GAA venue in Northern Ireland. (AQW 249/10)

**Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure:** I have publicly expressed my concerns at what took place at Galbally on 16 August and have called on the GAA to carry out a full investigation into the matter. I understand the Central Council of the GAA have already asked the Ulster Council to establish the exact circumstances surrounding the use of the Galbally Pearses grounds for a commemoration of deceased members of the Provisional IRA. I am awaiting the outcome of these findings and look forward to receiving a report when it is completed.

Sport Northern Ireland (SNI) is responsible for the development of sport including the distribution of funding. SNI have been asked to carry out a review of their existing terms and conditions of grants to sport. I look forward to receiving a report of SNI's analysis and, if appropriate, recommendations for change by the end of November.

### 2012 Olympic Games

**Mr D McNarry** asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how many athletes, and from which sports, who are expected to compete in the 2012 Olympic Games representing Great Britain and Northern Ireland have received, or are likely to receive within the next 12 months, funding from his Department. (AQW 251/10)

**Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure:** Sport Northern Ireland (SNI) is responsible for the development of sport in Northern Ireland including distribution of funding. SNI is currently providing financial assistance, through its Athlete Support Programme, to seven talented athletes considered to have the potential to represent Great Britain and Northern Ireland in the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games as follows:-

Sport	Number
Archery	1
Wheelchair basketball	2
Hockey	2
Table Tennis	1
Smallbore shooting	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>

SNI's Athlete Support Programme is presently closed for further applications. Consequently, the full number of talented athletes considered to have the potential to be part of the Great Britain and Northern Ireland team at the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games, and likely to receive funding from SNI within the next 12

months, will not be known until after the Athlete Support Programme reopens. SNI currently hopes to reopen this programme for further applications in October 2009.

### Commonwealth Games

**Mr D McNarry** asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail (i) the size of the Northern Ireland team competing in the next Commonwealth Games; (ii) the number of individuals taking part in each sport; (iii) the number of team administrators; (iv) the number of team coaches; (v) the number of support staff attending; and (vi) the likely cost. (AQW 252/10)

**Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure:** The Northern Ireland Commonwealth Games Council (NICGC) is responsible for the selection of the Northern Ireland team competing in the next Commonwealth Games. This includes the (i) size of the team; the number of individuals taking part in each sport; (iii) the number of team administrators; (iv) the number of team coaches; (v) the number of support staff attending; and (vi) the likely cost. I understand that the NICGC is in the process of selecting the team and that its final decision on these matters is unlikely to be known until the summer of 2010.

### Athletes

**Mr D McNarry** asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail the number of athletes who have received funding from his Department and represented countries other than Northern Ireland in international competition, broken down by sport. (AQW 253/10)

**Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure:** Sport Northern Ireland (SNI) is responsible for the development of sport in Northern Ireland including the distribution of funding. The attached list provides an overview of the number of athletes who have received funding from SNI over the last three financial years broken down by sport and representation/team.

### Employment of Coaches or Development Officers

**Mr A Ross** asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what financial assistance is offered to sports clubs for the employment of coaches or development officers. (AQW 271/10)

**Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure:** Sport Northern Ireland (SNI) is responsible for the development of sport in Northern Ireland including the distribution of funding. SNI is currently in the process of developing two programmes, Active Communities and Awards for Sport, through which sports clubs may be able to obtain assistance in employing sports coaches and/or development officers. It is presently expected that these programmes will open for application in the next few months. In addition, SNI currently operates an Investing in Performance Sport programme through which sports clubs may, via their respective sports governing bodies, be able to access coaches and/or development officers to assist with athlete development.

### GAA

**Mr A Ross** asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail all (i) GAA clubs; (ii) grounds; and (iii) competitions named after republican terrorists. (AQW 329/10)

**Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure:** The Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure does not retain information on GAA clubs, grounds or competitions that are named after republican terrorists.

However, one of my major priorities as Sports Minister is to promote sport as a vehicle for improving community relations and community cohesion in Northern Ireland. I therefore fully expect all sports bodies, including Gaelic Sports, to do all they can to support these objectives. Linkages to terrorism in whatever form are not acceptable.

### Dictionary for Ulster-Scots

**Mr G Savage** asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure (i) what bodies based outside the UK have offered to contribute to the development of a dictionary for Ulster-Scots since 1999; (ii) the names of those bodies; (iii) how much was offered; and (iv) what was the outcome. (AQW 403/10)

**Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure:** The Department has no information relating to offers of funding from any body outside the UK for a dictionary of Ulster-Scots. Additionally the Department has engaged with the Ulster-Scots Agency, the Ulster-Scots Community Network and the Ulster-Scots Language Society and they also have no knowledge of any proposed funding from any body outside the UK for any Ulster-Scots dictionary project.

### Closure of Museums on Mondays

**Mrs C Hanna** asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure if his Department has looked at other ways of making savings to prevent the closure of museums on Mondays, due to come into effect from 1 October 2009. (AQW 498/10)

**Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure:** National Museums Northern Ireland regularly examines the way in which its services are aligned more closely with the needs and expectation of its visitors. While the organisation continues to prioritise its revenue funding in line with its Corporate Strategy objectives, the limited resources have to be targeted at improving the visitor experience, extending engagement with increasingly diverse audiences and widening access and participation within the communities its serves.

National Museums strives to align its business with the needs of users and following extensive consumer research, has decided to increase opening hours at weekends to meet an increasing demand from visitors. To achieve this objective within a very challenging funding environment, the organisation has also taken the decision to close the museums on a Monday (apart from Bank Holiday Mondays) – the day on which fewest visitors attend. The new opening hours are designed to match visitor demand and reflect the changing pattern of museum visits within the United Kingdom and more widely.

### Legislation

**Mr G Savage** asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to outline any legislation his Department intends to bring to the Assembly before 31 December 2009. (AQW 532/10)

**Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure:** My Department has no plans to introduce any legislation to the Assembly before 31 December 2009.

### Employment Levels

**Mr D McNarry** asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what plans he has to change employment levels within his Department in the next twelve months; and how many of these changes are planned to be made through redundancies. (AQW 545/10)

**Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure:** As part of Budget 2008-11, my Department has a target to deliver cash releasing efficiencies of £21m over the period 2008-11 (2008/09, £3.6m; 2009/10, £7m and 2010/11, £10.4m). The 2008/09 target has been achieved. In reaching the targets set for the remaining two years, existing staffing levels will be considered. Any changes which may be required to staffing levels in the next twelve months have not been quantified but will be considered in the context of the efficiencies referred to above. It is expected that any reduction in staffing levels will be achieved by natural wastage

### Sports Coaches

**Mr J McCallister** asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure when he will carry out a public consultation on the extension of positions of trust to sports coaches, as recommended by the Assembly's ad Hoc Committee on the Draft Sexual Offences Order (NI) 2007. (AQW 607/10)

**Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure:** The Northern Ireland Office (NIO) is responsible for sexual offences legislation in Northern Ireland. Decisions about the timing, and whether or not, to carry out a public consultation on the extension of positions of trust, under such legislation, to sports coaches are therefore entirely a matter for the NIO. I can, however, confirm that the previous Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure, Gregory Campbell MP MLA, agreed in March 2009 to a request from Paul Goggins MP, Minister for Policing and Criminal Justice at the NIO, to undertake a consultation with sports bodies to ascertain their views on the issue. A consultation with sports bodies is currently expected to be carried out this autumn.

### Swimmers at Camlough

**Mr J Shannon** asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure if he will issue a statement congratulating the swimmers at Camlough on their world record; and if he will consider hosting a reception to commemorate the occasion. (AQW 608/10)

**Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure:** I am aware of the recent Guinness world record breaking open water swim event which took place at Camlough. I have written to the Newry and Mourne Swimming Club as organisers of the event to congratulate them on achieving this Guinness world record.

### Grounds Improvement for Football

**Mr N Dodds** asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure for his plans in relation to the grounds improvement for football. (AQW 684/10)

**Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure:** Responsibility for ground improvements for football rests, in the first instance, with the owners and operators of football grounds. However, Sport Northern Ireland (SNI) is responsible for the development of sport in Northern Ireland including the distribution of funding and has a number of programmes aimed at assisting ground owners, including football grounds owners, to make improvements to their stadia. These include:

- the Stadia Safety Programme which aims to assist the owners of major football, rugby and GAA grounds, on a strategic basis, to ensure the safety and comfort of spectators attending fixtures at their venues;
- Places for Sport to assist in the development of a range of new, improved and shared sports facilities; and
- the Soccer Strategy which aims to develop football stadia to UEFA, Irish Premier League and Premier Intermediate League level.

To ensure that international football can continue to be played at Windsor Park, a limited programme of essential work has been agreed to bring the stadium up to standard in the short to medium term. In addition to this, the IFA has submitted its preferred option for future stadium provision which is currently being examined to ensure value for money, operational viability, sustainability and affordability.

I will also be considering future funding for sports grounds improvements, including football grounds, in the context of my Department's bid under the forthcoming Comprehensive Spending Review.

### Motorcycling Union of Ireland

**Mr J Craig** asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure if he can confirm that the Motorcycling Union of Ireland, via 2 and 4 Wheel Sport, has offered the Ulster Grand Prix £135 for course safety improvements to the pits area; and when this will be delivered. (AQW 741/10)

**Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure:** I am aware that the 2&4 Wheel Motorsport Steering Group Limited (2&4 Wheel MSG), with the support of the Motorcycle Union of Ireland (MCUI) and other motorsports governing bodies, is currently developing a business case to Sport Northern Ireland (SNI) for assistance with safety improvements at a range of motorsports venues across Northern Ireland.

I also understand that as part of that process, the MCUI on behalf of 2&4 Wheel MSG has invited the promoters of motorcycle road racing events, including the organisers of the Ulster Grand Prix, to submit proposals for safety improvements at their venues which may be included within the 2&4 Wheel MSG business case. I am not aware that the MCUI, via 2&4 Wheel MSG, has offered the Ulster Grand Prix funding for safety improvements at this stage. I understand, however, that 2&4 Wheel MSG may consider including proposals for safety improvements at the Ulster Grand Prix within its final business case application to SNI.

## 2012 Olympic Games

**Mr A McQuillan** asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what he would view as a deliverable legacy of the London 2012 Olympic games to the UK. (AQO 83/10)

**Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure:** The delivery of a legacy from London2012 for the UK is the responsibility of the Department for Culture Media and Sport (DCMS) and is articulated through the DCMS 2012 Legacy Action Plan.

In NI, I chair a 2012 Leadership Group that is responsible for delivering a NI Games legacy. Work is underway to secure increased business opportunities and revenue for NI companies through helping them to bid for and win Olympic-related contracts.

The Games present a unique once in a lifetime opportunity to inspire healthier lifestyles of a whole generation of young people through participation in sports and arts. My predecessor, Gregory Campbell, committed to using the power of the 2012 Games to tackle obesity and leave a sustainable sporting legacy. This significantly contributes to the Government's health agenda including the 'Fit Futures' programme.

NI 2012 Programmes, such as 'Connections' will contribute to the legacy by encouraging sports and arts organisations to work in partnership. NI is contributing to the Cultural Olympiad through participation in 4 major Cultural Projects, and by securing visiting teams to NI for pre-games training along with the torch relay to NI venues will help profile NI on an international platform.

## Public Record Office of Northern Ireland

**Mr B Armstrong** asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure for his assessment on the justification of the eight month closure of the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland during its relocation to the Titanic Quarter. (AQO 85/10)

**Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure:** The opening of a brand new, £30 million, state- of- the- art Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI) in Titanic Quarter will be a highly significant event for the preservation and accessibility of Northern Ireland's archival heritage. This major investment is a chance in a lifetime opportunity to enhance public access to that heritage, and it requires proper project management, aided by sufficient time and space, to carry out the work methodically and efficiently.

The estimate of up to 8 months for the work is based on a pilot exercise carried out 2 years ago (and on discussions with removal contractors) when approximately 14 linear kilometres of material was relocated. This time 40 linear kilometres, amounting to millions of individual documents, many of them unique, priceless and irreplaceable, plus staff and equipment, have to be moved to the new building.

To ensure a systematic decant and relocation of the records, and to keep within health and safety guidelines, it will simply not be possible for PRONI to remain open during this period.

## Shared Future

**Miss M McIlveen** asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what role he envisages for his Department in promoting a shared and better future for Northern Ireland. (AQO 86/10)

**Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure:** Improving relationships between and within communities in Northern Ireland and building a shared and better future, based on equity, diversity and interdependency, remains a high priority for my Department.

As the Department with responsibility for culture, DCAL has a duty both to support the diverse cultures in Northern Ireland and to ensure the widest possible opportunity for people to express their own, and have access to other cultures.

My Department's commitments to A Shared Future and the Racial Equality Strategy were set out in the Triennial Action Plan and the Racial Equality Implementation Action Plan.

An example of some of the good relations work sponsored by my Department I would cite the following:

- Sport - DCAL, in partnership with Sport Northern Ireland (SNI), has drawn up a new 10 Strategy for Sport and Physical Recreation for Northern Ireland, entitled "Sport Matters: The Northern Ireland Strategy for Sport

and Physical Recreation, 2009-2019". Sport Matters commits Government in Northern Ireland to "promote community cohesion through sport and physical recreation in the context of a Shared Future". The concept of "working towards a Shared Future" is also one of the key principles underpinning the document.

- Language Diversity Policy, on which DCAL is in the lead, has the potential to make a contribution to the promotion of good relations in Northern Ireland. I envisage that the Indigenous or Regional Minority Languages Strategy will enhance and develop the Ulster-Scots culture, heritage and language and enhance and protect the development of the Irish Language.
- Arts - Many areas of the Arts Council of Northern Ireland's work directly contribute to promoting a shared and better future. Notable examples include the Re-Imaging Communities Programme and the Cultural Traditions Programme. The Arts Council of Northern Ireland has advised that two thirds of its 'Regularly Funded Organisations' target activity that relates to cross-community work, and that it has provided over £12.5m funding since 2004 to programmes and projects which make a contribution to promoting a shared future for our society.

Work continues on many of the initiatives contained in these action plans as the Department awaits the detail and direction of the Executive's good relations policy under the new 'Programme of Cohesion, Sharing and Integration'

### Ulster Scots: US Links

**Mr J Craig** asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what strategic plans his Department has to enhance the development of the Ulster-Scots, East-West relationship with the United States of America.

(AQO 87/10)

**Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure:** The Ulster-Scots Agency, the Arts Council of Northern Ireland and Northern Ireland Screen have all been involved in the promotion of Ulster-Scots in the United States of America.

The Ulster-Scots Agency in conjunction with organisations such as Tourism Ireland is working to raise awareness of Ulster-Scots in the United States. The Agency also cooperates with American based organisations such as the Ulster-Scots Society of America and the Scotch-Irish Society.

The Arts Council of Northern Ireland sits on the Belfast-Nashville Advisory Group which develops and organises Sister City related events and activities between Belfast and Nashville.

Northern Ireland Screen has previously supported the production of a documentary telling the story of the Ulster-Scots and their settlement in the United States.

### Shared Future

**Mr D Ford** asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what action his Department is taking to promote a Shared Future.

(AQO 88/10)

**Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure:** Improving relationships between and within communities in Northern Ireland and building a shared and better future, based on equity, diversity and interdependence, remains a high priority for my Department.

As the Department with responsibility for culture, DCAL has a duty both to support the diverse cultures in Northern Ireland and to ensure the widest possible opportunity for people to express their own, and have access to other cultures.

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Work continues on many of the initiatives contained in these action plans as the Department awaits the detail and direction of the Executive's good relations policy under the new 'Programme of Cohesion, Sharing and Integration'

## DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

### Education and Skills Authority Bill

**Mr M Storey** asked the Minister of Education to detail any stakeholders with whom she or her Department held meetings over the summer regarding the development of guidance and model schemes of employment in relation to the Education and Skills Authority Bill. (AQW 35/10)

**Minister of Education (Ms C Ruane):** Over the summer various opportunities have been taken to have informal discussions with a variety of stakeholders ahead of being able to consult on a more formal basis on the content of a draft employment scheme including a draft scheme for recruitment and selection of teaching and support staff in schools.

Tionóladh cruinniú foirmiúil le hionadaithe ó na hiontaobhaithe Caitliceacha ar 17 Lúnasa 2009 agus tá cruinnithe á bpleanáil leis na páirtithe eile leasmhara sna míonna atá romhainn.

A formal meeting with representatives of the Catholic trustees took place on 17 August 2009 and meetings with the other stakeholders are being planned for the near future.

### Schools Heating Systems

**Mr S Hamilton** asked the Minister of Education, in relation to schools converting heating systems to natural gas, how many (i) have converted; and (ii) are capable of converting but haven't yet done so. (AQW 131/10)

**Minister of Education:** Baineann an t-eolas sa fhreagra seo le scoileanna atá suite i gceantair a bhfuil líonra gáis nádúrtha iontu. Fuarthas an t-eolas ó na Boird Oideachais agus Leabharlainne, ó scoileanna deonacha gramadaí agus ó scoileanna imeasctha deontaschúnta.

The information in this answer relates to schools that are located in areas served by a natural gas network. The information has been supplied by the Education and Library Boards, voluntary grammar schools and grant maintained integrated schools.

- (i) 371 schools have converted to natural gas; and
- (ii) 95 schools are capable of converting but have not yet done so.

### Mobile Classrooms

**Mr M Storey** asked the Minister of Education to list those schools currently using mobile classrooms with temporary planning permission broken down by (i) Education and Library board; and (ii) sector. (AQW 199/10)

**Minister of Education:** Níl an t-eolas seo ar fáil.

This information is not available. Planning permissions are not awarded on a temporary basis. Planning permissions can however be time limited to a maximum of 5 years within which the proposed development needs to be taken forward. Grant aid is not reimbursed by my department without evidence (including planning) of all statutory approvals.

### Education and Skills Authority Bill

**Mr M Storey** asked the Minister of Education to detail, by education sector, any stakeholders with whom she or her Department held meetings over the summer regarding employment arrangements contained in the Education and Skills Authority Bill. (AQW 202/10)

**Minister of Education:** Over the summer various opportunities have been taken to have informal discussions with a variety of stakeholders ahead of being able to consult on a more formal basis on the content of a draft employment scheme including a draft scheme for recruitment and selection of teaching and support staff in schools.

Tionóladh cruinniú foirmiúil le hionadaithe ó na hiontaobhaithe Caitliceacha ar 17 Lúnasa 2009 agus tá cruinnithe á bpleanáil leis na páirtithe eile leasmhara sna míonna atá romhainn.

A formal meeting with representatives of the Catholic trustees took place on 17 August 2009 and meetings with the other stakeholders are being planned for the near future.

### Pre-School Education Expansion Report

**Mr M Storey** asked the Minister of Education for an update on how her Department is progressing with the recommendations of the Northern Ireland Audit Office Pre-School Education Expansion Report. (AQW 214/10)

**Minister of Education:** Foilsíodh Tuarascáil an NIAO ar an Pre-school Education Expansion Programme ar an 19ú Meitheamh 2009. Liostaíodh inti roinnt gnéithe arbh fhéidir a fheabhsú, agus ar chóir don Roinn a chur san áireamh agus beartas do pháistí á fhorbairt as seo amach.

The NIAO Report on the Pre-school Education Expansion Programme published on 19th June 2009 listed a number of areas for potential improvement which the Department should consider when developing future policy for children.

The Department is committed to addressing the observations and recommendations in the NIAO Report and will be taking those forward in developing the Early Years 0-6 Strategy.

### Travel Costs of the Southern Education and Library Board

**Mr G Savage** asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 7298/09, to detail the £1.58 million travel costs of the Southern Education and Library board, broken down by (i) the mode of transport used; (ii) economy/first class/business class used; (iii) the destination; and (iv) the reason for the journey. (AQW 237/10)

**Minister of Education:** The level of detail requested in respect of the £1.583 million travel costs for the Southern Education and Library Board (SELB) in 2007-08 is not held electronically by the SELB and would require the accessing of all original claim documentation. The SELB process between 700 - 1,000 mileage claims per month and therefore it would not be reasonable in terms of the disproportionate costs involved to manually source this documentation.

Tá taifead ar chóras ríomhairithe, áfach, de shonraí ar chostais taistil an SELB don bhliain airgeadais 2007/08 san fhormáid seo a leanas agus seo a leanas miondéalú ar na costais sin:

However, the details of travel costs for the SELB for 2007/08 are recorded on a computerised system in the following format and are broken down as follows:

	£,000s
Staff claims for mileage / subsistence	856
Essential car users lump sum	286
Travel expenses for pupils	441
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,583</b>

### Maintained Primary Schools

**Mr M Durkan** asked the Minister of Education to provide an update on the provision of capital investment in the maintained primary schools sector in the Faughanvale parish. (AQW 285/10)

**Minister of Education:** Is ceist í pleanáil eastát na scoileanna faoi chothabháil a bhaineann le Comhairle na Scoileanna Caitleachacha faoi Chothabháil (CCMS) ar an chéad dul síos.

The planning of the maintained school estate is a matter for the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS) in the first instance. CCMS has advised that discussions are now ongoing with Trustees in regard to the future development of educational provision in the parish

### Naiscoil Colmcille

**Mr R McCartney** asked the Minister of Education what plans she has to assist Naiscoil Colmcille, in this its 25th anniversary year, to ensure ongoing Irish medium nursery provision in the local area. (AQW 303/10)

**Minister of Education:** I commend Naiscoil Cholmcille in achieving its 25th anniversary.

The naiscoil has been in receipt of funded places under the Pre-School Education Expansion Programme since the Programme started in September 1998 and, for as long as the group continues to meet the requirements of the Programme, it will continue to receive funding.

Tá Naiscoil Cholmcille ar cheann de na soláthróirí réamhscolaíochta Gaeilge i gceantair Dhoire a fhaigheann maoiniú ón Roinn. Tá an t-éileamh ar na soláthróirí seo breithnithe agam, agus tá mé sásta go bhfuil soláthar leordhóthanach réamhscolaíochta Gaeilge i gceantair Dhoire faoi láthair.

Naiscoil Cholmcille is one of several funded Irish-medium pre-school providers in the Derry area and, having looked at the uptake across those providers I am satisfied that there is adequate Irish-medium pre-school provision in the Derry area at the present time.

### Magherafelt High School

**Mr B Armstrong** asked the Minister of Education, in relation to the construction of new facilities at Magherafelt High School (i) what progress has been made to date; (ii) what is the reason for any delays to date; and (iii) when is the work due for completion. (AQW 318/10)

**Minister of Education:** Tá an próiseas tairisceana don tionscadal ag Magherafelt High School críochnaithe agus tá an Roinn ag na céimeanna deireanacha d'fhaomhadh an chonartha.

The tender process for the Magherafelt High School project is concluded and the Department is in the final stages of approving the award of the contract. This was one of three contracts that was at an advanced stage in procurement under the major works framework and was stopped when the framework was set aside following a High Court ruling on the framework. The project had to be subsequently prepared for a single procurement outside of the framework. As a result of these delays the economic appraisal for the project ran out of time and required fresh approval. The project cannot be awarded until approval is in place but officials are working on this as a priority. This is a 24 month contract and work is currently programmed to conclude on this in December 2011.

### Commissioners at the South Eastern Education and Library Board

**Mr P Weir** asked the Minister of Education how many meetings the Commissioners at the South Eastern Education and Library Board held in each of the last three years. (AQW 331/10)

**Minister of Education:** The South Eastern Education and Library Board has advised that, since their appointment in July 2006, the Commissioners have met as follows:

2006	6 meetings
2007	12 meetings
2008	10 meetings
2009	8 meetings up to September

Go ginearálta, maireann na cruinnithe seo 2 lá.

These meetings generally extend to 2 days.

### Commissioners of the South Eastern Education and Library Board

**Mr P Weir** asked the Minister of Education to detail the total expenses of the Commissioners of the South Eastern Education and Library Board, in each of the last three years. (AQW 333/10)

**Minister of Education:** Tá curtha in iúl ag Bord Oideachais agus Leabharlainne an Oirdheiscirt gur mar seo a leanas na méideanna iomlána a íocadh leis na Coimisinéirí, lena n-áiríodh táillí, taisteal agus cothabháil:

The South Eastern Education and Library Board has advised that the total payments, including fees, travel and subsistence, made to the Commissioners is as follows:

2006	£50,316
2007	£97,677
2008	£75,361
2009	£47,885

### Teaching Appointments Committee

**Mr P Weir** asked the Minister of Education if the Commissioners at the South Eastern Education and Library Board sought legal advice on the Teaching Appointments Committee before taking over its functions. (AQW 336/10)

**Minister of Education:** Tá curtha in iúl ag Bord Oideachais agus Leabharlainne an Oirdheiscirt nach bhfuil na Coimisinéirí freagrach as feidhmeanna an Teaching Appointments Committee (TAC), agus tá an TAC fós ag feidmiú.

The South Eastern Education and Library Board has advised that the Commissioners have not taken over the functions of the Teaching Appointments Committee (TAC), and the TAC continues to operate as before.

### Teaching Appointments Committee

**Mr P Weir** asked the Minister of Education under what legal authority the Commissioners at the South Eastern Education and Library Board took over the functions of the Teaching Appointment Committee. (AQW 341/10)

**Minister of Education:** Tá curtha in iúl ag Bord Oideachais agus Leabharlainne an Oirdheiscirt nach bhfuil na Coimisinéirí freagrach as feidhmeanna an Teaching Appointments Committee (TAC), agus tá an TAC fós ag feidmiú.

The South Eastern Education and Library Board has advised that the Commissioners have not taken over the functions of the Teaching Appointments Committee (TAC), and the TAC continues to operate as before.

### Primary Languages Programme

**Mr K Robinson** asked the Minister of Education when her Department will introduce French and German into the Primary Languages Programme; and if the inclusion of these two languages on the NI Curriculum Primary Languages website is a preliminary step towards that end. (AQW 348/10)

**Minister of Education:** Thug mé isteach Clár na dTeangacha Bunscoile le tacaíocht a thabhairt do na bunscoileanna sin a bhí ag iarraidh nuatheangacha a chur ar fáil. Tá an Ghaeilge agus an Spáinnis ar fáil faoi láthair agus leathnófar an clár sa bhliain acadúil seo leis an Pholainnis a chur san áireamh. Níl sé beartaithe faoi láthair an Fhraincis ná an Ghearmáinis a thabhairt isteach mar chuid den chlár.

I introduced the Primary Languages Programme to provide support for those primary schools who wished to make available modern languages. Currently, Spanish and Irish are available and in this academic year the programme will be expanded to include Polish. There are currently no plans to introduce French and German into the programme.

It is of course open to schools to offer additional language learning opportunities outside of the Primary Languages Programme, including in French and German, and I am pleased that many already do this. There is a range of existing support arrangements in place for those primary schools wishing to offer French and German, including through the education and library boards and CCEA, who has developed material in French, German, Spanish and Irish to assist Primary teachers to develop and integrate an element of language teaching into their classrooms. These resources are available to all schools via the Curriculum website to which you refer to. I believe that all efforts to provide enjoyable experience of language learning are valuable. The Primary Languages Programme offers opportunities for our youngest pupils and it, along with the wider efforts of schools, will, I believe, encourage more young people to continue with languages at post-primary level and beyond.

### Polish Language

**Mr K Robinson** asked the Minister of Education when the Primary Languages website will include material in Polish to fully develop the language skills of school children who will be introduced to the Polish language by peripatetic tutors during this academic year. (AQW 349/10)

**Minister of Education:** Cuimsíonn láithreán gréasáin na dTeangacha Bunscoile teangacha a múineadh mar chuid de chlár piolótach Teangacha Bunscoile de chuid na Comhairle Curaclaim, Scrúdúcháin agus Measúnaithe (CCEA), ar tháinig deireadh leis i mí Lúnasa 2009 agus soláthraíonn an láithreán tacaíocht agus acmhainní do scoileanna atá ag iarraidh nuatheanga a thabhairt isteach.

The Primary Languages website features languages that were part of the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment's (CCEA) Primary Languages Pilot programme which concluded in August 2009 and provides support and resources for schools which wish to introduce a modern language.

The languages included on that website do not currently include Polish but I have asked the Primary Languages Group to work with CCEA to explore how the resources being developed for Polish within the Primary Languages Programme might be made more widely available to schools, including through links from the Primary Languages website to the training modules for Polish which are being incorporated into the learning platform available to all schools via the C2k network.

### Physically Disabled Children

**Lord Morrow** asked the Minister of Education how many physically disabled children are being educated in mainstream primary and post-primary schools in each Education and Library Board. (AQW 356/10)

**Minister of Education:** Léirítear sa tábla thíos líon na ndaltaí atá cláraithe mar dhaltaí a bhfuil Riachtanais Speisialta Oideachais le haicmiú fisiciúil acu.

The number of pupils recorded as having Special Educational Needs with a physical classification is shown in the table below.

#### PRIMARY AND POST PRIMARY PUPILS WHO ARE RECORDED AS HAVING 'PHYSICAL' SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS – 2008/09

ELB	School type		Total
	Primary	Post primary	
BELB	101	100	201
NEELB	131	77	208
SEELB	101	70	171
SELB	151	118	269
WELB	113	72	185
<b>Total</b>	<b>597</b>	<b>437</b>	<b>1,034</b>

**Source:** Annual school census.

**Note:**

1. Primary includes nursery, reception and year 1 – 7 classes.
2. The physical special educational needs classification includes needs such as: cerebral palsy, spina bifida and/or hydrocephalus, muscular dystrophy, significant accidental injury and any other physical need.
3. Figures relate to pupils in mainstream classes and special units within primary and post primary schools.

## Childhood Obesity

**Lord Morrow** asked the Minister of Education what plans she has to address childhood obesity within the school health curriculum. (AQW 357/10)

**Minister of Education:** Áirítear sa churaclam athbhreithnithe an snáithe Forbairt Phearsanta agus Comhthuiscint do dhaltáí bun scoile agus an snáithe Foghlaim don Saol agus don Obair do dhaltáí iarbhunscoile trína mbíonn daltaí ábalta ceisteanna a fhiosrú, mar shampla tairbhí bia sláintiúil agus gníomhaíochta coirp, iarmhairtí drochroghanna cothaithe, bealaí le cothú sláintiúil a bhaint amach, na tionchair ar a bhfolláine coirp agus mothúchán agus bealaí lena bhféinmheas a fhorbairt.

The revised curriculum includes a Personal Development and Mutual Understanding strand for primary pupils and a Learning for Life and Work strand for post-primary pupils which allow pupils to explore issues such as the benefits of healthy eating and physical activity, the consequences of poor dietary choices, ways of achieving a healthy diet, the influences on their physical and emotional health and ways of developing their self-esteem.

It is also a requirement of the revised curriculum for all children to undertake Home Economics at Key Stage 3. This will provide opportunities for young people to develop their understanding of a healthy diet and the hygienic and healthy use of foods in the preparation of meals.

Physical Education is a compulsory part of the revised curriculum for all pupils in Years 1 – 12 and the Department's guidance recommends at least 2 hours per week. Recognising the importance of developing children's physical literacy skills, I introduced a sports programme in 2007 to encourage children to have a healthy and active lifestyle. Since then, 62 GAA and IFA coaches have worked in 600 schools with over 32,000 children and over £3.7 million has been made available to the programme.

My Department recognises that a healthy, balanced diet is vital for children's growth and development, and for their long term health and well being. It has been working for some time to improve the quality of food in schools here and compulsory nutritional standards for school lunches are now in place in all our schools. It has also been working with the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to draw up a Food in Schools policy document which draws together the range of strategies and plans that are being put in place to deliver improved nutrition for our school children.

The policy aims to ensure that school food is representative of the five food groups; makes a significant contribution to childhood nutrition and enables children to develop the necessary skills and knowledge to make healthy food choices both at school and at home. The draft policy was issued for public consultation on Monday, 14 September and I would encourage everyone to respond.

Finally, I would like to assure you that my Department is participating fully in the DHSSPS led Obesity Prevention Steering Group and advisory groups.

## New Facilities at Magherafelt Primary and Nursery Schools

**Mr B Armstrong** asked the Minister of Education, in relation to the construction of new facilities at Magherafelt primary and nursery schools (i) what progress has been made to date; (ii) what is the reason for any delays to date; and (iii) when the work is due for completion. (AQW 401/10)

**Minister of Education:** Tá pleanáil do na foirgnimh nua scoile ag Magherafelt Primary School agus Magherafelt Nursery School ag céim Réamhthairisceana an phróisis pleanála faoi láthair. Ní féidir an togra seo a thabhairt ar aghaidh chuig an chéim tairisceana áfach, mar gheall ar mhoilleanna i dtaca leis an láithreán nua molta do na scoileanna a fháil.

Planning of the proposed new school buildings for Magherafelt Primary School and Magherafelt Nursery School is currently at Pre-tender stage of the planning process. The project cannot, however, progress to tender stage due to the delays the NEELB are experiencing in acquiring the proposed new site for the schools.

The delay in acquiring the site has arisen due to a need to purchase a strip of land at the front of the proposed site. This strip of land which is owned by DRD Roads Service is key for access to the proposed school site. Discussions are underway with Roads Service with a view to effecting a transfer of the land. However, further progress on the site acquisition and planning of the project cannot be made until full access to the site can be guaranteed.

### Children: Statemented

**Mr P Weir** asked the Minister of Education how many children have been statemented by each of the Education and Library Boards, in each of the last five years. (AQW 423/10)

**Minister of Education:** Tá curtha in iúl ag Príomhfheidhmeannaigh na mBord Oideachais agus Leabharlainne gur mar seo a leanas líon na bpáistí a fuair ráitis ar riachtanas speisialta oideachais le cúig bliana anuas:

The Chief Executives of the Education and Library Boards have advised that the number of children who have received statements of special educational need in the last five years is as follows:

	BELB	NEELB	SEELB	SELB	WELB
2004/05*	285	299	492	343	304
2005/06*	317	354	528	409	249
2006/07*	430	273	335	410	350
2007/08*	393	326	342	660	231
2008/09*	451	280	145	342	200

\* academic years

The above figures refer to children and young people who received final statements of special educational need. They do not include those who may have received reviewed statements.

### Truancy

**Lord Morrow** asked the Minister of Education what is the current truancy rate across all Education and Library Boards; and what measures are in place to combat truancy. (AQW 453/10)

**Minister of Education:** Bailíonn an Roinn eolas ar atreoruithe chuig an tSeirbhís Leasa Oideachais (EWS) a iarrann scoileanna mar gheall ar bhuarthaí faoi dhaltaí a bhíonn as láthair ón scoil. Léiríonn an tábla thíos líon na ndaltaí ar atreoraigh scoileanna chuig an EWS iad i ngach bliain le cúig bliana anuas:-

The Department collects information about referrals by schools to the Education Welfare Service (EWS) because of concerns about non-attendance. The table below shows the number of pupils referred for non-attendance by schools to the EWS in each of the last five years:

School Year	Number of pupils
2003/04	8,041
2004/05	5,633
2005/06	4,467
2006/07	5,083
2007/08	4,275

Information on the number of referrals for non-attendance in the 2008/09 school year is currently being collected and will be published on the Department's website in due course.

The reasons for persistent non-attendance are frequently symptomatic of other problems being experienced by a pupil, such as caring responsibilities, pregnancy or being a victim of bullying. The initial response to a referral of a pupil by a school to EWS is a home visit. This provides the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) with an opportunity to assess whether the absence is condoned by parents and if they are in a position to ensure regular attendance. When this is the case court action may be considered.

Where parents are judged to be in need of support or addressing the underlying reasons for non-attendance will require sustained intervention, then the EWO will act as lead worker and in collaboration with all parties seek to agree an action plan. This may involve a 'case conference' at which the pupil, his/her parents and the school are represented. Depending on the nature of the presenting problems participation may be broadened to include other agencies. For pupils with particular problems regular attendance at their host school, or any other mainstream school, may not be an option. Where this is the case, pupils may be referred by their EWO to a suitable alternative education programme.

### **'Document Guidance Transfer 2010/11'**

**Mr D Kennedy** asked the Minister of Education to detail the total costs involved in publishing and circulating her Department's Directive 'Document Guidance Transfer 2010/11' and the reasons why it was published in bi-lingual format resulting in considerable inconvenience and delay for principals and relevant staff. (AQW 509/10)

**Minister of Education:** Foilsíodh Imlitir 2009/07 ar 7 Meán Fómhair 2009, agus tugtar mionchomhairle oibriúcháin do scoileanna inti ar phróiseas an aistriú iarbhunscoile d'iontrálacha i mí Mheán Fómhair 2010, maidir le Treoir dheiridh na Roinne ar Aistriú 2010 a foilsíodh ar 25 Meitheamh 2009.

Circular 2009/07 was published on 7 September 2009, and provides schools with detailed operational advice on the process of post-primary transfer for September 2010 admissions, with reference to the Department's final Transfer 2010 Guidance published on 25 June 2009. The document was published and distributed electronically, as is the norm for Departmental Circulars, with the only related cost being that of translation into Irish, which amounted to around £1,000.

The use of Irish in Circular 2009/07 reflects the fact that there is a growing number of Irish speakers within, and being served by, our schools. They have the right to receive communications from me in their first language under the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. The Charter places obligations on governments to protect and promote languages such as Irish as part of a cultural heritage. I also have statutory duties under the Good Friday Agreement and I intend to fulfil these.

I view a bi-lingual format as a sensible and pragmatic way of fulfilling my commitments as described above.

### **Criteria for School Closures**

**Mr P Ramsey** asked the Minister of Education to outline the pupil numbers criteria for school closures.

(AQW 510/10)

**Minister of Education:** Leagtar amach sa Pholasáí do Scoileanna Inbhuanaithe na critéir a úsáidtear le hinmharthanacht scoileanna a athbhreithniú mar a leanas:

- Eispéireas Oideachasúil d'Ardchaighdeán
- Treochtaí Seasta Rollaithe
- Staid Airgeadais Fhóna
- Ceannaireacht agus Bainistíocht Láidir
- Inrochtaineacht
- Naisc Láidre leis an Phobal.

The Sustainable Schools Policy sets out the criteria for reviewing the viability of schools as follows:-

- Quality Educational Experience
- Stable Enrolment Trends

- Sound Financial Position
- Strong Leadership and Management
- Accessibility
- Strong Links with the Community.

Minimum enrolment thresholds form part of the “Stable Enrolment Trends” criterion and are as follows:

School Type	Pupil Numbers
Rural Primary	105
Urban Primary	140
Post-primary	500*
6th Form	100

\* excluding 6th form provision

There is no intention to use these enrolment thresholds in a mechanistic fashion to close schools. Any review of a school’s viability will be based on an assessment across the full range of criteria, taking account of local circumstances on a case-by-case basis. The quality of education provided will be the overriding consideration.

### Portadown College

**Mr S Gardiner** asked the Minister of Education, in relation to Portadown College’s new build economic appraisal, to detail (i) the reason for the postponement and rejection of the appraisal; and (ii) all meetings and correspondence between the Southern Education and Library Board and her Department on this matter.

(AQW 526/10)

**Minister of Education:** The Economic Appraisal for a major capital works scheme for Portadown College has not been postponed or rejected by the Department. In July 2009, a revised Appraisal was submitted by the Southern Education and Library Board (SELB) and is currently being considered by the Department’s Professional Advisors.

Ní raibh aon chomhfhreagras ná chruinnithe idir an SELB agus an Roinn Oideachais ar an ábhar seo.

There has been no correspondence or meetings between the SELB and the Department of Education on this matter.

### Area Planning

**Mr M Storey** asked the Minister of Education for an update on the findings of the central group and five local groups tasked with considering area planning.

(AQW 551/10)

**Minister of Education:** Tá an obair curtha i gcrích ag na cúig Ghrúpa Áitiúla agus an Lárghrúpa a bhí freagrach as breithniú a dhéanamh ar sholáthar éifeachtach agus éifeachtúil an Chreata Teidlíochta ar bhonn ceantair agus tá an tuarascáil agam. Tá mé ag déanamh breithnithe ar na fionnachtana agus ar na moltaí agus beidh mé ag tabhairt freagartha ar ball.

The work of the 5 Local Groups and the Central Group tasked with considering the efficient and effective delivery of the Entitlement Framework on an area basis is now complete and the report is with me. I am currently considering the findings and recommendations and will issue my response in the near future.

### Irish Medium Education

**Mr M Storey** asked the Minister of Education to detail the percentage growth of pupils enrolled in (i) Irish medium primary schools; and (ii) Irish medium post-primary schools, set against (a) the total number of pupils; and (b) the total number of pupils enrolled in Irish medium education, in each of the last three years.

(AQW 552/10)

**Minister of Education:** Tá an t-eolas a iarradh sa tábla thíos.

The information requested is detailed in the table below.

**PERCENTAGE CHANGE IN IRISH MEDIUM AND TOTAL SCHOOL ENROLMENTS 2006/07 – 2008/09**

Enrolments	2006/07	2007/08	% change 06/07 - 07/08	2008/09	% change 07/08 - 08/09
Irish Medium Primary schools	2,041	2,132	4.5	2,217	4.0
Total Primary	168,184	166,639	-0.9	164,811	-1.1
Irish Medium post primary schools	489	506	3.5	513	1.4
Total Post Primary	149,765	147,942	-1.2	147,986	0.0
Total Irish Medium Education	3,682	3,850	4.6	3,941	2.4
Total all schools	335,946	332,649	-1.0	330,802	-0.6

**Source:** School Census

**Notes to Table :**

1. Figures for primary schools include nursery, reception and year 1 – 7 classes.
2. Figures for ‘Total Irish medium Education’ include the Irish medium primary and post primary school enrolments, as well as children in: independent schools; Irish medium units in primary and post primary schools; and funded places in voluntary and private pre-school centres.
3. Figures for ‘Total all schools’ include the total primary and post primary enrolments as well as children in: funded places in voluntary and private pre-school centres; and in special, independent and hospital schools.

### Entrance Tests for Post Primary Schools

**Mr M Storey** asked the Minister of Education how many pupils will sit entrance tests for post primary schools in the next academic year (i) in total; and (ii) as a percentage of the total number of P7 pupils. (AQW 556/10)

**Minister of Education:** Ní heol don Roinn Oideachais líon na ndaltaí a iontráladh do theistearna easaontacha. Is féidir an t-eolas seo a fháil uathu sin atá freagrach as riar na dteistearna easaontacha.

The number of pupils entered for breakaway tests is not known to the Department of Education. This information can only be provided by those who are responsible for administering breakaway tests.

### Employment Levels

**Mr D McNarry** asked the Minister of Education what plans she has to change employment levels within her Department in the next 12 months; and how many of these changes are planned to be made through redundancies. (AQW 566/10)

**Minister of Education:** Is é an príomhfachtóir a mbeidh tionchar aige ar an leibhéal fostaíochta i mo Roinn sna 12 mhí atá romhainn ná athstruchtúrú na Roinne mar ullmhú do agus mar gheall ar chruthú an Údaráis um Oideachas agus Scileanna (ESA).

The key factor which will impact on the employment level in my Department over the next 12 months is the restructuring of the Department in preparation for and as a result of the creation of the Education and Skills Authority (ESA). In line with normal NICS practice, redeployment of staff will be used and it is not envisaged that a redundancy situation will arise.

## DEPARTMENT FOR EMPLOYMENT AND LEARNING

### Further Education Colleges

**Miss M McIlveen** asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how many members of staff, at lecturer grade and above, have been made redundant and subsequently re-employed in each of the Further Education Colleges in the last three years, and in what capacity. (AQW 10/10)

**Minister for Employment and Learning (Sir Reg Empey):** The information requested for each of the six regional colleges is detailed in the table below:

Year	No. of Redundancies	No. of re-deployments	Redeployment role
Southern Regional College			
2006/07	0	0	n/a
2007/08	28	0	n/a
2008/09	1	0	n/a
North West Regional College			
2006/07	1	1	Part-time lecturing
2007/08	25	2	Part-time lecturing
2008/09	1	0	n/a
Belfast Metropolitan College			
2006/07	9	4	Part-time lecturing
2007/08	53	12	Part-time lecturing
2008/09	0	0	n/a
Northern Regional College			
2006/07	6	1	Part-time lecturing
2007/08	18	7	Part-time lecturing
2008/09	0	0	n/a
South West College			
2006/07	9	4	Part-time lecturing
2007/08	22	1	Part-time lecturing
2008/09	0	0	n/a
South Eastern Regional College			
Year	No. of Redundancies	No. of redeployments	Redeployment capacity
2006/07	7	3	Part-time lecturing
2007/08	43	21	Part-time lecturing
2008/09	1	0	n/a

The operation of the Teacher' Premature Retirement Scheme (TPRS) is a matter for individual Colleges, in their capacity as the employing authority. It is a matter for individual Colleges to defend their actions in this regard, given their assurances that the lecturing posts declared redundant have been suppressed. The Department has obtained assurances from Colleges that there has been no abuse of the terms of the TPRS and that all of the posts declared redundant have been permanently suppressed. Although there is no legal impediment to former lecturers applying for College positions, the Department of Education (DE) is considering the scope for applying further restrictions to the re-employment of teachers and lecturers who have benefited from the Scheme's provisions. My Department fully supports DE's intention in this regard.

### Belfast Metropolitan College

**Miss M McIlveen** asked the Minister for Employment and Learning when the Efficiency Review of the Belfast Metropolitan College will be published. (AQW 14/10)

**Minister for Employment and Learning:** Once the report on the Efficiency Review of Belfast Metropolitan College has been finalised which, it is anticipated, will be during October 2009, it will be made available to the public via the Department's online publication scheme.

### Staff Grievances in Further Education Colleges

**Miss M McIlveen** asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail (i) the number of outstanding staff grievances; and (ii) the category of each grievance in each of the Further Education Colleges. (AQW 63/10)

**Minister for Employment and Learning:** The number of outstanding staff grievances in each the six Further Education Colleges and their category is detailed in the table below:

College	No. of Outstanding Staff Grievances	Category
BMC	21	Formal
NRC	6	Formal
NWRC	2	Formal
SERC	2	Formal
SRC	4	Formal
SWC	0	N/A
<b>Total</b>	<b>35</b>	

Further Education colleges are employing authorities in their own right. Each College operates their own staff grievance procedures, which are agreed in conjunction with the relevant trade unions. The Department has no remit in this process.

### Further Education Colleges

**Miss M McIlveen** asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail the drop-out and retention rates for students at each of the Further Education Colleges in each of the last five years. (AQW 66/10)

**Minister for Employment and Learning:** Drop out and retention rates at Northern Ireland Further Education Colleges are only available on an 'academic year' basis and therefore relate only to student enrolments on the final year of their course (approximately 70% of all enrolments). These data are listed below in the format of the current six college model for the period 2003/04 to 2007/08 (latest available data).

Academic year		Belfast Metropolitan	Northern Regional	South Eastern Regional	Southern Regional	South West	North West Regional	Total
2003/04	Drop Out Rate	12%	13%	7%	8%	8%	10%	10%
	Retention Rate	88%	87%	93%	92%	92%	90%	90%
2004/05	Drop Out Rate	12%	11%	10%	10%	12%	11%	11%
	Retention Rate	88%	89%	90%	90%	88%	89%	89%
2005/06	Drop Out Rate	17%	13%	15%	13%	12%	12%	14%
	Retention Rate	83%	87%	85%	87%	88%	88%	86%
2006/07	Drop Out Rate	12%	15%	13%	8%	12%	13%	12%
	Retention Rate	88%	85%	87%	92%	88%	87%	88%
2007/08	Drop Out Rate	13%	14%	12%	7%	12%	11%	12%
	Retention Rate	87%	86%	88%	93%	88%	89%	88%

**Source:** Further Education Leavers Survey.

## Vulnerable Students

**Lord Morrow** asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what emotional support services are in place in colleges and universities for vulnerable students, particularly those who are away from home for the first time. (AQW 132/10)

**Minister for Employment and Learning:** All Higher Education Institutions and Further Education Colleges in Northern Ireland provide a range of support services for vulnerable students, details of which are attached at Annex A.

### Annex A

#### The University of Ulster

The University of Ulster has a system in place that supports all vulnerable students. This system operates both informally, via the Students' Union, and more formally, through the professional counselling and health services delivered by Student Support. The Counselling Service offers regular "drop in" sessions and, for students with existing mental health issues, the Register of Support Providers arranges mentoring and study support. The University also has a Peer Mentoring system for students with mental health concerns.

The University's Student Support Outreach Adviser will, prior to the start of the academic year, make contact with new students coming from a background of care for whom the transition to a new environment may be particularly difficult.

For those students experiencing financial difficulties, due to delayed loan or grant payments, emergency payments are available from the Student Funding Advisor until a more detailed assessment of need can be made.

The University of Ulster also employs Resident Assistants who are more experienced students that are able to advise and assist with transitional concerns. In addition, all students participate in induction activities, including information on support services. Information is also available on the Student Support website, and on posters and printed materials throughout the University.

#### Queen's University Belfast

Queen's University's Welcome Week helps students familiarise themselves with the requirements of their chosen degree and the comprehensive range of services and facilities available within the University. The week includes Academic induction programmes and a range of social and practical events run by the University's central support services.

Each student has a Personal Tutor with whom they meet during their first week at the University. The Personal Tutor will act as a point of contact on all issues of concern, academic or personal, and will assist the student in accessing the full range of University support services.

The support services are based in the Student Guidance Centre. These include the following:

- The Counselling Service offers students access to professionally accredited counsellors.
- Disability Services staff liaise with all new students who have declared a disability and, together with the student, will determine non-medical support requirements.
- The Learning Development Service offers workshops and one-to-one consultations on a range of academic support areas, including stress management.
- A Careers, Employability and Skills Service.

Under the University's Student Care Protocol, students identified as having emotional support needs, and whose academic progression or attainment could be at risk, are flagged to the University's central support services and appropriate interventions made.

The University Accommodation Service employs three resident qualified Community Youth Workers who lead a team of 12 Residential Assistants and work with University staff to help new students integrate into University accommodation.

The Union, through its Advice Centre and its team of elected student officers, provides a Monday to Friday and out-of-hours information and advice service, covering issues such as academic problems, accommodation issues, debt management and general welfare matters. In addition, the Union administers a Hardship Fund that provides support for students in extreme financial difficulty.

The University's Students' Care Review Group meets on a regular basis to discuss issues relating to vulnerable students, and to assess and provide recommendations regarding support levels. The Students' Union may make appropriate referral to other support services, both within and external to the University, with the specific permission of the student.

### **St. Mary's University College**

St. Mary's University College provides an Induction Programme, which is revisited twice during the academic year. College counseling is also available in addition to a ten person Student Support Team. All students have a Personal Development Tutor and are encouraged to use the pastoral support services available in the College.

### **Stranmillis University College**

Stranmillis University College provides an on campus counselling service in addition to Queen's University's counselling service. Students are also encouraged to approach Hall Wardens, their Advisor of Studies, the Student Union President and the campus Nurse with any concerns. The University holds Communication Workshops, which offer peer guidance and support for students experiencing difficulties, and Exam Workshops designed to minimise stress. Financial assistance is also provided in the form of student bursaries.

Stranmillis University College maintains a Student at Risk Register which supports identified students. This confidential database is a joint project between the Stranmillis Counselling Service and the Occupational Health Department. The Advisor of Studies and the University's Head of Departments make recommendations to support any health needs. Support from the medical officer is provided during examinations to accommodate any students with difficult domestic situations.

### **Further Education (FE) Colleges**

#### **24/7 Carecall counselling service**

Carecall provides a 24/7 counselling service for all FE students and staff. Some colleges have also employed College Health and Welfare Officers to provide a counselling service.

#### **Staff and Student training sessions**

Staff training awareness are held regularly to encourage staff to remain alert to student needs e.g. to be aware of students who become unusually quiet or behave differently. Carecall also offer training sessions for staff. A series of student training awareness sessions are completed through the college induction process.

#### **Student Charter**

Each FE College has a Student Charter outlining information and facilities which are available for students including support and counselling services.

#### **Student Activities Focussed events**

FE Colleges hold regular student focused events. Examples include drug and alcohol awareness and healthy eating seminars.

- **Health Promotion Events**

Colleges organise health days through the Health Promotion Agency. This involves bringing in the local pharmacist and other organisations such as Breakthrough, Menssana and NUS and the Royal College of Nursing to raise issues including alcohol & drugs awareness.

- **Aware Defeat Depression – Sessions**

The Southern Regional College (SRC) (Newry Campus) has in collaboration with Aware Defeat Depression held a number of session for students focusing on mental health issues.

- **Choices DVD – Southern Regional College**

Southern Regional College (SRC) has produced a DVD to raise awareness in relation to the following topics:

- Disability
- Drug and Alcohol Abuse
- Domestic Violence
- Emerging Communities
- Diversity
- Street Violence

### Anti Harassment Policy for Students

An Anti Harassment policy is agreed by each individual college governing body to help prevent harassment and to help resolve any problems.

### Careers Advice

Careers Officers are available at each of the six regional FE Colleges to provide information and support for students.

### Disability Policy for Students

A disability policy is agreed by each individual College governing body to reflect local procedures and practices, in line with the Special Educational Needs and Disability (Northern Ireland) Order (SENDO).

### Health Promoting College

The Southern Regional College (SRC) and the South West College (SWC) are presently involved with the Southern Health & Social Care Trust and the Western Health & Social Care Trust in developing a "Health Promoting College". This will be a three year project working in partnership to promote ongoing improvement and development of physical and emotional health of which suicide risk will be a significant component. This is a pilot programme which will, if successful, be rolled out to all across all six regional FE Colleges in due course.

## Private Consultancy Firms and Events Organisers

**Mr P McGlone** asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how much has been spent by his Department in each of the last five years on (i) private consultancy firms; and (ii) events organisers.

(AQW 151/10)

**Minister for Employment and Learning:** The amount that the Department has spent on external consultancy in the past five years is contained in the table below. The Department adheres to DFP guidance on professional services, which defines external consultancy expenditure and best practice in relation to the engagement of consultants.

Year	2004/5 £m	2005/6 £m	2006/7 £m	2007/8 £m	2008/9 £m
Amount	£0.42	£0.62	£0.38	£0.6	£0.74

The amount the Department has spent on event organisers in the past five years is contained in the table below. The Department procures event organisers in association with the relevant branch and the Central Procurement Directorate – CPD within DFP.

Year	2004/5	2005/6	2006/7	2007/8	2008/9
Amount	£16750.00	£16750.00	£29790.00	£22723.00	£35972.00

## Night Courses in the Upper Bann Area

**Mr S Moutray** asked the Minister for Employment and Learning the number of people who enrolled in night courses in the Upper Bann area (i) in total; and (ii) by campus, in each of the last five years. (AQW 190/10)

**Minister for Employment and Learning:** The table below shows the number of enrolments on evening courses at Upper Bann Institute from 2002/03 to 2006/07. Upper Bann Institute became part of the Southern Regional College in August 2007. The latest enrolment data available is for academic year 2007/08, however this cannot be broken down into the pre-merger college format. In addition, campus breakdown is not available.

Academic year	Enrolments on evening courses
2002/03	7,448
2003/04	6,692

Academic year	Enrolments on evening courses
2004/05	6,829
2005/06	5,438
2006/07	4,655

Source: Further Education Statistical Record

### Apprenticeships in the Upper Bann Area

**Mr S Moutray** asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how many people have been enrolled in apprenticeships in the Upper Bann area in each of the last five years. (AQW 191/10)

**Minister for Employment and Learning:** The Department has supported 2663 apprentices in the Upper Bann area between March 2004 and March 2009. The data in Annex A lists numbers of apprentices in each of the last five years whose given address is within the Upper Bann area. Although these apprentices reside within the Upper Bann area, they may or may not have enrolled with Training Providers in the Upper Bann area and may or may not be employed by companies in the Upper Bann area. The Department is not in a position to break enrolments down by constituency.

#### ANNEX A

##### NUMBER OF ENROLMENTS FOR APPRENTICESHIPS PROGRAMMES IN THE UPPER BANN AREA SEPTEMBER 2004 – SEPTEMBER 2009

March 2004 – March 2005	375
March 2005 – March 2006	436
March 2006 – March 2007	413
March 2007 – March 2008	655
March 2008 – March 2009	784

### Drug and Alcohol Issues

**Lord Morrow** asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what measures are being taken to highlight drug and alcohol issues for higher education students. (AQW 235/10)

**Minister for Employment and Learning:** All Higher Education Institutions and Further Education Colleges have in place measures to highlight drug and alcohol issues for students.

The Department issued a policy circular to all Further Education (FE) Colleges in 2001, which sets out guidelines to enable colleges to put in place policies on a number of health issues, including drugs and substance abuse. An additional guidance circular was issued by the Department of Education in 2005, which also applied to the FE sector.

**Annex A details the measures in place.**

#### Annex A

##### Higher Education Institutions

##### University of Ulster

The University of Ulster's Students' Union runs a number of campaigns each year related to drug and alcohol issues. This academic year there will be a campaign on the dangers of Binge Drinking. The dangers of alcohol and drug abuse are included in some of the other campaigns, such as Love Thy Neighbour and Mind Your Head.

Student Support offers support and advice to students regarding alcohol and drugs. Health, counselling and other Student Support Services work with internal and external agencies to raise awareness of problems associated with alcohol and drug misuse and the mental health of students.

The following measures are currently in place:

- A full time University Counselling Service is available with professional counsellors. This includes an Addictions Counsellor and a Mental Health Advisor. A referral system is also in place for students to receive specialist alcohol counselling.
- The Student Support Health Service provide Health Promotion Days for students which include advice, support and help for students experiencing alcohol and drug related problems. These days are facilitated by nursing staff.
- The “Student Hints and Tips Group” works across disciplines to raise awareness and support for students on a range of matters and issues throughout the year. A theme of “Alcohol Management” is currently in progress.
- A booklet, designed to give support and advice about alcohol and drinking behaviour, is available in the University.
- Links with local, and regional, external agencies which offer additional specialist support in the community. Referrals and advice are sought from the local Addiction Service.
- The University’s Community Liaison Officer works closely with students in private accommodation, with landlords and with community groups to educate and respond to substance related issues.

### **St. Mary’s University College**

Students at the College are advised during its Induction Programme about the use of drugs and alcohol. Throughout the year, and in co-operation with the Students’ Union, poster campaigns are organised to alert students to the dangers of drug and alcohol abuse. In addition, a “Take Care of Your Health Day” is organised annually to alert students to the dangers of drugs and alcohol. The College Counsellor is available to students experiencing various difficulties, including alcohol and drugs.

### **Stranmillis University College**

Prior to enrolment at Stranmillis University College, a health questionnaire, including any history of addiction, is completed by each Year 1 student and sent to the Occupational Health Department at Stranmillis University College, where the answers are screened by the Nurse. In the event of a student answering yes to any of the questions, an appointment is made with the Nurse. Following this appointment, the student may then be referred to an Occupational Health Physician, their GP, the University Counsellor or an appropriate outside agency.

All Year 1 students visit the Student Support Centre where they are given an overview of the confidential services available and receive a list of emergency health and councillor services, 24hr telephone numbers and email address for health agencies in Northern Ireland. In addition, health promotion literature is displayed and available within the Student Support Centre, including details of support services for Drug and alcohol dependency.

### **Queen’s University Belfast**

As part of their induction to Queen’s, students are made aware of the range of University professional support services including: Counselling; Student Welfare; the University Health Centre; and the Students’ Union Advice Centre, where advice and support on general welfare issues, including substance and alcohol abuse, is provided.

Students living in Queen’s accommodation also have access to three resident Community Youth Workers, trained to assist students with emotional or lifestyle problems and help them to access professional support services.

Every student has a Personal Tutor with whom they meet during their first week at the University. The Personal Tutor acts as a point of contact for the student throughout their time at Queen’s. Each Personal Tutor is trained to identify students who may be at risk and will assist the student in accessing the full range of University professional support services. Support service staff work closely with academic colleagues to ensure that students are able to progress with their academic studies.

The University’s drugs and alcohol policy advises students of the consequences of their misuse and promotes support for students in difficulty. As part of Queen’s ‘Student Mental Health Policy’, a University awareness-raising campaign will highlight factors which contribute to mental wellbeing and will include a mental health awareness week on campus. The Student Mental Health Policy will dovetail with the drug and alcohol policy in promoting student wellbeing.

At the beginning of each academic year, the Vice-Chancellor and the President of the Students' Union both address all First Year students and make it clear that anti-social behaviour, including that resulting from alcohol consumption, will not be tolerated by the University and is a disciplinary matter.

### **Further Education (FE) Colleges**

#### **Student Activities Focussed events**

FE Colleges hold regular student focused events. Examples include drug and alcohol awareness and healthy eating seminars.

#### **Health Promotion Events**

FE Colleges organise a number of 'health days' through the Health Promotion Agency. This involves bringing in the local pharmacist and other organisations such as Breakthrough, Menssana and NUS and the Royal College of Nursing to raise issues including alcohol & drugs awareness.

## **Student Loans**

**Mr G Robinson** asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how many students are, or may be, in financial crisis due to difficulties with obtaining their student loans. (AQW 537/10)

**Minister for Employment and Learning:** My Department is not aware of any Northern Ireland domiciled students being affected by the delays in payments by the Student Loans Company that have been recently reported in the media, and is not, therefore, aware of any students in financial crisis due to difficulties in obtaining their student loan.

It is my understanding that these delays are primarily the result of a change in the arrangements for processing applications for new English domiciled students and an increase in applications from English domiciled students. There has been no change in arrangements for Northern Ireland domiciled students. Applications will continue to be processed by the Education and Library Boards, with payments made by the Student Loans Company.

Rather than engage with specific political parties, my Department liaises closely with the other United Kingdom administrations on a wide range of student finance issues and is always represented at Student Finance Quadrilateral (Devolved Administrations) meetings, which are also attended by student finance colleagues from England, Scotland and Wales. In addition, there is regular liaison between my Department, the Education and Library Boards and the Student Loans Company to ensure that Northern Ireland domiciled students receive an effective service. As Minister, I engage with a wide range of interested parties on this and other issues.

## **Student Loans**

**Mr G Robinson** asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what action he intends to take, unilaterally and in conjunction with his Conservative political partners in England, Scotland and Wales, to ensure that the difficulties students have faced obtaining their student loans do not arise in future years. (AQW 538/10)

**Minister for Employment and Learning:** My Department is not aware of any Northern Ireland domiciled students being affected by the delays in payments by the Student Loans Company that have been recently reported in the media, and is not, therefore, aware of any students in financial crisis due to difficulties in obtaining their student loan.

It is my understanding that these delays are primarily the result of a change in the arrangements for processing applications for new English domiciled students and an increase in applications from English domiciled students. There has been no change in arrangements for Northern Ireland domiciled students. Applications will continue to be processed by the Education and Library Boards, with payments made by the Student Loans Company.

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## Student Loans

**Mr T Burns** asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail the approximate numbers of higher education students in Northern Ireland who have not received their student loans in time for the start of the academic year; and for her assessment on the Student Loans Company's inability to process all loans in time this year. (AQW 567/10)

**Minister for Employment and Learning:** My Department is not aware of any Northern Ireland domiciled students being affected by the delays in payments by the Student Loans Company that have been recently reported in the media.

It is my understanding that these delays are primarily the result of a change in the arrangements for processing applications for new English domiciled students and an increase in applications from English domiciled students. There has been no change in arrangements for Northern Ireland domiciled students. Applications will continue to be processed by the Education and Library Boards, with payments made by the Student Loans Company.

Whilst a number of Northern Ireland domiciled students have yet to receive payment from the Student Loans Company, this is due to a variety of legitimate reasons. These include instances where a student's application has not yet been approved, for example, as a result of insufficient information provided by the student; where the student's application was not received on time; where the student's course has not yet commenced or where a Higher Education Institution has not yet confirmed a student's attendance.

## DEPARTMENT OF ENTERPRISE, TRADE AND INVESTMENT

### Declared Bankruptcies and Individual Voluntary Arrangements in the Over 65 Age Category

**Mr T Burns** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the number of (i) declared bankruptcies; and (ii) individual voluntary arrangements in the over 65 age category, in each of the last five years. (AQW 114/10)

**Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (Mrs A Foster):**

- (i) It is not mandatory for those made bankrupt to provide details regarding their age but when it is provided it is recorded by DETI's Insolvency Service. Based on the limited information available, it is estimated that in the most recent year ending 31 March 2009 3.6% of declared bankrupts (1155) were over 65 years. Insufficient data is available from previous years to make any meaningful comparisons
- (ii) Below is a table showing the number of individual voluntary arrangements (IVAs) for the over 65 age category for the last three financial years. Information for years ending 31 March 2005 and 31 March 2006 is unavailable<sup>1</sup>.

Year ending	Total number of IVAs	IVAs where DOB recorded	Age 65 and over	Percentage
31 March 2007	724	589	14	2.9%
31 March 2008	436	407	10	2.5%
31 March 2009	606	599	13	2.2%

<sup>1</sup> With the coming into operation of the Insolvency Service (NI) Order 2005 on 27 March 2006, insolvency practitioners are required when registering an Individual Voluntary Arrangement, if possible, to supply a date of birth for the debtor. Because this provision came into operation at the end of March 2006, information for years ending 31 March 2005 and 31 March 2006 is unavailable.

## Foreign Direct Investment

**Mr S Moutray** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment the estimated total amount of foreign direct investment in (i) Upper Bann, (ii) Banbridge District Council; and (iii) Craigavon Borough Council, in each of the last five years. (AQW 193/10)

**Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment:** Tables (i), (ii) and (iii) provide information on the amount of foreign direct investment offered support by Invest NI within the Upper Bann Parliamentary Constituency Area (PCA) and Banbridge and Craigavon District Council Areas (DCA) respectively during the five-year period 2004/05 to 2008/09.

This represents the estimated total cost of these projects to Invest NI's externally-owned clients. The number of projects and the associated assistance offered by Invest NI is also included. Projects have been split into those where the main focus is on employment creation and those that are innovation based, including activities such as training, research and development, trade development and technology and process development.

**(I) - INVEST NI ASSISTANCE OFFERED TO EXTERNALLY-OWNED CLIENTS IN UPPER BANN PCA (2004/05 - 2008/09)**

Type of Assistance	Year	No of Offers	Total Assistance £m	Total Planned Investment £m
Employment Related	2004/05	5	6.05	35.95
	2005/06	1	0.14	2.00
	2006/07	1	0.03	0.17
	2007/08	1	0.03	0.25
	2008/09			
	<b>Total</b>		<b>8</b>	<b>6.26</b>
Innovation	2004/05	21	0.12	0.24
	2005/06	15	0.89	3.26
	2006/07	10	0.26	0.52
	2007/08	34	0.64	1.96
	2008/09	18	0.92	3.13
	<b>Total</b>		<b>98</b>	<b>2.82</b>
Total	2004/05	26	6.17	36.19
	2005/06	16	1.03	5.25
	2006/07	11	0.30	0.69
	2007/08	35	0.67	2.20
	2008/09	18	0.92	3.13
	<b>Total</b>		<b>106</b>	<b>9.08</b>

**(II) - INVEST NI ASSISTANCE OFFERED TO EXTERNALLY-OWNED CLIENTS IN BANBRIDGE DCA (2004/05 - 2008/09)**

Type of Assistance	Year	No of Offers	Total Assistance £m	Total Planned Investment £m
Employment Related	2004/05	1	0.49	2.89
	2005/06			
	2006/07			
	2007/08			
	2008/09			
	<b>Total</b>		<b>1</b>	<b>0.49</b>

Type of Assistance	Year	No of Offers	Total Assistance £m	Total Planned Investment £m
Innovation	2004/05			
	2005/06			
	2006/07	1	0.00	0.00
	2007/08	6	0.16	0.43
	2008/09	3	0.29	0.78
	<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>0.45</b>	<b>1.21</b>
Total	2004/05	1	0.49	2.89
	2005/06			
	2006/07	1	0.00	0.00
	2007/08	6	0.16	0.43
	2008/09	3	0.29	0.78
	<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>0.94</b>	<b>4.10</b>

## (III) - INVEST NI ASSISTANCE OFFERED TO EXTERNALLY-OWNED CLIENTS IN CRAIGAVON DCA (2004/05 - 2008/09)

Type of Assistance	Year	No of Offers	Total Assistance £m	Total Planned Investment £m
Employment Related	2004/05	4	5.56	33.06
	2005/06	1	0.14	2.00
	2006/07	1	0.03	0.17
	2007/08	1	0.03	0.25
	2008/09			
	<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>5.77</b>	<b>35.47</b>
Innovation	2004/05	21	0.12	0.24
	2005/06	15	0.89	3.26
	2006/07	9	0.26	0.51
	2007/08	28	0.48	1.53
	2008/09	15	0.63	2.35
	<b>Total</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>2.37</b>	<b>7.89</b>
Total	2004/05	25	5.68	33.30
	2005/06	16	1.03	5.25
	2006/07	10	0.29	0.68
	2007/08	29	0.51	1.77
	2008/09	15	0.63	2.35
	<b>Total</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>8.14</b>	<b>43.36</b>

**Notes:**

1. Table totals may not add due to rounding
2. Planned investment includes assistance offered.
3. Total offer locations in geographic tables exceed total number of offers, as some projects are located in more than one area.
4. Some of the assistance offered may not be paid if projects are not fully delivered by the client.

## New IT Systems

**Mr S Hamilton** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, to detail (i) all new IT systems that were installed within her Department; (ii) the initial budget; (iii) the actual cost; (iv) the estimated start date; and (v) the actual start date, in the last five years. (AQW 218/10)

**Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment:** In the past 5 years there have been 4 Information and Communication Technology systems implemented in DETI. The summary details (excluding staff costs) are as follows:

ICT System	Initial Budget Cost (£,000)	Actual Start Date (£,000)	Planned Start Date	Actual
Insolvency Service Case Mgt	1,041	1,068	30 Apr '06	30 Oct '06
HSENI Knowledge Mgt	335	250	01 Nov '05	01 Apr '06
Companies Registry	800	700	01 Nov '03	01 Nov '04
Emergency Fuel Plan	35	31	31 Mar '08	31 Mar '08

## Eco-Business Advice and Job Creation

**Mr P McGlone** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what information has been made available to the public in relation to Eco-Business advice and job creation, particularly via the NI Direct website (AQW 240/10)

**Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment:** Invest NI is committed to improving the competitiveness, productivity and sustainability of NI business by encouraging more efficient use of resources and improved environmental performance. As a part of this remit, Invest NI funds three UK wide Programmes – Envirowise, National Industrial Symbiosis Programme (NISP) and The Carbon Trust. A fundamental aspect of these programmes is provision of best practice guidance on a range of topics, including sustainable energy, clean technologies, waste minimisation and waste management. The programmes offer a number of information and advisory functions to a wide business audience including dedicated helplines, websites, free literature, technical seminars, events and training provision.

NI Direct website is targeted at the private citizen and provides a link to nibusinessinfo (nibusinessinfo.co.uk/) which is the website that has been developed and delivered by Invest NI to be the key online delivery mechanism for business information. The site receives over 20,000 visits per month. Nibusinessinfo has a section dedicated to 'Environment & Efficiency' guidance which comprises nearly 60 guides and tools with topics ranging from best practice in environmental compliance to new business innovation, as well as signposts to government support.

Invest NI publicises local environmental business events on nibusinessinfo.co.uk/ through the Events and Business News sections and also on the events calendar on investni.com/.

Invest NI is also actively engaged in promoting and raising awareness of the opportunities that are rapidly emerging from the global market for renewable energy technology amongst local businesses.

Invest NI is facilitating collaboration between companies which share a common interest in, for example wind energy, bio-energy or marine energy, to ensure that opportunities to diversify from more traditional engineering activities into the renewables market are identified and exploited where possible.

A series of five DVDs to demonstrate NI capabilities in the renewable energy sector was launched in May 2009:

- Sustainable Energy - Marine
- Sustainable Energy - Low Carbon Technologies,
- Sustainable Energy - Bio-energy
- Sustainable Energy - Wind - Investment Potential
- Sustainable Energy - Wind Energy.

These videos have been placed on YouTube at [www.youtube.com/investnirenewables](http://www.youtube.com/investnirenewables) to be available to a wider audience.

An International Energy and Environmental Conference, to be held at the Waterfront Hall, Belfast on 14th October 2009, will provide delegates with access to present and future technologies, eco-business opportunities, research and development programmes and energy and environmental business supply chains. Information on local, national and international collaboration for the purpose of developing new eco-business opportunities will be debated.

Invest NI also provides a forum for companies and entrepreneurs that are planning to invest in energy related technologies. The Energy Research Group ensures that Northern Ireland businesses receive ongoing support and up-to-date guidance to help fast-track the development of the latest energy technologies.

### Apple Growers

**Mr G Savage** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what assistance her Department (i) has given to date; and (ii) continues to give to apple growers to help them find new markets for their products. (AQW 284/10)

**Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment:** Invest NI has had and will continue to have significant engagement with apple processors to assist them in finding new markets for their products. Over the past three years, five companies have participated in 75 specialist 'Meet the Buyer' events organised by Invest NI. Some of these processors have also exhibited/attended major sectoral trade shows such as the International Food Exhibition (IFE) in London and CATEX in Dublin.

In addition, through Invest NI's Food Sector Marketing Advisors, over £200,000 first year sales were secured for three clients engaged in apple processing to 11 customers outside Northern Ireland. Given the timing of this business it is estimated that this could represent in excess of £500,000 cumulative sales.

### Telephone Debt Advisory Services

**Mr M Durkan** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, pursuant to AQW 8216/09, for an update on the delivery of telephone debt advisory services. (AQW 319/10)

**Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment:** The free to use, confidential telephone debt advice service for Northern Ireland, Advice4debtNI went live on 1 September 2009. The associated website, [www.advice4debtni.com](http://www.advice4debtni.com) is now also operational.

Advice4debtNI representatives have met with a number of key stakeholders in Northern Ireland's advice network to discuss potential cross working opportunities and suitable referral protocols.

There has also been widespread distribution of posters and leaflets throughout Northern Ireland promoting the new service and its free phone number, 0800 917 4607.

### Telephone Debt Advisory Services

**Mr M Durkan** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how many staff are employed through the Northern Ireland telephone debt advisory services contract, broken down by location. (AQW 320/10)

**Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment:** In April 2009, my Department awarded a 2 year contract to A4e to provide a telephone debt advice service for Northern Ireland.

The free to use, confidential telephone helpline, advice4debtNI went live on 1 September 2009 and employs four staff – 2 debt advisors, a senior debt advisor and a marketing co-ordinator.

All 4 members of staff are based in Belfast.

In addition, 2 senior A4e staff, the Northern Ireland Development Director and the Contract Manager, oversee the management and delivery of the contract on a part time basis.

## Inward Investment in Upper Bann

**Mr S Moutray** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail (i) the amount of inward investment in Upper Bann; and (ii) the number of jobs created as a result, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 359/10)

**Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment:** Table 1 addresses both points (i) and (ii) above. It provides information on the amount of foreign direct investment offered support by Invest NI within the Upper Bann Parliamentary Constituency Area (PCA) and the number of jobs promoted or safeguarded as a result during the five-year period 2004/05 to 2008/09. The information in Table 1 represents the estimated total cost of these projects to Invest NI's externally-owned clients and the number of jobs that the projects expect to create or safeguard. The number of projects and the associated assistance offered by Invest NI is also included.

Projects have been split into those where the main focus is on employment creation and those that are innovation based, including activities such as training, research and development, trade development and technology and process development.

**TABLE 1 - INVEST NI ASSISTANCE OFFERED TO EXTERNALLY-OWNED CLIENTS IN UPPER BANN PCA & JOBS PROMOTED OR SAFEGUARDED (2004/05 - 2008/09)**

Type Of Assistance	Year	No of Offers	Total Assistance £m	Total Planned Investment £m	New Jobs	Safe Jobs
Employment Related	2004/05	5	6.05	35.95	13	616
	2005/06	1	0.14	2.00	49	0
	2006/07	1	0.03	0.17	0	5
	2007/08	1	0.03	0.25	5	0
	2008/09					
	<b>Total</b>		<b>8</b>	<b>6.26</b>	<b>38.36</b>	<b>67</b>
Innovation	2004/05	21	0.12	0.24		
	2005/06	15	0.89	3.26		
	2006/07	10	0.26	0.52		
	2007/08	34	0.64	1.96		
	2008/09	18	0.92	3.13		
	<b>Total</b>		<b>98</b>	<b>2.82</b>	<b>9.10</b>	
Total	2004/05	26	6.17	36.19	13	616
	2005/06	16	1.03	5.25	49	0
	2006/07	11	0.30	0.69	0	5
	2007/08	35	0.67	2.20	5	0
	2008/09	18	0.92	3.13		
	<b>Total</b>		<b>106</b>	<b>9.08</b>	<b>47.46</b>	<b>67</b>

**Notes:**

5. Table totals may not add due to rounding.
6. Planned investment includes assistance offered.
7. Total offer locations in geographic tables exceed total number of offers, as some projects are located in more than one area.
8. Some of the assistance offered may not be paid if projects are not fully delivered by the client.
9. New Jobs represent the number of jobs expected to be created by the project.
10. Safe Jobs represent the number jobs that would have been lost if the project was not supported.

## Credit Unions

**Mr P Butler** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what progress she has made to date, to allow Credit Unions in Northern Ireland to offer the same range of financial services and products as their counterparts in Britain and the Republic of Ireland. (AQW 574/10)

**Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment:** One of the recommendations included in the Committee for Enterprise, Trade and Investment's report of its inquiry into the Role and Potential of Credit Unions in Northern Ireland was that NI credit unions be permitted to expand their range of services to include, at the very least, those services which credit unions in Great Britain can offer currently. In my response to the report, I endorsed this recommendation.

To enable credit unions in Northern Ireland which wish to expand their current range of services, new legislation will require to be enacted. To progress this matter, along with other recommendations contained in the Committee's Report, my Department has established a team to take forward the legislative changes needed to facilitate this expansion of services.

This requires working closely with Her Majesty's Treasury (HMT) which has also completed a separate Review of the Legislative Framework for Credit Unions and Industrial and Provident Societies in Northern Ireland. The input of the Financial Services Authority (FSA) will also be crucial to the process. A joint project team consisting of HMT, DETI and FSA officials has been established to take forward the legislative and non-legislative recommendations of both Reports. These discussions have proved a useful starting point. Further meetings are planned.

My Department is committed to working to implement the recommendations of the Committee and will take all steps to ensure that this is completed as soon as practically possible. A key next step will be to consult in Northern Ireland and in GB on the detail of the proposals for the reform of the regulatory framework for Northern Ireland credit unions and I am hopeful that this will happen by the end of the year.

## Assistance to Small Local Businesses

**Mr P McGlone** asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what measures have been taken to provide assistance to small, local businesses and shops during the current economic downturn. (AQW 631/10)

**Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment:** In the last twelve months, my Department has introduced a number of initiatives to help small businesses survive the current economic downturn and help them prepare for recovery. Invest NI organised a series of 'credit crunch' seminars throughout Northern Ireland which offered advice to client companies on how to navigate their way through the downturn and these were adapted for joint local council, Enterprise NI and Enterprise Agency events, with a focus specifically on non Invest NI businesses of all sizes.

The agency also has programmes designed to assist all Northern Ireland businesses with energy and environmental efficiency support and access to comprehensive online business advice and support through [www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk](http://www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk) which includes a "Beat the Credit Crunch" section.

In January 2009, the UK Government introduced the Enterprise Finance Guarantee (EFG), which provides a 75% government guarantee on Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) loans up to £1 million which can be used to convert an overdraft into a loan. Most sectors are eligible for EFG, providing they meet the banks' own lending criteria. I have met all the main Northern Ireland banks to underline the importance I attach to the active promotion of EFG.

DETI has produced an overview guide to the various support schemes which have been introduced at European, UK and local level to help businesses through the current economic downturn. This can be accessed on the DETI website.

Small businesses are benefitting from a 'prompt payment' policy introduced across all NI departments which ensures more efficient cash-flow to businesses and from April 2010 small businesses will also be able to take advantage of the small business rate relief scheme which is estimated will benefit some 16,000 businesses in Northern Ireland.

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**DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT****Clamping of Vehicles**

**Mr T Lunn** asked the Minister of the Environment what policy exists with, regards to the clamping of vehicles left untaxed in the street, when the owners of those vehicles are in care or in hospital. (AQW 141/10)

**Minister of the Environment (Mr E Poots):** Vehicle Licensing is an Excepted Matter, which is the responsibility of the Secretary of State for Transport. The arrangement for the removal and disposal of untaxed vehicles and associated policy is administered by the Driver & Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) Swansea. I have referred your question to DVLA and officials in that Agency have agreed to respond directly to you on this matter.

**Planning Application Z/2008/0489/F**

**Mrs N Long** asked the Minister of the Environment whether the landscape planting scheme which formed part of Planning Application Z/2008/0489/F was considered in the context of providing suitable replacement planting for the Tree Preservation Order trees which were removed from the site at 135 Shandon Park, Belfast. (AQW 143/10)

**Minister of the Environment:** The landscape planting plan showed 5 semi-mature trees to replace the 4 TPO protected trees that had been removed. These were considered to be suitable replacements and were also considered acceptable as part of the landscape planting plan.

**Planning Application Z/2008/0489/F**

**Mrs N Long** asked the Minister of the Environment whether the landscape planting scheme which formed part of Planning Application Z/2008/0489/F was (i) considered in the context of the site at the time it was determined, with the Tree Preservation Order trees already removed from the site at 135 Shandon Park, Belfast; or (ii) considered in the context in which the application was originally submitted with the Tree Preservation Order trees still in situ. (AQW 147/10)

**Minister of the Environment:** The drawings originally submitted with the planning application showed the 4 Tree Preservation Order protected trees still in situ. Planning Service subsequently became aware that these trees had been removed. An amended tree survey drawing was then submitted showing the 5 replacement trees. Planning Service determined the application in the knowledge that the TPO trees had been removed and on the basis of the amended landscape planting plan.

**Planning Application Z/2008/0489/F**

**Mrs N Long** asked the Minister of the Environment for his assessment as to whether the landscape plans, which formed part of Planning Application Z/2008/0489/F, would have been acceptable to Landscape Branch in the context of the mature trees which were subject to Tree Preservation Orders having been still in situ. (AQW 148/10)

**Minister of the Environment:** Landscape Branch was consulted on the amended landscape planting plan. In their reply of 7 October 2008 they noted that the building footprints had been reduced and redesigned and that some TPO trees had been removed. They confirmed that they had no objection in principle to the proposed development. I am unable to speculate as to whether their comments would have been any different had the TPO trees still be in situ.

### Cost of Legal Advice

**Mr R Beggs** asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to AQO 3070/09, to detail the number of hours and the estimated cost of legal advice sought from the Departmental Solicitor, regarding legal advice provided to the previous Minister, because of his potential or actual conflict of interest as a local Councillor. (AQW 173/10)

**Minister of the Environment:** As my predecessor advised, the Planning Service Management Board sought legal advice in relation to the application for the Aurora Building regarding the procedural handling of the application post Council consultation.

The Department did not at any time seek legal advice in relation to the previous Minister because of potential or actual conflict of interest as a local Councillor.

### Planning Applications

**Mr M Storey** asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the time taken by each divisional planning office to approve planning applications for the erection of poultry houses, in each of the last three years. (AQW 201/10)

**Minister of the Environment:** The time taken by each Divisional Planning Office to approve planning applications for the erection of poultry houses in each of the last three years is as follows:

Divisional Planning Office	Average Processing Time – Weeks (Number of Applications Processed) 1 April 2006 – 31 March 2009		
	2006/2007	2007/2008	2008/2009
Ballymena	18 (1)	34 (4)	20 (11)
Craigavon	61 (7)	31 (5)	26 (8)
Downpatrick	246 (1)	41 (1)	No applications
Londonderry	21 (2)	No applications	23 (14)
Omagh	35 (12)	26 (6)	20 (21)
Agency	41 (23)	31 (16)	22 (54)

The figure in brackets represents the number of planning applications decided in that year. The application decided in 2006/2007 in Downpatrick Planning Office was an Environmental Impact Assessment development and required the submission of an Environment Statement and involved protracted negotiations with Roads Service over access issues including a number of amendments to the application.

### High Hedges

**Mr M Storey** asked the Minister of the Environment what plans he has to introduce legislation on High Hedges. (AQW 211/10)

**Minister of the Environment:** I fully appreciate the level of concern over nuisance high hedges in Northern Ireland. I have just announced my decision to bring legislative proposals before the Executive and the Assembly. Naturally, I intend to consult publicly on these proposals.

### New IT systems

**Mr S Hamilton** asked the Minister of the Environment to detail (i) all new IT systems that were installed within his Department; (ii) the initial budget; (iii) the actual cost; (iv) the estimated start date; and (v) the actual start date, in the last five years. (AQW 220/10)

**Minister of the Environment:** My Department has installed only one IT System costing over £100,000 within the last 5 years. Project details are given below.

Project Name	Initial Budget	Actual Cost	Estimated start date	Actual Start date
Taxi Licensing Information System	£465,778	£463,629	June 2008	October 2008

### Rights of Access to Farm Land

**Mr A Ross** asked the Minister of the Environment what current legislation allows, in terms of rights of access to farm land for horse riders; and if the Department has any plans to review the current legislation. (AQW 270/10)

**Minister of the Environment:** The common law right of access by horse riders to private land can be established through the general public having unrestricted access, on horseback along a defined route, which has been tolerated by the landowner for a period of time.

The responsibility for asserting such routes falls to District Councils under Article 3 of the Access to the Countryside (Northern Ireland) Order 1983.

I have no plans to amend the current legislation.

### Dangerous Wild Animals Order (Northern Ireland) 2004

**Mr T Burns** asked the Minister of the Environment to detail (i) the total number of current licences for keeping animals which have been granted by his Department under the Dangerous Wild Animals Order (Northern Ireland) 2004; (ii) a breakdown of all dangerous animals held under these licences; and (iii) to state whether these animals are owned by (a) circuses; (b) zoos; (c) private individuals; or (d) held under some other ownership arrangement. (AQW 286/10)

**Minister of the Environment:**

- (i) The Dangerous Wild Animals (Northern Ireland) Order 2004 enables my Department to regulate private individuals in Northern Ireland who keep Dangerous Wild Animals. There are currently 19 licences to possess Dangerous Wild Animals covering 60 animals.
- (ii) The following animals are licensed in Northern Ireland:

Emu	10
Wolf/wolf dogs	8
Ring tailed lemurs (primate)	10
Black and white ruffed lemur (primate)	3
Brown ruffed lemur (primate)	2
Saki monkey (primate)	4
Tamarins	8 (small primate)
Capuchin	5 (small primate)
Tiger	1
Cheetah (Bengal cat/Ocicat cross, the latter being an all domestic breed of cat)	1
Vicugna (camelid)	2
Zebra	2
Dwarf caiman (reptile)	2
Venomous snakes	2 (white lipped viper, western diamondback rattlesnake).

- (iii) All licences apply to private keepers, although one licence holder also runs an 'open farm'. Zoos and circuses are exempted from requiring licences to possess Dangerous Wild Animals under Article 7 of the Order.

### High Hedges

**Mr M McLaughlin** asked the Minister of the Environment what legislative action he intends to take to address the problem of nuisance high hedges. (AQW 305/10)

**Minister of the Environment:** I fully appreciate the level of concern over nuisance high hedges in Northern Ireland. I have just announced my decision to bring legislative proposals before the Executive and the Assembly. Naturally, I intend to consult publicly on these proposals.

### Child and Adolescent Mental Health Unit in Templepatrick

**Mr T Burns** asked the Minister of the Environment if full planning permission has been granted to build a child and adolescent mental health unit in Templepatrick; and for an update on the status of this project. (AQW 327/10)

**Minister of the Environment:** My Department is processing a planning application for full permission for erection of a residential institution for child and adolescent care at 182 Templepatrick Road, Ballyclare. On 7 September 2009 a recommendation of approval was placed before Newtownabbey Council. Another MLA has requested a meeting with me to discuss the application and this will take place as soon as possible. At the Council meeting the Planning Officer agreed that no decision would issue until the request for the meeting was considered.

### High Hedges and Trees

**Mr P Weir** asked the Minister of the Environment the proposed timescale for legislation on high hedges and trees. (AQW 330/10)

**Minister of the Environment:** I fully appreciate the level of concern over nuisance high hedges in Northern Ireland. I have just announced my decision to bring legislative proposals before the Executive and the Assembly. Naturally, I intend to consult publicly on these proposals. Unfortunately I am unable to confirm the timetable at present however, I can assure you that I am fully committed to introducing this legislation at the earliest opportunity.

### Lisburn: City Status

**Mr P Butler** asked the Minister of the Environment (i) for his assessment of the city status of Lisburn in the wake of the proposed local council boundary changes; (ii) what steps his Department will be taking to confer new city status on Lisburn as part of the Review of Public Administration proposals; and (iii) will this require new legislation. (AQW 371/10)

**Minister of the Environment:** My Department is currently developing proposals for legislation, which will enable all five cities in Northern Ireland, to retain their city status following the reorganisation of local government in 2011. The Department will need to consult the relevant councils and you can expect my officials to be in contact with your Council in due course.

### Colin Valley Golf Course

**Mr P Butler** asked the Minister of the Environment, in relation to the economic appraisal on Colin Valley Golf Course (i) when it was completed; (ii) when it was provided to the Department of Finance and Personnel; and (iii) what conclusions and recommendations it contains. (AQW 374/10)

**Minister of the Environment:** A submission was made to the Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP) in December 2008 to determine the feasibility of leasing Colin Valley Golf Course to Colin Glen Trust for 99 years. DFP's response in January 2009 did not rule out the possibility of such a lease, but required the submission of an economic appraisal justifying it. My officials attempted this exercise but were unable to assemble a sufficiently robust case with the information supplied by the Trust. Instead they followed the advice of my predecessor,

Sammy Wilson, and proposed providing a letter assuring potential backers of my Department's intention to replace the existing lease with one renewable on a 25-year cycle.

The completion of an economic appraisal supporting this course of action awaits confirmation from the Trust that the letter sent by my officials has satisfied the Trust's financial backers.

### Red Kites

**Mr J Shannon** asked the Minister of the Environment if any of the Red Kites released in Mid and South Down have been found dead; and whether there has been any monitoring of their numbers. (AQW 388/10)

**Minister of the Environment:** Four red kites have been found dead over the course of the first year of the RSPB re-introduction programme.

All released birds are fitted with radio transmitters which allow them to be tracked and monitored. The radio transmitters fall off after the first season when the birds moult. In addition, all released birds are permanently wing tagged which allows individuals to be identified and their movements recorded.

While the project is still at an early stage, useful data is being collected by the RSPB. Early observations show that the birds tend to stay around the South Down release area although one has travelled as far as County Wicklow. The birds have been observed foraging in fields where they take insects and earthworms.

The Northern Ireland red kites are still juveniles and they are not expected to breed until they are 2-3 years old.

### Magpies

**Mr J Shannon** asked the Minister of the Environment what action he is taking to address the increase in the numbers of magpies; and whether he has held any discussions with the British Association for Shooting and Conservation or Country Side Alliance Ireland to initiate a control scheme. (AQW 389/10)

**Minister of the Environment:** The Breeding Bird Survey, carried out by the British Trust for Ornithology, shows no increase in the numbers of breeding magpies across Northern Ireland during the last survey period 1995-2006.

Magpies are currently listed on the General Licence in the Wildlife (Northern Ireland) Order 1985. This allows authorised persons to take or kill this species for reasons such as 'preventing serious damage to livestock' or 'conserving wild birds'. Control of predators has always been seen as the responsibility of landowners.

My officials have a good working relationship and regular liaison with the British Association for Shooting and Conservation and the Countryside Alliance. To date they have not received any requests from either organisation to consider additional control measures for magpies.

### Infill Sites

**Mr A McQuillan** asked the Minister of the Environment how many infill sites have been passed for (i) Coleraine; (ii) Limavady; (iii) Moyle; (iv) Ballymoney; (v) Magherafelt; and (vi) Ballymena since the introduction of draft PPS21. (AQW 397/10)

**Minister of the Environment:** My Department does not record this level of detail on the current system of electronic retrieval – 20/20. Planning applications for single dwellings in the rural area are categorised as either rural new or rural replacement. A statistical code for a single dwelling in the rural area which represents an infill development is not an available option on the 20/20 computer system. To provide accurate figures for the data requested would require a manual search of all our existing files. This information would not be available in the time specified and would incur disproportionate costs.

### Flooding

**Mr J Shannon** asked the Minister of the Environment if he will be making the £1000 payout available to all households that have been subjected to flooding, and in particular to households in Strangford. (AQW 435/10)

**Minister of the Environment:** The Scheme of Emergency Financial Assistance to District Councils was re-activated on 2 September 2009 following severe flooding in parts of Northern Ireland in the latter part of August 2009. The main purpose of the £1,000 emergency payment afforded to householders is an offer of immediate practical assistance to those who have experienced severe inconvenience, to ensure their homes are made habitable as quickly as possible.

A framework which provided the basis for the 2009/2010 Emergency Financial Assistance Scheme issued to district councils on 20 May 2009, to enable them to take immediate action in the eventuality of a flooding incident in their area. Therefore, having followed these guidelines, should a council be able to provide the Department with evidence of any isolated incidences of severe inconvenience caused by flooding which occurred prior to 2 September 2009, these cases will be considered by officials and a response issued to the council. Such applications would, of course, have to adhere to the general terms and conditions of the Scheme.

The Department, having consulted with both Ards Borough Council and Down District Council can confirm that emergency payments were paid to two individual householders who suffered severe inconvenience as a result of flooding in the Strangford constituency area on 2 and 3 September 2009.

### **Landfill Site at Craigmore Road, Ringsend, Coleraine**

**Mr J Dallat** asked the Minister of the Environment to detail his plans to ensure that any expansion of the landfill site at Craigmore Road, Ringsend, Coleraine, is subject to a formal planning application and a full consultation with the local community. (AQW 446/10)

**Minister of the Environment:** The Planning (Northern Ireland) Order 1991 provides the legislative context through which Planning Service exercises control over development. The Craigmore Road site has been the subject of a number of planning applications within the last five years. I am satisfied that any future development proposals for the site will be subject to the necessary planning application process. Any application will be processed in accordance with the requirements of the legislation.

### **‘Safeguarding the Character of Established Residential Areas’**

**Mr R Beggs** asked the Minister of the Environment if and when he intends to publish a draft addendum to PPS7, ‘Safeguarding the Character of Established Residential Areas’; and whether it will be treated as a material planning document with immediate effect when assessing applications. (AQW 478/10)

**Minister of the Environment:** I am currently considering Draft PPS 7 Addendum ‘Safeguarding the Character of Established Residential Areas’, which I intend to publish for consultation as soon as possible, following Executive clearance.

In line with Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 1 ‘General Principles’, draft planning policy statements, once published, may be regarded as a material planning consideration in the determination of planning applications.

### **Effluent Dispersion Modelling Report**

**Mr R Beggs** asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to AQW 3716/09, to detail the results of the Effluent Dispersion Modelling Report commissioned by NI Water and the NI Environment Agency, in relation to sewerage treatment and coastal discharge for Whitehead, Ballycarry and Ballystrudder districts. (AQW 481/10)

**Minister of the Environment:** The Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) requested that Northern Ireland Water (NIW) carry out a marine dispersion model to assess the impact of the discharge from Whitehead, Ballycarry and Ballystrudder on the receiving water.

Initial modelling carried out by NIW was for an untreated screened discharge as the population equivalent (p.e.) has been determined as less than 10,000. The modelling study showed that a large section of coastline would be impacted by the discharge, which NIEA did not consider to be acceptable. Consequently, NIEA asked NIW to model the discharge with varying levels of treatment.

NIW modelled a discharge consisting of secondary treated effluent from Ballycarry and screened effluent from Whitehead and Ballystrudder through a proposed 500m long outfall at Cloughfin Bay.

The Northern Ireland Estuarine and Coastal Waters Classification Scheme (NIECWCS) requires that any Waste Water Treatment Works (WWTW) discharging to coastal waters serving a p.e. greater than 250 must allow the mandatory requirements of the Bathing Water Directive to be met during the bathing season.

The modelling requested by NIEA demonstrates that the discharge meets the requirements of the NIECWCS.

### NI Environment Agency

**Mr R Beggs** asked the Minister of the Environment, pursuant to AQW 3716/09, if the NI Environment Agency has asked for and received a model for the option of discharging secondary treated effluent into the North Channel at Cloghfin Bay, Islandmagee. (AQW 485/10)

**Minister of the Environment:** A model for the option of discharging secondary treated effluent into the North Channel at Cloghfin Bay, Islandmagee was not requested because the modelling of the secondary treated effluent from Ballycarry and screened effluent from Whitehead and Ballystrudder, met NIEA standards.

### Untreated Screened Effluent

**Mr R Beggs** asked the Minister of the Environment for his assessment of the potential for pollution to the adjacent coastline due to high bacterial levels from untreated screened effluent being discharged via a 500 metre outfall pipe proposed in Cloghfin Bay, Islandmagee. (AQW 486/10)

**Minister of the Environment:** The proposed discharge at Cloghfin Bay consists of secondary treated effluent from Ballycarry and screened effluent from Whitehead and Ballystrudder. The Northern Ireland Environment Agency requires that any Waste Water Treatment Works discharging to coastal waters serving a population equivalent greater than 250 must allow the mandatory requirements of the Bathing Water Directive to be met during the bathing season. The modelling of this proposed discharge was carried out under a range of tide and wind conditions and shows that standards set in the Bathing Water Directive will be complied with out to 200m below low tide between June and mid-September. There are no designated bathing or shellfish waters in this area which would require bacteriological standards to be applied along the coastline.

### Illegal Dumping

**Mr D Simpson** asked the Minister of the Environment for an update on the work carried out by his Department to counter illegal dumping. (AQW 508/10)

**Minister of the Environment:** Since January 2009, the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) has overseen 27 successful prosecutions, one suspended six-month prison sentence and an associated £115,950 in fines against illegal waste offenders. My officials have been instrumental in obtaining the agreement of the Irish authorities to repatriate vast quantities of illegally imported waste and will continue to work closely with their counterparts to see this work through to its conclusion.

The increased focus of NIEA's Environmental Crime Unit (ECU) on an intelligence-led strategy is producing tangible results. In March 2009, ECU's trained and accredited Financial Investigators (using the increased powers available to them under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002) secured their first confiscation order, independently of the Serious Organised Crime Agency for £200,000, against a Co Antrim man convicted of illegally disposing of 50,400 tonnes of waste.

This confiscation order builds on four previous confiscation orders obtained on behalf of NIEA by the former Assets Recovery Agency totalling £832,000 in the period November 2007 to February 2008 and raises the total sum of environmental crime confiscation orders to over £1 million.

### Illegal Dumping

**Mr T Gallagher** asked the Minister of the Environment to detail the cost of disposing of all tyres collected as a result of illegal dumping, in each District Council, in (i) 2006/07; (ii) 2007/08; and (iii) 2008/09. (AQW 534/10)

**Minister of the Environment:** My Department has no statutory authority over the collection and disposal of illegally dumped materials, and therefore does not hold these details. Figures would be collated by individual District Councils.

### Safety Gear

**Mr J Shannon** asked the Minister of the Environment what steps is he taking to encourage bikers to wear correct safety gear when on their bikes. (AQW 539/10)

**Minister of the Environment:** My Department launched a new Highway Code for Northern Ireland in July 2008. The new Code contains a section on motorcycling which states that riders and pillion passengers on motorcycles, scooters or mopeds must wear protective helmets, which must comply with the Regulations and must be fastened securely. It also provides advice on eye protectors and suitable clothing.

The Highway Code is widely available from bookshops and other retail outlets, and can be downloaded from the DOE road safety website. It is also available in Portuguese, Polish, Lithuanian, Mandarin Chinese and Russian.

My Department is also considering, in the context of the proposed new road safety strategy for Northern Ireland, what further measures could be taken to improve the safety of motorcyclists, and on 15 September 2009 motorcyclists were invited to participate in a relevant research project.

### Landfill Tax Regime

**Mr M McLaughlin** asked the Minister of the Environment what waste licences currently regulate the Arena race track, Nutts Corner, under the Landfill Tax Regime. (AQW 679/10)

**Minister of the Environment:** The Department does not issue Waste Licences under the Landfill Tax Regime.

This site is not licensed under the Waste Management Licensing Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003.

## DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE AND PERSONNEL

### NI Direct Website

**Mr P McGlone** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how long it took to develop the NI Direct Government Services website and at what cost. (AQW 45/10)

**Minister of Finance and Personnel (Mr S Wilson):** Development of the NI Direct website began in December 2008 with the site going live, on target, on 31 March 2009.

The cost of developing the site including preparatory work was £348k.

### NI Direct Website

**Mr P McGlone** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to outline what contact was made with the Direct Government UK Services website during the development of the NI Direct site. (AQW 46/10)

**Minister of Finance and Personnel:** The evaluation of the options for delivering the NI Direct project objectives concluded with a decision to base the new website on the very successful Directgov site which had been operating in Great Britain for some years. It was decided that this would be the most effective, speediest and efficient method of creating the new website. Although modelled on Directgov, NI Direct is being developed to reflect the particular needs of citizens in Northern Ireland.

Directgov has been very supportive and co-operative in setting up NI Direct and during the initial development phase, there was significant contact between the Directgov team and NI Direct.

Staff at Directgov have provided advice on a number of issues including technical, publishing, analytical and operational matters. A Memorandum of Understanding was developed to formalise the contact between the two websites.

Senior members of the Directgov team also came to Northern Ireland to give presentations to the NI Direct project board. The Directgov operational board also includes a representative from Northern Ireland (the head of the NI Direct central editorial team).

Directgov also agreed that their site could be copied to use as a template for the “localisation” of the content for Northern Ireland citizens.

## Carbon Trust

**Mr R Beggs** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to outline why Northern Ireland is the only part of the UK where the public sector has not been able to avail of support from the Carbon Trust to improve energy efficiency in its operations and the energy efficiency and energy systems within buildings. (AQW 71/10)

**Minister of Finance and Personnel:** In Northern Ireland, the Carbon Trust is funded by the Department of Enterprise, Trade & Investment through Invest NI, which limits the provision of their free services to the private sector. However their services are available to any public sector organisation that is prepared to cover the cost. A separate fund to support energy efficiency improvements in Northern Ireland public sector buildings already exists.

## Central Energy Efficiency Fund

**Mrs D Kelly** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail (i) grant awards to Craigavon Borough Council under the Central Energy Efficiency Fund from 2003 to date, including the reference numbers; and (ii) the savings that resulted from energy saving measures funded by these grant awards. (AQW 81/10)

**Minister of Finance and Personnel:** The table attached sets out all Central Energy Efficiency Fund grants awarded to Craigavon Borough Council from 2003 to date. The estimated energy, carbon dioxide and monetary savings that each project could achieve have been extracted from the project data supplied by the Council in each of their bids. The Department does not have a record of actual savings achieved by the projects.

The Department is not aware of partial funding from the Clear Skies programme for the installation of wind turbines at Kinnego Marina. The bid submitted by the Council referred to one wind turbine only and was funded fully by the CEEF.

### CEEF GRANTS AWARDED TO CRAIGAVON BOROUGH COUNCIL 2003/04 TO PRESENT

Year	DFP Ref	Council Ref	Brief Project Description	Capital Cost/ Grant Awarded	Projected Energy Savings (Gigajoules /annum)	Projected Co2 Savings (Tonnes /annum)	Projected Total Project Savings (£/annum)
2003/04	58	Tannaghcoil	Tannaghmore change of Fuel	£3,850	13.1	2.32	£1,209
2004/05	11	Carnwind 04	Three Wind Turbines Carn Depot	£48,000	784	90.88	£13,825
2004/05	12	Kinnegowind	One Wind Turbine Kinnego Marina	£16,000	189	25.52	£4,626
2005/06	22	Watersportwind	One Wind Turbine Craigavon Water Sports Centre	£16,000	189	22.49	£4,626
2006/07	214	Carnbio	Biomass Boiler Carn Depot	£45,000	1200	83.33	£13,137
2006/07	220	LNDCBio	Biomass Boiler Lurgan Park Sports Pavillion	£6,500	105.97	12.66	£1,803
2006/07	218	LNDCBio	Biomass Boiler Lurgan Park Gate Lodge	£6,500	228.04	15.84	£1,604
2006/07	219	OXINFO	Biomass Boiler Oxford Island Information Centre	£4,200	36	4.3	£1,038

Year	DFP Ref	Council Ref	Brief Project Description	Capital Cost/ Grant Awarded	Projected Energy Savings (Gigajoules /annum)	Projected Co2 Savings (Tonnes /annum)	Projected Total Project Savings (£/annum)
2006/07	217	LNDCBio	Biomass Boiler Lough Neagh Discovery Centre	£35,000	988	68.61	£7,234
2007/08	149	BIOCLC (Project not completed and grant not claimed)	Biomass Boiler Craigavon Leisure Centre	£82,000	0	291.94	£26,573
2007/08	150	BIOwaves (Project not completed and grant not claimed)	Biomass Boiler Waves Leisure Centre	£79,000	0	237.95	£21,675

### Health and Safety Inspection

**Mrs D Kelly** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel (i) who vetted the qualifications of the company that carried out the Health and Safety inspection of the Craigavon Borough Council owned wind turbines; and (ii) if that company met the required qualifications. (AQW 82/10)

**Minister of Finance and Personnel:** It is the responsibility of Craigavon Borough Council, not the Department, to vet the qualifications of the company that carried out the health and safety inspection of the Council-owned wind turbines and thereby determine if that company met the required qualifications.

### Central Energy Efficiency Fund

**Mrs D Kelly** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the savings made (i) by the installation of wind turbines at Kinnego Marina, which were part funded by the Central Energy Efficiency Fund (CEEF) and Clear Skies; and (ii) by the three wind turbines at the Carn Depot in Craigavon, which were fully funded by the CEEF. (AQW 83/10)

**Minister of Finance and Personnel:** The table attached sets out all Central Energy Efficiency Fund grants awarded to Craigavon Borough Council from 2003 to date. The estimated energy, carbon dioxide and monetary savings that each project could achieve have been extracted from the project data supplied by the Council in each of their bids. The Department does not have a record of actual savings achieved by the projects.

The Department is not aware of partial funding from the Clear Skies programme for the installation of wind turbines at Kinnego Marina. The bid submitted by the Council referred to one wind turbine only and was funded fully by the CEEF.

#### CEEF GRANTS AWARDED TO CRAIGAVON BOROUGH COUNCIL 2003/04 TO PRESENT

Year	DFP Ref	Council Ref	Brief Project Description	Capital Cost/ Grant Awarded	Projected Energy Savings (Gigajoules /annum)	Projected Co2 Savings (Tonnes /annum)	Projected Total Project Savings (£/annum)
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### Energy Return Reports

**Mrs D Kelly** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to provide copies of the annual Energy Return Reports from Craigavon Borough Council to his Department for the last three years. (AQW 84/10)

**Minister of Finance and Personnel:** Craigavon Borough Council last completed and returned an Energy Data Request form to the Department for the year 2005/06, a copy of which has been placed in the Library. Despite repeated requests to the Council for energy data for 2006/07 and 2007/08 the Department has received no response. The Energy Data Request for 2008/09 will be issued in the week ending 18 September 2009 for return no later than 31 October 2009.

### Vacancies in the Northern Ireland Civil Service

**Mr M Durkan** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the (i) location; and (ii) number of vacancies in the Northern Ireland Civil Service at (a) Administrative Officer; (b) Executive Officer II; (c) Executive Officer I; and (d) Staff Officer grades in each Government Department. (AQW 88/10)

**Minister of Finance and Personnel:** The location and number of vacancies in permanent posts in each Northern Ireland Civil Service department at the grades of (a) Administrative Officer; (b) Executive Officer 2; (c) Executive Officer 1; and (d) Staff Officer are set out in the table attached.

**VACANCIES (FULL TIME EQUIVALENT BASIS) IN THE ELEVEN NI DEPARTMENTS AND THEIR AGENCIES IN GRADES: AO; EO2; EO1; SO, AT 9 SEPTEMBER 2009**

Department	AO		EO2		EO1		SO	
	Number	Location (posts)	Number	Location (posts)	Number	Location (posts)	Number	Location (posts)
Agriculture & Rural Development (DARD)	2	Belfast	4	Belfast (1) Armagh (1) Ballymena (1) Larne (1)	5	Belfast	1	Belfast(1)
Culture, Arts & Leisure (DCAL)	0	-	0	-	1	Belfast	0	-
Education (DE)	3	Bangor (2) Londonderry (1)	0	-	1	Bangor	1	Bangor
Employment & Learning (DEL)	33	Belfast(4), Antrim(2), Ballymoney(3), Banbridge (2) Coleraine(1), Dungannon(3), Kilkeel (1) Lisburn(1), Lisnagelvin(2), Lurgan (2) Magherafelt (4) Newtownabbey (2) Omagh(3), Portadown(3)	39	Belfast(6), Antrim(1), Ballymoney(2), Carrickfergus(1), Coleraine (3) Dungannon(5), Foyle (5) Kilkeel (1) Larne(1), Lisburn (1) Lisnagelvin (2) Lurgan (3) Magherafelt (2) Newtownabbey(1) Omagh (3) Portadown (2)	24.06	Belfast(14.66), Antrim (2) Bangor (0.35) Carrickfergus (0.28) Downpatrick (0.8) Enniskillen (0.29) Limavady(0.5) Lisburn (2) Lurgan (0.14) Magherafelt (0.78) Portadown (2.26)	6	Belfast(6),
Enterprise, Trade & Investment (DETI)	0	-	1	Belfast	8	Belfast(8),	0	-
Finance & Personnel (DFP)	23	Belfast(22), Craigavon(1),	11	Belfast	11	Belfast (9) Bangor (2)	8	Belfast(7), Bangor(1),
Health, Social Services & Public Safety (DHSSPS)	0	-	3	Belfast	0	-	3	Belfast

Department	AO		EO2		EO1		SO	
	Number	Location (posts)	Number	Location (posts)	Number	Location (posts)	Number	Location (posts)
Environment (DOE)	9	Belfast(5), Coleraine(2), Armagh (1) Craigavon (1)	8	Belfast(5), Coleraine(1) Omagh (1) Ballymena (1)	10	Belfast(9), Londonderry(1)	2	Belfast(1), Coleraine(1)
Regional Development (DRD)	22.69	Belfast(9), Coleraine(1), Craigavon(2), Enniskillen(4), Omagh(3), Strangford (3) Londonderry (0.69)	7	Belfast(4), Ballymena(1), Coleraine(2),	9	Belfast(8), Coleraine(1)	10	Belfast(9), Ballymena(1),
Social Development (DSD)	16	Belfast(13), Londonderry (3)	85	Armagh (1) Ballynahinch (2) Bangor (2) Belfast(62), Downpatrick(4), Dungannon (3) Enniskillen (2) Kilkeel (1) Londonderry(3), Lurgan (2) Newtownards(2), Omagh(1)	35	Antrim (1) Belfast(26) Dungannon(2), Enniskillen(2), Kilkeel (1) Londonderry(1), Newry(1) Portadown (1)	10	Belfast(10),
Office of the First & Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM)	1	Belfast	0	-	0	-	0	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>109.69</b>		<b>158</b>		<b>104.06</b>		<b>41</b>	

### Floodline

**Mr G Savage** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to outline the protocols and procedures that come into force at Floodline whenever rain is expected. (AQW 89/10)

**Minister of Finance and Personnel:** NI Direct has a Flooding Incident Line (FIL) Liaison Officer who monitors weather forecasts and liaises with the Met Office and the three Flood Response Agencies (Rivers Agency, Roads Service and NI Water).

On receiving heavy rain or flood warnings from the Met Office, the FIL Liaison Officer consults with the Flood Response Agencies to assess the level of risk of flooding and decide on the appropriate course of action.

In cases where a warning relates to a period outside normal business hours, the appropriate number of additional Customer Service Representatives (CSRs) are assigned to report for duty and work alongside the normal out of hours team. Additional CSRs may also be put on stand-by.

The on-call duty officer and the FIL Liaison Officer coordinate and manage staff levels thereafter and can reduce or further increase them as appropriate.

Prediction of serious flooding is not an exact science. In the interests of proper value for public funds, it is necessary to balance the need for an appropriate level of staff given the forecast, against the need to avoid having too many CSRs on duty if flooding does not materialise.

### Floodline

**Mr G Savage** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail (i) how many staff are employed in Floodline; and (ii) how many staff were working at Floodline on 29 August 2009 at noon. (AQW 91/10)

**Minister of Finance and Personnel:** Currently there are 8 on-call duty officers plus 50 Customer Service Representatives (CSRs) including an Out of Hours Team of 8.

At noon on 29th August there were 2 CSRs working plus there was an on-call duty officer. As a precautionary measure, a further 4 CSRs were put on call since it was a holiday weekend.

### Floodline

**Mr G Savage** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how many staff, on average, work in Floodline on a daily basis. (AQW 93/10)

**Minister of Finance and Personnel:** An average of 36 Customer Service Representatives (CSRs) trained in Flooding Incident Line (FIL) would be working on other NI Direct activities during normal business hours. They are diverted instantly to FIL as calls come in.

Outside normal business hours a minimum of 2 staff are on FIL duty. On receiving heavy rain or flood warnings from the Met Office, the level of risk of flooding is considered and additional CSRs are assigned to report for duty. Additional CSRs may also be put on stand-by.

### Central Procurement Directorate

**Mr G Savage** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail (i) how many court cases have been taken against the Central Procurement Directorate (CPD) in each of the last 5 years; and (ii) how many were (a) won by CPD; and (b) lost by CPD. (AQW 144/10)

**Minister of Finance and Personnel:** Court cases can only be taken against DFP, as CPD's parent Department. Details requested in respect of the number of court cases brought against DFP in relation to procurement competitions managed by CPD are set out below.

Year	Won	Lost	Withdrawn	Total
2004 -2005	0	0	0	0
2005-2006	0	0	0	0
2006-2007	1	0	0	1
2007-2008	0	1	1	2
2008-2009	0	0	2	2
2009-2010	1	0	0	1
<b>Totals</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>6</b>

### Central Procurement Directorate

**Mr G Savage** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail how the Central Procurement Directorate is audited. (AQW 145/10)

**Minister of Finance and Personnel:** Central Procurement Directorate's (CPD) income and expenditure is audited annually by the Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG) as part of his audit of the departmental Resource Accounts.

On an annual basis, the Department of Finance and Personnel's Internal Audit function compiles an audit plan based on an assessment of specific risks. The 2008/09 Assurance Report, concluded that the control framework within CPD provided an overall satisfactory level of assurance.

### Floodline

**Mr G Savage** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to outline the relationship between Floodline, his Department, and the Met Office. (AQW 146/10)

**Minister of Finance and Personnel:** NI Direct uses the Met Office National Severe Weather Warning Service to receive emails and SMS text alerts of early warnings and / or flash messages of Heavy/Extreme rainfall. These warnings are proactively distributed by the Met Office. Advisories of heavy / extreme rainfall are web-based only and are not proactively distributed. In addition, NI Direct is part of a local Northern Ireland group that receives, where necessary, further updates from the Met Office Public Weather Service Advisor in Northern Ireland, allowing more localised or regional advice for planning purposes. NI Direct has established a good and effective working relationship with the Met Office and regularly consults with them on both a formal and informal basis.

### Northern Ireland Gross Domestic Product

**Mr S Gardiner** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to give an estimate, on the basis of the most recent figures available, of the size of the manufacturing base as a percentage of the overall Northern Ireland Gross Domestic Product. (AQW 154/10)

**Minister of Finance and Personnel:** Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is not produced for Northern Ireland. Because of a definitional change, what was formerly referred to as GDP was actually Gross Value Added (GVA) at basic prices. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) is responsible for producing GVA for the UK and its regions. The most recent figures available are for 2006 and show that Manufacturing accounts for 15.4% of Northern Ireland's Gross Value Added.

### Northern Ireland Gross Domestic Product

**Mr S Gardiner** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to give an estimate, on the basis of the most recent figures available, of the size of the agricultural and agri-business sector as a percentage of the overall Northern Ireland Gross Domestic Product. (AQW 156/10)

**Minister of Finance and Personnel:** Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is not produced for Northern Ireland. Because of a definitional change, what was formerly referred to as GDP was actually Gross Value Added (GVA) at basic prices. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) is responsible for producing GVA for the UK and its regions. The most recent figures available are for 2006 and show that Agriculture accounts for 1.7% of Northern Ireland's Gross Value Added.

### Northern Ireland Gross Domestic Product

**Mr S Gardiner** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to give an estimate, on the basis of the most recent figures available, of the size of the services sector as a percentage of the overall Northern Ireland Gross Domestic Product. (AQW 157/10)

**Minister of Finance and Personnel:** Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is not produced for Northern Ireland. Because of a definitional change, what was formerly referred to as GDP was actually Gross Value Added (GVA) at basic prices. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) is responsible for producing GVA for the UK and its regions. The most recent figures available are for 2006 and show that Services (including both public and private elements) account for 71.6% of Northern Ireland's Gross Value Added.

### Northern Ireland Gross Domestic Product

**Mr S Gardiner** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to give an estimate, on the basis of the most recent figures available, of the size of the construction sector as a percentage of the overall Northern Ireland Gross Domestic Product. (AQW 158/10)

**Minister of Finance and Personnel:** Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is not produced for Northern Ireland. Because of a definitional change, what was formerly referred to as GDP was actually Gross Value Added (GVA) at basic prices. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) is responsible for producing GVA for the UK and its regions. The most recent figures available are for 2006 and show that Construction accounts for 8.5% of Northern Ireland's Gross Value Added.

### Private Consultancy Firms and Events Organisers

**Mr P McGlone** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how much has been spent by his Department in each of the last five years on (i) private consultancy firms; and (ii) events organisers. (AQW 162/10)

**Minister of Finance and Personnel:** The total expenditure for The Department of Finance and Personnel over the last five years on (i) private consultancy firms and (ii) events organisers is set out in the tables overleaf.

The majority of the consultancy expenditure relates to NICS reform projects and has been necessary to support the development and implementation of the NICS reform programme. With most of these key reform projects moving from the implementation to service delivery phases expenditure on external consultancy is expected to fall significantly in 2009/10, and a target reduction of 25% has been adopted by my Department.

External Consultancy £'m	
2004/05	2.65
2005/06	2.51
2006/07	4.37
2007/08	6.63
2008/09	4.90 (provisional)
<b>Total</b>	<b>21.06</b>

Events Organisers £'000	
2004/05	37
2005/06	-
2006/07	77
2007/08	141
2008/09	29
<b>Total</b>	<b>284</b>

### New IT Systems

**Mr S Hamilton** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail (i) all new IT systems installed within his Department in the last 5 years; (ii) the initial budget; (iii) the actual cost; (iv) the estimated start date; and (v) the actual start date. (AQW 204/10)

**Minister of Finance and Personnel:** Within the last 5 years, DFP have installed 15 IT projects costing more than £25k. The initial budget for these projects was £124,684,550 and the actual cost is £134,924,206.

I have included further information relating to each individual project in the table attached.

## IT SYSTEMS INSTALLED IN DFP (2004-2009)

No.	Project Name	Initial budget	Actual cost	Estimated start date	Actual start date
1	Records NI	Budget of £12.7M for 2005-08 out of a total 7 year project budget of £23.7M (to July 2013)	Actual cost £13.0M - Costs from start of project to Aug 09 amount to £17.1M	Contract awarded July 2006	July 2006
2	Touch paper	£172,525	£178,700	May 2007	May 2007
3	Resilient Messaging	£1.09m	£1.22m	July 2008	November 2008
4	HR Connect	£37,750,000	2006/07 £15,337,470 2007/08 £11,462,530 2008/09 £5,625,000 2009/10 £300,000 to date Anticipated expenditure £5,025,000 Total expenditure: £37,750,000	June 2007	November 2007
5	PAAP (Pension)	Phase 1 & 3 £296,945 Phase 2 - £120,000 Total: £416,945	Phase 1 2008/09 – £253,249 Phase 2 – 2008/09 - £120,000 Phase 3 – not implemented Anticipated expenditure (09/10) Phase 1 – £18,000 Phase 3 - £23,656 Sub Total: £414,905 Possible further expenditure (09/10) Phase 1 - £13,000 Phase 3 - £5,000 Total expenditure: £432,905	Phase 1 May 2008 Phase 2 September 2009 Phase 3 January 2010	Phase 1 May 2008 Phase 2 September 2009
6	Account NI	£55.6m (nominal) over 12 years	The cost of the BT contract as of July 2009 is estimated at £58.7m (nominal).	June 2006.	June 2006
7	LPS - Assessment Office System	£3,081,000	£3,800,000	May 2004	December 2005
8	LPS – CAMA GIS System	£652,540	£669,615	June 2004	August 2004
9	LPS - Valuation Spatial Environment	£52,212	£56,387	December 2007	December 2007
10	LPS - IT Replacement Project	£11,059,328	£12,989,879	Phase 1 – 30.6.06 Phase 2 – 27.10.06 Phase 3 – 27.10.06 Phase 4 – 29.1.07	Phase 1 – 2.10.06 Phase 2 – 1.4.07 Phase 3 – 28.7.08 Phase 4 – 12.3.07

No.	Project Name	Initial budget	Actual cost	Estimated start date	Actual start date
11	NISRA - Registration and Certificate Modernisation System	£1,161,000	£1,161,000	September 2004	September 2004
12	NISRA - Enhancement	£120,000	£120,000	December 2005	December 2005
13	NISRA - System Upgrade	£52,000	£51,720	April 2007	April 2007
14	NISRA - Enhancement	£52,000	£44,000	March 2008	April 2008
15	DFP/OFMDFM - email migration from Lotus Notes to Microsoft Outlook	£725,000	£650,000	January 2007	January 2007

### Central Procurement Directorate

**Mr G Savage** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel whether the Central Procurement Directorate has been found in breach of Article 83 of the EC Treaty. (AQW 221/10)

**Minister of Finance and Personnel:** CPD has never been found in breach of Article 83 of the EC Treaty.

### Statistics on Administration Staff and Specialist Appointees

**Mr J Shannon** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for statistics on administration staff and specialist appointees within her Department, broken down by religion and percentages for each religion. (AQW 230/10)

**Minister of Finance and Personnel:** Information on the community background of NICS staff is collected for the purpose of monitoring the effectiveness of NICS equality and personnel policies. Because these are corporate policies it is appropriate that they are monitored centrally by the Department of Finance and Personnel on behalf of all departments. In keeping with this approach DFP will publish monitoring information for the NICS as a whole and by occupational grouping. The further processing of NICS monitoring information at the level of department, directorate or location would not be consistent with Data Protection principles.

### Commercially Sensitive Information

**Mr G Savage** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail his Department's policy in relation to the release of commercially sensitive information to the media via (i) press releases; and (ii) requests for further information from journalists to his Department's Press Office. (AQW 254/10)

**Minister of Finance and Personnel:** It is the policy of my Department not to release commercially sensitive information to the media.

### Collapse of Workplace 2010

**Mr D O'Loan** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for his assessment of the needs of the public sector office estate and to report on his plans to improve it, following the collapse of Workplace 2010. (AQW 276/10)

**Minister of Finance and Personnel:** Following the termination of the WP2010 procurement process, my Department has commenced a review of the options available to it to address the continuing deterioration of the office estate. The NICS remains committed to the general accommodation principles set out under the WP2010 programme including the move to an open, flexible office environment. This will increase the density of workstations, reduce our overall office footprint and reduce our running costs. However given the limitations on budget this change will have to take place over a considerably longer time frame than that envisaged under the WP2010 PFI process.

### Central Procurement Directorate

**Mr G Savage** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail any occasions when Central Procurement Directorate has been found in breach of EU law. (AQW 277/10)

**Minister of Finance and Personnel:** Since CPD was established in April 2002 it has been found to be in breach of the Public Contracts Regulations 2006 (which implement the EU Procurement Directives) on one occasion in respect of the procurement of a framework agreement, in 2008, for Integrated Supply Teams to design and build a variety of construction projects. The judgement is being appealed.

### Central Procurement Directorate

**Mr G Savage** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how much Central Procurement Directorate has had to pay out in compensation as a result of having lost court cases in each of the last five years. (AQW 332/10)

**Minister of Finance and Personnel:** Central Procurement Directorate has not paid any compensation as a result of lost court cases in the last five years.

### Central Procurement Directorate

**Mr G Savage** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to give the reasons why Central Procurement Directorate has been (i) taken to court; (ii) forced to pay fines; and (iii) forced to pay damages or loss of income compensation, in each of the last five years. (AQW 334/10)

**Minister of Finance and Personnel:** Court cases can only be taken against DFP, as CPD's parent Department. Details requested in respect of court cases brought against DFP in relation to procurement competitions managed by CPD in each of the last five years are set out overleaf.

There were no instances when DFP/CPD was forced to pay fines, pay damages or loss of income compensation.

Year	Reason for court action	Fines paid	Damages/loss of income
2004-05	n/a	0	0
2005-06	n/a	0	0
2006-07	Failure to secure a contract.	0	0
2007-08	1. Alleged breach of transparency requirements relating to assessment of tenders for a framework agreement. Case is being appealed.	0	0
	2. Failure to be included on a framework agreement.	0	0
2008-09	1. Failure to be included on a framework agreement.	0	0
	2. Failure to be included in a category on a framework agreement.	0	0
2009-10	Failure to secure a contract.	0	0

### Quangos and Similar Bodies

**Mr S Moutray** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what estimate he has made of the potential savings to the public purse by reducing the number of quangos and similar bodies. (AQW 373/10)

**Minister of Finance and Personnel:** The Department of Finance and Personnel sponsors 2 Non Departmental Public Bodies – the Northern Ireland Building Regulations Advisory Committee and the Statistics Advisory

Committee. As both of these committees are required by statute and appointments to them are not remunerated, there is no scope for potential savings.

### Legislation

**Mr G Savage** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to outline any legislation his Department intends to bring before the Assembly before 31 December 2009. (AQW 404/10)

**Minister of Finance and Personnel:** I introduced the Rates (Amendment) Bill to the Assembly on 14 September. I have no other plans to introduce any further legislation before 31 December 2009.

### Civil Service Pay Claim

**Mr J McCallister** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel, in relation to the Civil Service pay claim, when the review of technical grades was completed; and to provide a synopsis of the results. (AQW 467/10)

**Minister of Finance and Personnel:** Thanks to the cooperation of both the unions and staff, the field work stage of the review was completed on time at the end of August. Officials are considering a draft report of the review, a copy of which has been provided to NIPSA for its consideration and comment as part of the normal arrangements for staff reviews. It is only when that process is completed that the report will be finalised.

### Rating of Empty Homes

**Mr P Weir** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel, given the economic downturn and the decline in the housing market, if he will reconsider the introduction of the rating of empty homes. (AQW 470/10)

**Minister of Finance and Personnel:** I am reconsidering the timing of the introduction of this measure and I am currently waiting for confirmation from the Finance and Personnel Committee regarding their position.

I am well aware of the difficulties that are being experienced by homeowners during the current economic downturn. This has been demonstrated most sharply in terms of the decline in the housing market. I am keen to avoid doing anything through the rating system that would either worsen the current situation, through further reducing property prices, or hamper stabilisation of the market.

I believe that, in principle, the rating of empty homes can bring many benefits under the right circumstances. However, now does not seem to me to be the right time to place an additional burden on home owners. The local housing market has seen dramatic price falls since the policy was first announced in 2007 and increasingly the owners of empty properties cannot find buyers or tenants.

For this reason I believe that the rating of empty homes at 100% should not be introduced in April 2010. I have listened carefully to views expressed at the DFP Committee and although I am awaiting final confirmation I would like to postpone this measure until April 2011. By this time I expect the property market will have stabilised and the conditions for introducing it will be much healthier.

### Republic of Ireland's National Asset Management Agency Proposals

**Mr T Elliott** asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for his assessment of the potential impact of the Republic of Ireland's National Asset Management Agency proposals on Northern Ireland's economy. (AQW 653/10)

**Minister of Finance and Personnel:** I recently had a very constructive meeting with Finance Minister Lenihan on the NAMA issue. During this meeting I was briefed on the NAMA proposals and the extent to which Northern Ireland assets would be involved. There will be some €4.8 billion in Northern Ireland loans transferring from participating banks into NAMA. These loans cover a range of assets including existing property and land.

Minister Lenihan agreed with me that there should be no 'firesale' of these assets. I was concerned that any such sale would have a deflationary impact upon the local property market and the wider Northern Ireland economy. Minister Lenihan agreed that it was in no-one's interest that this should happen.

I will continue to engage with Minister Lenihan on this important issue over the coming months.

## DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, SOCIAL SERVICES AND PUBLIC SAFETY

### Ambulance Trust's Efficiency Plans

**Mr A Easton** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the Ambulance Trust's efficiency plans for ambulance cover for the North Down area. (AQW 9/10)

**Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (Mr M McGimpsey):** Ambulance cover in North Down is mainly provided from Bangor and Newtownards Ambulance Stations and from deployment points at Donaghadee (Fire Station), Bangor Marina and the Ulster Hospital, Dundonald.

The Northern Ireland Ambulance Service (NIAS) plans an increase of 4,093 hours of paramedic cover at Bangor. The profile of emergency cover at Newtownards will remain unchanged.

I have invested £17.4 million capital over the CSR period to modernise NIAS's fleet, estate, equipment and IT infrastructure. This investment will primarily be used to commence the replacement of the fleet, allowing around 20 A&E ambulances and 20 patient care service vehicles to be replaced annually. A total of 26 rapid response vehicles will be also purchased over this period.

As a result of these changes, there will be more vehicles on the road capable of responding to emergencies than in the past. Research evidence shows that for every minute between collapse and commencement of life support, survival rates reduce by 10%. The introduction of more paramedic rapid response capability is about increasing the speed and the clinical quality of the ambulance service response to those patients with the most serious life-threatening medical emergencies.

### Legislative Framework for Mental Capacity and Mental Health Legislation in Northern Ireland

**Dr S Farry** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AWQ 8944/09, to report (i) on the number of responses to the Department's consultation on the Legislative Framework for Mental Capacity and Mental Health Legislation in Northern Ireland which made specific reference to the issue of a single bill versus separate pieces of legislation; and (ii) from that subset, the percentage of responses which argued for a single piece of legislation. (AQW 49/10)

**Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety:** Thirty seven responses to the Department's consultation on the Legislative Framework for Mental Capacity and Mental Health Legislation in Northern Ireland made reference to the issue of a single Bill versus separate pieces of legislation; of which approximately 76% indicated support for a single piece of legislation.

Having carefully considered the views expressed in the consultation responses, I announced my intention to proceed with a single Bill on 10 September 2009.

### Anti-obesity Drugs

**Mr T Burns** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number, broken down by age, of people who have been prescribed anti-obesity drugs in each of the last five years. (AQW 56/10)

**Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety:** The information is not available in the form requested.

### NHS Dentists

**Mr K McCarthy** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to provide an update on the recruitment of 38 more NHS dentists. (AQW 85/10)

**Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety:** The contract with Oasis Dental Care Ltd specifies that there will be a phased roll out of dental practices across Northern Ireland, starting with the areas of greatest

need. The first new dental practices will open in Enniskillen and Londonderry and begin seeing patients before the end of this year.

Subject to acquisition of suitable properties, and any required planning permission being approved promptly, I fully expect that all of the new dentists will be in post within 12 months of the first new practice opening.

### Scoliosis

**Mr K McCarthy** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to outline the provision made for people with a scoliosis condition. (AQW 86/10)

**Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety:** Patients suffering from scoliosis have access to care and treatment from an appropriate part of the Health and Social Care sector depending on their individual needs, ranging from primary and community care to general orthopaedic and specialist scoliosis clinics.

Regional orthopaedic services are provided by the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust's orthopaedic department. Scoliosis clinics are held at Musgrave Park Hospital. Two consultants run 6 Wednesday morning clinics per month; if a 5 week month then 1 extra clinic is held. These clinics are also attended by a spinal liaison nurse to help patients and their parents prepare for surgery. Surgery is carried out at the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children. There is one scoliosis theatre list per month. From September capacity is to be increased to provide one week of paediatric scoliosis lists per month for 6 months to address those patients currently waiting for surgery.

### Speech and Therapy Action Plan

**Mr K McCarthy** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety when the planned speech and therapy action plan will be published. (AQW 87/10)

**Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety:** It is anticipated that the draft Speech and Language Therapy Action Plan will be published for public consultation by the end of 2009.

### Hospital Cleanliness Audit Team

**Lord Morrow** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what consideration has been given to the establishment of a dedicated hospital cleanliness audit team to carry out routine and unannounced inspections and publish regular reports on their findings. (AQW 97/10)

**Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety:** The Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA) carries out a programme of unannounced inspections of hospital hygiene including environmental cleanliness. A dedicated team uses an audit tool and the reports are published on the RQIA website.

### NI Medical and Dental Training Agency

**Mr T Gallagher** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail (i) the number of junior doctors appointed to each maternity unit this year by the NI Medical and Dental Training Agency; and (ii) how many of the doctors appointed to each maternity unit have taken up their posts. (AQW 101/10)

**Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety:** The number of junior doctors appointed to Obstetrics and Gynaecology in each hospital in this year's recruitment round is detailed in the table below. At the end of August 2009 107 of the 126 training posts available in Obstetrics and Gynaecology in Northern Ireland were filled.

**OBSTETRICS AND GYNAECOLOGY JUNIOR DOCTOR VACANCY POSITION, AUGUST 2009**

Hospital	Total No of Posts	Posts filled at Aug 09
Antrim	17	17
Altnagelvin	13	13
Craigavon	15	15
Causeway	9	5
Daisy Hill	7	6
Lagan Valley	7	5
Mater	6	5
Royal	30	25
Ulster	16	15
Erne	6	1
Total	126	107

With the exception of the Erne, the vacancy situation did not adversely impact on Obstetrics and Gynaecology patient services at any of the hospitals listed in the above table. Full services at the Erne were restored on 14th September 2009.

**Agenda for Change**

**Mr A Easton** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety why senior district nursing staff in the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust have not yet been banded under Agenda for Change. (AQW 106/10)

**Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety:** The process for grading senior district nursing staff posts is continuing. Staff will be advised of the Agenda for Change banding when that process is complete.

**Agenda for Change**

**Mr A Easton** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety if the banding for sisters in outpatients in the Bangor, Ards and Ulster Hospitals under Agenda for Change has been agreed by the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust. (AQW 107/10)

**Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety:** The review process for the banding of Sisters in Outpatients in Bangor, Ards and the Ulster Hospitals is nearing completion and the Trust hopes to be in a position to release the outcome shortly.

**Bamford Action Plan**

**Mrs N Long** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety when he anticipates the Bamford Action Plan will be presented to the Executive for approval. (AQW 120/10)

**Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety:** I am currently seeking agreement from Executive colleagues to publication of the cross-Departmental Bamford Action Plan 2009-2011. The draft Action Plan was circulated to Executive colleagues in June.

Subject to agreement from OFMdfM, I hope this issue will be considered at the next meeting of the Executive on the 24 September.

### **Bamford Action Plan**

**Mrs N Long** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether he has the resources required to implement the Bamford Action Plan. (AQW 121/10)

**Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety:** I have submitted to the Executive a proposed Action Plan for 2009-2011 on the implementation of the Bamford Review. This focuses on actions which can be achieved over the period to 2011 within the funding levels set out in the Executive's spending plans following the Comprehensive Spending Review, but some longer term objectives are also signalled in the Plan.

My Department's total new investment in mental health and learning disability services in support of Bamford amounts to £87m over three years, resulting in recurrent additional investment of £44m from 2010/11.

Substantial resources are also being contributed by other Departments, in particular Department of Education and Department for Social Development.

If the Plan is approved by the Executive, the necessary resources up to 2010/11 are in place. However I have made it clear to Executive colleagues that this is only a start; we will need to continue to secure substantial additional monies for these services in future spending rounds to deliver the Bamford vision. The Bamford Review envisaged a 10-15 year programme of change, costing over £300m in additional resources.

### **Heating in Hospitals**

**Mr S Hamilton** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the heating systems used in each of Northern Ireland's hospitals; and the annual cost of heating in hospitals in each of the last 5 years. (AQW 126/10)

**Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety:** This information is not held centrally by the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety.

### **Dormant Wards in South Tyrone Hospital**

**Lord Morrow** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety if consideration has been given to the further refurbishment of dormant wards in South Tyrone Hospital, specifically for elderly after-care, in order to free up bed space in Craigavon Area Hospital. (AQW 133/10)

**Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety:** At present, the Trust is completing a programme of refurbishment work in South Tyrone Hospital, which will allow all non-acute beds to be located in Loane House and provide a new day hospital and out patient department for older people's services.

There are currently no plans to refurbishment dormant wards to increase the number of non acute hospital beds for older people in South Tyrone Hospital.

### **Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder**

**Lord Morrow** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many cases of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder are currently diagnosed in (i) Fermanagh; and (ii) South Tyrone. (AQW 135/10)

**Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety:** The information is not available in the format requested.

### **Swine Flu Testing**

**Lord Morrow** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the procedure for swine flu testing; and to clarify if testing of Northern Ireland cases is carried out locally. (AQW 136/10)

**Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety:** Testing is carried out locally at the Regional Virus Laboratory, Belfast Health and Social Care Trust.

Testing for the influenza A (H1N1) virus which causes swine flu is carried out by taking a swab from the patient's nose and throat. The swab is then sent to the Regional Virus Laboratory for testing.

Initially swine flu tests were only available at the Public Health Laboratory Service in Colindale, North London. However, testing was then rolled out to regional laboratories across the UK and the Regional Virus Laboratory in Belfast began testing for swine flu when the necessary validation data was determined on 8 June 2009. This ensures a prompt and responsive local service.

### Surgical Site Infections

**Mr G Robinson** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many surgical site infections occurred in the orthopaedic wards at Altnagelvin Hospital in the last 5 years. (AQW 140/10)

**Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety:** For the period 1 January 2004 to 31 December 2008, 42 Surgical Site Infections resulting from 4321 documented orthopaedic procedures were reported by Altnagelvin Area Hospital to the Healthcare Infection Surveillance Centre (HISC).

### Staff Grade Doctors

**Mr G Robinson** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what action he is taking to address the shortage of staff grade doctors treating (i) cardiology; (ii) older people; and (iii) respiratory conditions at Causeway Hospital. (AQW 142/10)

**Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety:** I can confirm that the Northern Trust have arrangements in place to ensure that there is proper medical cover of cardiology, older people and respiratory services. There is no evidence of any vacancies in Cardiology, Older people or Respiratory conditions within Causeway Hospital.

Recruitment is the responsibility of trusts. My Department has however invested year on year in additional training grade doctors to meet the HSC's demand for career grade doctors of all types. The number of doctors in the training grades has increased from 1421 in 2001 to 1752 in 2008, an increase of 23%, with a view to meeting these and other service demands.

### Agenda for Change

**Mr T Lunn** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an update on his Department's implementation of the Agenda for Change pay structure in relation to ambulance workers. (AQW 165/10)

**Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety:** The Agenda for Change agreement is being implemented by Health and Social Care employers in partnership with local Trade Unions. The Northern Ireland Ambulance Trust is working towards resolving the outstanding implementation issues in line with the AfC Joint Working Group's principles and protocols. This includes processing 8 grading review applications covering 16 ambulance staff and undertaking full job evaluation for Emergency Medical Technicians, Paramedics and Rapid Response Paramedics. All parties are due to meet on 27 November to sign-off the Job Evaluation questionnaires and providing agreement is reached on that date the job evaluation process will move to the next stage.

### Fire Service and Health Service Vehicles

**Mr T Burns** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail (i) the number of recorded incidents of (a) theft; and (b) vandalism against Fire Service and Health Service vehicles in each of the last 5 years and; (ii) the total costs incurred by his Department in respect of these incidents. (AQW 168/10)

**Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety:** The information requested is shown in the tables. The information shown in tables (c) shows the total cost for theft and vandalism for Health service Vehicles as the information is not recorded separately. Table (c) does not include details relating to the Northern Trust, as the information is not readily available and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

**(A) THEFT FROM NI FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE VEHICLES**

Year	Number of Incidents	Cost
2004/05	Nil	-
2005/06	Nil	-
2006/07	Nil	-
2007/08	2	£1960.21
2008/09	2	£ 335.00
Total	4	£2295.21

**(B) VANDALISM TO NI FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE VEHICLES**

Year	Number of Incidents	Estimated cost
2004/05	78	£44,850
2005/06	54	£31,050
2006/07	42	£24,150
2007/08	42	£24,150
2008/09	36	£20,700
Total	252	£144,900.00

**(C) THEFT AND VANDALISM - HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE VEHICLES**

Year	Number of Incidents		Cost
	Theft	Vandalism	
2004/05	0	12	£5,950
2005/06	2	17	£6,290
2006/07	3	23	£43,435
2007/08	8	36	£10,200
2008/09	3	14	£22,344
Total	16	102	£88,219

**Swine Flu**

**Mr A Easton** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many people diagnosed with swine flu have not been treated with Tamiflu tablets. (AQW 169/10)

**Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety:** The information requested is not available.

**Health and Social Care Trusts' Efficiency Plans**

**Mr A Easton** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety if he has approved the five Health and Social Care Trusts' efficiency plans. (AQW 170/10)

**Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety:** My Department has approved the final proposals presented by Southern, Western, Belfast and South Eastern HSC Trusts, except in the case of Belfast Trust's Victoria Day Centre, with regard to which discussions are still ongoing.

Northern HSC Trust proposals are still under consideration.

### Ambulance Trust's Efficiency Plan

**Mr A Easton** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety if he has approved the Ambulance Trust's efficiency plan. (AQW 171/10)

**Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety:** My Department has approved the NI Ambulance Service efficiency proposals, with amendments, and the outcome of these decisions have been publicly announced.

### Swine Flu

**Mr A Easton** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety if cases of swine flu are only recorded if they receive Tamiflu. (AQW 172/10)

**Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety:** Cases of swine flu are recorded as confirmed once the laboratory test is found to be positive. Although all suspected cases of swine flu were tested in the early stages of the outbreak (the containment phase), not all suspected cases undergo testing as the outbreak develops. Therefore the number of confirmed cases ceases to be a useful way to estimate the actual number of cases.

Since Northern Ireland moved to the treatment phase on 2 July, the numbers of cases of swine flu are estimated from consultations for flu and flu like illness recorded by a sample of GP practices across Northern Ireland known as Sentinel GP practices. Consultations in Out of Hours centres are also included.

The number of courses of Tamiflu and Relenza is recorded on a daily basis, but not all patients receive treatment with antivirals.

### Allegations of Sexual Abuse in Termonbacca, Londonderry

**Mr D Simpson** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) to outline the child health issues arising from the allegations of sexual abuse in Termonbacca, Londonderry; and (ii) how he intends to investigate the child health issues associated with those allegations. (AQW 174/10)

**Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety:** Within Northern Ireland, the statutory framework requires that where allegations of child abuse come to light these must be reported immediately to PSNI and Social Services for investigation. I would encourage anyone who has any information regarding any allegations of child abuse to report these immediately to the statutory authorities for investigation so that perpetrators can be brought before the courts where this is appropriate.

Regulation, inspection and provision here have been strengthened significantly over many years. Since the public inquiry by Judge Hughes in 1985 into abuse at the Kincora Boys' Home we have continuously strengthened arrangements for vulnerable children. We established an independent Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority with statutory responsibility and powers to inspect services. The Northern Ireland Social Care Council, the independent public regulatory body for the social care workforce in Northern Ireland, is dedicated to improving and regulating standards of training and practice for social care workers.

Under current legislative procedures in Northern Ireland individuals who wish to work in a paid or unpaid capacity with children in a regulated position are subject to pre-employment vetting procedures. Information regarding individuals who have harmed a child or placed a child at risk of harm will be considered with a view to placing that individual on a disqualification list thereby preventing them from working with children in the future. Individuals placed on disqualification lists have the right of appeal to the independent Care Tribunal.

The introduction of new Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups legislation next month will further strengthen protection for children and vulnerable adults in workplace situations. These new safeguarding arrangements will help to meet Government's commitment to increasing public protection by significantly extending the range of activities and workplaces from which individuals may be barred from working with children and vulnerable adults. Consequently, many more individuals than at present who may pose a risk to children or vulnerable adults can be removed from the workplace.

My Department also intends to bring forward legislation next year to establish a regional, independently-chaired Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland. The Board will ultimately replace the non-statutory Area Child Protection Committees and will have a duty to make arrangements to safeguard the welfare of children

and young people. There will be a duty for relevant agencies to make arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and to co-operate to improve the well being of children. This measure will strengthen further safeguarding arrangements within Northern Ireland.

### Acute Hospital in Enniskillen

**Mr T Buchanan** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to outline (i) the current stage of development of the new acute hospital in Enniskillen; (ii) if it is on schedule for completion in 2012; (iii) if it is still on budget; and (iv) whether any additional costs have been incurred. (AQW 177/10)

**Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety:** Financial close for the South West Acute Hospital was achieved on 20 May 2009. Northern Ireland Health Group commenced work on site immediately in order to achieve the 2012 deadline. The general construction programme is on schedule with work currently focusing on the sub-structure works. The total capital construction costs for the project remains at £270 million with no additional costs incurred on this project. The project will be managed within the contract sum.

### Freedom of Information Act

**Mr J McCallister** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what action his Department is taking to improve compliance with section 10 of the Freedom of Information Act. (AQW 181/10)

**Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety:** The actions taken by my Department to improve compliance with section 10 of the Freedom of Information Act include the use of an electronic tracking system to log, track and issue reminders for each request, the allocation of each request to a trained Local Information Manager and the regular monitoring of performance, including scrutiny by the Departmental Board.

### Insulin Pumps

**Mr J Shannon** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to outline the funding currently provided in relation to the provision of insulin pumps in each Health and Social Care Trust area. (AQW 185/10)

**Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety:** The information requested is not available.

On 25 June 2009, my Department endorsed National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence Technology Appraisal No 151 on insulin pump therapy as applicable to Northern Ireland. The Health and Social Care Board and Trusts are currently developing plans to facilitate implementation of this guidance.

### Type 1 Diabetes

**Mr J Shannon** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail, as a whole number and a percentage, how many people with Type 1 diabetes in each Health and Social Care Trust area are currently on insulin pump therapy. (AQW 186/10)

**Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety:** The information requested is not available centrally.

### Allegations of Sexual Abuse in St Patrick's Home

**Mr D Simpson** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) to outline the child health issues arising from the allegations of sexual abuse in St Patrick's home on the Glen Road, Belfast; and (ii) how he intends to investigate the child health issues associated with those allegations. (AQW 189/10)

**Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety:** Within Northern Ireland, the statutory framework requires that where allegations of child abuse come to light these must be reported immediately to PSNI and Social Services for investigation. I would encourage anyone who has any information regarding any allegations

of child abuse to report these immediately to the statutory authorities for investigation so that perpetrators can be brought before the courts where this is appropriate.

Regulation, inspection and provision here have been strengthened significantly over many years. Since the public inquiry by Judge Hughes in 1985 into abuse at the Kincora Boys' Home we have continuously strengthened arrangements for vulnerable children. We established an independent Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority with statutory responsibility and powers to inspect services. The Northern Ireland Social Care Council, the independent public regulatory body for the social care workforce in Northern Ireland, is dedicated to improving and regulating standards of training and practice for social care workers.

Under current legislative procedures in Northern Ireland individuals who wish to work in a paid or unpaid capacity with children in a regulated position are subject to pre-employment vetting procedures. Information regarding individuals who have harmed a child or placed a child at risk of harm will be considered with a view to placing that individual on a disqualification list thereby preventing them from working with children in the future. Individuals placed on disqualification lists have the right of appeal to the independent Care Tribunal.

The introduction of new Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups legislation next month will further strengthen protection for children and vulnerable adults in workplace situations. These new safeguarding arrangements will help to meet Government's commitment to increasing public protection by significantly extending the range of activities and workplaces from which individuals may be barred from working with children and vulnerable adults. Consequently, many more individuals than at present who may pose a risk to children or vulnerable adults can be removed from the workplace.

My Department also intends to bring forward legislation next year to establish a regional, independently-chaired Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland. The Board will ultimately replace the non-statutory Area Child Protection Committees and will have a duty to make arrangements to safeguard the welfare of children and young people. There will be a duty for relevant agencies to make arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and to co-operate to improve the well being of children. This measure will strengthen further safeguarding arrangements within Northern Ireland.

### **Alcohol and Drug Awareness Programmes**

**Mr A Ross** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how much funding is given to the community and voluntary sectors for alcohol and drug awareness programmes. (AQW 213/10)

**Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety:** Through my Department's New Strategic Direction for Alcohol and Drugs, £3,159,665 has been allocated in 2009/2010 via the Public Health Agency to a range of community and voluntary sector organisations across Northern Ireland to raise awareness, and to prevent and address alcohol and drug related harm.

It is anticipated that this will increase to £3,712,819 in 2010/11.

### **Missed Appointments**

**Mr A Ross** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how much public money was lost through (i) missed GP appointments; and (ii) missed hospital appointments in the past twelve months. (AQW 215/10)

**Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety:** The cost of (i) missed GP appointments and (ii) missed hospital appointments is not available centrally.

### **Swine Flu**

**Lord Browne** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many cases of Swine Flu have been recorded in east Belfast. (AQW 228/10)

**Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety:** The information requested is not available.

### Blood Donation

**Mr T Burns** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the total number of (i) whole blood donations; (ii) platelet donations which the Northern Ireland Blood Transfusion Service has received in each of the last 5 years; and (iii) the number of those who became repeat donors. (AQW 231/10)

**Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety:** (i) and (ii)

Year	Whole blood	Platelets
2004/05	67,384	4,049
2005/06	64,338	3,716
2006/07	61,132	3,483
2007/08	57,872	3,905
2008/09	57,388	3,854

(iii) whole blood donations in any year are donated by donors at an average frequency of around 1.6 donations per donor per year (based on some donors donating up to three times per year, and some donors only once).

### Blood Donation

**Mr T Burns** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail (i) the total number of people registered to give blood in Northern Ireland; and (ii) the number of registered donors who are (a) active; and (b) lapsed or inactive. (AQW 232/10)

**Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety:**

- (i) Northern Ireland Blood Transfusion Service introduced a new IT system in 1996, and almost 400,000 people have been enrolled on this register (including those transferred from the legacy computer system).
- (ii)
  - (a) The current active donor panel is in excess of 64,000 - approximately 6% of the eligible population
  - (b) A simple definition of a lapsed donor is a person who has not donated for two years. However, a more useful indicator of the change to the database is the percentage of donors who become inactive each year - which can be as much as 15% in a year. Hence the constant need for new donors i.e. in the region of 8,000 to 10,000 each year.

### Blood Donation

**Mr T Burns** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how much was spent advertising and promoting blood donation in each of the last five years. (AQW 233/10)

**Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety:**

Year	Advertising spend (£'000)
2004/05	158
2005/06	119
2006/07	127
2007/08	110
2008/09	119

### Blood Stock and Reserves

**Mr T Burns** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for his assessment of the current status of blood stock and reserves in Northern Ireland. (AQW 234/10)

**Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety:** On 11 September Northern Ireland Blood Transfusion Service held just over nine days stock of blood, against a 'satisfactory' target of four days. However, stocks of one specific group O Rhesus negative were at just over 6 days (due to the higher usage of this universal blood group).

It should be noted that blood stocks have been increased in the light of current pandemic 'flu planning.

### NI Fire Service

**Mr A Easton** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety if he has approved the NI Fire Service efficiency plans. (AQW 244/10)

**Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety:** NI Fire Service efficiency proposals are currently being finalised and will then be sent to me for my approval.

### Nexium (esomeprazole), Lyrica (pregabalin), and Tramacet

**Mr C Boylan** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety if (i) Nexium (esomeprazole); (ii) Lyrica (pregabalin); and (iii) Tramacet have been prescribed by GPs, consultants or hospitals. (AQW 347/10)

**Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety:** Information is not available centrally in respect of drugs prescribed by consultants and hospitals; however I can confirm that each of the three drugs Nexium (esomeprazole); Lyrica (pregabalin); and Tramacet were prescribed by GPs during 2008.

### Nexium (esomeprazole), Lyrica (pregabalin) and Tramacet

**Mr C Boylan** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to outline the guidelines issued to GPs, consultants and hospitals in relation to prescribing (i) Nexium (esomeprazole); (ii) Lyrica (pregabalin); and (iii) Tramacet. (AQW 393/10)

**Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety:** Guidance on prescribing for specific conditions is regularly disseminated to the Health and Social Care sector and reflects an evidence-based approach to care as developed by the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE), other national bodies and regional Northern Ireland groups such as the Guidelines and Audit Implementation Network (GAIN).

In respect of Nexium (esomeprazole), the most recent guidance on the medicines used to treat symptomatic reflux and / or dyspepsia were issued by DHSSPS in March 2007. This recommended the use of Nexium® (esomeprazole) as an option if initial treatment of the condition with a cost-effective generic medicine had not achieved an adequate response. This guidance is in line with advice issued by NICE in 2004.

The Clinical Resources Efficiency Support Team (CREST) issued guidance dealing with the management of neuropathic pain in February 2008. This guidance lists Lyrica® as a treatment option for patients who develop side-effects with other more cost-effective drugs.

No specific prescribing guidance has been issued by the Department on the use Tramacet®.

Guidance issued to the Health and Social Care sector does not override or replace the individual responsibility of health professionals to make appropriate decisions in the circumstances of their individual patients, in consultation with the patient and/or guardian or carer.

### Foyle Epilepsy Action

**Mr G Robinson** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to outline what action he intends to take following his recent meeting with representatives of Foyle Epilepsy Action. (AQW 504/10)

**Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety:** At the meeting on Tuesday 15 September a number of issues were raised and I have asked Departmental Officials to take these forward with the relevant Health and Social Care bodies, Public Health Agency and other relevant Departments.

### Extracorporeal Membrane Oxygenation Therapy

**Lord Morrow** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) what provision is in place for patients suffering from swine flu and associated complications who require Extracorporeal Membrane Oxygenation therapy; and (ii) what is the protocol involved. (AQW 535/10)

**Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety:** There are only five dedicated adult Extracorporeal Membrane Oxygenation (ECMO) beds in Britain, located at Glenfield Hospital in Leicester. ECMO facilities for children are located at the Freeman Hospital, Newcastle, the Royal Hospital for Sick Children, Glasgow; and Great Ormond Street Hospital, London.

If an individual clinician recommended ECMO for a patient, it would be considered on a case by case basis by the Health and Social Care Board for an extra-contractual referral to a centre providing this therapy. However, during the peak of a surge of pandemic influenza, it is likely that there would be limited availability.

Extracorporeal Membrane Oxygenation therapy (ECMO) is only one of a number of treatments for respiratory failure. Robust clinical evidence to support the use of ECMO is limited and the treatment is not without considerable risks.

In Northern Ireland, patients who require ventilatory support are cared for in intensive care units. Plans are in place to expand the provision of critical care to more than double capacity through the purchase of an additional 47 ventilators for adults and 38 ventilators for children.

### Mid Ulster Hospital

**Mr P McGlone** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail all plans for changes, or anticipated dates for announcement of changes, to services at the Mid Ulster Hospital, Magherafelt, with particular reference to the Accident and Emergency Unit. (AQW 559/10)

**Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety:** The Northern Trust has recently forwarded proposals for the reform of acute service provision across the Trust area. I am currently considering those proposals and expect to be in a position to make an announcement shortly.

### Mid-Ulster Hospital

**Mr F Molloy** asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an update on his recent visit to the Mid-Ulster Hospital. (AQW 683/10)

**Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety:** The Northern Trust recently forwarded for my consideration proposals for the reform of acute services within its area. To help inform my decision on these proposals I took the opportunity to visit the Mid-Ulster hospital on 21 September and to see for myself the facilities and newly refurbished areas at the hospital.

## DEPARTMENT FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

### A56 Newry toTandragee Road

**Mr D Kennedy** asked the Minister for Regional Development if there are any plans to improve or upgrade the A56 Newry toTandragee Road following the recent fatal accidents on this road. (AQW 48/10)

**Minister for Regional Development (Mr C Murphy):** It is assumed that the question relates to the stretch of the A27 road between Newry and Tandragee.

I am pleased to advise you that my Department's Roads Service proposes to carry out a number of road improvement schemes, over the next few years, which will contribute to improving road safety on this stretch of the A27, namely:-

- a right turn lane at Terryhoogan Road;
- a right turn lane at Mullahead Road;
- an improvement to the forward visibility at Blacks Lane; and
- road link to the A28 as part of the A1 upgrade which is currently ongoing.

### Pay and Display Machines

**Mr A Ross** asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the (i) number; and (ii) location of pay and display machines in the East Antrim constituency. (AQW 50/10)

**Minister for Regional Development:** My Department's Roads Service has advised that there are 20 pay and display machines used in Roads Service car parks in the East Antrim Constituency. Their locations and the number at each car park are shown in the table below:

<b>Carrickfergus</b>	
Location	No. of machines
High Street	2
Joymount Street	2
Lancasterian Street	3
St Brides	4
<b>Larne</b>	
Location	No. of machines
Agnew Street	2
Circular Road West	2
Fairhill	1
Narrowgauge Road	4

### Pay and Display Machines

**Mr A Ross** asked the Minister for Regional Development (i) how many pay and display machines have been broken in the East Antrim constituency, in the last year; and (ii) for how long each machine was broken. (AQW 51/10)

**Minister for Regional Development:** My Department's Roads Service has advised that during the period from 1 September 2008 to 31 August 2009, each one of the 20 machines in the East Antrim Constituency experienced at least one fault that rendered it out of order. A total of 362 machine faults were reported in the last year.

I am also advised that the average total length of time that each machine was not operational, as a result of these faults, was 5.6 days. This equates to approximately 1.8% of the total working time of the machines.

### Flags on Lampposts

**Dr S Farry** asked the Minister for Regional Development to outline the number and nature of requests that have been made by the Roads Service to the Police for the names and addresses of those responsible for erecting flags on lampposts to enable enforcement action to be taken. (AQW 52/10)

**Minister for Regional Development:** My Department's Roads Service has advised that it has not made any requests to the PSNI for the names and addresses of those responsible for erecting flags on Roads Service lampposts.

### Vesting of Properties

**Mr R Beggs** asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail (i) all properties on the A2 Greenisland widening scheme that have been vested to date; and (ii) what budget has been set aside for the vesting of properties during 2009/10 and 2010/11. (AQW 76/10)

**Minister for Regional Development:** My Department's Roads Service has advised that, to date, no properties have been vested as part of the A2 Greenisland widening scheme. However, over the last few years a number of houses were acquired under blight legislation. This legislation obliges Roads Service to acquire properties, if the presence of a protection line for a road scheme has led to the owner being unable to sell the property at market value. So far Roads Service has acquired 23 properties, with a total cost of approximately £9 million.

I can also advise that no budget has been identified at this time for the vesting of properties during 2009/10 and 2010/11. Further applications under blight legislation will of course be addressed.

Roads Service will continue to bid, through the normal process, to obtain funding to allow the vesting of land and construction to proceed at the earliest opportunity.

### The A1/Dromore Road Flyover, Banbridge

**Mr G Savage** asked the Minister for Regional Development why, four months after completion, the A1/Dromore Road flyover, Banbridge, is still not fully operational. (AQW 78/10)

**Minister for Regional Development:** The works to provide a new flyover at the Dromore Road junction on the A1 at Banbridge are part of Package 2 of my Department's Roads Service's Design, Build, Finance and Operate programme. Roads Service has advised that the date specified in the contract for the completion of the new flyover is December 2009.

However, once the construction works on the flyover were substantially completed, ahead of schedule, traffic was able to travel one-way across the new bridge from the southbound carriageway to Dromore Road. While the new road may have appeared to be ready for opening, a Road Safety Audit, carried out by an independent Road Safety Auditor appointed by the Contractor, highlighted a number of issues which needed to be addressed. This is normal procedure on such contracts. At the same time, the Contractor's own Quality Inspectors conducted a survey to identify works that were not fully completed, or where defects needed to be rectified. While I am advised that none of the issues identified were matters of concern, they did need to be attended to, prior to fully opening the flyover to traffic.

Activities have, therefore, been continuing on site to address the issues raised by both the independent Road Safety Auditor and the Contractor's Quality Inspection team. In the interest of safety, of both the travelling public and the workforce on site, traffic management measures have remained in place on the flyover.

I am pleased to be able to now confirm that the Dromore Road junction on the A1 at Banbridge was fully opened to all traffic on Monday 14 September 2009.

### Water Infrastructure and Storm Drainage Infrastructure

**Mr G Savage** asked the Minister for Regional Development for his assessment of (i) Northern Ireland Water infrastructure; and (ii) Roads Service storm drainage infrastructure, in the Belfast and surrounding area, with particular reference to performance on Saturday 29 August 2009. (AQW 79/10)

**Minister for Regional Development:** I am advised that there were only isolated reported incidences of flooding on 29 August 2009. Both Northern Ireland Water and Roads Service have reported that there were no major problems with the performance of their drainage systems on the subject date.

### Primary Road Network Connections

**Mr M Durkan** asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on the report on primary road network connections around the Derry City area; and to indicate when it will be made public. (AQW 90/10)

**Minister for Regional Development:** My Department's Roads Service appointed consultants, Scott Wilson, to consider the strategic needs of the traffic around Derry City and it was previously anticipated that the report would be completed this summer.

However, due to the level of detail required, it is now anticipated that the report should be completed by the end of 2009.

### A47 at Bo Island, Co. Fermanagh

**Mr T Gallagher** asked the Minister for Regional Development to outline what improvement works his Department plans to carry out on the A47 at Bo Island, Co. Fermanagh over the next three years. (AQW 103/10)

**Minister for Regional Development:** My Department's Roads Service has advised that two significant resurfacing schemes on the A47 Boa Island Road are near completion. These schemes, located at The Commons near Belleek and on Boa Island near Ardshankil, have a combined value of some £200,000.

Over the next three years Roads Service plans to carry out further widening work on the A47 near Lusty Beg, as suitable fill material becomes available from other schemes. Resurfacing the widened section of road will, however, be subject to the availability of funding.

### Private Consultancy Firms and Events Organisers

**Mr P McGlone** asked the Minister for Regional Development how much has been spent by his Department in each of the last five years on (i) private consultancy firms; and (ii) events organisers. (AQW 153/10)

**Minister for Regional Development:**

(i) The expenditure incurred by my Department on private consultancy firms during the financial years 2004/05 to 2008/09 is set out in the table below.

#### DRD EXPENDITURE ON PRIVATE CONSULTANCY FIRMS

	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Core Department	£2,178,062	£1,372,423	£5,076,850	£1,081,710	£248,299
DRD Agencies	£5,261,687	£7,240,114	£10,861,783	£757,368	£533,145
<b>Total</b>	<b>£7,439,749</b>	<b>£8,612,537</b>	<b>£15,938,633</b>	<b>£1,839,078</b>	<b>£781,444</b>

(ii) The expenditure incurred by my Department on external events organisers during the financial years 2004/05 to 2008/09 is set out in the table below.

#### DRD EXPENDITURE ON EVENTS ORGANISERS

	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
Core Department	£4,922	£Nil	£928	£Nil	£11,270
DRD Agencies	£4,167	£50,884	£39,671	£Nil	£Nil
<b>Total</b>	<b>£9,089</b>	<b>£50,884</b>	<b>£40,599</b>	<b>£Nil</b>	<b>£11,270</b>

### Rapid Transport Division

**Mr D Kinahan** asked the Minister for Regional Development to outline the progress of the Rapid Transport Division in carrying out detailed survey work on route options provided in the Rapid Transit strategic outline case. (AQW 175/10)

**Minister for Regional Development:** Rapid Transit Division have completed Traffic and Parking Surveys for all routes.

Topographical, Geotechnical, Deflectograph, and Land Acquisition Surveys are currently ongoing along the route options provided in the Strategic Outline Case.

### Rapid Transport Scheme

**Mr D Kinahan** asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQO 2237/09, what action has been taken to solicit developer contributions to the Rapid Transport scheme. (AQW 176/10)

**Minister for Regional Development:** Rapid Transit Division has met with a number of key developers to discuss contributions. Initially it was envisaged that developer contributions would contribute significantly to the funding of the Rapid Transit project. However, this may be difficult to realise in the short term due to the current economic climate.

Rapid Transit Division is also being advised of planning applications on/adjacent to the routes which will enable them to seek contributions from new developments as part of planning conditions.

### Rapid Transport Division

**Mr D Kinahan** asked the Minister for Regional Development to outline the progress of the Rapid Transport Division in carrying out a market sounding exercise for the Rapid Transit scheme. (AQW 178/10)

**Minister for Regional Development:** Rapid Transit Division completed the Market Sounding Exercise and reported to me on 27 July 2009.

In summary, the report demonstrates that there is a high level of interest from operators in the design, operation and maintenance of the BRT system. The limited interest in its financing is due to the current market conditions, the current formative level of system design, and uncertainty in relation to legislative and operational risks.

### Londonderry Line Passing Loop

**Mr D Kinahan** asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQO 664/09, for an update on the Londonderry line passing loop. (AQW 179/10)

**Minister for Regional Development:** A detailed track capacity and Infrastructure Study of the line between Belfast and Derry has now been completed. The objective of the Study was to identify specifically the infrastructure upgrades necessary to support an hourly intercity train service between Derry and Belfast. The Study suggests that Ballykelly is not the preferred location for a passing loop on what is otherwise a single track railway. For the optimal hourly train service and technical reasons the passing loop needs to be located close to Derry. Translink are now advancing their detailed plans to determine the precise location for the passing loop and intend to incorporate this development into the much larger track relay and re-signalling project between Coleraine and Derry which is planned to run from 2011 to 2013. These decisions are subject to the outcome of the economic appraisal and will require the necessary statutory approval process.

### NI Railways Timetable

**Mr G Robinson** asked the Minister for Regional Development what consultation was carried out with NI Railway passengers on the Londonderry Line before the new timetable was agreed. (AQW 222/10)

**Minister for Regional Development:** NIR are formally obliged to consult with my department, under existing Public Service Obligations, in relation to changes in service levels (i.e. the number of trains per day) however, no changes in service levels are proposed on the Derry line.

Translink are in continuous consultation with customers through “Translink Feedback”. NIR have informed me that they have been advising customers from early 2009 that following line reconstruction in April to June 2009 that new train timetables would be introduced in September. No specific consultation in relation to detailed train times took place prior to the issue of timetables at stations on 8 September 2009.

Translink are also expected to pay regard to its Passenger’s Charter commitments, which require new timetables to be in the public domain a number of weeks prior to introduction. I am not convinced that adequate consultation took place in this case and these issues have been discussed with Translink.

### NI Railways Timetable

**Mr G Robinson** asked the Minister for Regional Development what consideration was given to passenger requirements when developing the new NI Railway timetable for the Londonderry line. (AQW 223/10)

**Minister for Regional Development:** I have had changes made to the revised timetable initially proposed by NIR.

The first train will now arrive in Derry at 9.00 am. This is 10 minutes earlier than at present and 30 minutes earlier than in the revised timetabled initially proposed by NIR. However the revised timetable retains the proposal that will mean rail passengers from Derry and Coleraine will have reduced journey times to Belfast. This aspect was central to Translinks consideration of the proposals originally announced.

### NI Railways

**Mr G Robinson** asked the Minister for Regional Development to outline how the working time directive is applied to NI Railway drivers, conductors and signal staff. (AQW 225/10)

**Minister for Regional Development:** NI Railways has informed me that the working patterns for train drivers, conductors and signals staff are covered by EU Working Time Directives and that they are in full compliance with same. In particular this is applied to minimum daily rest periods, minimum weekly rest periods, maximum weekly working hours and average weekly working hours. Working patterns are monitored on a regular basis.

### A8 Road

**Mr A Ross** asked the Minister for Regional Development, in relation to the A8 road, to outline (i) the process undertaken when dealing with landowners affected by the preferred route; and (ii) what level of compensation will be offered to landowners impacted by the preferred route. (AQW 236/10)

**Minister for Regional Development:** Firstly, in relation to the processes undertaken when dealing with landowners affected by the preferred route for the A8, my Department’s Roads Service has advised that, affected landowners were given the opportunity to discuss this scheme, by attending public exhibitions which were held in May 2008 and November 2008. At that time landowners were offered one to one meetings with Roads Service officials and the design consultants. These meetings gave an opportunity to explain the scheme options being considered and the likely impact they may have on landowners. In addition, over 600 people took the opportunity to view the preferred route and speak with officials, at the “Preferred Route Announcement” exhibition which was held on 5 and 6 August 2009.

It is considered that there are approximately 100 landowners likely to be affected by the preferred route and discussions are planned with these landowners, during the coming months, where the impact on landowners will be discussed and attempts made at identifying measures to mitigate this impact.

With regard to compensation, I can advise that landowners’ rights and interests are protected by legislation and the Department of Finance and Personnel’s, Land and Property Services, will act for the Department on these matters. They will evaluate the level of compensation, on an individual basis, in line with their published guidance on the assessment of compensation.

## New IT Systems

**Mr S Hamilton** asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail (i) all new IT systems that were installed in his Department; (ii) the initial budget; (iii) the actual cost; (iv) the estimated start date; and (v) the actual start date, in the last five years. (AQW 261/10)

**Minister for Regional Development:** Over the past five years the Department for Regional Development has installed one new system - the Decriminalised Parking Enforcement (DPE) Penalty Charge Notice (PCN) Processing System.

The business case estimated the cost of the system (initial budget) at £2.76M over a contract period of 10 years. Based on the initial capital cost and monthly volume based service charges to date, the projected actual cost to 2016 (assuming no significant change in volumes) is £2.46M, i.e. £300k within budget.

The project had an estimated go-live date of October 2006, and the system did indeed go-live in October 2006.

In addition to this Departmental specific system, a number of common NICS systems were implemented within the Department during the past five years including Records Management HR Connect, and Account NI. Implementation of these systems was managed by the DFP.

## Rail Level-crossing on the A76 in Lurgan

**Mr S Gardiner** asked the Minister for Regional Development why he does not consider it a priority to address the issue of the rail level-crossing on the A76 in Lurgan, which is closed for over three hours each day, interrupting the town's main link to the M1 motorway, by providing uninterrupted vehicle access through an underpass or flyover. (AQW 265/10)

**Minister for Regional Development:** As you are aware, a study was carried out, in September 2007, to assess the William Street crossing in Lurgan.

The report considered a number of engineering options including an overpass, an underpass and a tunnel. All the options proved to be very expensive, ranging from approximately £20 million to £250 million. None of the options performed well under economic appraisal, and all had significant environmental consequences for the William Street/Lough Road area of Lurgan.

Translink has advised me that there are three crossings on the section of railway line, within the vicinity of Lurgan town centre, and the timing of the relevant signals has been optimised to mitigate delays to road traffic. NIR's new timetables from 27 September 2009 will have no impact on existing road closure times at the railway crossing on the A76 in Lurgan.

## Roads Maintenance

**Mr S Gardiner** asked the Minister for Regional Development how much he is spending on roads maintenance per mile of road (i) on trunk roads; (ii) on motorways; (iii) on A class roads; and (iv) on B class roads. (AQW 266/10)

**Minister for Regional Development:** My Department's Roads Service do not maintain details of expenditure broken down by road class. However, when the structural maintenance expenditure for 2008/09 is assessed against the total number of miles of all classes of public roads, this equates to approximately £4,000 per mile of road.

## Contingency Fund

**Mr S Gardiner** asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the amount of any contingency fund he retains within his departmental budget. (AQW 267/10)

**Minister for Regional Development:** My department's budget has been fully allocated across the Roads, Transport and Water and Sewerage programmes as set out on page 43 in the current Corporate and Business Plan (available on the DRD website at [http://www.drdsn.gov.uk/drd\\_corporate\\_plan\\_2009-11\\_and\\_business\\_plan\\_2009-10.pdf](http://www.drdsn.gov.uk/drd_corporate_plan_2009-11_and_business_plan_2009-10.pdf)). My department does not have a policy to withhold allocations to maintain a contingency fund.

During the year my department's focus is on managing risk through contingency plans on an ongoing basis across those allocations.

### Roads Infrastructure

**Mr D O'Loan** asked the Minister for Regional Development, in relation to developer contribution to roads infrastructure, if there is any agreement or understanding in cases where the developer is another public body, that Roads Service will fund the cost of the development. (AQW 280/10)

**Minister for Regional Development:** The principle of developer contributions for roads and other infrastructure, as a result of new development, is well established in Planning Policy Statements (PPS) 3 (Access, Movement and Parking), and PPS 13 (Transportation and Land Use).

The principle applies equally to proposals coming forward from other public bodies, and there is no general agreement or understanding that Roads Service would fund infrastructure requirements identified in a Transport Assessment.

### Translink

**Mr G Robinson** asked the Minister for Regional Development if he can confirm that all timetable changes being considered by Translink in the future will be subject to a passenger consultation, to ensure that passengers have a direct input into service improvement and development. (AQW 313/10)

**Minister for Regional Development:** The Translink Passenger's Charter has been drawn up in agreement with DRD and the Consumer Council. Within this Charter Translink are committed to tell passengers about timetable changes 4 weeks before the new timetable applies. This can reduce to 2 weeks when essential engineering work is the reason for the timetable change.

Timetable changes are an operational matter and are the responsibility of Translink. There is no specific requirement for Translink to consult on timetable changes but I would expect Translink to consult at a local level with customers for major changes.

Timetable development is a complex matter requiring the balancing of various stakeholder interests. In addition, to best, meeting as many customers' needs as possible, Translink need to balance the policy aims of government, operational effectiveness and efficiencies.

Under the Transport Act 1967 if sufficient numbers of customers complain to me about rail services I can review the position and if necessary ask Translink to change their proposals. This is not my preferred position and can be avoided, in my view, if local consultations and communications take place. Clearly I also need to take account of the legal requirement for Translink to work to a commercial remit.

I have advised Translink that they need to consider carefully the impacts of potential timetable changes and to reconsider their methods for consulting locally with customers and political representatives. We also need to recognize that not all stakeholders will be fully satisfied with any existing or new timetable. Translink have also offered to provide my department with proposed major timetable changes 2 weeks prior to publication of the proposal. However we need to be careful about ensuring that Translink are allowed to operate with some degree of operational autonomy and to recognize the commercial remit the company operates under.

### NI Railways Timetable

**Mr G Robinson** asked the Minister for Regional Development if he will seek the input of local elected representatives on future timetable changes proposed by NI Railways. (AQW 316/10)

**Minister for Regional Development:** Timetable changes are an operational matter and are the responsibility of Translink. There is no specific requirement for Translink to consult on timetable changes but I would expect, for major changes, Translink to consult at a local level both with customers and elected representatives.

I have advised Translink that they need to consider carefully the impacts of potential timetable changes and to reconsider their methods for consulting locally with customers and political representatives. Translink have also offered to provide my department with proposed timetable changes 2 weeks prior to publication of proposed

timetable changes. I also need to be careful about ensuring that Translink are allowed to operate with some degree of operational autonomy and to recognise their commercial remit.

### NI Railways Timetable

**Mr M Durkan** asked the Minister for Regional Development what is the approval process for changes to NI Railways timetables. (AQW 321/10)

**Minister for Regional Development:** The Translink Passenger's Charter has been drawn up in agreement with DRD and the Consumer Council. Within this Charter, Translink are committed to tell passengers about timetable changes 4 weeks before the new timetable applies. This can reduce to 2 weeks when essential engineering work is the reason for the timetable change.

There is no formal agreed process for my department to approve bus or rail timetables. Timetable changes are an operational matter and are the responsibility of Translink. I do expect Translink to consult at a local level with customers and to discuss major changes with my department. Under the Transport Act 1967 if sufficient numbers of customers complain to myself about rail services I can review the position and if necessary ask Translink to change their proposals. This is not my preferred position and can be avoided, in my view, if local consultations and communications take place. Clearly I also need to take account of the legal requirement for Translink to work to a commercial remit.

It is the case that passengers can complain about Translink services through the "feedback" website and Translink are committed, within the Passenger's Charter, to investigate all complaints thoroughly and fairly.

I have advised Translink that they need to consider carefully the impacts of potential timetable changes and to reconsider their methods for consulting locally with customers and political representatives. Translink have also offered to provide my department with proposed major timetable changes 2 weeks prior to publication of the proposal. Under existing Public Service Obligation arrangement a schedule of rail services detailing the number of train services exists. Changes to this schedule must be agreed with my department in light of available resources. We need also to be careful about ensuring that Translink are allowed to operate with some degree of operational autonomy and to recognise the commercial remit.

### 'Brown' Directional Signs

**Mr J Dallat** asked the Minister for Regional Development what steps he has taken to review departmental policy on the use of 'brown' directional signs to assist users of hotels and guesthouses, particularly in rural areas. (AQW 379/10)

**Minister for Regional Development:** My Department's Roads Service facilitates the provision of white on brown tourist traffic signs using its policy "Tourist Signing in Northern Ireland". The policy, published in April 2004, was jointly developed and agreed with the NI Tourist Board (NITB) and provides a framework for the provision of tourist signing, in a consistent and equitable manner.

I have recently asked Roads Service to examine the policy, to establish if there is potential for an enhancement that would allow additional rural businesses to be accommodated. As deliberations are just underway, it is too early to say what changes are possible.

Roads Service has to be mindful of the impact that a proliferation of signing could have on the rural landscape and road safety, and any change will have to be done in a controlled way.

### Passing Loop Between Derry and Coleraine

**Mr M Durkan** asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on the provision of a passing loop between Derry and Coleraine. (AQW 399/10)

**Minister for Regional Development:** A detailed track capacity and Infrastructure Study of the line between Belfast and Derry has now been completed. The objective of the Study was to identify specifically the infrastructure upgrades necessary to support an hourly intercity train service between Derry and Belfast. The Study suggests that Ballykelly is not the preferred location for a passing loop on what is otherwise a single track

railway. For the optimal hourly train service and technical reasons the passing loop needs to be located close to Derry. Translink are now advancing their detailed plans to determine the precise location for the passing loop and intend to incorporate this development into the much larger track relay and re-signalling project between Coleraine and Derry which is planned to run from 2011 to 2013. These decisions are subject to the outcome of the economic appraisal and will require the necessary statutory approval process.

### NI Railways Timetable

**Mr G Robinson** asked the Minister for Regional Development why the 21.20 train from Belfast to Londonderry on Saturday and Sunday evenings and the 21.20 from Londonderry to Belfast on Sunday evenings have been completely removed from the NI Railway timetable. (AQW 402/10)

**Minister for Regional Development:** The current 2120 hours Saturday night train from Belfast to Derry has been rescheduled to depart Great Victoria Street Station at 2110 hours and Belfast Central at 2120 hours. It will arrive into Derry at 2323 hours, some 17 minutes earlier than the current timetable.

The current 2120 hours Sunday night train from Belfast to Derry had been rescheduled to 2143 hours departure but with the train terminating in Coleraine. Following discussions with Translink this planned change has now been withdrawn and the rescheduled service will terminate in Derry.

With respect to Sunday night Derry to Belfast trains, there is no current 2120 hours train to Belfast. Currently the last train to Belfast departs Derry at 1935 hours. This will become a 1925 hours departure in the new timetable proposals.

The new weekend timetables between Derry and Belfast have been recast to provide regular clockface departures throughout the day – that is a train every two hours on Saturdays and every three hours on Sundays. Translink experience to date is that by providing regularity and consistency of timetables, as far as possible, that this is generally welcomed by passengers and that it generates additional ridership. It is also worth pointing out that the new timetables at weekends will deliver reduced journey times.

### Roads Service

**Mr I McCrea** asked the Minister for Regional Development why Roads Service has reduced the number of maintenance section engineers from 24 to 20. (AQW 437/10)

**Minister for Regional Development:** Roads Service has not reduced the number of maintenance section engineers from 24 to 20. At present, two of the 24 Section Engineer posts are unfilled.

### Roads Service

**Mr I McCrea** asked the Minister for Regional Development what areas are affected by the recent decision by Roads Service to reduce the number of maintenance section engineers from 24 to 20. (AQW 438/10)

**Minister for Regional Development:** I would refer the Member to my answer to his Assembly Question AQW 437/10.

### Direct Labour Operational Depots

**Mr I McCrea** asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail any proposed closures of the direct labour operational depots of Roads Service. (AQW 443/10)

**Minister for Regional Development:** In order to meet the Executive's Budget 2008 administrative efficiency savings my Department's Roads Service is reviewing its administration costs, with a view to identifying potential savings.

Within Roads Service, the first stage of a Depot Review is almost complete. As yet, no final decision has been made, however, consideration is being given to closing three Depots and moving associated staff to neighbouring depots.

Roads Service has invited the Trade Union Side to enter into discussions about this matter.

### **Steria Contract**

**Mr T Gallagher** asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQO 30/10, in relation to the termination of the Steria contract, to list (i) the functions transferred; and (ii) the service provider, to which the functions were transferred. (AQW 487/10)

**Minister for Regional Development:** I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water that following the termination of the Steria contract, functions relating to ICT support and help desk were transferred to Northgate Ltd and the provision of the back office functions of the Customer Service Centre were transferred to Echo Managed Services Ltd.

In addition, the management of a number of small contracts which were under the control of Steria transferred either to NIW or Echo Managed Services Ltd.

### **NI Railways Timetable**

**Mr G Robinson** asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the cost to the public purse of Translink having to withdraw the planned revised NI Railway timetable for the Londonderry line last week. (AQW 503/10)

**Minister for Regional Development:** Translink have advised me that they incurred £811.00 expenditure for the printing of 30,000 timetables, which have now been withdrawn, for the Derry line rail service.

### **Burrenbridge/ Ballyhafry Road Junction, Castlewellan**

**Mr W Clarke** asked the Minister for Regional Development when the Burrenbridge/ Ballyhafry Road junction, Castlewellan, will be repaired. (AQW 514/10)

**Minister for Regional Development:** My Department's Roads Service has advised that no repairs are considered necessary to the Burrenbridge Road / Ballyhafry Road Junction. However, a section of the Burrenbridge Road, near to the Ballyhafry Road, was damaged recently, as a result of a retaining wall collapse. A contractor has been appointed to carry out repairs, and it is anticipated that this work should be completed by 15 October 2009.

### **Roadside Trees**

**Mr J Dallat** asked the Minister for Regional Development what plans he has to erect warning signs in areas where roadside trees act as a hazard. (AQW 518/10)

**Minister for Regional Development:** I can advise that, where trees are considered to pose a high risk hazard to road users or they have been found to be the primary cause of a serious collision, they are invariably removed, if on Roads Service owned land, or protection measures are installed.

I can also advise that Roads Service is jointly working with the national road authorities of Scotland, Wales and the South to develop a Road Protection Scoring system, using the EuroRAP protocols, which will assess the level of protection a road offers to vehicle occupants in the event of a collision. One of the elements that the system will assess is the likely outcome of a run-off collision with roadside hazards, such as trees. The information provided will be used by Roads Service to consider what mitigating measures are necessary to improve the road safety performance of each route.

### **NI Water**

**Mr W Irwin** asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the cost associated with a connection to an existing water main for a new dwelling in the countryside; and to explain the pricing arrangements adopted by NI Water. (AQW 542/10)

**Minister for Regional Development:** I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water that the charges for connecting a property to the watermain are detailed in its Scheme of Charges for 2009/10, which is available on

its website at [www.niwater.com](http://www.niwater.com). The cost of a connection will depend on the circumstances of each case, but the charge for a full standard water connection in a public area/roadway is £882. Where a connection is in private lands and the customer can undertake all excavation and reinstatement works at their own expense, the cost of a standard connection is £216.

### Surveys in Toome and Castledawson

**Mr G Campbell** asked the Minister for Regional Development if there have been any surveys done in Toome and Castledawson in the last five years, since the opening of the bypasses, to determine if there has been any change in patterns of business following the new road layout being established. (AQW 558/10)

**Minister for Regional Development:** My Department's Roads Service has advised that no surveys of this nature have been carried out in the last five years, and that it has no plans to carry out such surveys in the future.

### Belfast Harbour Commission Land

**Ms C Ní Chuilín** asked the Minister for Regional Development, in relation to Belfast Harbour Commission land, to detail (i) how much land it has; (ii) if any land has been transferred or sold to other companies, if so, (a) will any land be used for regeneration; and (b) what type of regeneration will be developed. (AQW 572/10)

**Minister for Regional Development:** The total area of land owned by Belfast Harbour Commissioners is 1955 acres. Since 1847 the Belfast Harbour Commissioners have granted a total of 1438 acres on various leases. Of this figure, 377 acres may be described as regeneration land on which commercial office, warehousing, local service retail, leisure and residential development has either taken place, is being developed, or is proposed.

### Road Building and Improvement Schemes

**Mr S Gardiner** asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail (i) all road building and improvement schemes undertaken by his Department; (ii) the estimated and actual costs of each scheme; and (iii) the current stage of each scheme, in each constituency, since 2007. (AQW 624/10)

**Minister for Regional Development:** My Department's Roads Service does not hold information on schemes on a constituency basis. However, information on schemes completed and proposed schemes can be found in Roads Service's Spring and Autumn Reports to Councils. These reports can be accessed from the Roads Service internet site at the following web address: [www.roadsni.gov.uk/index/publications/publications-council\\_reports.htm](http://www.roadsni.gov.uk/index/publications/publications-council_reports.htm)

Roads Service is currently compiling their Autumn Reports to Councils.

## DEPARTMENT FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

### Social Housing Waiting List

**Mr S Hamilton** asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the current religious breakdown of the applicants on the social housing waiting list. (AQW 1/10)

**Minister for Social Development (Ms M Ritchie):** The table shows the social housing waiting list by religious background at 1 June 2009.

**SOCIAL HOUSING WAITING LIST BY RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND  
(AT 1 JUNE 2009)**

Religion	Number of position 1 applicants	Percentage
Catholic	14671	38.4%
Other	3395	8.9%
Protestant	15260	39.9%
Undisclosed	4901	12.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>38227</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Notes**

- i. The religious composition of households is based on 'self reported' answers to the question held in the General Housing Application Form. The religion of the Position 1 individual (i.e. the person appearing first on the General Housing Application Form) in the household is assumed as a proxy for the religion of all individuals in the household.
- ii. The Housing Executive is currently unable to identify 'mixed' religion households although we are aware that a number of households currently described as 'Roman Catholic' or 'Protestant' would clearly fall into a 'Mixed' category.

### NIHE Discretionary Grants

**Mr S Hamilton** asked the Minister for Social Development what consideration was given to the impact on the construction sector of the decision to stop NIHE discretionary grants. (AQW 2/10)

**Minister for Social Development:** Obviously the decision to suspend grants, except where obligations and commitments already existed, was going to impact on the construction sector. However the total spend on grants this year is likely to be of the order of £35.5 million against £40.5 million the previous year. We have also been managing the newbuild programme to ensure that more houses are built on land we already own—thus transferring funding from land purchase to pure construction activity.

You will aware that, due to the downturn in land and house sales, there is a £100 million shortfall in the Housing Budget for 2009/10 which will impact on all spending programmes. My priority is to protect vulnerable households and I have therefore protected the budgets for:

- i. Warm Homes – to help households facing fuel poverty;
- ii. Supporting People – to help people live independently in the community rather than in institutions; and
- iii. the newbuild programme – to help those in acute housing stress and the homeless.

### Warm Homes Scheme

**Mr S Hamilton** asked the Minister for Social Development (i) how many referrals and applications have been received since the inception of the new Warm Homes Scheme contracts; and (ii) how many schemes have been enacted. (AQW 3/10)

**Minister for Social Development:** Since the new Warm Homes Scheme commenced on 1 July 2009, 2,092 new applications have been received. Five hundred applications have been approved and allocated to contractors for installation of measures to improve the energy efficiency of the homes. There are a further 265 applications which have been approved and the work will to be allocated to a contractor in the next few days. I have set a Public Service Agreement target to implement energy efficiency measures in 10,000 households in 2009/2010 and I expect this target to be met.

### Warm Homes Scheme

**Mr S Hamilton** asked the Minister for Social Development how many Warm Homes Scheme installations have been made in each year of the lifetime of the Scheme, including the 2009 year to date. (AQW 4/10)

**Minister for Social Development:** Over 71,000 homes have been made more energy efficient by the Warm Homes Scheme Since its inception in 2001. Two new scheme managers were appointed in July 2009. The

number of homes assisted for each complete year of the scheme is shown in the table below. To date, 500 energy efficiency measures have been installed in 379 households during the financial year 2009/10. The Public Service Agreement target is to implement energy efficiency measures in 10,000 households and I fully expect that target to be met.

Year	Households Assisted
2001-02	3,826
2002-03	7,484
2003-04	7,124
2004-05	8,557
2005-06	10,266
2006-07	11,687
2007-08	11,279
2008-09	10,927
2009-10	379
<b>Total</b>	<b>71,529</b>

### Decent Homes Standard

**Mr S Hamilton** asked the Minister for Social Development how many homes owned by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive meet the Decent Homes standard in terms of energy; and how many do not. (AQW 59/10)

**Minister for Social Development:** Of the 90,272 Housing Executive dwellings, 12,300 do not currently meet the Decent Homes standard for thermal comfort. Through its programmes of planned improvement and heating replacement schemes the Housing Executive has reduced this figure from 55,970 in 2001.

### Natural Gas

**Mr S Hamilton** asked the Minister for Social Development (i) how many homes are owned by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive; (ii) how many of these are in areas served by natural gas; and (iii) how many have converted to natural gas. (AQW 60/10)

**Minister for Social Development:** The Housing Executive stock levels currently stand at 90,279 dwellings across Northern Ireland. The Housing Executive does not hold details about which areas are served by natural gas. Currently 29,161 Housing Executive properties have been converted to natural gas heating.

### Energy Efficiency Measures

**Mr S Hamilton** asked the Minister for Social Development how many Northern Ireland Housing Executive owned homes have had energy efficiency measures installed in each of the last 5 years. (AQW 61/10)

**Minister for Social Development:** Energy efficiency improvements were carried out by the Housing Executive on its properties as follows:-

2004/05	10476
2005/06	10978
2006/07	8606
2007/08	5394
2008/09	2547

### Heating Systems

**Mr S Hamilton** asked the Minister for Social Development how many homes owned by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive have (i) oil fired; and (ii) economy 7 heating systems. (AQW 62/10)

**Minister for Social Development:** The Housing Executive currently has 36,879 dwellings with oil heating and 11,339 dwellings with Economy 7 heating systems.

### Special Purchase of Evacuated Dwellings

**Mr A Easton** asked the Minister for Social Development how she proposes to raise additional funding for the Special Purchase of Evacuated Dwellings scheme for PSNI officers intimidated out of their homes. (AQW 105/10)

**Minister for Social Development:** I am pleased that the Executive, with a commitment to additional funding, has agreed that my Department can now reinstate the SPED scheme with immediate effect. I have now instructed the Housing Executive to process the outstanding SPED applications.

### Bonfire Sites

**Mr T Burns** asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the costs incurred by her Department in cleaning and repairing bonfire sites during the summer of 2009. (AQW 110/10)

**Minister for Social Development:** For the period 1 July 2009 to 31 August 2009 the Housing Executive incurred costs of £108k through the removal and reinstatement works associated with bonfires. This compares to £125k costs through such works during 2008/09.

### Special Purchase of Evacuated Dwellings Scheme

**Mr A Ross** asked the Minister for Social Development how many dwellings her Department has purchased under the Special Purchase of Evacuated Dwellings scheme in each of the past three years. (AQW 216/10)

**Minister for Social Development:** The number of properties purchased under the Special Purchase of Evacuated Dwellings Scheme for the period requested was as follows:

2006/2007	22
2007/2008	22
2008/2009	46

### Private Consultancy Firms and Events Organisers

**Mr P McGlone** asked the Minister for Social Development how much has been spent by her Department in each of the last five years on (i) private consultancy firms; and (ii) events organisers. (AQW 229/10)

**Minister for Social Development:** The information on consultancy and event organiser costs for the last 5 years is set out in the table below:

	Consultancy costs £	Event Organiser Costs £
2004-2005	923,945	-
2005-2006	719,511	860
2006-2007	640,518	-
2007-2008	760,597	1,575
2008-2009	1,929,236	-

### Housing Executive

**Mr A Easton** asked the Minister for Social Development how much money has been allocated to the Housing Executive for schemes in North Down for the next financial year. (AQW 239/10)

**Minister for Social Development:** The Housing Executive is unable to confirm its programmes of activity for 2010/11 and cannot therefore confirm how much will be available for planned maintenance and improvement schemes in North Down during the next financial year.

### Housing Executive

**Mr A Easton** asked the Minister for Social Development how much money has been allocated to the Housing Executive for new housing in North Down for the next financial year. (AQW 241/10)

**Minister for Social Development:** The Housing Executive is currently formulating the new Social Housing Development Programme for 2010/11-2012/13 and therefore it is not possible at this stage to state how much money will be allocated for new housing in North Down for the next financial year. I anticipate that the new Social Housing Development Programme will be ready for approval in 2010.

### Housing Executive

**Mr A Easton** asked the Minister for Social Development how much money has been allocated to the Housing Executive for maintenance in North Down in the next financial year. (AQW 242/10)

**Minister for Social Development:** The Housing Executive cannot confirm its programmes of activity for 2010/11 at this stage, and cannot therefore confirm how much will be available for maintenance in North Down during the next financial year.

### Solid Fuel to Oil Conversions

**Mr J Shannon** asked the Minister for Social Development, under Egan, what has the average cost been for solid fuel to oil conversions in disabled persons homes in each NI Housing Executive area over the past year. (AQW 246/10)

**Minister for Social Development:** The average costs for solid fuel to oil conversions in disabled persons homes in the last financial year are detailed below:

Housing Executive Administrative Area	£
Belfast	7893
South East	7322
South	7011
North East	7061
West	7000

### Neighbourhood Renewal Funding

**Lord Morrow** asked the Minister for Social Development how much neighbourhood renewal funding has been spent in Fermanagh and South Tyrone; and on what specific projects from January 2008 to date. (AQW 273/10)

**Minister for Social Development:** There are two Neighbourhood Renewal Areas in the Fermanagh and South Tyrone constituency. These are in Dungannon (covering the Annagshee, Fairmount Park and Milltown estates) and Enniskillen (covering Windmill Heights, Cornagrade, Kilmacormick 1, Rossory Church Road and Galliagh Park). From January 2008 to date, DSD has provided £476,297.44 to projects in the Dungannon Neighbourhood

Renewal Area and £310,535.28 to projects in the Enniskillen Neighbourhood Renewal Area. Specific projects details are listed below.

**ENNISKILLEN NRA**

Project	Amount of funding approved (£)
Aisling Centre – Provision of childcare for parents attending counselling sessions	9,562
Health and Wellbeing Project	74,710.00
Environmental Improvement schemes	23,000.00 & 20,545.00 = 43,545.00
Technical Assistance and Neighbourhood Renewal Coordinator for Partnership	48,017.02
Homework club and afterschool activities Jones Memorial Primary School	26,399.28
Community Alcohol Support	6,683.02
Refurbishment of Devenish Partnership Forum	4,884.19
Refurbishment of Kilmacormick Resource Centre	7,849.06
Social Activity & Community Interaction Programmes	4,000 & 6,384.77 = 10,384.77
Lakeshore Litter Collection	2,582.59
Exploring Enterprise Programme with Fermanagh Enterprise Ltd	15,287.45
Homework and Activities club in Devenish Partnership Forum	31,157.05
Research project on volunteering within NRA	10,500.00
Allotment Scheme – Devenish	18,973.85

**DUNGANNON NRA**

Project	Amount of funding approved (£)
Technical Assistance and Neighbourhood Renewal Coordinator	38,935.40
Education Programmes	35,000.00 & 57,500.00 & 19,804.17 = 112,304.17
Summer Schemes	12,011.50 & 2,690.00 = 14,701.50
Environmental Improvement & Estate Cleanup projects	9,500.00 & 20,000.00 & 52,250.00 & 15,000.00 = 96,750.00
Capital Works & Equipment Dungannon Youth Centre	12,642.86 & 10,438.15 = 23,081.01
Youth outreach and parent engagement programme	10,000.00
Health Programme	8,675.66
IT suite at Dungannon West	8,806.85
Exploring Enterprise programme with Dungannon Enterprise Ltd	6,380.00
Recreational Facilities at Dixon Park	50,000.00
Phase 1 Disabled Access at Dungannon West	3,800.00
Sports Programme for youths with MORPH	19,928.64
Loughview community house Refurbishment	5,707.12
Gannonball Run – 5 x Neighbourhood Renewal Area Teams	5,700.00
Upgrade of facilities GFC	71,527.09

**Co-Ownership Housing Scheme**

**Mr S Hamilton** asked the Minister for Social Development how many applications to the Co-Ownership Housing Scheme were accepted in each of the last five years. (AQW 311/10)

**Minister for Social Development:** Co-Ownership Housing has advised me that it records statistics for financial years. The table below details the information requested.

Year	Applications made	Accepted
2004/05	707	502
2005/06	718	504
2006/07	532	325
2007/08	1923	935
2008/09	381	325
2009/10	896	250 estimate

The number of applications for the 2008/09 financial year was affected by the suspension of new applications to the scheme between April and November 2008. A quota system was introduced by Co-Ownership Housing in April 09 as a response to the increased volume of applications to the scheme; as such the figure of 896 will include a large number of applications which have been resubmitted on one or more occasions.

### Co-Ownership Housing Scheme

**Mr S Hamilton** asked the Minister for Social Development (i) how many applications have been received for assistance via the Co-Ownership Housing Scheme in each month of the last year; and (ii) how many applications were accepted. (AQW 312/10)

**Minister for Social Development:** The table below details the information requested.

Month	Applications received	Accepted
November 08	84	1
December 08	35	7
January 09	34	12
February 09	63	28
March 09	165	29
April 09	207	30
May 09	176	32
June 09	195	62
July 09	137	63
August 09	106	45
September 09	75	Not yet available

The number of applications for the 2008/09 financial year was affected by the suspension of new applications to the scheme between April and November 2008. A quota system was introduced from April in response to the increased volume of applications to the scheme; as such the monthly figures include a large number of applications which have been resubmitted on one or more occasions.

### Manager of the West Belfast District Housing Executive

**Mr P Maskey** asked the Minister for Social Development, in relation to the transfer of the manager of the West Belfast District Housing Executive office to another branch, (i) why he is being transferred; (ii) if he agrees with the transfer; (iii) was he consulted on the move; (iv) if the Minister has any concerns about this move; and (v) has the transfer anything to do with the maintenance contract the Housing Executive has with Red Sky. (AQW 390/10)

**Minister for Social Development:** I am unable to answer this question as it is an operational matter for the Management of the Housing Executive.

### New Build Programmes for the Cookstown and Magherafelt Districts

**Mr P McGlone** asked the Minister for Social Development to detail all current and proposed new build programmes for the Cookstown and Magherafelt districts. (AQW 415/10)

**Minister for Social Development:** The Social Housing Development Programme is available on the Housing Executive's website at [www.nihe.gov.uk](http://www.nihe.gov.uk) and is broken down by District Councils and Parliamentary constituencies containing details of all current and proposed new build programmes for the Cookstown and Magherafelt districts.

### Pension Credit Applications

**Mrs I Robinson** asked the Minister for Social Development how many pension credit application forms submitted to the Pensions Service at Carlisle House in Londonderry are currently logged as lost or misplaced. (AQW 420/10)

**Minister for Social Development:** The information requested is not available. Since the introduction of new IT and enhanced telephony under the Pensions Transformation Programme in July 2008, approximately 90% of all new Pension Credit claims are made by telephone. This minimises considerably any incidences of misplaced forms.

### Co-ownership Housing Scheme

**Mr A Ross** asked the Minister for Social Development how many applications for the co-ownership housing scheme have been received from people in the East Antrim constituency in each of the last three years. (AQW 441/10)

**Minister for Social Development:** Co-Ownership Housing has advised me that it records statistics according to local council area, rather than by parliamentary constituency. The table details applications received relating to the Larne, Carrickfergus and Newtownabbey District Council Areas.

Year	Applications received
2006/07	18
2007/08	50
2008/09	6
2009/10	4

The number of applications for the 2008/09 financial year was affected by the suspension of the scheme between April and November due to insufficient funding.

### Co-ownership Housing Scheme

**Mr A Ross** asked the Minister for Social Development how many applications for the co-ownership housing scheme received from people in the East Antrim constituency have been accepted, in each of the last three years. (AQW 444/10)

**Minister for Social Development:** Co-Ownership Housing has advised me that it records statistics according to local council area, rather than by parliamentary constituency. The table details applications accepted relating to the Larne, Carrickfergus and Newtownabbey District Council Areas.

Year	Applications accepted
2006/07	7
2007/08	32
2008/09	9
2009/10	0

The number of applications for the 2008/09 financial year was affected by the suspension of the scheme between April and November due to insufficient funding.

### Job Seeker's Allowance

**Mr S Gardiner** asked the Minister for Social Development how many people aged 16 to 24 claimed Job Seeker's Allowance in each of the last twelve months. (AQW 499/10)

**Minister for Social Development:** The information requested is set out in the table below.

Month	No of People
September 2008	10769
October 2008	10823
November 2008	11359
December 2008	12088
January 2009	12883
February 2009	14702
March 2009	15977
April 2009	16390
May 2009	16451
June 2009	16702
July 2009	17564
August 2009	18873

### Job Seeker's Allowance

**Mr S Gardiner** asked the Minister for Social Development how many people claimed Job Seeker's Allowance in each of the last twelve months, in each employment sector. (AQW 505/10)

**Minister for Social Development:** The information requested is not recorded in the form requested.

### Legislation

**Mr G Savage** asked the Minister for Social Development to outline any legislation her Department intends to bring to the Assembly before 31 December 2009. (AQW 513/10)

**Minister for Social Development:** I intend to bring the Licensing and Registration of Clubs (Amendment) Bill and the Pensions Regulator Tribunal (Transfer of Functions) Bill to the Assembly by the end of the calendar year, subject to consultation with the Social Development Committee and agreement by the Executive. The Housing (Amendment) Bill which was introduced prior to the summer recess is currently undergoing its Committee stage. I will also be bringing forward a range of subordinate legislation to the Assembly during this period.

### Alexander Avenue in the Parkside area of North Belfast

**Ms C Ní Chuilín** asked the Minister for Social Development (i) to clarify whether Alexander Avenue in the Parkside area of north Belfast will not be included in redevelopment plans; (ii) if not, how was this decision reached; and (iii) if a detailed conditions or in-depth survey was carried out on the housing in the area.

(AQW 578/10)

**Minister for Social Development:** The Housing Executive has prepared an Economic Appraisal for the Parkside area of North Belfast which includes Alexandra Avenue and is currently being considered by the Department. Once a decision is taken on the way forward a detailed plan will be presented to the community.

### Social houses

**Mr R McCartney** asked the Minister for Social Development how many social houses were started in Derry City in year ending March 2009.

(AQW 583/10)

**Minister for Social Development:** The number of social housing starts on site in Derry City Council area during the 2008/09 Programme Year was 160 units.

### Upper Long Streets in the New Lodge Area

**Ms C Ní Chuilín** asked the Minister for Social Development when a decision will be made regarding the urban renewal status for the Upper Long Streets in the New Lodge area.

(AQW 585/10)

**Minister for Social Development:** The Economic Appraisal for Upper Long Streets consisting of a number of proposed options is currently being finalised by the Housing Executive. It should be completed by the end of November and I will then be in a position to consider the options before announcing how we will proceed.

### Volunteer Drivers

**Mr J Shannon** asked the Minister for Social Development if she would consider implementing a package whereby volunteer drivers, who use their own cars to provide alternative community transport to various community organisations and associations, could receive out of pocket mileage expenses.

(AQW 609/10)

**Minister for Social Development:** Funding for volunteer travel expenses is currently available under the Small Grants scheme. The Small Grants scheme is administered by the volunteer centre network.

### Employment and Support Allowance Branch

**Mr G Savage** asked the Minister for Social Development how many active cases are currently being dealt with by the Employment and Support Allowance Branch.

(AQW 628/10)

**Minister for Social Development:** The Employment and Support Allowance Centre is currently dealing with 12,880 active cases, figures correct at 31 August 2009.

### Employment and Support Allowance Branch

**Mr G Savage** asked the Minister for Social Development (i) how many staff are employed in the Employment and Support Allowance Branch (ESAB); (ii) to provide a breakdown of the sections within ESAB; and (iii) how many staff work in each section.

(AQW 630/10)

**Minister for Social Development:** The information requested is set out in the table below.

**STAFF EMPLOYED IN ESA CENTRE BY SECTION**

Section	Number of Staff
Accuracy & Medical	31.65
Decision Making & Appeals	37.00
Processing	75.44
Operational Support	36.80
Telephony	70.90
<b>Total</b>	<b>251.79*</b>

\* This number is based on whole time equivalents and will include a number of part time staff

**Employment and Support Allowance Branch**

**Mr G Savage** asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the average time it takes to process an Employment and Support Allowance claim. (AQW 634/10)

**Minister for Social Development:** The average clearance time for a claim to Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) is 17.5 days. These figures relate to August 2009, the last month for which there are full figures available.

**Disability Living Allowance**

**Mr J Shannon** asked the Minister for Social Development how many Disability Living Allowance tribunal appeals have been deferred due to non availability of GP notes, in each constituency, in each of the last three years. (AQW 669/10)

**Minister for Social Development:** The information cannot be provided in the detail requested as The Appeals Service does not maintain statistical data on the basis of constituency areas.

The total number of Disability Living Allowance appeals adjourned for General Practitioner records are:

2006/07	526
2007/08	821
2008/09	1147

**NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY COMMISSION****Parliament Buildings**

**Mr T Burns** asked the Assembly Commission for an overview of the design and an explanation of the figures and symbolism displayed on the facade at the front of Parliament Buildings above the main entrance. (AQW 287/10)

**The Representative of the Assembly Commission (Mr S Neeson):** The front of Parliament Buildings is adorned by Britannia and her guardian lions at the top and features the Royal Coat of Arms on the 1st Floor Balcony.

In between, on the pediment above the portico is a sculpture group that is not so easily identified or categorised.

While it is clear that the sculpture involves the flame or torch of liberty, there are differing views on what the sculpture portrays.

One record of Parliament Buildings, published by H.M.S.O., claims that the sculpture represents Ulster presenting the golden flame of loyalty to Britain while another record, published by the Ulster Architectural Heritage Society says that the sculpture represents the Commonwealth or Britain presenting the lighted torch of liberty to Northern Ireland.

Unfortunately we are not in a position to determine which of the above interpretations is correct.



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