
OFFICIAL REPORT

(HANSARD)

CONTENTS

Written Answers to Questions
Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister [p299]
Department of Agriculture and Rural Development [p300]
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure [p303]
Department of Education [p308]
Department for Employment and Learning [p318]
Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment [p320]
Department of the Environment [p330]
Department of Finance and Personnel [p331]
Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety [p332]
Department for Regional Development [p342]
Department for Social Development [p353]
Northern Ireland Assembly Commission [p356]
Written Answers [p357]

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NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY

Friday 18 December 2009

Written Answers to Questions

OFFICE OF THE FIRST MINISTER AND DEPUTY FIRST MINISTER

Evangelical Christian Community

Mr M Storey asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, pursuant to AQW 1937/10, if their Department has made any contribution to Community Relations Council publications aimed at promoting understanding of the Evangelical Christian community which remains apart from the ecumenical movement. (AQW 2666/10)

First Minister and deputy First Minister (Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness): We have not contributed to any Community Relations Council publications on promoting understanding of the Evangelical Christian community.

Community Relations Council

Mr D Ford asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what advice has been issued to the Community Relations Council and victims groups in respect of staff redundancy issues and funding after 1 April 2010. (AQW 3148/10)

First Minister and deputy First Minister: No advice has been issued to the Community Relations Council or victims groups in respect of staff redundancy issues.

The new Strategy for Victims and Survivors was published on 8 December. In addition, we are currently considering responses to our consultation on proposals for a new victims and survivors service. It is our intention that no groups will be disadvantaged as we implement the new strategy.

We intend to make an announcement on the transitional arrangements that will be put in place to support victims and survivors in the near future. In line with the overall funding proposals, funding will not be reduced. Therefore we do not anticipate any redundancies.

Rose Energy

Mr M McLaughlin asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister, given that the proposed Rose Energy Poultry Litter Incinerator is a cross-departmental project relevant to DARD, DETI and DFP, if they can confirm whether any proposed funding for the project will require discussion at the Executive and Executive approval. (AQW 3241/10)

First Minister and deputy First Minister: It would, in the first instance, be a matter for the relevant Minister to consider whether any proposal to offer grant-aid to Rose Energy required referral to the Executive under the terms of paragraph 2.4 of the Ministerial Code, which sets out the categories of matter which all Ministers are under an obligation to bring to the attention of the Executive for its consideration.

National Federation of Sub-Postmasters Report ‘Six Steps of a Sustainable Post Office Network’

Mr D Kinahan asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for their assessment of the recommendations aimed at devolving institutions and local councils in the National Federation of Sub-Postmasters Report ‘Six Steps of a Sustainable Post Office Network’ (March 2009); and whether the Department has identified how it can make better use of the Post Office network. (AQW 3258/10)

First Minister and deputy First Minister: The Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister is aware of the Report produced by the Federation regarding the Post Office Network.

The Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister has already considered whether any of its services could be offered through post offices, but none were identified.

Lifestart Mid-Ards

Mr J Shannon asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister if they would consider allocating any unspent monies from their Departmental budget to Lifestart Mid-Ards, whose current funding is coming to an end. (AQW 3309/10)

First Minister and deputy First Minister: Funding for Lifestart has to date been obtained from a range of sources including some government departments. OFMDFM cannot fund activities for which other Departments hold the policy responsibility and legislative authority. While we are supportive of early intervention and sympathetic to projects such as Lifestart, we do not have an appropriate grant funding scheme and are therefore not in a position to fund the Lifestart Foundation.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Flooding

Mr P McGlone asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what emergency funds are available for farmers and people living in rural areas to address the problems caused by the recent heavy rainfall and flooding. (AQW 3179/10)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development (Ms M Gildernew): The recent heavy rainfall and flooding has caused problems and created great inconvenience to people here and in other parts of Ireland, and I have seen directly the adverse effects on farmers and those living in rural areas. My thoughts are with everyone who has suffered disruption.

There are currently no emergency funds or compensation schemes available for farmers’ losses, however at the last Executive meeting I raised the issue of the recent flooding with my Executive Colleagues, and they have agreed to set up a task force on the matter.

Business owners, farmers and individuals may be able to pursue support through their insurers for any flood damage to property, and I would strongly urge all those affected, to do so as soon as possible.

DARD Development Advisers are available to provide technical support in dealing with problems brought on by flooding such as feed shortage.

In availing of this resource, farmers can help alleviate some of the problems that impact their businesses following a flooding incident and I would urge them to do so.

EU Technical Conservation Regulations

Mr J Shannon asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to outline any consultation she has held with fishing organisations about the EU Technical Conservation Regulation to change net mesh sizes. (AQW 3187/10)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: Copies of the draft technical conservation regulations were circulated to the NI Fish Producers Organisation (NIFPO), the Anglo-North Irish Fish Producers Organisation (ANIFPO), and NI Seafood in August 2008. My Department received comments from NIFPO and ANIFPO. Progress on the Regulation was very slow until September 2009 and despite strong representations to the Commission about issues important to our fleet there was little movement in the revised texts going into the November Council. A meeting of catchers and processors on 12 November 2009 discussed revised Commission proposals that were presented in early November. At the November Council there was no agreement to a compromise Regulation and existing technical measures, with minor changes, were rolled over until June 2011. This is good news in the short term as it represents no change for our industry on the important issues of minimum landing sizes for nephrops and rules on nets. However over the next six months work will start again on revised proposals and we understand that the Commission is still against issues such as regional minimum landing sizes that are vitally important for our prawn fleet.

National Federation of Sub-Postmasters Report ‘Six Steps of a Sustainable Post Office Network’

Mr D Kinahan asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for her assessment of the recommendations aimed at devolved institutions and local councils in the National Federation of Sub-Postmasters Report ‘Six Steps of a Sustainable Post Office Network’ (March 2009); and whether the Department has identified how it can make better use of the Post Office network. (AQW 3234/10)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: Post Offices continue to be a reserved matter, however there are some interesting suggestions in this report for devolved and local governments.

My Department has previously explored how to make better use of the Post Office, however we have not identified any significant existing or proposed services which could be delivered through the Post Office at this time. We will continue to consider this delivery option in the future development of services but any new service delivery would be subject to the appropriate procurement policy.

Tree Planting Schemes

Mr J Shannon asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what co-operation and assistance is available for schools and community groups to enable them to be involved in tree planting schemes in their own areas. (AQW 3324/10)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: The Forest Service (an agency of the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development) offers advice and grant assistance up to £1850 per hectare under the Woodland Grant Scheme, for the creation of new woodland. In addition the Community Woodland Supplement, currently £1000 per hectare is also available to contribute towards the creation of woodland close to towns and villages especially designed for public access.

Forest Service also offers Forest Environments grants to develop existing woodland, currently up to 50% of agreed cost, or a maximum of £3000 for projects which contribute towards the management and maintenance of existing woodland for biodiversity or public access objectives.

All of these forestry grants are currently available to schools and community groups.

Flooding in County Fermanagh

Mr T Elliott asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development if hardship payments will be made available to individuals, farmers and businesses who have suffered as a result of the recent flooding in County Fermanagh. (AQW 3340/10)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: The recent heavy rainfall and flooding has caused problems and created great inconvenience to people in County Fermanagh and I have seen directly the adverse effects on farmers and those living in the county. My thoughts are with all those individuals and businesses who have suffered disruption.

There are currently no Executive hardship payments or compensation schemes available for farmers' losses; however at the last Executive meeting I raised the issue of the recent flooding with my Executive Colleagues, and the Executive agreed to set up a task force on the matter.

In addition, business owners, farmers and individuals may be able to pursue support through their insurers for any flood damage to property, and I would strongly urge all those affected, to do so as soon as possible.

DARD Development Advisers are available to provide technical support in dealing with problems brought on by flooding such as feed supply. In availing of this resource, farmers can help alleviate some of the problems that impact their businesses following the flooding incident.

Cycle Trails

Mr M Durkan asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development (i) how many kilometres of cycle trails are available in publicly-owned forests; and (ii) what steps her Department intends to take to increase this. (AQW 3394/10)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: There are 38 kilometres of cycle trails available in publicly-owned forests. These trails provide a variety of challenges depending on an individual's physical abilities. They range in nature from family cycling to mountain bike trails. In addition, there are also 32 kilometres of Sustrans routes available on Forest Service land. These are part of a wider national network of cycle trails.

Forest Service has also facilitated various bike events within its forests, with individual trails identified and designated for the period of the event.

My Department launched a Recreation and Social Use strategy for forests in July this year. This strategy sets out how we propose to promote the recreational and social use of forests in the north of Ireland, including cycling. I am personally very keen that this strategy should help realise the full potential of our forests.

This strategy acknowledges that Forest Service, on its own, will have neither the resource nor, in some cases, the expertise to fully develop the opportunities that exist. For this reason, we will have to work in partnership with a range of other providers, and my officials in Forest Service have already started to explore partnership opportunities with a number of stakeholders including the NI Tourist Board, Countryside and Activities Network, National Trust and District Councils.

Renewable Energy

Mr J Shannon asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what financial assistance is available for the coppicing and planting of willow trees for renewable energy. (AQW 3412/10)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: The Forest Service, an agency within the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, offers grant aid towards the establishment of short rotation coppice willow. The Short Rotation Coppice Scheme 2007 aids the establishment of approved varieties of willow, planted at close spacing for the purposes of producing woodchip to be used as a renewable energy resource. The minimum area per application is 3 hectares and the crop is harvested at 2-3 year intervals. Grant aid is paid at a rate of up to £1000/hectare, 70% after planting and the remaining 30% after first harvest.

Applicants must undertake to establish and maintain the crop for at least 5 years, and must provide evidence of an energy end use for the woodchip.

Quarantine of Dogs by Kent County Council

Mr J Shannon asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what action she is taking to address the decision by Kent County Council to quarantine dogs from Northern Ireland for 10 days. (AQW 3539/10)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: I am not aware of any decision by Kent County Council to quarantine dogs from here. Kent County Council would fall under the jurisdiction of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). My officials have been in contact with officials in Defra who have confirmed that they are not aware of any such action.

However if you would provide specific information I will investigate the matter further as such action would not be permissible under current EU and domestic legislation.

DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE, ARTS AND LEISURE

Ethnic Minority Languages

Mr B McElduff asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to outline the work undertaken by his Department to promote and enhance ethnic minority languages in the last five years. (AQW 3474/10)

Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure (Mr N McCausland): The primary responsibility of my department for languages relates to Northern Ireland's indigenous minority languages, Ulster-Scots and Irish. They are supported through the North-South Language Body which comprises Foras na Gaeilge and the Ulster-Scots Agency.

My department has also initiated work on a Strategy for Indigenous or Regional Minority Languages which will seek to enhance and protect the development of the Irish language and enhance and develop the Ulster-Scots culture, heritage and language.

My department has lead responsibility for the management of the Northern Ireland Civil Service wide Irish translations contract which was introduced on 8 June 2009. The translation contract provides quality assured Irish language translations.

It is the responsibility of each individual Department to source minority language translations to meet its own business requirements.

Civil Servants' Earnings

Mr P Weir asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how many civil servants in his Department receive an annual salary (i) between £37,801-£43,100; (ii) between £43,101-50,537; (iii) between £50,538-71,433; (iv) between £71,434-82,975; and (v) above £82,976. (AQW 3492/10)

Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure:

ANSWER

Annual Salary	Number of Civil Servants
£37,801-£43,100	18
£43,101-£50,537	6
£50,538-£71,433	10
£71,434-£82,975	nil
Above £ 82,976	2
Total Civil Servants	36

Civil Servants' Earnings

Mr J Craig asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure, pursuant to AQW 2997/10, to detail (i) the job titles; (ii) pay scale; and (iii) the total amount earned by the civil servants in question. (AQW 3495/10)

Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure:

Job Titles	Pay Scale £	Total Amount Earned £'000
Permanent Secretary	98,059-205,000	105-110

Job Titles	Pay Scale £	Total Amount Earned £'000
Deputy Secretary	81,600-160,000	90-95

Investing for Health Strategy

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what targets his Department set towards the Investing for Health strategy; and what progress has been made to date against these targets. (AQW 3506/10)

Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: DCAL, in partnership with Sport Northern Ireland (SNI), has developed a new 10 year strategy for sport and physical recreation entitled 'Sport Matters: The Northern Ireland Strategy for Sport and Physical Recreation, 2009-2019'. Sport Matters recognises the role of sport and physical recreation in improving public health. It contains 26 targets, in the areas of participation, performance and places for sport, over the next 10 years which are expected to contribute towards the Investing for Health Strategy. Sport Matters, including its 26 targets, was recently approved by the Northern Ireland Executive. The Department is now arranging for the full implementation of Sport Matters and the delivery of the 26 targets.

Libraries NI operate 'Book prescription schemes' – partnerships with Health Trusts which have funded the purchase of specific books. GPs then 'prescribe' these to patients who come and borrow them from the library.

Funding for Local Soccer

Mr D McClarty asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure (i) to detail the funding made available to each Irish Football Association member club over the past ten years, with particular regard to upgrading stadia and spectator facilities; (ii) what funding sources are currently available; and (iii) what funding streams are anticipated in the future. (AQW 3510/10)

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. Over the past ten financial years, SNI has made funding available to Irish Football Association (IFA) member clubs, with particular regard to upgrading stadia and spectator facilities, as detailed in the attached tables.

SNI is currently making available a new small grants programme, Awards for Sport, which is designed to help sports organisations, including IFA member clubs, purchase sports equipment. This programme closes for receipt of applications on 6th January 2010. In addition, SNI hopes, subject to a successful bid in the next Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) period, to complete further phases of its Stadia Safety Programme and launch a third phase of its Places for Sport Programme. IFA member clubs are already eligible to apply for funding under these programmes.

FINANCIAL YEAR – 1999/00

Club	Programme	Award
Coleraine FC	Lottery	£50,000
Glenavon FC	Lottery	£50,000
Killen Rangers FC	Lottery	£45,742
Dergview FC	Lottery	£90,000
Seagoe FC	Lottery	£38,500

FINANCIAL YEAR – 2000/01

Club	Programme	Award
Ballymena United FC	Safe Sports Grounds	£225,000
Portadown FC	Safe Sports Grounds	£26,994
Derry City FC	Safe Sports Grounds	£25,000

Club	Programme	Award
Glenavon FC	Safe Sports Grounds	£260,000
Crusaders FC	Safe Sports Grounds	£28,156
Lisburn Distillery FC	Safe Sports Grounds	£12,384
Newry City FC	Safe Sports Grounds	£275,000
Coleraine FC	Safe Sports Grounds	£155,000
Omagh Town FC	Safe Sports Grounds	£222,491
Linfield FC	Safe Sports Grounds	£171,590
Armagh City FC	Safe Sports Grounds	£15,000
Dungannon Swifts FC	Safe Sports Grounds	£12,133
Bangor FC	Safe Sports Grounds	£14,807
Larne FC	Safe Sports Grounds	£15,000
Limavady United FC	Safe Sports Grounds	£15,000
Glentoran FC	Safe Sports Grounds	£217,000
Cliftonville FC	Safe Sports Grounds	£275,000
Carrick Rangers FC	Safe Sports Grounds	£15,000
Institute FC	Safe Sports Grounds	£18,000
Larne FC	Lottery	£15,000
Coleraine FC	Lottery	£44,448
Newry City FC	Lottery	£61,600
Linfield FC	Lottery	£60,000
Glentoran FC	Lottery	£30,000
Dungannon Utd Youth FC	Lottery	£17,500
Brantwood FC	Lottery	£70,000
Kilmore Rec FC	Lottery	£65,000
Fivemiletown Utd FC	Lottery	£57,000
Carnlough FC	Lottery	£8,420
Sport & Leisure/Celtic Boys	Lottery	£79,500

FINANCIAL YEAR – 2001/02

Club	Programme	Award
Limavady United FC	Safe Sports Grounds	£15,000
Institute FC	Safe Sports Grounds	£12,000
Glentoran FC	Safe Sports Grounds	£50,597
Derry City FC	Safe Sports Grounds	£9,724
Armagh City FC	Safe Sports Grounds	£15,000
Dungannon Swifts	Safe Sports Grounds	£13,233
Bangor FC	Safe Sports Grounds	£14,663
Ards FC	Safe Sports Grounds	£40,000
Portadown FC	Safe Sports Grounds	£245,256
Newry City FC	Safe Sports Grounds	£27,000

Club	Programme	Award
Killyleagh FC	Lottery	£48,000
Ballinamallard Utd FC	Lottery	£23,591
Saintfield United FC	Lottery	£78,137
Islandmagee FC	Lottery	£70,000

FINANCIAL YEAR – 2002/03

Club	Programme	Award
Linfield FC	Safe Sports Grounds	£85,000
Glenavon FC	Safe Sports Grounds	£70,000
Institute FC	Safe Sports Grounds	£11,900
Coleraine FC	Safe Sports Grounds	£70,000
Portadown FC	Safe Sports Grounds	£65,000
Ballymena United FC	Safe Sports Grounds	£20,000
Crusaders FC	Safe Sports Grounds	£77,450
Knockbreda FC	Lottery	£48,000
Saintfield United FC	Lottery	£13,761
Tollymore United FC	Lottery	£57,383
Tandragee Rovers FC	Lottery	£70,000
18 Newtownabbey FC	Lottery	£80,000

FINANCIAL YEAR – 2003/04

Club	Programme	Award
Ballinamallard Utd FC	Lottery	£85,000
Dungiven Celtic FC	Lottery	£70,000
Rathfriland FC	Lottery	£76,004

FINANCIAL YEAR – 2004/05

Club	Programme	Award
N/A	N/A	0

FINANCIAL YEAR – 2005/06

Club	Programme	Award
Cliftonville FC	Stadia Safety Programme	£800,000

FINANCIAL YEAR – 2006/07

Club	Programme	Award
Ballymena Utd FC	Stadia Safety Programme	£161,636
Ballymena Utd FC	Revenue Safety Management	£6,690
Glentoran FC	Revenue Safety Management	£11,706
Linfield FC	Revenue Safety Management	£11,628

Club	Programme	Award
Cliftonville FC	Revenue Safety Management	£4,023
Donegal Celtic FC	Revenue Safety Management	£3,150
Crusaders FC	Revenue Safety Management	£2,135
Portadown FC	Revenue Safety Management	£4,995
Armagh City FC	Revenue Safety Management	£3,365
Newry City FC	Revenue Safety Management	£2,179
Ards FC	Revenue Safety Management	£1,888
Dungannon Swifts FC	Revenue Safety Management	£2,402

FINANCIAL YEAR – 2007/08

Club	Programme	Award
Portadown FC	Stadia Safety Programme	£800,000
Donegal Celtic FC	Revenue Safety Management	£938
Linfield FC	Revenue Safety Management	£4,425
Portadown FC	Revenue Safety Management	£900

FINANCIAL YEAR – 2008/09

Club	Programme	Award
Donegal Celtic FC	Stadia Safety Programme	£627,764
Donegal Celtic FC	Soccer Strategy	£186,523
Cliftonville FC	Soccer Strategy	£300,000
Moyola Park FC	Lottery Capital	£1.57m
Coagh UTD FC	Building Sport	£213,329
Killen Rangers FC	Building Sport	£175,585
Dergview FC	Building Sport	£152,284

Departmental Initiatives

Mr P McGlone asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what new initiatives, measures and practices have been implemented by his Department as a means of assisting the community and achieving improved, efficient decision-making during the current economic crisis. (AQW 3531/10)

Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: My Department, along with all other Departments, has a target of 10 days in which to pay suppliers against valid invoices. Prior to the current economic downturn the target was 30 days. This is designed to improve the cash flow of local business.

Furthermore, DCAL, through its arms length bodies, process applications for grants and release payments to successful applicants promptly. For example, Arts Council NI aim to ensure that all publicized timelines are met and that all grant instalment payments, subsequent to offer, are paid promptly so as to ease the cash flow situation of community groups.

In addition, my Department, through its arms length bodies, and subject to available resources, continue to promote and develop the culture, arts and leisure sectors, conscious of the important contribution that this sector can make to economic development, for example:

- the Arts Council is currently undertaking a multi-million pound arts infrastructure programme which will lead to the construction of new arts facilities of world class standards. This will make a significant contribution to Northern Ireland's cultural tourism; attracting visitors and investment to Northern Ireland;
- in addition the Arts Council is administering the Creative Industries Innovation Fund. The programme aims to deliver support to 140 Northern Ireland creative businesses over the period to March 2011; and
- Initiatives undertaken by NI Screen continue to attract significant investment in the local economy through Film and Television. This has helped develop the Northern Ireland skills base and support local industry.

Funding for Band Tuition Classes

Mr D Kennedy asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure why funding for band tuition classes is currently frozen; and when funds will be made available for such projects. (AQW 3579/10)

Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: The Ulster-Scots Agency, through its Financial Assistance Scheme, may provide funding for musical tuition. Applications for tuition can also be made under the Arts Council's Small Grants Programme or, depending on the scale of the project, under Lottery Project Funding.

Applications for grant assistance to the Ulster-Scots Agency for music and dance tuition exceeded the resources available to the Agency. Options to address this issue were being considered and agreement has now been reached with the Department to proceed with this programme. Letters of offer should issue from the Ulster-Scots Agency to the successful organisation in the coming weeks.

The Small Grants Programme operates on a rolling basis. Lottery Project funding has two application points per year; the next application date will be in March/April 2010.

Arts Council

Mr D Kennedy asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure if he plans to encourage the Arts Council to increase funding allocations to the Marching Bands community. (AQW 3580/10)

Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: The Arts Council has allocated almost £900,000 funding to Marching Bands in the last five years. My Department, through the Arts Council, will continue to ensure that appropriate funding is provided for the artistic development of marching bands.

I recently met with the Arts Council and with representatives of the bands sector to discuss increased access for funding and I hope that this will result in a greater uptake of available funding in future years.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Teacher Appointment Committee

Mr A Ross asked the Minister of Education how the Teacher Appointment Committee will operate in the Belfast Education and Library Board after 1 January 2010, given reduced numbers of representatives from the Transferor Representative Council. (AQW 3318/10)

Minister of Education (Ms C Ruane): I mo ráiteas ar 1 Nollaig, chuir mé in iúl go mbeadh tuilleadh díospóireachtaí agam ar an ghné de rialachas eatramhach agus socruithe bainistíochta le haghaidh eagraíochtaí oideachais. Ó shin i leith, bhreithnigh mé roinnt tuairimí a d'ardaigh na Boird Oideachais agus Leabharlainne, agus an Coiste Oideachais. Mar gheall air sin, molaim mionathruithe a dhéanamh ar líon na mball de Bhoird Oideachais agus Leabharlainne Bhéal Feirste agus an Iarthair.

In my statement on 1 December, I indicated that I would be having further discussions on the detail of interim governance and management arrangements for education organisations. Since then, I have considered a number of points raised by Education and Library Boards, and the Education Committee. As a consequence, I propose to make minor changes to the numbers of members of the Belfast and Western Education and Library Boards. These are reflected in the table below, which replaces the table attached to my statement of 1 December.

In relation to the Belfast Board, I propose to appoint two members nominated by Transferors, and two members nominated by the Trustees of maintained schools. This will facilitate the establishment of a Teaching Appointments Committee.

MEMBERSHIP OF EDUCATION AND LIBRARY BOARDS

Category	BELB	SELB	WELB	NEELB
Councillor	4	6	5	9
Transferors	2	2	2	4
Trustees	2	2	2	2
Others	4	5	4	8
Total	12	15	13	23

Education and Skills Authority

Mr K Robinson asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 2817/10, to detail the number of staff employed by the Education and Skills Authority to date, broken down by (i) job title; (ii) salary scale; (iii) jobs which were publicly advertised; and (iv) jobs which were filled by internal trawl procedures. (AQW 3400/10)

Minister of Education: Níl aon fhoireann fostaithe ag an Údarás um Oideachas agus Scileanna cionn is nár tháinig an tÚdarás chun bheith ann go fóill.

No staff are currently employed by the Education and Skills Authority since the Authority has not yet come into existence.

Education and Skills Authority

Mr K Robinson asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 2817/10, to detail the support services used by the Education and Skills Authority, broken down by (i) the cost involved in obtaining and retaining support services; (ii) the type of service provided; and (iii) the location of the service provided. (AQW 3446/10)

Minister of Education: Níl aon sheirbhísí tacaíochta á n-úsáid ag an Údarás um Oideachas agus Scileanna cionn is nár tháinig an tÚdarás chun bheith ann go fóill.

No support services are currently used by the Education and Skills Authority as the Authority has not yet come into existence.

Education and Skills Authority

Mr K Robinson asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 2817/10, to detail (i) the location of the accommodation used to date by the Education and Skills Authority; (ii) the cost of accommodation at each location; and (iii) the length of any leases taken out by the Education and Skills Authority at each location. (AQW 3476/10)

Minister of Education: Níor úsáideadh aon chóiríocht go dtí seo agus níor íocadh as léas ar bith ag an Údarás um Oideachas agus Scileanna cionn is nár tháinig an tÚdarás chun bheith ann go fóill.

No accommodation has been used to date and no leases have been taken out by the Education and Skills Authority as the Authority has not yet come into existence.

Civil Servants' Earnings

Mr P Weir asked the Minister of Education how many civil servants within her Department receive an annual salary in excess of (i) £37,801; (ii) £43,101; (iii) £50,538; (iv) £71,434; and (v) £82,976. (AQW 3491/10)

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

The information requested is set out in the table below.

Salary band (£)	Number of DE staff
37801-43100	30
43101-50537	39
50538-71433	56
71434-82975	1
82976 and above	5

Investing for Health Strategy

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister of Education what targets her Department set within the Investing for Health strategy; and what progress has been made to date against these targets. (AQW 3516/10)

Minister of Education: There are 2 targets in the Investing for Health Strategy that are specific to my Department. They are:

Objective 2 - To enable all people and young people in particular to develop skills and attitudes that will give them the capacity to reach their full potential and make healthy choices.

Target i:

In the 25% of Primary Schools with the highest percentage of Free School Meal Entitlement, to reduce the proportion of pupils not achieving the expected (level 4) at Key Stage 2 to 25% in both English and Mathematics by 2005/06.

Target ii:

In the 25% of Secondary Schools with the highest percentage Free School Meal Entitlement, to reduce the proportion of year 12 pupils achieving no GCSEs to 5 % by 2005/06

The most up to date statistics (2007/08) show that the target for secondary schools was met (3.8%) but that the target for primary schools was not (32.2% English and 29.9% Maths).

My Department has a range of policies and initiatives which support the key aims and objectives of the Investing for Health strategy and will continue to impact upon the targets aimed primarily at

- raising standards and tackling educational underachievement, in particular on closing the achievement gaps between the highest and lowest achievers and between the most and least disadvantaged; and
- making schools a healthy setting by promoting healthy choices in relation to healthy eating, physical activity, personal development and emotional health and wellbeing for the whole school community.

Tá áthas orm a thuairisciú go bhfuil cuid mhór de na polasaithe seo i bhfeidhm cheana féin, mar shampla, an curaclam athbhreithnithe, Gach Scoil ina Scoil Mhaith- Beartas um Fheabhsúchán Scoile, Caighdeáin chothaitheacha do lónta scoile, Tús Cinnte, is araile. Tá dul chun cinn suntasach á dhéanamh i roinnt polasaithe agus tionscnamh eile, mar shampla, sláinte mheabhrach agus folláine daltaí, an Beartas Bia i Scoileanna, an Straitéis Lítearthachta agus Uimhearthachta, an Straitéis Luathbhlianta 0-6.

I am pleased to report that many of these policies are already in place eg the revised curriculum, Every School a Good School – a Policy for School Improvement, Nutritional standards for school lunches, Surestart etc. Significant progress is being made in a number of other policies and initiatives eg pupil's emotional health and wellbeing, Food in Schools policy, Literacy and Numeracy strategy, Early Years 0- 6 strategy.

Education and Skills Authority

Mr K Robinson asked the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 2817/10, to provide a breakdown of the 'other costs' by (i) the location for which these costs were incurred; (ii) the types of costs incurred; (iii) any recurrent costs and their nature; and (iv) the actual costs within the 'other costs' category. (AQW 3521/10)

Minister of Education: Tá miondealú ar an chaiteachas a nochtadh mar ‘Costais Eile’ in AQW 2817/10 leagtha amach sa tábla thíos.

A breakdown of the expenditure disclosed in AQW 2817/10 as ‘Other Costs’ is set out in the table below:

Type of Cost incurred	Location where costs incurred		Total
	Rathgael House, Bangor	Forestview, Belfast	
	£'000	£'000	£'000
DFP Notional Expenditure re Business Consultancy service	247	0	247
Premises Running Costs	4	99	103
Conferences/Meetings	55	40	95
IT Services	0	33	33
Staff Travel and Subsistence	18	51	69
Printing and Stationery	7	59	66
Temporary Staff/ Recruitment Expenses	38	0	38
Other Admin Costs	61	15	76
Total	430	297	727

All of the expenditure detailed in the table above is deemed to be recurrent expenditure as it is charged to the operating cost statement in the Departmental resource account.

Fathers' Rights

Mr P Weir asked the Minister of Education what plans her Department has to safeguard and increase fathers' rights to access their children's educational records. (AQW 3524/10)

Minister of Education: Tacaíonn an reachtaíocht reatha le cearta freagrachta thuistí a bheith ag aithreacha, seachas i gcásanna inár cuireadh an chúirt srianta ar na cearta seo. Tá gach duine a bhfuil freagracht thuistí ar pháiste aige i dteideal réimse iomlán ceart a chleachtadh atá sa reachtaíocht oideachais nó i reachtaíocht eile, lena n-áirítear an ceart le teacht ar thaifid oideachais i dtaca leis an pháiste sin.

Current legislation provides for fathers to have parental responsibility rights except where restrictions are placed on this by a court. Anyone with parental responsibility for a child is entitled to exercise the full range of rights contained in education or other legislation, including rights to access educational records in relation to that child.

For children who have reached the age of compulsory schooling, education legislation provides for schools to make available to parents annually a range of information on their children's educational progress, and to report to parents in each autumn term on assessment outcomes for children in Years 4 to 7. Schools are also required to keep a formal record of a pupil's academic and other achievements and, on receipt of a written request from a pupil's parent, to make this available to the parent.

More generally, schools also have obligations to parents under the Data Protection Act 1998. A parent acting on behalf of their child can access his or her personal data held by a school under the Act.

I recognise the importance of involving parents in the education of their children and keeping them informed. I believe that, where possible, it is in a child's interests to have the encouragement and support of both parents. Where a school may not be aware that a person has parental responsibility rights, it is for the person to ensure that they can exercise them and, if necessary, satisfy the school that they have these rights.

Economic Crisis

Mr P McGlone asked the Minister of Education what new initiatives, measures and practices have been implemented in her Department as a means of assisting the community and achieving improved, efficient decision-making during the current economic crisis. (AQW 3526/10)

Minister of Education: Tá an Coiste ag obair le chéile chun an cor chun donais eacnamaíoch a bhainistiú agus chun daoine agus gnóthaí áitiúla a chosaint ó éifeachtaí is measa an choir chun donais eacnamaíoch. Sa chomhthéacs seo, cuireadh £4 mhilliún ar fáil sa bhliain 2009/10 le dul i ngleic le cothabháil an riaráiste laistigh den earnáil oideachais. Ina theannta sin, chuir mé £5 mhilliún breise ar fáil do scoileanna sa bhliain airgeadais seo le déileáil leis na himthosca seo. Sholáthar na hacmhainní breise seo tuilleadh deiseanna don earnáil foirgníochta áitiúla.

The Executive is collectively managing the response to the economic downturn with the aim of protecting local people and businesses from the worst effects of the economic downturn. In this context £4 million was made available in 2009/10 to tackle backlog maintenance within the education sector. In addition to this I have made an additional £5 million available to schools in this financial year to help address the situation. These additional resources have provided further opportunities for the local construction industry.

I also have in place policies which are specifically targeted at addressing social need for example free school meals and clothing allowances. Mindful of the economic downturn and the financial impact on families, particularly those on low incomes, I have extended the current grant scheme which assists parents on low incomes with the cost of school uniforms to include, from this year, parents of primary school children. This is a very practical measure which I believe will make a real difference to children in our society.

In addition, I strongly support the prompt payment target of making payments within ten working days to ease any financial burden on suppliers particularly during the current economic downturn.

New Build Schools

Mrs I Robinson asked the Minister of Education (i) how many schools are awaiting new builds; and (ii) to provide an update on the progress of each new build application. (AQW 3559/10)

Minister of Education: In line with the Investment Delivery Plan for schools and youth services, my Department tracks progress on 108 schemes. Of these 22 are complete and 18 are under construction or about to commence construction. The remaining 68 schemes are at various stages of development as outlined in Annex A.

In addition my Department has received 100 proposals for construction of new schools. All of these are at initial Economic Appraisal stage as outlined in Annex B.

Beidh gach scéim chaipitil nach bhfuil tiomnaithe go conarthach, beidh siad faoi réir an athbhreithnithe a d'fhógair mé ar 15 Deireadh Fómhair 2009, lena chinntiú go bhfuil siad ar fad i gcomhréir le mo chreat foriomlán beartais agus go mbeidh siad inmharthana agus inbhuanaithe san fhadtréimhse.

All capital schemes not contractually committed will be subject to the review I announced on 15 October 2009, to ensure that all are consistent with my overall policy framework and will be viable and sustainable in the long term.

ANNEX A

PROJECTS ANNOUNCED AND IN PLANNING

School Name	Current Position
Artigarvan P.S. Strabane	Final sketch plans awaited
Arvalee / Cranny Special School, Omagh	Initial sketch plans awaited
Ballykelly P.S. Limavady	Final sketch plans awaited
Ballymoney H.S.	Initial sketch plans awaited
Bangor G.S.	Pre-tender
Belmont Special School, Derry	Initial sketch plans awaited

School Name	Current Position
Carrick P.S. Warrenpoint	Pre-tender
Colaiste Feirste Belfast	Revised final sketch plans under consideration
Coranny & Cornagogue P.S. Roslea	Pre-tender
Dean Maguirc College, Carrickmore	Initial sketch plans awaited
Devenish College, Enniskillen	Initial sketch plans awaited
Dromintee P.S. Newry	Pre-tender
Dromore Central P.S.	Final sketch plans awaited
Ebrington P.S. Derry	Initial sketch plans awaited
Edendork P.S. Dungannon	Revised initial sketch plans under consideration
Eglinton P.S. Derry	Final sketch plans awaited
Enniskillen Model P.S.	Final sketch plans awaited
Foyle & Londonderry College	Initial sketch plans awaited
Glastry College, Ballyhalbert	Initial sketch plans under consideration
Glenwood P.S. / Edenderry N.S. Belfast	Initial sketch plans awaited
Greenwood Assessment Centre, Belfast	EA under review
Holy Family P.S. Magherafelt	Initial sketch plans awaited
Holy Trinity College, Cookstown	EA under review
Hollywood Primary School	Revised initial sketch plans under consideration
Knockbreda H.S. Belfast	Pre-tender
Knockevin Special School, Downpatrick	Revised final sketch plans awaited
Lagan College, Belfast (PPP)	Preferred bidder not yet appointed
Limegrove/Glasvey Special School, Limavady	Initial sketch plans awaited
Little Flower Girls S.S. Belfast	Initial sketch plans under consideration
Loreto College, Omagh	EA under review
Magherafelt P.S.	Pre-tender
Methodist College, Belfast	Initial sketch plans awaited
Mitchell House Special School, Belfast	EA under review
Newbuilding's P.S. Derry	Final sketch plans awaited
Omagh Integrated P.S.	Initial sketch plans awaited
Parkhall College, Antrim	Pre-tender
Portadown College	Initial sketch plans awaited
Priory College Holywood	Revised initial sketch plans under consideration
Rainey Endowed School, Magherafelt	Initial sketch plans awaited
Scoil Na Fuiseoige P.S. Belfast	Final sketch plans under consideration
Springhill P.S. Belfast	Revised initial sketch plans awaited
St Bronagh's P.S. Rostrevor	Revised initial sketch plans awaited
St Clare's Abbey P.S. Newry	Revised initial sketch plans awaited
St Colman's P.S. Lambeg	Pre-tender
St Columba's P.S. Straw, Draperstown	Pre-tender

School Name	Current Position
St Columbanus College, Bangor	Pre-tender
St Columbkille's P.S. Carrickmore	Pre-tender submission awaited
St Conor's P.S. Omagh	Revised initial sketch plans awaited
St Joseph's Convent P.S. Newry	Final sketch plans awaited
St Joseph's P.S. Madden	Pre-tender
St Louis G.S. Kilkeel	Pre-tender submission awaited
St Mary's P.S. Banbridge	Revised initial sketch plans awaited
St Mary's P.S. Newcastle	Pre-tender submission under consideration
St Oliver Plunkett P.S. Forkhill	Pre-tender
St Patrick's Academy Dungannon	Revised final sketch plans under consideration
St Patrick's College, Banbridge	Revised final sketch plans under consideration
St Patrick's G.S. Armagh	Initial sketch plans under consideration
St Paul's P.S. Irvinestown	Initial sketch plans awaited
St Teresa's P.S. Lurgan	Revised final sketch plans awaited
Strand/Sydenham P.S. Belfast	Initial sketch plans awaited
Strandtown P.S. Belfast	Initial sketch plans awaited
Strathearn G.S. Belfast	Pre-tender
Tannaghmore P.S. Lurgan	Finals sketch plans under consideration
Taughmonagh P.S. Belfast	Final sketch plans under consideration
The High School, Ballynahinch	Initial sketch plans awaited
Tor Bank Special School, Dundonald (PPP)	Preferred bidder not yet appointed
Victoria College, Belfast	Revised final sketch plans awaited
Whitehouse P.S. Newtownabbey	Tender Stage

ANNEX B**SCHEMES NOT YET ANNOUNCED**

School Name	Current Position
Abercorn PS, Banbridge	Feasibility Study / Economic Appraisal
Anahorish PS, Toomebridge	Feasibility Study / Economic Appraisal
Antrim PS	Feasibility Study / Economic Appraisal
Ballycastle HS	Feasibility Study / Economic Appraisal
Ballyclare HS	Feasibility Study / Economic Appraisal
Ballyclare PS	Feasibility Study / Economic Appraisal
Ballymena Academy	Feasibility Study / Economic Appraisal
Ballymena PS	Feasibility Study / Economic Appraisal
Ballynahinch PS	Feasibility Study / Economic Appraisal
Ballywalter PS	Feasibility Study / Economic Appraisal
Bangor Central Integrated PS	Feasibility Study / Economic Appraisal
Belfast HS	Feasibility Study / Economic Appraisal

School Name	Current Position
Belfast Royal Academy	Feasibility Study / Economic Appraisal
Braidside Integrated PS, Ballymena	Feasibility Study / Economic Appraisal
Broadbridge, Derry	Feasibility Study / Economic Appraisal
Bunscoil an Iuir, Newry	Feasibility Study / Economic Appraisal
Bunscoil Bheann Mhadagain Belfast	Feasibility Study / Economic Appraisal
Bunscoil Cholmcille, Derry	Feasibility Study / Economic Appraisal
Cambridge House, Ballymena	Feasibility Study / Economic Appraisal
Carrickfergus College	Feasibility Study / Economic Appraisal
Carrickfergus Grammar	Feasibility Study / Economic Appraisal
Castle Tower Special School, Ballymena	Feasibility Study / Economic Appraisal
Christian Brothers' PS ,Mount St Catherine's PS , St Malachy's PS St Patrick's PS (Possible Rationalisation)	Feasibility Study / Economic Appraisal
Coleraine Academical College	Feasibility Study / Economic Appraisal
Corran Integrated PS, Larne	Feasibility Study / Economic Appraisal
Cross and Passion College, Ballycastle	Feasibility Study / Economic Appraisal
Crossroads, Kilrea & St Columbas PS, Kilrea	Feasibility Study / Economic Appraisal
Crumlin HS	Feasibility Study / Economic Appraisal
Cullybackey HS	Feasibility Study / Economic Appraisal
Dalriada, Ballymoney	Feasibility Study / Economic Appraisal
Downpatrick PS	Feasibility Study / Economic Appraisal
Dromore High School	Feasibility Study / Economic Appraisal
Edmund Rice CB PS & Star of the Sea P.S. Belfast	Feasibility Study / Economic Appraisal
Faughanvale Parish P.S. Derry	Feasibility Study / Economic Appraisal
Fermanagh post-primary (controlled)	Feasibility Study / Economic Appraisal
Fermanagh post-primary (maintained)	Feasibility Study / Economic Appraisal
Friends School, Lisburn	Feasibility Study / Economic Appraisal
Gaelscoil Eadain Mhoir, Derry	Feasibility Study / Economic Appraisal
Gaelscoil ui Dhochartaigh, Strabane	Feasibility Study / Economic Appraisal
Gaelscoil Ui Neill, Coalisland	Feasibility Study / Economic Appraisal
Glenravel, Martinstown & St Mary's PS, Cargan	Feasibility Study / Economic Appraisal
Hart Memorial PS, Portadown	Feasibility Study / Economic Appraisal
Hazelwood Integrated College, Belfast	Feasibility Study / Economic Appraisal
Holy Cross Boys' & Girls' & Mercy PS Belfast	Feasibility Study / Economic Appraisal
Holy Trinity PS, Belfast	Feasibility Study / Economic Appraisal
Iveagh PS, Rathfriland	Feasibility Study / Economic Appraisal
Kilcoan & Mullaghduh PS, Islandmagee P.S.	Feasibility Study / Economic Appraisal
Kilkeel High School	Feasibility Study / Economic Appraisal
Killinchy PS	Feasibility Study / Economic Appraisal
Kilmoyle PS, Ballymoney	Feasibility Study / Economic Appraisal
King's Park PS, Lurgan	Feasibility Study / Economic Appraisal

School Name	Current Position
Larne HS	Feasibility Study / Economic Appraisal
Lismore Comprehensive, Craigavon	Feasibility Study / Economic Appraisal
Loreto/St Colmcille's P.S., Omagh	Feasibility Study / Economic Appraisal
Lower Mourne Rationalisation (amalgamation of - Moneydarragh PS, St Joseph's, Ballymartin, St Mary's, Glassdrumman).	Feasibility Study / Economic Appraisal
Malone College, Belfast	Feasibility Study / Economic Appraisal
Markethill High School	Feasibility Study / Economic Appraisal
Millstrand PS, Portrush	Feasibility Study / Economic Appraisal
New Bridge Integrated College, Banbridge	Feasibility Study / Economic Appraisal
New Row PS, Castledawson	Feasibility Study / Economic Appraisal
Omagh County P.S.	Feasibility Study / Economic Appraisal
Our Lady of Lourdes PS, Belfast	Feasibility Study / Economic Appraisal
Portadown IPS	Feasibility Study / Economic Appraisal
Recarson P.S., Omagh	Feasibility Study / Economic Appraisal
Roe Valley P.S. Limavady	Feasibility Study / Economic Appraisal
Saintfield H.S.	Feasibility Study / Economic Appraisal
Slemish College, Ballymena	Feasibility Study / Economic Appraisal
St Aidan's CB PS & St Bernadette's PS Belfast	Feasibility Study / Economic Appraisal
St Anne's PS, Finaghy	Feasibility Study / Economic Appraisal
St Benedict's College, Randalstown	Feasibility Study / Economic Appraisal
St Catherine's College Armagh	Feasibility Study / Economic Appraisal
St Colm's HS, Twinbrook	Feasibility Study / Economic Appraisal
St Colm's HS, Draperstown	Feasibility Study / Economic Appraisal
St Eugene's Parish re-organisation, Derry	Feasibility Study / Economic Appraisal
St Gerard's Educational Resource Centre, Belfast	Feasibility Study / Economic Appraisal
St John the Baptist Boys' & Girls PS Belfast	Feasibility Study / Economic Appraisal
St Joseph's College, Belfast	Feasibility Study / Economic Appraisal
St Joseph's HS, Crossmaglen	Feasibility Study / Economic Appraisal
St Joseph's & St James' PS, Poyntzpass	Feasibility Study / Economic Appraisal
St Joseph's PS Galbally	Feasibility Study / Economic Appraisal
St Killians College Garron Tower (St Comgalls, St Aloysius, St MacNissi's)	Feasibility Study / Economic Appraisal
St Louis G.S. Ballymena	Feasibility Study / Economic Appraisal
St Louise's Comprehensive College, Belfast	Feasibility Study / Economic Appraisal
St Malachy's College, Belfast	Feasibility Study / Economic Appraisal
St Mark's and St Luke's (incl nursery), Twinbrook	Feasibility Study / Economic Appraisal
St Mary's CBS Belfast	Feasibility Study / Economic Appraisal
St Mary's JHS) proposed amalgamation with St Paul's JHS) St Michael's Grammar Lurgan	Feasibility Study / Economic Appraisal
St Mary's on the Hill PS, Glengormley	Feasibility Study / Economic Appraisal
St Mary's PS, Glenview, Maghera	Feasibility Study / Economic Appraisal

School Name	Current Position
St Mary's G.S., Magherafelt	Feasibility Study / Economic Appraisal
St Mary's PS, Newtownbutler	Feasibility Study / Economic Appraisal
St Mary's, Barr & St John's PS Newry	Feasibility Study / Economic Appraisal
St Patrick's and Convent of Mercy, Downpatrick	Feasibility Study / Economic Appraisal
St Peter's, Moy, Dungannon	Feasibility Study / Economic Appraisal
Strabane post-pr amalgamation	Feasibility Study / Economic Appraisal
Straid PS, Ballyclare	Feasibility Study / Economic Appraisal
The Thompson PS, Ballyclare	Feasibility Study / Economic Appraisal
Wallace High, Lisburn	Feasibility Study / Economic Appraisal
Whiteabbey PS	Feasibility Study / Economic Appraisal
Woodburn PS, Carrickfergus	Feasibility Study / Economic Appraisal

Documents in Irish

Mr S Gardiner asked the Minister of Education why official documents, such as the recent circular reminding Boards of Governors of their curricular responsibilities, are issued in Irish to non-Irish medium schools; and what additional cost is involved in terms of paper and postage. (AQW 3577/10)

Minister of Education: Léiríonn úsáid na Gaeilge sa chiorclán a ndearna tú tagairt dó an tiomantas atá agam don Ghaeilge a urramú agus a léiriú i mbealach cuí i ráitis na Roinne. Tá mionchostais bhreise ag baint leis an fhormáid dhátheangach maidir le postas agus le húsáid páipéir cionn is go ndéanann mo Roinn cumarsáid le scoileanna trí ríomhphost de ghnáth. Soláthróidh suíomh gréasáin na Roinne leaganacha dátheangacha, leaganacha Gaeilge-amháin agus leaganacha Béarla-amháin de dhoiciméid, lena n-áirítear ciorcláin scoile, le clódoireacht a éascú.

The use of Irish in the circular you refer to reflects my commitment to respect the Irish language and reflect it in an appropriate way in Departmental communications.

The bilingual format has minimal additional costs in terms of postage and paper use as my Department communicates with schools mainly via e-mail. The Department's website will provide bilingual and Irish-only and English-only versions of documents, including school circulars, to facilitate printing.

Foreign Language Teaching

Mr M Durkan asked the Minister of Education what measures are in place to provide foreign language teaching in primary schools. (AQW 3586/10)

Minister of Education: Thug mé an Clár Teangacha Bunscoile isteach chun tacaíocht pheiripitéatach a thabhairt do bhunscoileanna atá ag iarraidh an Spáinnis, an Ghaeilge, agus níos déanaí, an Pholainnis a sholáthar. Tá lúchair orm go bhfuil 349 bunscoil ag glacadh páirte sa chlár le breis agus 22,000 dalta ag baint an tairbhe le teanga bhreise a fhoghlaim i seisiúin sheachtainiúla a bhfuil baint ag múinteoirí agus teagascóirí teanga araon leo.

I have introduced the Primary Languages Programme, providing peripatetic support for primary schools wishing to deliver Spanish, Irish and, more recently, Polish. I am delighted that 349 schools are currently participating in the programme, with over 22,000 pupils benefitting from learning an additional language in weekly sessions involving both teachers and language tutors.

Additionally, the Education and Library Boards Language Advisors provide support to primary schools wishing to deliver an additional language. Primary schools are also encouraged to become involved in programmes such as Comenius and the Regio programme, which support primary schools and teachers in language learning. Following the Primary Languages Pilot programme run by CCEA, which focused on German, French, Spanish and Irish, work has also been undertaken to develop a Primary Languages Website which was launched in June 2009 and provides support and resources for schools choosing to offer teaching of these four languages based on

the experiences of the programme. CCEA also continues to provide support and resources for primary schools that wish to introduce an additional language.

Foreign Language Teaching

Mr M Durkan asked the Minister of Education in how many primary schools is foreign language teaching available during school hours. (AQW 3587/10)

Minister of Education: Ní choinníonn an Roinn taifead de líon na mbunscoileanna a theagascann teangacha iasachta faoi láthair. Áfach, coinníonn an Roinn eolas ar na scoileanna sin atá ag glacadh páirte sa Chlár Teangacha Bunscoile a sholáthraíonn tacaíocht pheiripitéiteach do bhunscoileanna atá ag iarraidh Gaeilge, Spáinnis nó Polainnis a chur ar fáil. Is féidir liom a dheimhniú go bhfuil 349 bunscoil ag glacadh páirte sa chlár faoi láthair, a thugann deiseanna iontacha do bhreis agus 22,000 dalta teanga nua a fhoghlaim.

The Department does not hold records of the number of primary schools currently delivering foreign language teaching. It does, however, hold information on those schools participating in my Primary Languages Programme which provides peripatetic support to primary schools wishing to deliver Spanish, Irish and, more recently, Polish. I can confirm that 349 primary schools are currently participating in this programme, providing excellent opportunities for over 22,000 pupils to learn a new language.

DEPARTMENT FOR EMPLOYMENT AND LEARNING

Further Education College Associate Lecturers

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister for Employment and Learning if an Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out into HR practices relating to Further Education College Associate Lecturers; and if their terms and conditions relating to pay, teaching and preparation time ratio and overtime are managed on a pro-rata basis with full-time teaching staff. (AQW 3213/10)

Minister for Employment and Learning (Sir Reg Empey): I am advised by the Colleges' Human Resource Group that the terms and conditions of associate lecturers are managed on a pro-rata basis with full-time teaching staff.

My Department has not carried out an Equality Impact Assessment into Human Resource practices relating to Further Education College Associate Lecturers. This is a matter for the further education colleges as the employing authorities.

National Federation of Sub-Postmasters Report 'Six Steps of a Sustainable Post Office Network'

Mr D Kinahan asked the Minister for Employment and Learning for his assessment of the recommendations aimed at devolved institutions and local councils in the National Federation of Sub-Postmasters Report 'Six Steps of a Sustainable Post Office Network' (March 2009); and whether the Department has identified how it can make better use of the Post Office network. (AQW 3282/10)

Minister for Employment and Learning: This Department's engagement with the Post Office network is limited to links - as with other workplace learning venues - to encourage and facilitate the development of essential skills in the workforce

The location or otherwise of Post Office locations would also have relevance to those trainees on the Department's programmes who opt to have their allowances paid via the Post office. However, this is primarily an issue for the Social Security Agency.

Swine Flu

Mr J Shannon asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how much money was redirected from his departmental budget to fund the cost of dealing with the Swine Flu pandemic. (AQW 3359/10)

Minister for Employment and Learning: As stated in the Finance Minister's Statement to the Assembly on 13 October 2009 in relation to the 2009/10 September Monitoring exercise, the Executive unanimously agreed that, having taken account of the amounts available within the existing DHSSPS budget, the balance of funding required to meet the cost of dealing with the swine flu pandemic should be funded by way of a pro rata contribution from all other departments. The Department for Employment and Learning redirected a total of £5.025m, £4.690m current expenditure budget and £0.335m capital expenditure budget, as its pro rata contribution to fund the cost of dealing with the Swine Flu pandemic.

Funding Learning Units

Mr J Shannon asked the Minister for Employment and Learning if he would consider increasing the number of Funding Learning Units for the South Eastern Regional College, due to the increasing number of students. (AQW 3360/10)

Minister for Employment and Learning: The college's recurrent block grant allocation and number of Funded Learning Units for the 2009/10 academic year has been agreed in negotiation with my Department. For South Eastern Regional College, this has resulted in an increase in grant of £2.4 million on the previous academic year.

My Department is currently analysing the November enrolment data received from each of the FE Colleges however at this time I have no additional resources available to me to increase existing allocations. All Colleges are required to have sound financial controls in place and are required to live within the budget set.

Full-time and Part-time Teaching Jobs

Mr J Shannon asked the Minister for Employment and Learning if the full-time and part-time teaching jobs at the Ballyboley, Newtownards and Bangor campuses of the South Eastern Regional College will be secure until the end of the academic year. (AQW 3361/10)

Minister for Employment and Learning: Matters relating to the employment of staff are a matter for the Governing Body of South Eastern Regional College (SERC), as the employing authority.

The College has advised me that the contracts of its full-time lecturers will be secure for the remainder of the current academic year, at least; the contracts of part-time lecturers are determined by the duration of the course they have been appointed to teach.

South Eastern Regional College

Mr J Shannon asked the Minister for Employment and Learning, given that the Ballyboley and Newtownards campuses of the South Eastern Regional College are receiving only limited funding for 2010, what action he intends to take to assist them to deliver courses. (AQW 3364/10)

Minister for Employment and Learning: The Department does not fund individual campuses. Each Regional College is funded on an academic year basis, through the recurrent block grant allocation.

The governing body of South Eastern Regional College is responsible for deciding how funding is allocated throughout the various campuses.

South Eastern Regional College

Mr J Shannon asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what action he is taking to ensure that enrolment at the Ballyboley Campus of the South Eastern Regional College can continue in January, March and September 2010. (AQW 3460/10)

Minister for Employment and Learning: Further Education Colleges are responsible for determining the nature and timetabling of provision offered at each of their campuses, based on local demand.

South Eastern Regional College has advised that provision will continue where there are sufficient enrolment numbers.

South Eastern Regional College

Mr J Shannon asked the Minister for Employment and Learning if he will consider providing additional financial assistance for the South Eastern Regional College, in light of the increasing number of students.

(AQW 3461/10)

Minister for Employment and Learning: Please also refer to AQW 3360/10. The college's recurrent block grant allocation for the 2009/10 academic year was agreed in negotiation with my Department in April 2009. Additionally, further funding is made available sector wide for specific purposes, which is allocated through earmarked funds. My Department is currently analysing the November enrolment data received from each of the Colleges. However at this time I have no additional resources available to me to increase existing allocations.

DEPARTMENT OF ENTERPRISE, TRADE AND INVESTMENT

The Tourism Industry

Mr S Gardiner asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how many meetings her officials have had with officials in other Departments and public bodies in each of the last three years regarding the management of the tourism industry.

(AQW 3170/10)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (Mrs A Foster): Officials in the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment have formal Oversight and Liaison Meetings with management from the Northern Ireland Tourist Board and Tourism Ireland on a quarterly basis.

In addition, officials in DETI meet their colleagues in NITB and Tourism Ireland on a regular and frequent basis to discuss a wide range of matters relating to tourism and also meet colleagues from other Departments occasionally to consider, consult and develop a number of cross cutting tourism related issues.

Capital for Enterprise Fund

Mr S Gardiner asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (i) how many businesses have received assistance under the Capital for Enterprise Fund since its inception; and (ii) how much has been spent on this assistance.

(AQW 3171/10)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: Since the launch, in January 2009, of the £75 million Capital for Enterprise Fund equity scheme, the appointed fund managers have so far made offers totalling £68.7m to 44 businesses across the UK. Eight businesses have received investment totalling £12.4m with a further thirteen businesses having accepted the terms of the funding offered with a total value of £20.3m.

The Capital for Enterprise Fund is being run in Northern Ireland by Maven Capital Partners who held a seminar in June 2009 in Belfast to help publicise the fund. Although there have been a number of enquiries from Northern Ireland companies, none to date has made a successful application or is under current consideration.

Economically Inactive People

Mr A Ross asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment how many people were economically inactive in the East Antrim constituency, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 3182/10)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: Estimates of economic inactivity at constituency level are sourced to the Northern Ireland Labour Force Survey annual dataset and are only available on a consistent basis

from 2005 onwards. The table below provides the estimated¹ total number of economically inactive people in the East Antrim Parliamentary Constituency Area, aged 16 & over and of working age, from 2005 – 2008.

Number of economically inactive² persons in the East Antrim Constituency, 2005 - 2008

Year	Total Economically Inactive Aged 16+	Total Economically Inactive Working Age ³
2005	21,000	9,000
2006	22,000	10,000
2007	26,000	11,000
2008	30,000	14,000

1 The LFS is a sample survey and the estimate has an associated degree of sampling error. In particular, estimates at constituency level are based on relatively small sample sizes and are subject to a higher degree of sampling variability. They should, therefore, be treated with caution.

2 The economically inactive are those people who are neither in employment nor unemployed. This group includes, for example, all those who are looking after the family/home, retired, sick/disabled or in full-time education etc.

3 Working age refers to females aged 16 to 59 and males aged 16 to 64.

Source: NI Labour Force Survey (LFS), January - December annual dataset.

Working Capital Scheme

Mr S Gardiner asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (i) how many businesses have received assistance under the Working Capital Scheme since its inception; and (ii) how much has been spent on it. (AQW 3192/10)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: £2bn of guarantees have been provided to two banks under The Working Capital Scheme (WCS), which is administered by the UK Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS). It provides guarantees to participating banks related to working capital portfolios, rather than individual loans. It is designed to free up capital for new lending to UK companies. Companies themselves do not apply for WCS guarantees and are not aware that their loans are guaranteed under the scheme. BIS does not hold records by region of companies which have loans underpinned by WCS guarantees.

Accelerated Support Fund

Mr S Gardiner asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (i) how many businesses have received assistance under the Accelerated Support Fund since its inception; and (ii) how much has been spent on it. (AQW 3194/10)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: The gateway to Accelerated Support Fund (ASF) support is the 'credit crunch diagnostic', which is free to Invest NI clients attending 'Challenges and Opportunities – the Credit Crunch' events.

(i) 527 diagnostics contracts have been issued valued at £1,283,279.

Following on from the diagnostic activity 112 clients have received ASF offers of support totalling £3,645,296.

(ii) Total expenditure to 30 November 2009 is £1,521,248 This includes expenditure on the free diagnostic undertaken in each of the participating companies and grant support paid under ASF

As at 30 November 2009 the total support committed to ASF both via diagnostic and project support is £4,928,575.

Clients can access information on ASF through nibusinessinfo.co.uk which gives details on the scheme and eligibility considerations.

Invest NI

Mr K Robinson asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, pursuant to AQW 1362/10, to detail the orders generated by Invest NI's overseas trade missions in each constituency, in each of the last three years. (AQW 3251/10)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: The following table gives details of the orders reported by companies participating in Invest NI's trade mission activities by constituency in each of the past three years.

Constituency	2006/07 £000'S	2007/08 £000'S	2008/09 £000'S
Belfast East	5,150	3,430	2,923
Belfast North	900	10,080	6,209
Belfast South	7,068	158,520	4,811
Belfast West	65,866	14,030	3,200
East Antrim	25,800	500	3,008
East Londonderry	11,240	2,493	1,495
Fermanagh & South Tyrone	5,264	17,000	9,575
Foyle	4,461	12,553	13,535
Lagan Valley	28,796	1,310	348
Mid Ulster	37,605	22,303	4,478
Newry & Armagh	3,086	4,650	5,790
North Antrim	30,625	17,200	2,313
North Down	2,432	580	1,569
*Other	27	0	306
South Antrim	16,472	19,087	23,280
South Down	6,022	61,285	4,522
Strangford	489	2,041	11,845
Upper Bann	30,001	6,230	3,342
West Tyrone	8,059	14,100	14,651
Totals	289,363	367,392	117,200

* Orders received by RoI-based companies which participated in Invest NI's trade mission programme

Civil Servants' Earnings

Mr J Craig asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, pursuant to AQW 2954/10, to detail (i) the job title; (ii) pay scale; and (iii) the total amount earned by the civil servant in question. (AQW 3259/10)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: The one Civil Servant who currently earns more than the Minister in the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment is the Permanent Secretary. The current pay band scale for Permanent Secretary in the NICS is £98,059 to £205,000. The DETI Permanent Secretary currently earns between £100,000- £105,000.

National Federation of Sub-Postmasters Report 'Six Steps of a Sustainable Post Office Network'

Mr D Kinahan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for her assessment of the recommendations aimed at devolved institutions and local councils in the National Federation of Sub-Postmasters Report 'Six Steps

of a Sustainable Post Office Network' (March 2009); and whether the Department has identified how it can make better use of the Post Office network. (AQW 3283/10)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: The document 'Six Steps to a Sustainable Post Office Network' – A Report by the National Federation of Sub Postmasters provides opportunities to enable the sustainability of the national network of Post Offices. At page 13, the document provides a list of services which might be delivered within Post Offices; the only example relevant to my Department is the delivery of tourist information.

In Northern Ireland, tourist information is formally delivered by local councils, mainly through the network of 31 Tourism Information Centres (TICs). In addition, there are Local Information Centres (LICs); Tourism Information Points (TIPs); and Electronic Kiosks.

The Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB) is currently considering how servicing of visitor information might be co-ordinated into a seamless integrated network accessible throughout Northern Ireland.

NITB welcomes the opportunity to increase visitor opportunities to gain quality visitor information at locations which are highly accessible and in formats which are suitable to the visitors' needs and preferences.

Nevertheless, NITB would wish to ensure that all visitors continue to avail of the highly skilled and quality experience delivered in the Tourist Information Centres (TICs) across Northern Ireland.

The successful delivery of visitor information requires detailed knowledge of Northern Ireland, as well as local authority districts. During September 2009, NITB commissioned a survey of 1,000 visitors at Tourist Information Centres and visitor attractions across Northern Ireland. The survey identified that of those visitors who used the services of a TIC, 55% stated that they visited an attraction which they had not planned to visit, while 31% indicated that they were greatly encouraged to return to Northern Ireland following their visit to the TIC.

NITB would consider any potential role for Post Offices in the delivery of visitor information to be concerned with hosting self service materials only.

Wireless Network in Fermanagh and Tyrone

Mr P Doherty asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to outline the reasons for the delay in the availability of the wireless network in parts of Fermanagh and Tyrone, given that some of the contract winners have received funding to provide the service. (AQW 3296/10)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: My Department is currently supporting the deployment of fixed wireless networks in the rural west, Foyle Basin/North Sperrins and Co. Fermanagh border areas. Delivery of services using fixed wireless technologies is dependent on line-of-sight and while the core network in the rural west has been completed on schedule this month, some minor in-fill work is underway to address not-spot areas. Commercial services are therefore already being delivered in some areas under this project.

Work on the Foyle Basin/North Sperrins network, being delivered by the same company, will commence in December 2009 and will take approximately 6 months. A condition of funding this project was that it would commence only when work was substantially completed on the rural west network.

Work on delivery of the Co. Fermanagh network began in August 2009 and is scheduled to run for approximately 12 months, at which point commercial services will be made available.

No funds have been paid out, to date, in respect of either the Foyle Basin/North Sperrins or Co. Fermanagh projects.

Rose Energy

Mr T Burns asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment why funding sought by Rose Energy from Invest NI for a proposed biomass fuelled power plant is being considered by the Food Division of Invest NI and not the Energy Division of Invest NI. (AQW 3297/10)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: My response to AQW 2923/10 indicated that the evaluation of this project was at an advanced stage. The project rests with Invest NI's Food Division because of the links with the Northern Ireland poultry industry but the evaluation process goes much wider and has involved Energy Division in DETI.

NI Electricity

Mr S Gardiner asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment if she has had discussions with NI Electricity on the early introduction of smart meters which calculate how much gas or electricity is used each time an appliance is switched on. (AQW 3300/10)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: To date my Department has not had any discussions with NI Electricity on the early introduction of smart meters. Northern Ireland Authority for Utility Regulation (NIAUR) is currently engaged with both the electricity and gas companies in looking at the potential for smart meters in both the electricity and gas sectors.

DETI is currently working closely with NIAUR in this area, particularly in a study looking at potential technical solutions for a smart metering rollout in Northern Ireland which is nearing completion.

Some smart meters have the functionality to output the amount of electricity or gas being consumed to a separate real time display. These types of displays can identify the switching on and off of appliances.

DETI will issue a further consultation on the options for Northern Ireland once an impact assessment has been completed to identify the likely costs of any solution and the potential impact on consumer bills.

NI Electricity

Mr S Gardiner asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment if an assessment has been made of the impact the introduction of smart meters would have on the employment of NI Electricity staff. (AQW 3301/10)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: The introduction of smart meters has the potential to reduce the need for meter readers in the longer term. However at this stage, neither DETI nor NIE can make an assessment of the impact on meter readers until the technical solution for a smart metering rollout in Northern Ireland has been completed.

DETI is currently working closely with the Northern Ireland Authority for Utility Regulation (NIAUR) in this area, and a study looking at potential technical solutions for a smart metering rollout in Northern Ireland is nearing completion.

Smart Meters

Mr S Gardiner asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment if she has had any discussions with the Secretary of State for Energy on the newly announced Government scheme to introduce smart meters across the UK by 2020. (AQW 3302/10)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: I have not had any discussions with the Secretary of State for Energy on smart meters, although officials from Energy Division work closely with their counterparts in the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) in this area. Energy policy is a devolved matter and therefore recent announcements by DECC apply to GB only.

In April 2009 my Department issued a consultation on Better Billing and Metering, including smart metering and the majority of respondents were in favour of a smart meter rollout. DETI is currently working closely with the Northern Ireland Authority for Utility Regulation (NIAUR) in this area, and a study looking at potential technical solutions for a smart metering rollout in Northern Ireland is nearing completion.

DETI will issue a further consultation on these options once an impact assessment has been completed to identify the likely costs of any solution and the potential impact on consumer bills.

Broadband

Mr P Doherty asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (i) why County Fermanagh is not deemed a priority area in the latest Broadband Fund call, given that in January 2009 Fermanagh District Council presented a list of over 50 townlands which do not receive broadband; and (ii) when County Fermanagh can expect to receive broadband coverage other than that currently being offered by Avanti Communications. (AQW 3312/10)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment:

- (i) There are no areas in Co. Fermanagh or indeed anywhere else in Northern Ireland that do not have access to broadband. As a direct consequence of my Department's initiative in developing the 2004 Local Broadband Access Contract, Northern Ireland has 100% access to broadband services. Less than 1% of existing broadband services across Northern Ireland are delivered using the satellite in-fill service put in place by my Department with Avanti Communications.

The Broadband Fund is a mechanism for supporting projects delivering next generation broadband services into rural locations. My Department engaged extensively with Fermanagh District Council when identifying priority areas under the 3rd call for projects. One application was received and approved for funding assistance, involving the development of a fixed wireless network. The project began in August 2009 and is on schedule for completion and delivery of commercial services in August 2010. Although no specific locations in Co Fermanagh were prioritised under the recently closed 4th call, my officials wrote to the Council, and all of the others, advising them of the opportunities under the 4th call.

- (ii) Co. Fermanagh, like every other part of Northern Ireland, has broadband coverage. This is delivered by fixed line, wireless and satellite technologies, but in the main by fixed line (with less than 1% using the other solutions). Co. Fermanagh will also benefit from my announcement this week of the award of a contract to BT for delivery of a next generation solution for Northern Ireland businesses.

Broadband

Mr P Doherty asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment why her Department and Avanti Communications are marketing a satellite service with speeds of 512 Kbps as a broadband service when, according to the BT Group, internet speeds of below 1Mbps are not classified as broadband. (AQW 3325/10)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: The telecommunications market is privatised and independently regulated nationally by Ofcom. Although there are many definitions of broadband, Ofcom, in numerous publications, including its latest Communications Market Report (2009), defines broadband as "a service or connection generally defined as being 'always on' and providing a bandwidth greater than narrowband". Narrowband is in turn defined as "a service or connection providing data speeds up to 128 kilobits per second, such as via an analogue telephone line, or via ISDN".

In awarding the contract to Avanti Communications (as was the case in awarding the previous 5-year contract to BT) DETI specified that services delivered should provide a minimum data transfer speed of 500kbps and this is clearly in line with the Telecommunications Regulator's definition of broadband as well as meeting the recommendations of internationally renowned groups such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) which suggests that broadband services should offer internet connectivity capable of download speeds of at least 256kbps. In addition BT in Northern Ireland have confirmed that they can find no reference to substantiate the claim that internet speeds of below 1Mbps are not classified as broadband.

Broadband

Mr P Doherty asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment why Avanti Communication customers pay £24.47 a month for 512kbps, when BT Retail could offer the same service for £17.99 a month through their phone lines, but refuse to as it provides a speed of less than 1Mbps. (AQW 3326/10)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: The telecommunications market is privatised and independently regulated nationally by Ofcom. Investment decisions in the delivery and pricing of services are typically made by the Private Sector service providers. DETI has made investments in the marketplace to deliver networks or improve their extent, quality and reliability where it notes underlying market failure.

The contract between DETI and Avanti Communications was put in place to counter a market failure in the delivery of broadband services to those living and working in rural areas but unable to access broadband services via a fixed-line solution.

Avanti provides a portfolio of services under its contract with DETI ranging from a 512/128 kbps service at £24.47 per month (including VAT) to a 3mbps/768kbps service at £67.56 per month (including VAT). These costs are heavily subsidised by the Department and are very favourable in relation to those for comparable services

elsewhere in the UK where, on average, the cost of a direct satellite service is £1400 for installation and £70 per month thereafter.

While BT Retail or, indeed, any other service provider operating in Northern Ireland can make the commercial decision to supply an ADSL broadband service to Northern Ireland customers at lower prices and higher speeds, this can only be achieved where the line length to the customer's premises will accommodate the signal.

Broadband

Mr T Burns asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (i) to detail the 166 telephone exchanges which will be upgraded as part of the recently announced £50 million investment in broadband provision; and (ii) what the anticipated date of the upgrade is. (AQW 3333/10)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: On 3 December 2009 I announced jointly with BT the Next Generation Broadband project which will deliver Next Generation Services to 85% of businesses across Northern Ireland by 2011. The project will involve the deployment of fibre optic cable deeper into our urban districts, towns, villages and countryside and upgrades to equipment across 166 exchanges.

(i) These are listed below.

Exchange

- Bangor
- Newcastle
- Warrenpoint
- Cookstown
- Moira
- Aghalee
- Whiteabbey
- Kilkeel
- Rathfriland
- Crossmaglen
- Portadown
- Lurgan
- Cregagh, Belfast
- Ormeau, Belfast
- Magherafelt
- Maze
- Hillsborough
- Portstewart
- Ballycastle
- Balmoral
- Enniskillen
- Maghera
- Irvinestown
- Dundonald
- Keady
- Portglenone
- Ahoghill
- Cullybackey
- Rostrevor
- Newry

- Killeavy
- Donaghadee
- Castleberg
- Newtownards
- Bessbrook
- Carrickfergus
- Whitehead
- Castlewellan
- Ballymena
- Glarryford
- Cloughmills
- Portaferry
- Kircubbin
- Crossgar
- Downpatrick
- Banbridge
- Gilford
- Ballynahinch
- Saintfield
- Baillies Mills
- Coagh
- Moneymore
- Ballyronan
- Ballywalter
- Portavogie
- Waringstown
- Templepatrick
- Antrim
- Ardglass
- Killyleagh
- Millisle
- Portrush
- Lisburn
- Stoneyford
- Belfast City
- Campsie
- Ballymoney
- Glengormley
- Ballygowan
- Carryduff
- Strabane
- Waterside
- Annaghmore
- Castlereagh
- Comber
- Coleraine

- Ballysillan, Belfast
- Londonderry/Brookhall
- Tandragee
- Eglinton
- Limavady
- Helens Bay
- Londonderry
- Bready
- Cross
- Kesh
- Coalisland
- Pomeroy
- Newtownhamilton
- Annalong
- Forkhill
- Kilrea
- Garvagh
- Moy
- Dungannon
- Toomebridge
- Randalstown
- Aghadowey
- Armagh
- Benburb
- Loughall
- Caledon
- Ballyclare
- Lisnaskea
- Lisbellaw
- Brookeborough
- Fivemiletown
- Clogher
- Beragh
- Omagh
- Fintona
- Carrickmore
- Dundrod
- Crumlin
- Holywood
- Bushmills
- Dervock
- Draperstown
- Castledawson
- Donaghmore
- Newtonstewart
- Drumquin

- Rasharkin
- Swatragh
- Kells
- Feeny
- Claudy
- Dunamanagh
- Dromara
- Stewartstown
- Malone, Belfast
- Bellarena
- Larne
- Drumore
- Aghnacloy
- Cushendall
- Gortin
- Florencecourt
- Springfield, Northern Ireland
- Markethill
- Richill
- Ballygawley
- Greyabbey
- Martinstown
- Sion Mills
- Trillick
- Tulnacross
- Carnlough
- Glenarm
- Ballinamallard
- Mountfield
- Dungiven
- Derrylin
- Armoy
- Belleek
- Tempo
- Roslea
- Derrygonnelly
- Belcoo
- Broughshane
- Ballykinler
- Newtownbutler
- Stormont, Belfast
- Fortwilliam, Belfast
- Castlerock
- Derryadd

(ii) The investment roll out is scheduled to be completed by May 2011.

Disposal of Poultry Litter

Mr T Burns asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, apart from the proposed Rose Energy Poultry Litter Incinerator, what alternative technologies her Department has considered for the disposal of poultry litter; and how much her Department has invested in progressing these alternatives. (AQW 3356/10)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: Invest NI is not considering alternative technologies for the disposal of poultry litter. Invest NI participates in an Interdepartmental Working Group on Bioenergy and this group's recent public consultation on a Bioenergy Action Plan 2009 – 2014, noted the current proposal for a 30 mega watt power plant using chicken litter as a feedstock. The Carbon Trust which is funded by Invest NI has recently commissioned an Organic Energy Scoping Study, to map and quantify food-based organic waste arisings in Northern Ireland, with a view to informing the development of opportunities for renewable energy generation and the supply and maintenance of associated waste conversion equipment and plant. It is anticipated that this study will include poultry litter arisings.

DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT

National Federation of Sub-Postmasters Report 'Six Steps of a Sustainable Post Office Network'

Mr D Kinahan asked the Minister of the Environment for his assessment of the recommendations aimed at devolved institutions and local councils in the National Federation of Sub-Postmasters Report 'Six Steps of a Sustainable Post Office Network' (March 2009); and whether the Department has identified how it can make better use of the Post Office network. (AQW 3308/10)

Minister of the Environment (Mr E Poots): I am aware of the report produced by the Federation regarding the Post Office Network and its recommendations to devolved and local government, and would point out that the type of activities that the report highlights in terms of local authorities supporting local sub-post offices are unlikely to feature in local council activity in Northern Ireland in the short or even medium term.

Within my Department, the Driver & Vehicle Agency (DVA) currently has a contract with the Post Office for the renewal of vehicle tax discs in Northern Ireland. At present, this work is carried out at 145 post offices across Northern Ireland and involves the issue of nearly 750,000 tax discs by the Post Office. Under the terms of the contract for this work, the selection of the number and location of the Post Offices offering re-licensing services is determined by the Post Office, as a commercial decision. DVA is always happy to discuss with the Post Office the use of additional outlets.

Planning

Mr T Burns asked the Minister of the Environment how many (i) new buildings; and (ii) extension/expansion projects have been built without planning permission in each of the last five years, in each of the following categories (a) residential; (b) industrial; (c) leisure / recreational; and (d) other. (AQW 3404/10)

Minister of the Environment: Breaches of planning control are recorded on the Department's database by the nature of breach, e.g. change of use, breach of condition, operational development, etc., and not land use. It is not therefore possible to provide the requested figures.

In order to provide accurate figures for the information requested a manual search of individual case records which is not only disproportionate in terms of time and cost but would result in un-validated statistics being released would be required. This would be contrary to the Code of Practice for the release of official statistics published in January 2009 ahead of the enactment of the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 on 1 April 2009.

There were 4,241 live enforcement cases as at 31 October 2009.

DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE AND PERSONNEL

National Federation of Sub-Postmasters Report ‘Six Steps of a Sustainable Post Office Network’

Mr D Kinahan asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for his assessment of the recommendations aimed at devolved institutions and local councils in the National Federation of Sub-Postmasters Report ‘Six Steps of a Sustainable Post Office Network’ (March 2009); and whether the Department has identified how it can make better use of the Post Office network. (AQW 3269/10)

Minister of Finance and Personnel (Mr S Wilson): I am all too aware of the Federation’s concerns for the future of small post offices, having attended and participated in an event organised by the National Federation of Sub Postmasters in Stormont on 14 September and in subsequent correspondence with the Northern Ireland Branch of the Federation.

The Six Steps Report has a number of recommendations relating to devolved and local government. One of the key recommendations in the Report relates to providing rate relief for post offices.

You will be aware that my predecessor, Nigel Dodds, announced in December 2008 his intention to introduce a Small Business Rate Relief scheme and that is now progressing well. It is intended to come into operation in time for the next rating year in April 2010. Included in the scheme will be enhanced rate relief for post offices. This will benefit around 80% of all post offices, most of whom will pay no rates at all as a result of the scheme. In real terms that means an average benefit to eligible post offices of between £1,620 and £2,580 per year. Relief will be paid automatically by Land and Property Services to all post offices that qualify. The new scheme will help to sustain the network, particularly those operating in isolated urban and rural communities.

In terms of the provision of wider government services by post offices, I know that the Federation has suggested a number of possibilities such as the administration of benefit payments, payment for local council bills and the payment of fines (such as parking fines). Most of these are beyond the scope of this Department and therefore for my Ministerial colleagues to consider.

However, I am pleased to say that Land and Property Services is increasingly promoting the use of third parties, including post offices, for the payment of rates. In the last financial year, £77 million was collected from ratepayers through the post office network.

In addition LPS advise that there may also be potential for post offices to be involved in document verification, for some of the rating reliefs and allowances, such as the recently introduced Lone Pensioners Allowance Scheme. I have asked officials to examine the feasibility of such a service and if it appears a practicable proposition I will request a business case to be prepared, which will weigh up the costs and benefits. The Federation will be invited to assist in this task.

Childcare Vouchers

Mr J Shannon asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel, in light of the support shown during the Assembly debate on Childcare Vouchers, if he will lend his support to the campaign to continue this scheme, and speak to the Prime Minister on this issue. (AQW 3284/10)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: At present 532 staff in the Northern Ireland Civil Service have registered to receive childcare vouchers. The Prime Minister has recently confirmed that the scheme will continue but that from 2011 tax relief for new entrants to the scheme will be limited to 20%. This will ensure that the system does not disproportionately benefit higher rate taxpayers.

I will write to the Prime Minister in my capacity as an MP to advise him of my views.

Civil Service Equal Pay Claim

Dr A McDonnell asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel why he is not adhering to the commitment given in 2008 by the former Finance Minister, to include all NICS employees who have been retired 6 years in the settlement of the Civil Service equal pay claim. (AQW 3371/10)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: I am not aware of any commitment to include all NICS employees who have been retired 6 years in the settlement of the Civil Service equal pay claim.

Civil Service Pay Structure

Ms A Lo asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel if he will consider a review of the Civil Service pay structure following the pay offer to Administrative Assistants, Administrative Officers and EO2s, which has caused the anomaly of some Administrative Officers earning more than their EO2 managers. (AQW 3399/10)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: A comprehensive pay and grading review will be carried out in the NICS. This review will prioritise the examination of the EO2 grade within the NICS pay and grading structures.

Civil Servants' Earnings

Mr J Craig asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how many civil servants within his Department, inclusive of salaries, bonuses and any paid positions on outside bodies, earn more than the salary of a departmental Minister of £80,902. (AQW 3452/10)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: There are 16 civil servants in DFP who earn more than the salary of £80,902.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, SOCIAL SERVICES AND PUBLIC SAFETY

Crohn's Disease

Ms M Anderson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many patients in each Health and Social Care Trust are receiving ongoing treatment for Crohn's disease and similar chronic bowel conditions; and how many of these patients are receiving 'Remicade' treatment. (AQW 3162/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (Mr M McGimpsey): The information is not collected in the form requested. Treatment with Remicade for Crohn's disease is funded in line with current NICE guidance; that guidance does not recommend the use of Remicade on an ongoing (maintenance) basis. NICE is however currently consulting on revised guidelines on the use of Remicade and Humira for the treatment of Crohn's disease.

NICE has issued guidance indicating that Remicade is not recommended for people with subacute, moderately to severely active ulcerative colitis. The Institute has recommended Remicade as a possible treatment for people with acute, severely active ulcerative colitis if ciclosporin is considered inappropriate for them or they are taking part in a research study (clinical trial). My Department has endorsed this guidance.

Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority

Mr A Easton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the hospitals inspected by the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority; and how many times each hospital was inspected, in each of the last two years (AQW 3164/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Since The Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA) began its programme of unannounced infection prevention/ hygiene inspections in March 2008, all 19 acute hospitals in Northern Ireland have been subject to an inspection. The RQIA is also undertaking a programme of re-audits.

Physiotherapy Posts

Mr B McElduff asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many physiotherapy posts have been vacated at the Tyrone County Hospital in the last two years; and what measures are being taken to recruit physiotherapists for these posts. (AQW 3173/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The number of permanent posts vacated are as follows:

- 0.6 WTE Band 6 Community Physiotherapist – this was subsequently filled by an existing Tyrone County Hospital Physiotherapist via interview
- 1.0 WTE Band 5 rotational physiotherapist – interviews for this post were held recently.

In total, there are currently 1.5 WTE temporary Band 5, 1.0 WTE permanent Band 5 and 1.0 WTE Band 6 (maternity leave cover) positions out for recruitment.

The recruitment of staff is a matter for the Trust however the Western Trust advises that the current vacant posts are being recruited to using the usual recruitment process.

Physiotherapy Treatment

Mr B McElduff asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail (i) the average waiting time for patients referred to Tyrone County Hospital for urgent physiotherapy treatment; (ii) the number of people currently on the waiting list for physiotherapy treatment at Tyrone County Hospital after urgent referral by their GP; and (iii) the number of physiotherapists currently working at Tyrone County Hospital. (AQW 3174/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety:

- (i) Information on the average waiting time for patients referred to Tyrone County Hospital for urgent physiotherapy treatment is not available.
- (ii) There are currently 61 patients waiting for physiotherapy treatment at the Tyrone County Hospital following urgent referral by their GP; and
- (iii) There are currently 8.8 wte physiotherapists in place at Tyrone County Hospital.

Herbal Drugs

Mr A Ross asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many ‘herbal drugs’ have been made illegal in each of the last five years. (AQW 3181/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: In order to ensure a consistent approach is taken to the law in relation to drugs use, all jurisdictions within the UK place the same restrictions on certain drugs as set out in the Misuse of Drugs Act – which is the responsibility of the Home Office in Westminster.

No “herbal drugs” have been added to the Misuse of Drugs Act in the previous five years. However, I understand that the Home Office is currently proposing to amend the Act to include a number of substances known as “legal highs”. The amendment will make it illegal to possess or distribute a range of substances including:

- GBL and 1,4-BD);
- BZP and a group of substituted piperazines;
- a range of synthetic cannabinoid receptor agonists; and
- 24 anabolic steroids, and two growth promoters.

Drug Awareness Programmes

Mr A Ross asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety if drug awareness programmes include information on drugs that are advertised as giving a ‘legal high’. (AQW 3183/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Through the New Strategic Direction for Alcohol and Drugs, the Public Health Agency commissions and funds a range of locality based substance misuse

education and awareness programmes. Where “legal highs” are identified as an issue by a service provider this will be directly addressed within the education, prevention and drug awareness programmes. The misuse of legal substances is also included in all education, prevention, and drug awareness programmes as a matter of good practice.

Currently Legal Drugs

Mr A Ross asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to outline the process for banning currently legal drugs which are advertised as giving the user a ‘legal high’. (AQW 3197/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: It is the duty of the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs (ACMD) to advise Ministers on appropriate measures to be taken with respect to drugs which are being, or appear to them are likely to be, misused and which are causing or may cause a social problem.

‘Legal highs’ are substances currently not controlled under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 and which are self-administered to achieve an altered state of mind. Commonly, ‘legal highs’ contain benzylpiperazine (BZP), or one of a group of related compounds (substituted piperazines). In Northern Ireland, this Department has secured convictions under the Medicines Act 1968 for sales of these preparations.

Following a ACMD report and a subsequent public consultation, BZP, a number of other substituted piperazines and a similar preparation, Gamma-Butyrolactone (GBL) are to be controlled under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 and the Misuse of Drugs Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2002 from 23 December 2009

Clinical Supervision

Mrs I Robinson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the annual cost of clinical supervision for each of the last three years. (AQW 3200/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Details regarding the costs of clinical supervision are not held centrally by the DHSSPS and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

Clinical Supervision by Nurses

Mrs I Robinson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the practice of clinical supervision by nurses; and to outline its merits. (AQW 3202/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Clinical supervision is an important element of clinical governance, enabling practitioners to examine their practice, skills, knowledge, attitudes and values.

This has been highlighted in national and regional critical incident inquiries such as The Clothier Report (1994), Lewis Review (2003), Shipman Reports (2002 - 05), Murtagh Review (2005) and the McCleery Report (2006).

The Regulation Quality and Improvement Authority (RQIA) also recognise the importance of ensuring that staff have access to effective supervision, this is reflected in DHSSPS published quality standards for health and social care

In April 2008 the Chief Nursing Officer introduced two new standards for the supervision of nurses and a regional policy was agreed. This states that each registered nurse will undertake a minimum of two formal supervision sessions per year, the format for these sessions are arranged between the supervisor and supervisee.

Nursing Staff Shortages

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety if he has met with the Royal College of Nursing or ward managers in the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust to discuss potential staff shortages following the scaling back in the use of agency nurses. (AQW 3203/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: I have not met with the Royal College of Nursing or ward managers in the Belfast Trust to discuss potential staff shortages and the use of agency nurses. The employment of agency staff is an operational matter for the Health and Social Care Trusts.

Nurse to Patient Ratio

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) the statutory requirement for nurse to patient ratio on hospital wards; and (ii) how many times this requirement has been breached in each Health and Social Care Trust in the last six months. (AQW 3204/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: There is no statutory ratio of nurses to patients in the UK.

Agency Nurses

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety if he is aware of the difference in costs associated with English or Scottish-based nursing agencies, compared to locally based agencies; and what plans he has to prioritise locally based nursing agencies. (AQW 3205/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The employment of agency staff is an operational matter for the Health and Social Care Trusts and my Department has no direct involvement in this.

Agency Nurses

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail (i) the use and cost of English or Scottish-based nursing agencies; and (ii) how this compares to the use and cost of locally based nursing agencies, for each of the last three financial years. (AQW 3206/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The information requested is not held centrally and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

Information relating to the cost of agency staff is published bi-annually on the departmental website at www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/hrd/wpu/wpu-monitoring.htm

Agency Nurses

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the cost of (i) travel; (ii) accommodation; and (iii) subsistence associated with the use of agency nurses based in England or Scotland in each of the last three financial years. (AQW 3207/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The information requested is not held centrally and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

Information relating to the cost of agency staff is published bi-annually on the departmental website at www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/index/hrd/wpu/wpu-monitoring.htm

Health Charges

Mrs I Robinson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what procedures his Department has in place for charging patients who do not qualify for exemption from health charges. (AQW 3208/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Responsibility to identify and charge a person who is not entitled to free health services falls on the relevant health and social care body treating the patient.

The majority of costs incurred by treating non-entitled patients are for treatment in a hospital setting, where the responsible charging body is the relevant Health and Social Care Trust. All Trusts have procedures in place to identify and charge persons who do not satisfy an exemption category.

Charging for care for non-exempt patients in the primary care sector is a matter for each independent primary care contractor, i.e., Community Pharmacists, GPs, Dentists and Opticians

Occupational Therapists Issuing Wheelchairs

Mr I McCrea asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what criteria are in place for Occupational Therapists issuing wheelchairs to patients. (AQW 3212/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: My Department is committed to the provision of a person-centred, accessible, responsive and equitable wheelchair service to every individual in Northern Ireland who is assessed by an Occupational Therapist who confirms the need for a wheelchair.

Comprehensive regional access criteria and policy guidelines for wheelchair provision has been developed in partnership with users and professionals. This guidance will be formally signed off by the NI Occupational Therapy Managers in early 2010 for implementation across the province.

Multiple Sclerosis

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety if provision will be made at South Tyrone Hospital for specialist treatment and physiotherapy for people in that area diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis, given that they currently have to travel to Forster Green Hospital in Belfast for treatment. (AQW 3244/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: I understand that patients with MS in the South Tyrone region have access to a variety of physiotherapy treatment delivered both in hospital and community settings. Inevitably patients with more complex symptoms will need to continue being treated at the Regional Specialist Centre provided at Forster Green, Musgrave Park and the Royal Victoria hospitals.

However, from November 2009 a specialist Multiple Sclerosis clinic has commenced in Craigavon Area Hospital and I anticipate that a number of patients who currently travel to Belfast for treatment will now be accommodated at this new clinic.

Hospital Accident and Emergency Departments

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many walk-in cases to hospital accident and emergency departments in the last twelve months could have been appropriately dealt with by a GP or pharmacist. (AQW 3245/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Information on how many walk-in cases to hospital accident and emergency departments that could have been appropriately dealt with by a GP or pharmacist is not available.

Royal Victoria Hospital

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) when the kitchen in ward 4F of the Royal Victoria Hospital was closed down; (ii) why it was closed; (iii) why it is still closed; (iv) when it will re-open; and (v) from where does the food for patients on this ward now come. (AQW 3248/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The kitchen in Ward 4F of the Royal Victoria Hospital was closed in May 2009 because additional storage space was needed for essential ward supplies and it will not re-open. The kitchen was used only for hot beverages which are now available as required via a trolley supplied from the central kitchen. Patient food continues to be supplied from the Level 4 pantry kitchen.

Health and Social Care Trusts

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the performance related pay and bonuses paid out by each Health and Social Care Trust to Chief Executives and Senior Management since their inception; and to outline the key indicators for these payments and bonuses.

(AQW 3249/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Health and Social Care Trust Chief Executives and Directors are employed under contracts that provide them with a single annual percentage increase on their basic pay; based on how well they have achieved the performance targets set for them in the previous year. There is no automatic entitlement to any increase under these employment contracts. In addition, one individual in each organisation may receive a non-recurring payment if they are assessed to be in the “Superior” performance category.

The annual increases are set with the approval of the Department of Finance and Personnel Minister.

The increase due from 1 April 2009 is still under consideration. Details of the salaries paid to individuals relating to these % increases are published in the HSC Trust’s annual reports.

Health and Social Care Trusts

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many legal cases are currently pending against each Health and Social Care Trust.

(AQW 3250/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The information requested has been set out in the table below.

Legal Claims Open at 30 November 2009			
HSC Trust	Employer’s Liability Claims	Occupier’s Liability Claims	Professional Negligence Claims
Northern	101	28	427
Western	67	17	440
South Eastern	85	26	383
Southern	58	27	272
Belfast	250	91	900
NI Ambulance	27	2	7

Hospital Complaints

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) how many complaint forms have been submitted in the last twelve months by nurses, broken down by hospital; (ii) to provide a summary of these complaints; (iii) how many of the complaints remain unresolved; and (iv) for the outcome of the complaints that have been resolved.

(AQW 3252/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Information on complaints submitted by nursing staff in hospitals within Northern Ireland is not collected centrally and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Dementia and Alzheimer’s Disease

Mr J Shannon asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, in light of recent media reports highlighting the increase in the number of people diagnosed with dementia and Alzheimer’s disease, what steps he is taking to assist people diagnosed with these conditions.

(AQW 3254/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: My Department is currently developing a Northern Ireland Dementia Strategy. It is hoped the strategy will be available for consultation in early 2010. The Strategy

will assess the current level of service provision for people with dementia and their carers, and, drawing on best practice here and elsewhere, make recommendations which will aim to significantly improve the services and support arrangements currently available.

Alzheimer's Disease

Mr J Shannon asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many people are currently diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease; and how much funding is available to assist these people. (AQW 3255/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: It is estimated that there are approximately 16,000 people living with dementia in Northern Ireland. At 31 March 2009 a total of 9,971 patients were registered by their GP as having dementia; these registers are maintained by GPs as part of the Quality & Outcomes Framework (QOF).

An exact cost of health and social care services provided for people with dementia in Northern Ireland cannot be obtained because people with dementia often have other health and social care needs which are also being met; and people with dementia often use services which are not earmarked as being specifically for people with dementia.

HIV

Mr J Shannon asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many people in the age groups (i) 20 years and under; (ii) 21-40; (iii) 41-60; and (iv) 61 and over are currently diagnosed with HIV. (AQW 3256/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Data relating to the number of people accessing HIV related care from statutory medical services in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and giving an address in Northern Ireland as their address when they last accessed care is published by the Health Protection Agency and can be found at the following link:

http://www.hpa.org.uk/web/HPAwebFile/HPAweb_c/1221722386279

HIV

Mr J Shannon asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what his Department is doing to warn people of the dangers of HIV, given the rise in the number of cases. (AQW 3268/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Action to raise awareness of specific sexual health issues including HIV and AIDS is contained in my Department's Sexual Health Promotion Strategy and Action Plan. Planned action includes the further development and implementation of information initiatives for the public and professionals, with a particular focus on those most at risk, to highlight and encourage safer sexual health practices. My Department also funds a number of voluntary organisations working in the field of HIV prevention through information, education and awareness rising.

The Post Office Network

Mr D Kinahan asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for his assessment of the recommendations aimed at devolved institutions and local councils in the National Federation of Sub-Postmasters Report 'Six Steps of a Sustainable Post Office Network' (March 2009); and whether the Department has identified how it can make better use of the Post Office network. (AQW 3270/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: I am aware of the Report produced by the Federation regarding the Post Office Network.

I have considered whether any additional Departmental services could be offered through post offices, but have not identified any.

Swine Flu

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for a breakdown of the £64 million allocated to Swine Flu. (AQW 3271/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: As part of the September monitoring round it was estimated that Swine Flu would cost the Department £64.6m this financial year. 49% of these predicted costs are to be met from the Department's existing budget. The table below provides a breakdown of these costs.

Costs	£m
Antivirals	9.0
Antibiotics/Medicines	0.9
PPE/Consumables	6.4
Vaccine Purchase	14.8
Surge Planning- Hospitals/Community Services	11.8
Surge Capacity- Primary Care	3.4
Critical Care Equipment	4.3
Vaccination Programme	3.5
Other Surge Costs	1.7
Communications	1.5
Storage/Distribution	4.7
National Pandemic Flu Service	2.6
Total Forecasted Expenditure 2009/10	£64.6

These costs continue to be refined to reflect the changing need experienced across the service resulting from Swine Flu spread.

Swine Flu

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (i) how much of the £64 million Swine Flu budget will be paid to GPs to administer the vaccine; (ii) how many GP practices are holding additional Swine Flu clinics to administer the vaccine; and (iii) what the current waiting list is for each priority patient group to receive the vaccine. (AQW 3272/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety:

- (i) Under the nationally agreed deal with the BMA's General Practice Committee, GP practices are paid £5.25 per dose of vaccine administered. No information is available on the uptake levels for vaccination of patients in the "at risk" groups and therefore I am unable to indicate how much has been paid to GP Practices.
- (ii) The majority of GP practices are providing special swine flu clinics for the administration of the vaccine although information on exact numbers is not available.
- (iii) Information relating to waiting lists in respect of the priority groups is not available.

General Practitioners

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to outline any reason for which a GP can claim additional money from the Department outside their normal contract. (AQW 3273/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: There are a number of Departmental Committees and Advisory Groups which Health Professionals, including GPs, sit on for which they receive a payment, including travel and, in the case of Family Practitioners, locum expenses.

Rare Disease UK

Mr J Shannon asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether he has met with representatives of the organisation Rare Disease UK; and what steps he is taking to assist that body.

(AQW 3285/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: I have not met with representatives of Rare Disease UK. However, it is intended that in the near future, officials from each devolved administration will meet with Department of Health colleagues to discuss the recent European Union Council recommendation that member states should establish and implement plans or strategies for rare diseases. The outcome of this meeting will help determine how my Department takes this matter forward in Northern Ireland. I should point out that people suffering from rare diseases currently have access to appropriate specialist treatment depending on the symptoms of their condition.

Rare Disease UK

Mr J Shannon asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety in light of statistics from Rare Disease UK showing that there are over 100,000 people in the UK suffering from over 6000 rare diseases to outline his Department's policy on funding for, and treatment of, rare diseases.

(AQW 3286/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: I have not met with representatives of Rare Disease UK. However, it is intended that in the near future, officials from each devolved administration will meet with Department of Health colleagues to discuss the recent European Union Council recommendation that member states should establish and implement plans or strategies for rare diseases. The outcome of this meeting will help determine how my Department takes this matter forward in Northern Ireland. I should point out that people suffering from rare diseases currently have access to appropriate specialist treatment depending on the symptoms of their condition.

Rare Diseases

Mr J Shannon asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what steps he is taking with his UK counterparts to assist people with rare diseases.

(AQW 3287/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: I have not met with representatives of Rare Disease UK. However, it is intended that in the near future, officials from each devolved administration will meet with Department of Health colleagues to discuss the recent European Union Council recommendation that member states should establish and implement plans or strategies for rare diseases. The outcome of this meeting will help determine how my Department takes this matter forward in Northern Ireland. I should point out that people suffering from rare diseases currently have access to appropriate specialist treatment depending on the symptoms of their condition.

GP Out of Hours Surgery

Mr T Gallagher asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 2615/09, for a breakdown of the operational costs of each GP Out of Hours surgery in each Health and Social Care Trust in 2007/08.

(AQW 3313/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The Breakdown of Operational Costs of Each GP Out of Hours surgery in of the Health and Social Care Trust in 2007/08 are detailed in the following table.

COSTS RELATING TO 2007/08 FOR GP OUT-OF-HOURS

Health and Social Care Trust Area	GP Out-of-Hours Base	2007/08
Belfast HSC Trust area	North & West	£1,596,529
	South & East	£1,590,958
Northern HSC Trust area	Dalriada Urgent Care	£4,864,000
South Eastern HSC Trust area	Newtownards	£1,585,251
	Downpatrick	£618,036
	Lisburn	£1,840,892
Southern HSC Trust area	Armagh & Dungannon	£1,023,043
	Craigavon	£1,564,058
	Newry & Kilkeel	£1,228,181
Western HSC Trust area	L'Derry	£1,460,980
	Limavady	£838,440
	Strabane	£857,804
	Omagh	£1,131,070
	Enniskillen	£1,111,706

Source: Health and Social Care Board

Intensive Care Vehicles

Mr B McElduff asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the frequency of (i) internal; and (ii) home transfer of patients in (a) the Northern Health and Social Care Trust area; and (b) the Altnagelvin Hospital by intensive care vehicles which are stationed in Omagh, in the last twelve months.

(AQW 3330/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The Northern Ireland Ambulance Service has advised that it has no record of any Omagh based ambulance transporting patients home from either the Northern Health and Social Care Trust area or Altnagelvin Hospital in the period 1 December 2008 to 30 November 2009. Seven inter hospital transfers from Altnagelvin Hospital were carried out by Omagh based ambulances.

Patients on Suicide Watch

Mr T Burns asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number of (i) adult; and (ii) juvenile hospital in-patients who have been judged to be at risk of attempting suicide, or placed on 'suicide watch', in each of the last 5 years.

(AQW 3334/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The information requested is contained in individual patient records. In order to respond a manual trawl of each of the records corresponding to all hospital admissions over the course of the last 5 years would need to be undertaken. The associated cost of doing this would be disproportionate.

Ambulance and Rapid Response Vehicles

Mrs M O'Neill asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety if there will be any change to the current level of ambulance and rapid response vehicle provision servicing the Clonoe and Coalisland areas of Mid Ulster.

(AQW 3337/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Ambulance services in the Mid Ulster area are primarily provided from ambulance stations in Magherafelt and Cookstown. The Northern Ireland Ambulance

Service (NIAS) plans for Comprehensive Spending Review efficiency savings and investment will result in 1,981 hours of emergency ambulance cover at Magherafelt being replaced by 3,910 hours of paramedic rapid response cover, giving a net increase of 1,929 hours of paramedic cover delivering life-saving emergency care to those who need it. Ambulance cover at Cookstown will be unaffected. However, it is important to realise that NIAS deploys its emergency response resources using a tactical deployment plan to ensure the nearest resource responds to an incident. It is possible, therefore, that an emergency response to the Coalisland or Clonoe areas might be provided by emergency resources based at other stations.

Rapid Response Vehicles

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety if rapid response vehicles carry a spinal board as standard equipment. (AQW 3354/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: A rapid response vehicle is not equipped with a spinal board as this is used for loading or preparing to load a patient into an A&E vehicle.

Ambulance and Rapid Response Vehicles

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to confirm whether rapid response vehicles and emergency ambulances carry the same defibrillation equipment; and if not, to explain the reasons. (AQW 3384/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The Northern Ireland Ambulance Service is currently modernising the defibrillators used by its emergency response fleet. Defibrillators in both A&E ambulances and rapid response vehicles are being changed to a new model and that process is expected to be completed by April 2010. The ambulance service has assured the Department that patients will not experience any detriment in the quality of care provided during this process.

DEPARTMENT FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

EASSDA Property Developments

Mr T Burns asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQW 2892/10, to detail (i) the number of EASSDA property developments (a) in Northern Ireland; and (b) in the South Antrim constituency, where work is outstanding on the roads and sewers; (ii) the full address of these developments; (iii) the nature of the outstanding work; (iv) the estimated cost of completing this work; (v) the value of the bonds in place to pay for the outstanding work; and (vi) if the bonds which are in place have been paid in full, and if not, how the cost will be recovered from EASSDA. (AQW 3215/10)

Minister for Regional Development (Mr C Murphy): My Department's Roads Service has advised that there are five EASSDA occupied property developments in the North, four of which are within the South Antrim constituency, where work is outstanding on the roads and sewers.

Details of the location of these developments, the nature of the outstanding work, the estimated cost of completing this work and the value of the bonds in place to pay for the outstanding work, are set out in the table:-

Address	Nature of outstanding work	Estimated cost	Value of bonds
Bramblewood, Crumlin.	Remedial work to provide carriageways, kerbing and footways to adoption standard; including scarifying and overlaying carriageway, reconstruction of mountable shoulders and rumble strips, construction of road humps, repair of kerbs and footways and overlaying of footways with micro surfacing treatment. Sewer work has been completed to adoption standard.	£64,400	7 bonds valued at £1,825, £1,910, £2,000, £2,000, £4,023, £2,885, and £10,980.
Bushforde, Steeple Road, Antrim	Roads completed to adoption standard, but NIW awaiting adoption request from Administrator for adoption of sewers.	No estimate available.	2 bonds valued at £36,285, £73,050.
Bushforde Manor, Steeple Road, Antrim	Completion of streets, including provision of wearing course surfacing to carriageways and footways, and any other work to carriageways, footways, street lighting and sewers to bring streets to adoption standard. NIW awaiting adoption request from Administrator for adoption of sewers.	No estimate available.	10 bonds valued at £153,600, £133,650, £17,700, £54,300, £31,000, £17,100, £50,200, £44,200, £16,800, £9,500.
Bush Road, Antrim (west of entrance to Bush House)	Construction of carriageways, footways, street lighting and sewers still required. No occupied dwellings on site. NIW awaiting adoption request from Administrator for adoption of sewers.	No estimate available.	1 bond valued at £11,600 (part footway only).
Lindara, Linn Road, Larne	Completion of streets including provision of wearing course surfacing to carriageways and footways where required, and any other work to carriageways, footways, street lighting and sewers to bring streets to adoption standard. NIW awaiting adoption request from Administrator for adoption of sewers.	No estimate available.	10 bonds valued at £53,300, £44,100, £106,550, £105,950, £61,950, £63,650, £110,350, £141,700, £96,900, £105,000.

The above mentioned bonds are sealed and active and can be used to fund pre-adoption repairs where required. In the case of a shortfall in any bond area, additional costs will be funded in accordance with the Private Streets Legislation.

In addition, there are two unoccupied EASSDA developments under construction within the South Antrim constituency, at Bush Hall, Antrim. Again, details of outstanding work, associated costs and bonds are set out in the table below.

Address	Nature of outstanding work	Estimated cost	Value of bonds
2 Sites at Bush Hall, Antrim	Sewer construction not fully completed by the developer. NIW will adopt the sewers when requested by the Administrator if they have been constructed to a satisfactory standard.	No estimate available.	Bond securities to a value of £56,595 are in place

The above mentioned bonds are sealed and active and can be used to fund pre-adoption sewer repairs where required.

A5 Western Transport Corridor

Mr A Bresland asked the Minister for Regional Development how much his Department has paid, to date, to Mouchel consultants in relation to their work on the proposed A5 Western Transport Corridor; and what is the anticipated total payment. (AQW 3219/10)

Minister for Regional Development: My Department's Roads Service has advised that Mouchel were appointed to the A5 project in October 2007, and provide professional advice to Roads Service on a wide range of issues including engineering, environmental, economic and traffic aspects of the scheme.

Roads Service has to date paid Mouchel £15,583,276, in relation to development work completed to date, on the A5 Western Transport Corridor project. It is anticipated that they will be paid around £32m under their current commission, which extends to the end of the Public Inquiry phase.

If a successful outcome is obtained at Public Inquiry, it is anticipated that further costs to completion of the project, would be in the order of £15-£20 million.

Easy Bus Service Bangor

Mr A Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development why his Department is withdrawing funding for the Easy Bus service in Bangor for older people and people with disabilities. (AQW 3231/10)

Minister for Regional Development: Currently there are two Easibus vehicles operating in Bangor, only one of which is supported by my Department through the Transport Programme for People with Disabilities.

The decision to withdraw these services was taken by Translink in discussion with the Department. I am told by Translink that the number of passengers using these services is low and that Translink considers that it is not an efficient use of resources to continue these non commercial services.

Easibus services were introduced in Bangor in 2000 to provide accessible local transport within the area. They therefore pre-date the substantial improvements in accessibility of local services which have resulted from investment in the upgrading of the Ulsterbus fleet. They also pre-date the Door-to-Door Transport services for older and disabled people which have been available in the Bangor and Holywood areas since February 2007.

A5 Western Transport Corridor

Mr A Bresland asked the Minister for Regional Development what the estimated cost is of each of the four proposed options for the route of the A5 Western Transport Corridor. (AQW 3232/10)

Minister for Regional Development: My Department's Roads Service has advised that because of the scale of the project and the number of possible route options, the scheme was split into three sections to assist the assessment process. Section 1 runs from New Buildings to the south of Strabane, Section 2 runs from the south of Strabane to the south of Omagh and Section 3 runs from the south of Omagh to Aughnacloy. The estimated costs of the four routes within each of the three sections are outlined in the table below.

Section				
1	£356,000,000	£375,000,000	£413,000,000	£417,000,000
2	£384,000,000	£385,000,000	£388,000,000	£404,000,000
3	£307,000,000	£341,000,000	£341,000,000	£361,000,000

I announced The Preferred Route in July 2009, which is a combination of parts of the routes in the table above. In Section 1 the Preferred Route is estimated to cost £383 million, in Section 2 the Preferred Route is estimated to cost £385 million and in Section 3 the Preferred Route is estimated to cost £342 million.

It must be emphasised that these cost estimates were used for comparative purposes, and that economy is only one of the criteria used in determining the Preferred Route. The other criteria are safety, environment, integration and accessibility, in accordance with Department for Transport guidance.

After consideration of risk, as well as the efficiencies and savings which materialise as the scheme design develops, the estimated cost of the Preferred Route was subsequently adjusted to the range of £650 million - £850 million.

Further details of the scheme costs and rationale used are available on the project website www.a5wtc.com under Publications/Preferred Options Report. Chapter 3 of this document describes how the various routes evolved, Chapter 10 (and Appendix I) refer to costs and Chapter 12 describes the selection of the Preferred Route.

If you require any further clarification on the scheme costs then please contact the Project Sponsor, Conor Loughrey on 02882254728, or by e-mail at conor.loughrey@drdni.gov.uk

Road Traffic Accident 'Black Spots'

Mr T Burns asked the Minister for Regional Development (i) what research his Department has commissioned into identifying road traffic accident 'black spots'; and to list the locations of dangerous roads or junctions which have been identified. (AQW 3304/10)

Minister for Regional Development: My Department's Roads Service does not commission research into identifying road traffic accident 'black spots'. Roads Service receives information on collisions from the PSNI and uses this to identify locations where four or more injury collisions have occurred within a three-year period. These locations can then be investigated to see if any engineering measures can be introduced that would reduce the potential for collisions to occur. The results of this work are published in our Road Safety Engineering Report which is available online at http://www.roadsni.gov.uk/2006-07_rdsafetyreport.pdf

Roads Service is also an active member of the European Road Assessment Programme (EuroRAP), an organisation established to independently assess and report on the safety records of strategic roads in a consistent manner across Europe. Through membership of EuroRAP, Roads Service and the National Roads Authority in the South have produced risk rate maps for the island of Ireland. The first such map was published in March 2005 and a recent update was produced in May 2008. The risk rate maps provide an indication of the risk of being involved in a fatal or serious collision on the major road networks, based on previous collision histories and traffic volumes.

National Federation of Sub-Postmasters Report 'Six Steps of a Sustainable Post Office Network'

Mr D Kinahan asked the Minister for Regional Development for his assessment of the recommendations aimed at devolved institutions and local councils in the National Federation of Sub-Postmasters Report 'Six Steps of a Sustainable Post Office Network' (March 2009); and whether the Department has identified how it can make better use of the Post Office network. (AQW 3307/10)

Minister for Regional Development: I am aware of the National Federation of Sub-Postmasters' Report: 'Six Steps to a Sustainable Post Office Network'.

Currently Northern Ireland Water (NIW) facilitate the payment of bills by non-domestic customers at all Post Offices in the North. My Department has recently reviewed whether it could make better use of the Post Office network but, unfortunately, we failed to identify any additional services that could be provided through the network.

Currently Translink use approved agents for Smartlink card issues. There is an ongoing tendering process to allow public transport customers to top-up the value on their Smartlink cards at locations across the North. It is possible the Post Office could be successful in that tendering process.

EASSDA Property Developments

Mr T Burns asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQW 2892/10, to detail (i) the number of Euro Construction Corporation property developments (a) in Northern Ireland; and (b) in the South Antrim constituency, where work is outstanding on roads and sewers; (ii) the full address of these developments; (iii) the

nature of the outstanding work; (iv) the estimated cost of completing this work; (v) the value of the bonds in place to pay for the outstanding work; and (vi) if the bonds which are in place have been paid in full, and if not, how the cost will be recovered from Euro Construction Corporation. (AQW 3335/10)

Minister for Regional Development: My Department's Roads Service has advised that there are three Euro Construction Corporation occupied property developments in the North, all of which are within the South Antrim constituency, where work is outstanding on the roads and sewers.

Details of the location of these developments, as well as the nature of the outstanding work, the estimated cost of completing this work, and the value of the bonds in place to pay for the outstanding work, are set out in the table below:-

Address	Nature of outstanding work	Estimated cost	Value of bonds
Carquillan, Newry Road, Hilltown	Minor remedial road works, including technical approval for retaining walls.	Less than £10,000	3 bonds valued at £9,000, £15,600 and £45,000.
Silverwood Court, Lurgan	Minor remedial works to roads.	£2,000	£2,000.
Silverwood Green, Lurgan	CCTV survey of sewers required prior to establishing extent of outstanding works. NIW awaiting adoption request from Administrator for adoption of sewers.	Unable to determine until survey completed.	£49,100.

The above mentioned bonds are sealed and active and can be used to fund pre-adoption repairs where required. In the case of a shortfall in any bond area, additional costs will be funded in accordance with the Private Streets Legislation.

In addition to the above detailed property developments, Northern Ireland Water (NIW) has advised that it is aware of one further development at Rawdon Court, Moira. NI Water has also advised that it is awaiting a request from the Administrator in respect of the adoption of sewers and does not hold an estimate for the costs of completing any works. Roads Service does not hold any information on this particular development, including any information on the value of bonds.

Belfast International Airport: Unauthorised Car Parks

Mr D Kinahan asked the Minister for Regional Development if he has had any discussions with his Executive colleagues regarding car parks in the vicinity of Belfast International Airport which do not have planning permission; and what action he intends to take, along with other Departments, to address this issue. (AQW 3348/10)

Minister for Regional Development: I can advise the Member that I have not held any discussions with my Executive colleagues regarding unauthorised car parks in the vicinity of Belfast International Airport. My Department does not have statutory responsibility for planning enforcement and, as the car parks referred to are on private land, this is not a matter that my Department plans to pursue with other Departments.

Belfast International Airport: Unauthorised Car Parks

Mr D Kinahan asked the Minister for Regional Development what information his Department holds on unauthorised car parks in the vicinity of Belfast International Airport which do not pay rates. (AQW 3349/10)

Minister for Regional Development: I can advise the Member that my Department does not hold any information on unauthorised car parks in the vicinity of Belfast International Airport, as that would be a matter for the Department of the Environment's Planning Service. With regard to the collection of rates, I am advised by officials from the Department of Finance and Personnel's Land & Property Services that they are responsible for maintaining the property valuation list and for issuing rates bills, based on that list, and that no account is taken of whether planning permission has been granted.

Flooding

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the cost of work carried out in 2009 on storm drains and sewers to alleviate flooding in the Glen Road area of Comber. (AQW 3350/10)

Minister for Regional Development: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water that during 2009 a project to improve the sewerage network and reduce the risk of flooding in the Glen Road area of Comber was completed at a cost of £78,000.

Pumping Station at the Junction of the Gilford Road and Russwood Park, Portadown

Mr D Simpson asked the Minister for Regional Development whether the pumping station at the junction of the Gilford Road and Russwood Park, Portadown, complies with planning permission and public consultation requirements. (AQW 3377/10)

Minister for Regional Development: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) that following commencement of construction of the Gilford Road Sewage Pumping Station it became evident that the original proposal for the control kiosk, contained in the planning permission, would need to be revised to accommodate equipment required by Northern Ireland Electricity to protect the electricity supply to residents in the vicinity. NIW is currently reviewing the design of the control kiosk, following consultation with public representatives and local residents, and will submit an amended planning application to Planning Service for consideration in due course.

Pumping Station at the Junction of the Gilford Road and Russwood Park, Portadown

Mr D Simpson asked the Minister for Regional Development whether any change has been made to the dimensions of the kiosk outlined in the original plans pertaining to the pumping station at the junction of the Gilford Road and Russwood Park, Portadown. (AQW 3379/10)

Minister for Regional Development: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) that following the commencement of construction of the Gilford Road Sewage Pumping Station it became evident that the dimensions of the control kiosk would need to be increased to accommodate additional equipment required by Northern Ireland Electricity to protect the electricity supply to residents in the vicinity.

NIW is currently reviewing the design of the control kiosk following consultation with public representatives and local residents.

Easibus

Mr P Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development how many Easibus routes (i) are currently in use; and (ii) are planned to be withdrawn by 2010. (AQW 3390/10)

Minister for Regional Development: Currently there are five vehicles providing 16 Easibus routes. This figure comprises eleven routes in Belfast, four in Bangor and one in Derry.

I can confirm that there are plans to withdraw two routes in Bangor in January 2010 with a further two routes in Bangor and one in Derry being withdrawn in June 2010. Routes in Belfast are to be reviewed early in 2010.

Road Gritting

Mr P Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQW 2790/10, whether the hourly rate of pay for external contract staff for road gritting was greater or less than what is paid to Roads Service drivers to carry out the same task. (AQW 3391/10)

Minister for Regional Development: My Department's Roads Service has advised that the rates for its "Driver Hire" contract have been established through a competitive tendering process. To disclose any information concerning rates of pay, may affect the outcome of any future tender competition, and have an

adverse impact on the value for money achievable from that competition. In these circumstances, Roads Service cannot release such commercially sensitive information.

With regard to the rate of pay for Roads Service drivers, I advised the Member, in my answer to his Assembly Question AQW 2789/10, that the amount paid to Roads Service drivers for road gritting varies widely, depending on staff grade, and the time at which the gritting action occurs.

Senior Citizen SmartPass

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister for Regional Development if there are any plans to extend the Senior Citizen SmartPass to allow free travel throughout the United Kingdom, similar to the free travel arrangements for Senior Citizen SmartPass holders in the Republic of Ireland. (AQW 3392/10)

Minister for Regional Development: I can confirm that I have no plans to extend concessionary travel in the manner described.

Signed		Date
Drafted by	Trevor Robinson extn 40589	
Cleared by Head of Division	Brian White (extn 40561)	9 December 2009
Cleared by Spad		
Copied to	Paul Priestly Doreen Brown Trevor Robinson Tony McConnell	

A5 Western Transport Corridor

Mr A Bresland asked the Minister for Regional Development if tractors and self-propelled agricultural machinery will have access to the proposed A5 Western Transport Corridor when it is completed. (AQW 3395/10)

Minister for Regional Development: My Department's Roads Service has advised that tractors and self-propelled agricultural vehicles will have access to the A5 Western Transport Corridor on completion of the proposed upgrade to dual carriageway standard. However, access to the new carriageway will only be available at a limited number of key junctions along its 86 kilometre length, with no direct access from adjacent lands. Therefore, it is envisaged that, when this scheme is completed, local agricultural traffic will continue to use the existing A5 carriageway, which provides more convenient access to the local road network and farmlands.

Donaghadee Harbour

Mr J Shannon asked the Minister for Regional Development the cost of work required on Donaghadee Harbour to meet health and safety standards. (AQW 3408/10)

Minister for Regional Development: Approximately £90,000 is spent each year at Donaghadee Harbour on safety related works and general maintenance. In addition, dredging of the harbour is planned to be performed in early 2010 at a cost in the order of £100,000.

Donaghadee Harbour

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister for Regional Development when his Department last carried out a condition survey of Donaghadee Harbour and to detail the results. (AQW 3435/10)

Minister for Regional Development: The most recent survey carried out on the harbour structures at Donaghadee was in April 2008. I have arranged for a copy of this survey to be forwarded to the member.

Vandalism to Bus Shelters and Bus Stations

Mr A Bresland asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQW 2968/10, how much has it cost his Department to repair vandalism to (i) bus shelters; and (ii) bus stations in the Strabane District Council area, in each of the last five years. (AQW 3438/10)

Minister for Regional Development: As per my response to AQW 2968/10 the provision and maintenance of bus shelters are funded by Adshel (the bus shelter provider) through advertising revenue and at no cost to the Department. This is because in 2001, Roads Service and District Councils - including Strabane District Council - entered into a 15-year contract with Adshel for the provision of approximately 1500 bus shelters. The contract covers the vast majority of bus shelters here and the Department has no knowledge of the costs incurred by Adshel in carrying out their contractual commitments.

As well as bus stations, Translink are responsible for maintaining a small number of bus shelters. As a rule, the Department does not fund repairs to Translink maintained bus shelters or bus stations as a result of vandalism. These are self funded by Translink. The attached tables detail the costs of repairs from vandalism to bus shelters and bus stations in the Strabane District Council area in each of the last five years:

(i) Vandalism at Bus Shelters				
FY0506	FY0607	FY0708	FY0809	FY0910 to period 7
Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil

(ii) Vandalism at Bus Stations					
	FY0506	FY0607	FY0708	FY0809	FY0910 to period 7
Strabane Bus Station	Nil	£1,510	£2,311	£387	£238

Road Schemes

Mr G Campbell asked the Minister for Regional Development the estimated cost of the two major road schemes being considered between (i) Aughnacloy and Londonderry; and (ii) Dungiven and Londonderry. (AQW 3439/10)

Minister for Regional Development: The estimated costs of these two major road schemes are as follows:-

- (i) The A5 Western Transport Corridor project, which comprises 86 km of dual carriageway from Derry to Aughnacloy, is the largest single road scheme ever undertaken across the island of Ireland. The current estimate for this scheme is in the range £650-£850 million.
- (ii) The A6 Londonderry to Dungiven project, comprises 30 km of dual carriageway from Caw Roundabout in Derry to the southeast of Dungiven, and includes a bypass of Dungiven. The current estimate for this scheme is in the range £320-£390 million.

NI Water

Mr S Gardiner asked the Minister for Regional Development (i) how many staff have (a) transferred into NI Water from outside companies and consultancies; (b) transferred out of NI Water through the outsourcing of jobs, broken down by grade, in the last 12 months; (ii) what is the employment status of both these groups under the current Transfer of Undertaking and Protection of Employment Regulations; and (iii) what employment process NI Water followed in the hiring of new staff from outside companies and consultancies. (AQW 3441/10)

Minister for Regional Development: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) that where the Transfer of Undertaking and Protection of Employment Regulations apply, those employees who are subject to the Regulations will either transfer into or out of NIW by operation of law. In the past 12 months, 4 employees transferred into the company from outside companies and consultancies and are now NI Water employees.

Also in the past 12 months, 15 employees transferred out of NIW through the outsourcing of services and now hold employee status with the companies into which they were transferred under the Transfer of Undertaking and Protection of Employment Regulations. The grades involved are:

Grade	Number Transferred
Level 3 Manager	1
Level 4 Manager	2
Level 5 Manager	5
Class I Industrial	1
Class II Industrial	6

Civil Servants' Earnings

Mr J Craig asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQW 2903/10, to detail (i) the job titles; (ii) pay scale; and (iii) the total amount earned by the civil servants in question. (AQW 3445/10)

Minister for Regional Development: Details of the civil servants concerned (ie those senior officers in DRD whose earnings were more than those of the DRD Minister) are set out in the following table:

Job Title	Pay Scale £	Earnings Bracket £
Permanent Secretary	98,059 – 205,000	105,000-110,000
Deputy Secretary	81,600 – 160,000	105,000-110,000
Senior Finance Director	81,600 – 160,000	80,000-85,000
Chief Executive, Roads Service	81,600 – 160,000	90,000-95,000
Director (Grade 5)	57,300 – 116,000	85,000-90,000

Bus Service to Belfast International Airport

Mr T Burns asked the Minister for Regional Development, in relation to the No. 300 bus service to Belfast International Airport, if Translink intends to remove all or some bus stops within Belfast city centre on the outward bound journey on a temporary or permanent basis. (AQW 3466/10)

Minister for Regional Development: I am informed by Translink that, as a consequence of one-way working in Donegal Place, the boarding stop there for the outbound 300 service was replaced by one in High Street. No other changes in relation to stops for this service are planned.

A5 Western Transport Corridor

Mr T Buchanan asked the Minister for Regional Development (i) what contact his Department has had with the lobby group for the restoration of the rail link as an alternative to the proposed A5 Western Transport Corridor; and (ii) for his assessment of the rail link being a viable alternative. (AQW 3489/10)

Minister for Regional Development: In addition to discussions in October 2007 with the 'Into the West Group', I have received several letters from Mr Brian Guckian, a Dublin based rail development campaigner, regarding a rail link between Portadown and Derry. My Department, including Roads Service, has not had any contact with the lobby group for restoration of the rail link as an alternative to the proposed A5 Western Transport Corridor. Donegal County Council has made contact with me in regard to a proposed feasibility study about rail links in the North West generally.

Translink have also advised my officials that they also have had no meetings with lobby groups about the specific proposal referred to in the question.

Whilst the cost of a rail link as an alternative to the proposed A5 Western Transport Corridor has not been financially estimated, benchmarking information shows it would have very significant capital and revenue consequences and is not considered affordable or likely to meet economic appraisal criteria at this time. Nevertheless I am content to consider any future studies if and when they come forward.

The planned investment in public transport by the Department for Regional Development in the North of Ireland, over the next ten years, is set out in the Investment Delivery Plan which is published on the Strategic Investment Board's website. Development of overall railway infrastructure was considered in the course of the production of the business case, completed in August 2007, for the New Trains Two Programme. This followed from the work of an inter-departmental group established in September 2006 which considered options for future investment in the railways network here. My priority currently is to maintain, improve and upgrade existing railway lines in the region.

With regard to the assessment of the rail link being a viable alternative to a road development, the A5 was identified as one of five Key Transport Corridors in the North within the Regional Strategic Transport Network Plan 2015. This plan was developed to support both the Regional Development Strategy 2025 and the Regional Transportation Strategy 2002-2012. All of these documents can be viewed at the following web addresses:-

http://roadimprovements.roadsni.gov.uk/rstn_tp.pdf - Regional Strategic Transport Network Plan 2015;

<http://www.drdni.gov.uk/index/publications/publications-details.htm?docid=308> - Regional Development Strategy 2025; and

http://www.drdni.gov.uk/Transport_Planning.htm - Regional Transportation Strategy 2002-2012.

Easibus Service, Bangor

Mr A Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the cost of running the Easibus service in Bangor. (AQW 3543/10)

Minister for Regional Development: For the financial year ending in March 2009 the operating cost to Translink of providing Easibus in Bangor was £69,746.70, to which DRD contributed £38,360.69.

Easibus Service, Bangor

Mr A Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development how many passengers used the Easibus service in Bangor in the last financial year. (AQW 3544/10)

Minister for Regional Development: In the 2008/09 financial year, the four Easibus services in Bangor had the following passenger journeys:

Ashbury	Kilcooley	Rathmore	Groomsport
6,532	4,904	8,193	3,657

Easibus Service, Bangor

Mr A Easton asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the funding arrangements for the Easibus service in Bangor. (AQW 3545/10)

Minister for Regional Development: My Department provides funding to Translink to assist it to operate two of the four Easibus services in Bangor. The Department reviews statistical information on the operating costs and patronage of the services on a monthly basis and provides Translink with up to 55 percent of its operating costs, depending on the level of fare revenue received. In relation to the two other Easibus services, Translink has informed me that from 2001 until 2005 it received support from tenants of Bloomfield Shopping Centre to meet 60 percent of costs. This support has now ended and Translink has been meeting the costs of these two services from within its own resources.

Civil Servants' Salaries

Mr P Weir asked the Minister for Regional Development how many civil servants in his Department receive an annual salary (i) between £37,801-£43,100; (ii) between £43,101-50,537; (iii) between £50,538-71,433; (iv) between £71,434-82,975; and (v) above £82,975. (AQW 3561/10)

Minister for Regional Development: The numbers of DRD staff whose earnings fall within the above pay bands are as follows:

Salary Band £	Number of DRD Staff
37,801 – 43,100	107
43,101 – 50,537	39
50,538 – 71,433	28
71,434 – 82,975	1
Above 82,975	4

Works and Repairs to Railway Stations

Mr S Gardiner asked the Minister for Regional Development (i) what criteria Translink/NI Railways use to prioritise work and repairs to railway stations; (ii) what input his Department has to the decisions; and (iii) whether meeting the statutory requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 is the main priority in the refurbishment and upgrading of railway stations. (AQW 3578/10)

Minister for Regional Development:

(i) When prioritising work at railway stations Translink consider the following parameters:

- 1) safety or legislative compliance issues;
- 2) asset condition;
- 3) business efficiency; and
- 4) strategic requirements.

There are also external influences that need to be considered including local development and funding opportunities.

In addition, these parameters need to be balanced within the capital funding allocations. Budget availability will impact on timings and priorities accordingly.

- (ii) It is Translink's responsibility to prioritise capital projects including any repairs to railway stations, however my Department must assess and agree Translink's Corporate Plan and associated planning assumptions which includes consideration of the capital programme. Prior to being taken forward any capital project must be subjected to the economic appraisal process and be brought to the department for approval. Subject to the availability of funding and the necessary approval by the Department and DFP the project will be able to proceed.
- (iii) Railway station and rail halt developments are driven by safety or legislative compliance which will include meeting the statutory requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 2005. However with limits on the amount of funds allocated to public transport, the availability of capital funding will invariably affect timings and priorities. Consideration too must be given to the maximisation of benefits for a given cost and in some cases that means it is only sensible to slip certain works to enable them to be incorporated as part of a larger development project further down the line. Consideration of the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 is an important factor to be considered in all rail investment including trains, halts and stations.

DEPARTMENT FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Grants

Mr S Hamilton asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the amount of investment in (i) Egan contracts; (ii) renovation grants; (iii) disabled facilities grants; (iv) repair grants; (v) replacement grants; (vi) home repair assistance grants; and (vii) HMO grants, in each of the last 10 years. (AQW 3229/10)

Minister for Social Development (Ms M Ritchie): The tables below provide the following information:

- Table 1 details the Housing Executive's Egan Contract spend for the period 2000/01 to 2009/10.
- Table 2 details Housing Executive Grants expenditure (by Grant type) from 2000/01 to 2009/10.

TABLE 1 - HOUSING EXECUTIVE EGAN CONTRACT SPEND

Period	Planned Maintenance Schemes ** (£k)	Heating *** (£k)
2000/01	n/a	0
2001/02	n/a	331
2002/03	n/a	1,094
2003/04	n/a	1,919
2004/05	n/a	12,984
2005/06	n/a	16,155
2006/07	n/a	14,000
2007/08	n/a	10,886
2008/09	19,186	8,665
2009/10*	21,140	10,788

* This is the current forecast for 2009/10 but may be liable to change if additional funding becomes available.

** Egan arrangements commenced 1st April 2008

***Egan arrangements commenced 1st June 200

TABLE 2 - HOUSING EXECUTIVE GRANTS EXPENDITURE 2000/01 TO 2009/10

Grant type	2000/01 £k	2001/02 £k	2002/03 £k	2003/04 £k	2004/05 £k	2005/06 £k	2006/07 £k	2007/08 £k	2008/09 £k	2009/10* £k
Renovation	15246	16172	15284	15221	16306	13517	11801	12043	11059	9254
Disabled Facilities	7244	6792	8542	8572	10075	11027	12920	13571	14432	17574
Repair	2745	2262	2411	2138	2078	1341	1214	1174	916	1193
Group Repair	1281	990	1497	1984	2486	2713	3119	3394	2501	1713
Replacement	10299	9911	9501	7121	6991	5499	4628	3756	3449	2720
Home Repair Assistance + Minor Works	1810	2040	2177	2446	3256	6843	7290	9061	6633	4953
HMO	3373	3805	3545	3728	4451	4666	3357	1871	1509	2447

Note:

* This is a forecast for 2009/10

Housing Executive

Mr A Easton asked the Minister for Social Development what percentage of contractors' bills in the last twelve months have been paid within the six week timescale specified by the Finance Minister and the Executive after the completion of work on renovation projects for the Housing Executive. (AQW 3322/10)

Minister for Social Development: I understand that the Member is referring to Housing Executive Private Sector Grants payments. The information is not available in the format requested as the Housing Executive generally makes payments to the applicant and cannot pay contractors unless the applicant has assigned the payments directly to the contractor. The Housing Executive is not able to disaggregate payment performance to applicants and contractors. Overall, the Housing Executive aims to make 90% of all Grants payments within 6 weeks of a request. Figures for the financial year April 2008 to March 2009 show performance of 81% against the six week target. The latest available figures for the period April 2009 to September 2009 show performance of 78% against this target.

Irish Translation

Mr B McElduff asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the cost to her Department of translating documents into Irish in (i) 2007; (ii) 2008; and (iii) 2009. (AQW 3342/10)

Minister for Social Development: My Department incurred no cost in translating documents into Irish in this period.

Benefit Claim Forms

Mr S Hamilton asked the Minister for Social Development the average back office cost of processing benefit claim forms for social security claimants. (AQW 3367/10)

Minister for Social Development: The table below details, for each benefit, the average back office cost of processing benefit claim forms for social security claimants once a new claim has been received:

Benefit	Average Cost (£)
Income Support	36.06
Job Seekers Allowance	26.14
Attendance Allowance	32.17
Carers Allowance	21.35
Disability Living Allowance	27.21
Industrial Injuries Branch	57.41
Incapacity Benefit	16.39
State Pension	38.47
State Pension Credit	58.31
Employment & Support Allowance	42.53

Social Security and Pensions Legislation

Mr S Hamilton asked the Minister for Social Development how many amendments to primary and subordinate legislation relating to social security and pensions have been made since May 2007. (AQW 3369/10)

Minister for Social Development: No amendments have been made to social security and pensions primary or subordinate legislation by the Assembly during the legislative process since May 2007.

I tabled amendments to the Mesothelioma, etc., Bill 2008 and the Pensions (No. 2) Bill 2008.

Primary and Subordinate Legislation

Mr S Hamilton asked the Minister for Social Development how many pieces of primary and subordinate legislation her Department has had passed by the Assembly since May 2007. (AQW 3370/10)

Minister for Social Development: My Department has had 6 pieces of primary legislation and 169 pieces of subordinate legislation passed by the Assembly since May 2007.

Housing Executive

Mr D O'Loan asked the Minister for Social Development for an update on the acquisition for the Housing Executive of the houses at the former St Patrick's Barracks site in Ballymena. (AQW 3372/10)

Minister for Social Development: My Department is currently working with the Northern Ireland Housing Executive to appoint a Housing Association to acquire the former Ministry of Defence housing at St Patrick's Barracks in Ballymena.

Randalstown Gateway Environmental Improvement Scheme

Mr T Burns asked the Minister for Social Development to detail (i) the work which will take place as part of the Randalstown Gateway Environmental Improvement Scheme; (ii) the total cost of these works; and (iii) the timeframe for completion of the works. (AQW 3402/10)

Minister for Social Development: I can confirm the following information for the Randalstown Gateway Environmental Improvement Scheme –

- (a) The work will be carried out on the southerly access road into the town to replace footways and kerbing, underground overhead cables, install traditional style street lighting and construct a new traffic island at Station Road.
- (b) The total cost of the scheme is £256,417.
- (c) Work is due to commence in early January 2010 and is expected to complete within 8 weeks.

Social Housing Within the Titanic Quarter

Mr A Maskey asked the Minister for Social Development, pursuant to AQW 2877/10, to detail the meetings her Department has held with Titanic Quarter Ltd, the Housing Executive and the Planning Service in relation to the provision of social and affordable housing within the Titanic Quarter; and the outcome of these meetings. (AQW 3440/10)

Minister for Social Development: The Northern Ireland Housing Executive met with Planning Service in March 2007 to discuss the requirements of the Belfast Area Metropolitan Plan in relation to the provision of social housing within the Titanic Development. There were two further meetings and the Housing Executive submitted a Housing Need Statement. There was no need for any further meetings as planning approval was subsequently given.

Curran Street Regeneration, Portadown

Mr J O'Dowd asked the Minister for Social Development how many responses were received to the Department's consultation on the Curran Street Regeneration in Portadown; and when the Department will be in a position to report on the findings of the consultation. (AQW 3458/10)

Minister for Social Development: A total of 24 responses were received following the public consultation on the Curran Street Regeneration project in Portadown, which took place during September and October 2009. The comments received from the consultation were mainly very positive, with the majority of people (approximately 94%) stating that the overall use of the site and the scheme design were both excellent.

European Investment Bank Funding

Mr S Hamilton asked the Minister for Social Development if the £30 million funding from the European Investment Bank for social housing projects is additional to the existing new build budget, or if it is an alternative means of financing the housing association's own borrowing over and above the Housing Association Grant. (AQW 3479/10)

Minister for Social Development: The European Investment Bank have agreed to invest a record £30 million this year in 5 Housing Associations to deliver a range of new schemes right across Northern Ireland.

The investment will complement the funding I have already made available and will support the delivery of 1750 new homes this year, our largest total for a decade.

Housing Executive

Mr B McElduff asked the Minister for Social Development if her Department and the Housing Executive will take whatever steps are necessary to ensure the house at number 4 Lammy Crescent, Omagh is demolished. (AQW 3547/10)

Minister for Social Development: The Northern Ireland Housing Executive does not own the property at 4 Lammy Crescent, Omagh but would be prepared to enter into discussions with the owner of the property regarding its future.

Bass Brewery Site

Mr S Hamilton asked the Minister for Social Development what value for money test was applied to the 'off the shelf' purchase of 166 units at the Bass Brewery site; and how the purchase price compares to the current average costs of construction of one unit of social housing new build. (AQW 3572/10)

Minister for Social Development: The new housing units on the site of the former Bass Brewery in West Belfast that I announced last week is not an "off the shelf" purchase. Clanmil Housing have acquired the land and are in the process of appointing a contractor [in line with procurement law] to build these homes on their behalf.

NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY COMMISSION

Assembly Commission: Legal Cases

Mr A Attwood asked the Assembly Commission how many legal cases are currently pending against it. (AQW 3588/10)

The Representative of the Assembly Commission (Mr S Neeson): There are four claims against the Commission arising out of employment disputes. There are also two personal injuries claims against the Commission.

WRITTEN ANSWERS

Department for Regional Development		Housing Executive	355
A5 Western Transport Corridor	344	Housing Executive	356
A5 Western Transport Corridor	344	Irish Translation	354
A5 Western Transport Corridor	348	Primary and Subordinate Legislation	355
A5 Western Transport Corridor	350	Randalstown Gateway Environmental Improvement Scheme	355
Belfast International Airport: Unauthorised Car Parks	346	Social Housing Within the Titanic Quarter	355
Belfast International Airport: Unauthorised Car Parks	346	Social Security and Pensions Legislation	354
Bus Service to Belfast International Airport	350	Department of Agriculture and Rural Development	
Civil Servants' Earnings	350	Cycle Trails	302
Civil Servants' Salaries	352	EU Technical Conservation Regulations	300
Donaghadee Harbour	348	Flooding	300
Donaghadee Harbour	348	Flooding in County Fermanagh	301
Easibus	347	National Federation of Sub-Postmasters Report 'Six Steps of a Sustainable Post Office Network'	301
Easibus Service, Bangor	351	Quarantine of Dogs by Kent County Council	302
Easibus Service, Bangor	351	Renewable Energy	302
Easibus Service, Bangor	351	Tree Planting Schemes	301
EASSDA Property Developments	342	Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure	
EASSDA Property Developments	345	Arts Council	308
Easy Bus Service Bangor	344	Civil Servants' Earnings	303
Flooding	347	Civil Servants' Earnings	303
National Federation of Sub-Postmasters Report 'Six Steps of a Sustainable Post Office Network'	345	Departmental Initiatives	307
NI Water	349	Ethnic Minority Languages	303
Pumping Station at the Junction of the Gilford Road and Russwood Park, Portadown	347	Funding for Band Tuition Classes	308
Pumping Station at the Junction of the Gilford Road and Russwood Park, Portadown	347	Funding for Local Soccer	304
Road Gritting	347	Investing for Health Strategy	304
Road Schemes	349	Department of Education	
Road Traffic Accident 'Black Spots'	345	Civil Servants' Earnings	309
Senior Citizen SmartPass	348	Documents in Irish	317
Vandalism to Bus Shelters and Bus Stations	349	Economic Crisis	312
Works and Repairs to Railway Stations	352	Education and Skills Authority	309
Department for Employment and Learning		Education and Skills Authority	309
Full-time and Part-time Teaching Jobs	319	Education and Skills Authority	309
Funding Learning Units	319	Education and Skills Authority	310
Further Education College Associate Lecturers	318	Fathers' Rights	311
National Federation of Sub-Postmasters Report 'Six Steps of a Sustainable Post Office Network'	318	Foreign Language Teaching	317
South Eastern Regional College	319	Foreign Language Teaching	318
South Eastern Regional College	319	Investing for Health Strategy	310
South Eastern Regional College	320	New Build Schools	312
Swine Flu	319	Teacher Appointment Committee	308
Department for Social Development		Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment	
Bass Brewery Site	356	Accelerated Support Fund	321
Benefit Claim Forms	354	Broadband	324
Curran Street Regeneration, Portadown	355	Broadband	325
European Investment Bank Funding	356	Broadband	325
Grants	353	Broadband	326
Housing Executive	354	Broadband	326
		Capital for Enterprise Fund	320
		Civil Servants' Earnings	322
		Disposal of Poultry Litter	330
		Economically Inactive People	320
		Invest NI	322

National Federation of Sub-Postmasters Report		Royal Victoria Hospital	336
‘Six Steps of a Sustainable Post		Swine Flu	339
Office Network’	322	Swine Flu	339
NI Electricity	324	The Post Office Network	338
NI Electricity	324		
Rose Energy	323	Department of the Environment	
Smart Meters	324	National Federation of Sub-Postmasters Report	
The Tourism Industry	320	‘Six Steps of a Sustainable Post Office	
Wireless Network in Fermanagh and Tyrone	323	Network’	330
Working Capital Scheme	321	Planning	330
Department of Finance and Personnel		Northern Ireland Assembly Commission	
Childcare Vouchers	331	Assembly Commission: Legal Cases	356
Civil Servants’ Earnings	332	Office of the First Minister and deputy First	
Civil Service Equal Pay Claim	331	Minister	
Civil Service Pay Structure	332	Community Relations Council	299
National Federation of Sub-Postmasters Report		Evangelical Christian Community	299
‘Six Steps of a Sustainable Post		Lifestart Mid-Ards	300
Office Network’	331	National Federation of Sub-Postmasters Report	
Department of Health, Social Services and Public		‘Six Steps of a Sustainable Post Office	
Safety		Network’	300
Agency Nurses	335	Rose Energy	299
Agency Nurses	335		
Agency Nurses	335		
Alzheimer’s Disease	338		
Ambulance and Rapid Response Vehicles	341		
Ambulance and Rapid Response Vehicles	342		
Clinical Supervision	334		
Clinical Supervision by Nurses	334		
Crohn’s Disease	332		
Currently Legal Drugs	334		
Dementia and Alzheimer’s Disease	337		
Drug Awareness Programmes	333		
General Practitioners	339		
GP Out of Hours Surgery	340		
Health and Social Care Trusts	337		
Health and Social Care Trusts	337		
Health Charges	335		
Herbal Drugs	333		
HIV	338		
HIV	338		
Hospital Accident and Emergency			
Departments	336		
Hospital Complaints	337		
Intensive Care Vehicles	341		
Multiple Sclerosis	336		
Nurse to Patient Ratio	335		
Nursing Staff Shortages	334		
Occupational Therapists Issuing Wheelchairs	336		
Patients on Suicide Watch	341		
Physiotherapy Posts	333		
Physiotherapy Treatment	333		
Rapid Response Vehicles	342		
Rare Diseases	340		
Rare Disease UK	340		
Rare Disease UK	340		
Regulation and Quality Improvement			
Authority	332		

REVISED WRITTEN ANSWERS

Friday 18 December 2009

(AQW 1084/10)

The latest available forecast 2009/10 financial deficits reported by Health and Social Care Trusts as at the end of October 2009, adjusted to take account of contingency plans that I have recently approved. The Belfast Trust Contingency Plan is not yet finalised, further announcements will follow in due course.

Trust	Adjusted Trust Deficit Forecasts	Less additional reductions required by Trusts	Adjusted year-end forecast £m
Belfast	(14.0)	(2.0)	12.0
Northern	(22.0)	(3.0)	19.0
South Eastern	(1.0)	(1.0)	0
Western	(1.7)	(1.7)	0
Southern	0	0	0
NIAS	0	0	0
Total	*(38.7)	(7.7)	31.0

* Excludes potential 'Agenda for Change' costs

Every trust has a statutory duty to break even over the course of the year and my Department, in conjunction with Health and Social Care commissioners, is working with the trusts in an effort to secure a break-even position in 2009/10.

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