

From the Office of the
Minister for Finance & Personnel



DFP Private Office
Craigantlet Buildings
Stoney Road
Belfast BT4 3SX

Telephone: 028 90529140

Email: private.office@dfpni.gov.uk

Your reference:

Our reference: SUB/512/2009

Mr Thomas Burns MLA
Parliament Buildings
Stormont
BELFAST

Dear Thomas

17 November 2009

AQO 349/10 – 10 November 2009

Having read Hansard and reflected on my response to your supplementary question, in relation to whether the number of people employed in the Civil Service will decrease in light of recruitment freezes, I wanted to clarify what I said.

I stated that the number of Civil Service posts had reduced by 2,000 in the past 18 months. Whilst the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) posts has reduced over the past 18 months, the actual figure at 1 October 2009 was 684 FTE posts rather than 2,000. The 2,000 figure (based on data held at July 2009) related to the total projected NICS reductions between 1 April 2008 and April 2012.

The 684 figure is a net reduction since the start of the Budget 07 period (1 April 2008) and includes increases, for example, for the new Employment Support Allowance, increased benefit uptake, and transfers into the NICS from NIO/Fisheries Conservancy Board, and decreases associated with RPA transfers out of the NICS, reduced funding from GB Departments, falling receipts, Reform/Restructuring, or cash releasing efficiency savings under Budget 07.

My reference to 2,000 to 2,500 further reductions between now and 2012 should have referred to FTE posts rather than "people", and again was an estimate of the overall number of reductions between 1 April 2008 and April 2012.

For clarity therefore I can confirm that based on information provided by departments to my officials there has been a reduction of 684 FTE posts between 1 April 2008 (the start of the Budget 07 period) and 1 October 2009, and a further 1,699 FTE reductions projected until 1 April 2012; a total combined figure of nearly 2,400 FTE reductions.

At any point in time the number of staff in post will vary up and down as staff leave or when vacancies are filled. However, a downward trend in terms of FTE posts is being maintained from the baseline position at 1 April 2008, and this is projected to continue until April 2012.

Additional reductions may also be required as a result of the tightening financial situation and revised expenditure plans following the recent financial pressures.

I trust this clarifies the position. A copy of this letter goes to the Speaker and Members. A copy will be placed in the Assembly library.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sammy Wilson', with a stylized flourish at the end.

SAMMY WILSON MP MLA