

Written Answers to Questions

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Northern Ireland Assembly

Friday 5 November 2010

Written Answers to Questions

Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister

The Byron Review

Mr C McDevitt asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to outline how the recommendations of the Byron Review are being implemented across Executive Departments.

(AQW 1300/11)

First Minister and deputy First Minister (Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness): Relevant Executive Departments are members of Working Groups established by the UK Council for Child Internet Safety (UKCCIS) to support implementation of the Byron Review. Representatives from NI Departments work with UK counterparts to take forward recommendations which are appropriate to their area of responsibility.

The Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS) is represented on the Media Awareness Group and in February 2010, in conjunction with UKCCIS, launched a NI Public Awareness Campaign highlighting the development of a 'One Stop Shop' for child internet safety where parents and children can seek advice or report any concerns.

In addition, a cross-departmental sub-group of the Ministerial Sub-Committee on Children and Young People, chaired by the Junior Ministers, considers other general issues in relation to child internet safety. The action plan developed by this group included the commitment to strengthen online safeguarding arrangements through cross-departmental working, taking account of the recommendations of the Byron review. As safeguarding is the responsibility of DHSSPS, that department leads the group.

The UK Coalition Government is currently considering how it intends to proceed in the area of internet safety.

Budget 2010-11: Block Grant

Mr D Bradley asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to define what is meant by a 'flexible approach' in relation to their discussions with the Chancellor about proposed cuts in the Northern Ireland block grant.

(AQO 247/11)

First Minister and deputy First Minister: When we met with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on 28 September, we made it very clear what issues we want him to address.

The need to re-visit the scale and timing of the cuts; the need to reduce the proposed capital reductions; the need to honour the guarantees of the previous Labour Government; the improved use of End Year Flexibility to name a few.

The use of the term "flexible approach" was to emphasise the need to the Chancellor to re-visit all of these issues in light of the additional information we were able to provide in our meeting with him.

Commissioner for Older People

Mr T Gallagher asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister whether they can provide an assurance that funding for a Commissioner for Older People will be protected given comments from the First Minister regarding several commissioners sharing resources.

(AQO 250/11)

First Minister and deputy First Minister: It is our intention to establish a Commissioner for Older People within the lifetime of this Assembly, and we are on track to do that. Our plan is that the Assembly's consideration of the legislation will be completed by Christmas and a Commissioner appointed as soon as possible thereafter.

We are determined to proceed with the appointment of the Commissioner and provide her or him with the necessary resources to promote and safeguard the interests and rights of older people. However, given the financial constraints that the Executive will operate within the Budget 2010 period, we must ensure that all public services are being delivered as efficiently and effectively as possible. We are critically examining all aspects of our Department's expenditure, including the funding for sponsored public bodies and the potential to reduce costs through the sharing of resources among sponsored bodies.

We believe that in the current economic climate it is more important than ever that the Commissioner not only adds value to the experiences of older people but that the Commissioner's office demonstrates maximum benefits within the resources available to it.

Grants for Community-based Groups

Mr P Weir asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what grants are currently available from their Department, or any of its arms-length bodies, to community-based groups for capital build for premises.

(AQW 1413/11)

First Minister and deputy First Minister: OMFDFM provides funding for a range of programmes to all of the district councils, the Community Relations Council and a limited number of specific groups and bodies including contract holder organisations. However, there are currently no grants available to community-based groups for the purposes of capital build projects from either our Department or its arms-length bodies.

Policy Screening Process

Ms S Ramsey asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail, for the period from May 2007 to date, (i) the number of policies their Department and its associated bodies have (a) "screened out" as having no Equality Impact; and (b) "screened in" as having an Equality Impact; (ii) the number of staff involved in the screening process; and (iii) the cost of the screening process.

(AQW 1563/11)

First Minister and deputy First Minister: Since 2007, our core department has 'screened out' a total of 10 policies and 'screened in' 3. Over the same period, our Department's Arms Length Bodies have 'screened out' a total of 58 policies and 'screened in' 17.

Typically the screening process is assigned to a person within the relevant business area. He/she would in turn involve relevant policy people, statisticians and economists as appropriate to develop and finalise the screening process. It is therefore impossible to give a precise figure for the cost of the screening process but it is estimated to be minimal.

Comparable Service Delivery

Dr S Farry asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what benchmarking exercises their Department conducts to assess its spending profile relative to comparable service delivery in other jurisdictions.

(AQW 1574/11)

First Minister and deputy First Minister: The Department has not undertaken formal benchmarking exercises to assess its spending relative to comparable service delivery in other jurisdictions. Many aspects of OFMDFM functions and role are unique to the Northern Ireland Executive context, and meaningful service delivery comparators are not available in other jurisdictions.

However, we are fully committed to the effective and efficient operation of the Department. A major review of OFMDFM functions and structures was completed in 2009/10, which delivered a reduction of 51 posts in the Department, and will deliver annualised savings in the region of £2 million.

Comprehensive Spending Review

Ms D Purvis asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister if they will make a statement to the Assembly on the implications of the Comprehensive Spending Review for children and young people. **(AQW 1613/11)**

First Minister and deputy First Minister: The implications of the Comprehensive Spending Review settlement will be very challenging for all concerned. We will be doing everything we can to minimise its impact on vulnerable groups.

As part of the outworkings of the budget process, departments will be paying due regard to their equality responsibilities to determine the potential for differential impact on vulnerable groups.

Our department has paid close attention to the interests of children and young people and we will maintain this throughout our consideration of the Spending Review options and when making final budget decisions.

Quangos

Mr A Easton asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister how many quangos are currently funded by Executive Departments; and what is the annual cost to the Executive of maintaining these quangos. **(AQW 1646/11)**

First Minister and deputy First Minister: Information on the number of Non-Departmental Public Bodies sponsored by Northern Ireland departments, including the amount of government funding received by each, is contained in the annual Public Bodies Report. A copy of the latest Report, for the financial year ending 31 March 2009, is held in the Assembly Library, or is available at: http://www.dfni.gov.uk/public_bodies_2009__2_-8.pdf.

Planning Appeals

Mr D O'Loan asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what percentage of planning appeals against refusal were upheld in 2009-10, broken down by Planning Service division and District Council area.

(AQW 1654/11)

First Minister and deputy First Minister: The Planning Appeals Commission is an independent tribunal Non-Departmental Public Body. Given its independent tribunal status, its Chief Commissioner has been asked to provide a response directly to you, and we understand that she has written to you in the following terms:

"I have been asked to provide you with information requested in the above Assembly Question.

In the following tables I have set out the percentage of appeals against refusal which were upheld in 2009/10 by Planning Service Division, Sub-Division and by District Council Area.

STATISTICS ON APPEALS RECEIVED BY PLANNING SERVICE DIVISION & SUB-DIVISION

Planning Service Division	Number Allowed	Number Dismissed	Total	% Upheld
Ballymena	86	114	200	57
Belfast	37	79	116	68
Craigavon	104	130	234	56
Downpatrick	47	48	95	51
Londonderry	15	38	53	72
Omagh	131	238	369	64
Sub-Divisions				
Coleraine	28	44	72	61
Enniskillen	67	97	164	59
	515	788	1303	

STATISTICS ON APPEALS RECEIVED BY DISTRICT COUNCIL AREA

District Council	Number Allowed	Number Dismissed	Total	% Upheld
Antrim	9	17	26	65
Ards	12	7	19	37
Armagh	26	35	61	57
Ballymena	42	45	87	52
Ballymoney	5	7	12	58
Banbridge	23	24	47	51
Belfast	27	53	80	66
Carrickfergus	3	10	13	77
Castlereagh	6	15	21	71
Coleraine	18	28	46	61
Cookstown	29	54	83	65
Craigavon	8	9	17	53
Derry	10	28	38	74
Down	20	19	39	49
Dungannon	36	65	101	64
Fermanagh	67	97	164	59
Larne	0	8	8	100
Limavady	5	10	15	67
Lisburn	8	16	24	67

District Council	Number Allowed	Number Dismissed	Total	% Upheld
Magherafelt	32	34	66	52
Moyle	5	9	14	64
Newry & Mourne	47	62	109	57
Newtownabbey	4	11	15	73
North Down	7	6	13	46
Omagh	44	69	113	61
Strabane	22	50	72	69
	515	788	1303	

I would be happy to provide any further information you require arising out of this response or to meet with you to discuss the matter if that would be more suitable.”

Comprehensive Spending Review

Mr D McNarry asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what steps he has taken, as part of the Department's response to the Comprehensive Spending Review, to identify Government property and other assets for possible sale.

(AQO 461/11)

First Minister and deputy First Minister: The Strategic Investment Board (SIB) is working with departments to construct an asset management database which will help to identify potential efficiency or realisation opportunities.

As part of the Budget 2010 process, the Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP) has asked departments to identify anticipated receipts over the budget period.

All this information will be taken into account by the Executive when formulating the draft budget.

Regeneration Sites

Mr K Robinson asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the regeneration sites.
(AQO 374/11)

First Minister and deputy First Minister: The 2003 Strategic Investment and Regeneration of Sites Order made provision to gift a number of former military sites to the Executive.

The Malone Road site in Belfast was sold on for private housing development in 2003, and the Magherafelt site was sold earlier this year to the North Eastern Education and Library Board who intends to build a new school campus on the site.

On 14 September the Assembly approved a motion to establish a development corporation to regenerate the strategically placed Maze/Long Kesh site. It is intended that the Corporation will be operational by April 2011 and it will take forward the regeneration of this regionally significant site as a major investment and development opportunity.

The former Ebrington Barracks site in Derry/Londonderry is at the heart of new plans by the local regeneration company Ilex for the transformation of the city as the hub of the North West sub region. Ilex is owned jointly by OFMDFM along with the Department for Social Development. The deputy First Minister and the Minister for Social Development last month launched the draft regeneration plan for consultation, and Ebrington is set to play a key role in both the regeneration plan and as a central location within the city of culture in 2013.

Much work has been done to prepare Ebrington so that it can play its part in making the city more prosperous for all of its people and contribute to the wider economy. A significant demolition project was completed in 2008 and a number of initial conservation projects are underway along with the redesign of the large parade ground, scheduled to be completed in the summer of 2011 to coincide with the opening of the iconic Peace Bridge funding by the European Community PEACE III Programme.

Finally, the former Belfast Prison on the Crumlin Road is potentially a key asset for North Belfast and one which could make a significant contribution to one of our poorest electoral wards. A very large amount of work has been done to remove high security features from this famous Belfast landmark and important listed building, and to restore the architecture to its high quality early Victorian condition. Refurbishment of the Gatehouse and Governor's Wing of Crumlin Road Gaol is currently underway, as is a substantial contract to replace roofing, and the target is to re-open the Gaol to the public in late 2011. The Gaol is very popular with the North Belfast community and some 27,000 visitors toured the building last year.

The regeneration of these key sites will be a real driver for our economy. Initially the construction industry will benefit but these initiatives will go on to make a real and positive impact on many other sectors of the economy here and further afield, and the very firm intention is that the outcomes will contribute to the prosperity of the whole community, including through the provision of jobs.

Department of Agriculture and Rural Development

Farm Modernisation Programme

Mr P Givan asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how many farmers in the Lagan Valley area have benefited to date from the Farm Modernisation programme.

(AQW 1392/11)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development (Ms M Gildernew): To date, Letters of Offer with a total value of £183,663 have been issued to 45 farm businesses in the Lagan Valley Parliamentary constituency under the Farm Modernisation Programme (FMP). 10 farm businesses received Letters of Offer with a total value of £94,490 under the Manure Efficiency Technology Sub Programme (METS).

Grants for Community-based Groups

Mr P Weir asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what grants are currently available from her Department, or any of its arms-length bodies, to community-based groups for capital build for premises.

(AQW 1410/11)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: Under the six Axis 3 measures of the 2007-13 NI Rural Development Programme £100m is available to rural communities to improve the economy and quality of life in their areas.

Subject to scheme rules community based organisations are eligible to apply for capital building funding under five of the six measures.

In your area the Rural Development measures are being delivered on DARD's behalf by Lagan Rural Partnership (LRP). The Group will support projects which are compatible with the priorities in the local rural development strategy, and which have been subject to robust economic appraisal and have been successful in a competitive assessment.

LRP can be contacted on 028 9250 9489.

Stray Dogs

Mr T Burns asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail (i) the number of stray dogs impounded by each local council in each of the last five years; and of these, (ii) the number successfully re-homed; and (iii) the number destroyed.

(AQW 1440/11)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: Local councils are responsible for enforcing all aspects of the Dogs Order 1983 and are required to provide statistical information to my Department relating to the operation of the Order.

Councils do not provide statistical information specifically regarding the number of stray dogs successfully re-homed, but the information we do hold in relation to stray dogs for the last five years is provided at Table 1.

This includes the number of dogs impounded, sold, reclaimed, and unclaimed/destroyed.

TABLE 1

2005	Stray Dogs Impounded	Sold	Reclaimed	Unclaimed/Destroyed	Other *
Antrim	295	10	85	78	122
Ards	246	89	122	32	3
Armagh	607	256	161	177	13
Ballymena	278	33	134	91	20
Ballymoney	117	36	42	21	18
Banbridge	141	37	41	47	16
Belfast	885	410	327	131	17
Carrickfergus	183	30	122	23	8
Castlereagh	176	57	97	22	0
Coleraine	290	127	91	57	15
Cookstown	148	78	22	48	0
Craigavon	852	332	159	206	155
Derry	376	26	63	287	0
Down	751	366	125	260	0
Dungannon	291	37	20	231	3
Fermanagh	234	23	35	167	9
Larne	160	25	89	38	8
Limavady	115	11	33	71	0
Lisburn	468	99	203	70	96
Magherafelt	121	59	22	40	0
Moyle	111	25	37	43	6
Newry	786	345	101	336	4
Newtownabbey	328	88	192	35	13

2005	Stray Dogs Impounded	Sold	Reclaimed	Unclaimed/ Destroyed	Other *
North Down	119	85	13	21	0
Omagh	604	54	53	497	0
Strabane	221	61	35	125	0
Total	8903	2799	2424	3154	526

2006	Stray Dogs Impounded	Sold	Reclaimed	Unclaimed/ Destroyed	Other *
Antrim	320	22	115	79	104
Ards	276	100	143	33	0
Armagh	704	261	125	169	149
Ballymena	206	46	91	67	2
Ballymoney	112	41	40	19	12
Banbridge	179	31	52	53	43
Belfast	1026	464	385	163	14
Carrickfergus	195	60	126	8	1
Castlereagh	208	80	107	21	0
Coleraine	232	68	99	59	6
Cookstown	163	100	32	31	0
Craigavon	881	445	136	66	234
Derry	450	34	85	331	0
Down	748	469	105	171	3
Dungannon	292	72	42	87	91
Fermanagh	205	18	40	142	5
Larne	141	22	84	20	15
Limavady	112	11	32	69	0
Lisburn	419	76	187	80	76
Magherafelt	139	54	16	35	34
Moyle	84	16	21	28	19
Newry	705	253	91	358	3
Newtownabbey	393	98	233	39	23
North Down	105	79	10	15	1
Omagh	243	29	27	187	0
Strabane	219	38	52	129	0

2006	Stray Dogs Impounded	Sold	Reclaimed	Unclaimed/ Destroyed	Other *
Total	8757	2987	2476	2459	835

2007	Stray Dogs Impounded	Sold	Reclaimed	Unclaimed/ Destroyed	Other *
Antrim	244	37	88	52	67
Ards	315	80	187	48	0
Armagh	670	267	122	142	139
Ballymena	199	20	81	85	13
Ballymoney	95	43	27	9	16
Banbridge	188	55	52	43	38
Belfast	1037	377	404	251	5
Carrickfergus	163	37	116	8	2
Castlereagh	214	73	105	36	0
Coleraine	209	59	90	58	2
Cookstown	136	71	30	33	2
Craigavon	756	360	139	129	128
Derry	444	44	74	303	23
Down	726	363	133	229	1
Dungannon	447	292	37	75	43
Fermanagh	183	17	34	128	4
Larne	176	32	91	41	12
Limavady	101	9	30	62	0
Lisburn	466	69	215	90	92
Magherafelt	143	86	16	41	0
Moyle	71	5	39	15	12
Newry	724	277	114	290	43
Newtownabbey	374	73	233	32	36
North Down	101	58	8	35	0
Omagh	379	42	34	269	34
Strabane	174	36	45	91	2
Total	8735	2882	2544	2595	714

2008	Stray Dogs Impounded	Sold	Reclaimed	Unclaimed/ Destroyed	Other *
Antrim	241	30	81	33	97

2008	Stray Dogs Impounded	Sold	Reclaimed	Unclaimed/ Destroyed	Other *
Ards	263	35	183	35	10
Armagh	603	224	118	78	183
Ballymena	181	19	70	73	19
Ballymoney	105	39	41	14	11
Banbridge	190	44	53	71	22
Belfast	939	377	393	167	2
Carrickfergus	162	33	108	13	8
Castlereagh	197	85	88	24	0
Coleraine	215	66	103	44	2
Cookstown	164	94	30	40	0
Craigavon	789	325	147	249	68
Derry	404	43	85	273	3
Down	686	312	138	192	44
Dungannon	515	415	42	56	2
Fermanagh	221	31	55	115	20
Larne	146	41	75	16	14
Limavady	110	20	25	65	0
Lisburn	380	39	179	73	89
Magherafelt	142	91	24	27	0
Moyle	50	0	23	13	14
Newry	506	172	104	199	31
Newtownabbey	299	56	195	17	31
North Down	96	57	16	23	0
Omagh	159	17	47	62	33
Strabane	167	46	33	88	0
Total	7930	2711	2456	2060	703

2009	Stray Dogs Impounded	Sold	Reclaimed	Unclaimed/ Destroyed	Other *
Antrim	244	36	70	13	125
Ards	234	80	124	29	1
Armagh	436	158	100	43	135
Ballymena	173	16	84	43	30
Ballymoney	97	36	33	9	19

2009	Stray Dogs Impounded	Sold	Reclaimed	Unclaimed/ Destroyed	Other *
Banbridge	113	21	39	17	36
Belfast	668	265	251	146	6
Carrickfergus	158	38	115	1	4
Castlereagh	215	79	120	16	0
Coleraine	201	74	93	33	1
Cookstown	144	102	31	9	2
Craigavon	654	257	129	125	143
Derry	327	40	84	97	106
Down	622	315	135	107	65
Dungannon	502	371	53	59	19
Fermanagh	149	37	24	88	0
Larne	108	35	52	9	12
Limavady	80	15	25	17	23
Lisburn	309	36	124	46	103
Magherafelt	126	79	30	17	0
Moyle	56	0	21	13	22
Newry	380	10	62	209	99
Newtownabbey	311	60	187	20	44
North Down	112	67	28	17	0
Omagh	166	17	17	90	42
Strabane	160	44	43	73	0
Total	6745	2288	2074	1346	1037

* Other – includes dogs transferred to and accommodated by animal welfare organisations and animal sanctuaries.

Comparable Service Delivery

Dr S Farry asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what benchmarking exercises her Department conducts to assess its spending profile relative to comparable service delivery in other jurisdictions.

(AQW 1454/11)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: The table below lists recent one –off and routine benchmarking exercises carried out to assess costs of various service delivery activities.

Service Assessed	Bench Marking Exercise	Jurisdiction the service is benchmarked against
Meat Hygiene Controls	Cost of delivery, carried out by DARD for Food Standards Agency –(NI).	Great Britain (GB)
Brucella blood sampling	Cost of a sample collected by DARD staff with cost of a sample by private sector in the South	Republic of Ireland (ROI)
Seed Potato inspection fees	Fees compared with other UK regions and ROI when fees are under consideration	GB counterparts in the Food and Environment Research Agency (FERA), Science and Advice for Scottish Agriculture (SASA) and Dept of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (DAFF) (ROI)
Fees for approval of Animal Feed businesses	Fees compared when fees are under consideration	Veterinary Medicines Directorate, DEFRA
Identification, Registration and Movement (IRM) of Cattle	Benchmarked IRM administration	DAFF in ROI and DEFRA in GB
Frontline customer service delivery	Liverpool City Council and DAFF	Liverpool City Council in GB and DAFF Roscommon in ROI
All axes under the Northern Ireland Rural Development Plan, in particular Axis 2 (Less Favoured Area Compensatory Allowances and the suite of agri-environment schemes) and also Single Farm Payment which comes under the European Agriculture Guidance Fund (EAGF).	Two cost of control exercises have been carried out in this area. The first in 2009 covered the 2005 FEOGA year and the second in February of this year covered the 2008 FEOGA year. (FEOGA is the French equivalent of EAGF)	The other UK Paying Agencies

Legal Services

Mr P McGlone asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how much her Department and its agencies paid for legal services in each of the last five years; and to detail the firms engaged.

(AQW 1456/11)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: The total costs to my Department and its Agencies in respect of legal services in each of the last 3 years were as follows:

2009/10	2008/09	2007/08
£498,805.28	£725,552.51	£498,805.28

I have not been able to provide figures for 2005/06 and 2006/07 due to the disproportionate cost of extracting this information. The costs include outlay for Counsel's fees; Barristers' fees; Departmental Solicitor's Office (DSO) professional costs and notional costs for both the DSO and employment litigation.

I have attached at Appendix 1 a list of the firms engaged in the provision of these legal services.

Appendix 1 - Firms engaged

- Philip Aldworth
- Paul S Brennan
- Michael Burke
- James W Calderwood
- Peter Coll BL
- Jill Comerton
- Niall P Cosgrove
- Barry F Craig
- Peter Cush
- Data Dispatch
- DLF Services
- Craig Dunford
- David Dunlop BL
- Brian Fee
- Ferguson Bell
- Stephen Ham BL
- Nicolas Hanna QC
- Dr Karen Harkin
- Dr S Hedderwick
- Dr Daj Keegan
- Patricia A Kerr
- Paul Lewis
- Geoffrey Mack
- P Maguire
- Eamon McArdle BL
- Philip McAteer BL
- B McCloskey
- Dr G McDonald
- McGleenan BL
- Paul C McLaughlin
- Michael McLoughlin
- Dr Clifford McMillan
- David McMillen BL
- R Millar
- Chris Millinson
- Mollan Medical Ltd
- Turlough Montague
- Neasa Murnaghan
- Old Mill Saddlery
- Mark Orr QC
- Fintan Quinn
- David A Scoffield BL
- G Simpson QC
- GV Walker
- Richard Wallace FRCS
- Martin Wolfe BL
- HA Yeates

Plans to Plant More Trees

Mr A Easton asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for an update on plans to plant more trees.

(AQW 1487/11)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: The Forestry Strategy identified a long term aim of doubling the existing area of woodland from 6% to 12% of the land area over the next 50 years, largely through the transfer of privately owned agricultural land to woodland, using funds made available under the Rural Development Programme woodland grant schemes.

The Programme for Government (PfG) set a target of 1,650 hectare of new woodland creation by March 2011. 667 hectares of new woodland have been created by farmers and landowners under the schemes up to the end of September 2010. This is less than was planned and in order to encourage more farmers and landowners to create their own woodland, increases in grant rates of up to 30 per cent were announced in November 2009. Since then, there has been an increase in applications for the woodland grant schemes, however we acknowledge that it will be difficult to achieve our PfG target by March 2011.

Participants in agri-environment schemes may avail of funding for planting small areas (up to 0.2 hectares) of native trees on farmland and managing existing woodland. These schemes include the Countryside Management Scheme and Environmentally Sensitive Areas Scheme. Currently scheme participants are managing approximately 600 hectares of native trees which have been planted as part of their agri-environment scheme agreement.

European Commission Fine

Mr K McCarthy asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development why her Department did not mount a legal challenge against the European Commission fine in relation to the Single Farm Payment scheme.

(AQW 1537/11)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: In my Statement to the Assembly on 27 September 2010 I confirmed that my Department has taken the necessary steps to take a case to the European Court of Justice and that it has the support of the Executive in this matter.

Policy Screening Process

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development to detail, for the period from May 2007 to date, (i) the number of policies his Department and its associated bodies have (a) "screened out" as having no Equality Impact; and (b) "screened in" as having an Equality Impact; (ii) the number of staff involved in the screening process; and (iii) the cost of the screening process.

(AQW 1544/11)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development:

	May 2007 – 31 March 2008	1 April 2008 – 31 March 2009	1 April 2009 – 31 March 2010
Number of policies screened out	29	36	27
Number of policies screened in	2	3	5

Information in the form requested in parts (ii) and (iii) of this question is not readily available and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

Carecall Report

Mr P J Bradley asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development if she will make a statement on the Carecall report in relation to the DARD Direct office in Newry.

(AQW 1554/11)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: It would not be appropriate for me to comment on the detail of the Carecall report whilst efforts are being made to secure a satisfactory resolution to these matters.

However, I can confirm that my officials have given careful consideration to the report and are currently in consultation with Trade Union Side with a view to reaching a decision on the best way forward.

Rural Development Programme.

Mr D O'Loan asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development if she will ensure that Credit Unions can benefit from grants under the Rural Development Programme.

(AQW 1559/11)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: The purpose of the rural development Programme is to bring economic and quality of life benefits to rural dwellers. Therefore the priority and the focus of the programme is on benefiting rural dwellers rather than organisations.

However, if a rural Credit Union works up a project which is eligible under one of the six measures within Axis 3 and is assessed as providing the specific outcomes for rural dwellers which the Programme seeks, then it can submit an application to the relevant Local Action Group.

Northern Ireland Agricultural Wages Board

Mr R Beggs asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development whether she will review the position of the Northern Ireland Agricultural Wages Board in light of the decision to dissolve its equivalent body in Wales and England.

(AQW 1566/11)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: I intend to review the Agricultural Wages Board in early 2011. The review will report on whether the functions of AWB are still required and, as part of the review process, I intend that my officials will launch a consultation with interested parties on the issue. I will announce details in the near future.

Woodland Areas

Mr P Weir asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what action is being taken by her Department to meet the targets to increase woodland areas.

(AQW 1601/11)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: To encourage more farmers and landowners to create their own woodland, increases in grant rates of up to 30 per cent were announced in November 2009. Since then, there has been an increase in applications for the woodland grant schemes.

In addition to increasing grant rates, woodland creation has been encouraged through:

- Implementing beneficial changes to the Single Farm Payment (SFP) Scheme allowing farmers to continue to receive SFP, as well as forestry grant payments, on land converted to woodland;
- Engaging with a wide range of landowning bodies, such as local councils, and other central Government Departments, encouraging them to consider woodland as a viable economic alternative to their current land use;
- Engaging with afforestation stakeholders to identify barriers to woodland creation and possible solutions;
- Extending the funding of the Short Rotation Coppice Scheme until the end of the current Rural Development Programme in 2013;
- Publicising the Woodland Grant Scheme through Balmoral and other shows, talks with interested groups, press articles and open days and targeted mail drops.

Participants in agri-environment schemes may avail of funding for planting small areas (up to 0.2 hectares) of native trees on farmland and managing existing woodland. These schemes include the Countryside Management Scheme and Environmentally Sensitive Areas Scheme.

Apprentices

Mr P Weir asked the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how many apprentices have a placement within her Department or any of its arms-length bodies for 2010/11.

(AQW 1602/11)

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development: There are no placements on an apprenticeship basis either within DARD or any of its arms-length bodies for 2010/11.

I would further advise that despite the offer of placements by DARD and AFBI under the Programme-Led Apprenticeship programme, there has been no up-take by prospective participants for this period.

Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure

Illegal Netting

Mr D Kinahan asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure, pursuant to AQW 635/11, to detail (i) the dates, locations and amounts of netting discovered in 2009; and (ii) how much illegal netting has been discovered to date in 2010.

(AQW 1407/11)

Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure (Mr N McCausland): The tables below provide the dates, locations and number of nets discovered by DCAL Fisheries Protection staff in Lough Neagh in 2009 and 2010.

(I) 2009:

Date	Location	No. of Nets
14/01	Ardboe	1
01/02	54.35.18N 006.28.57W	1
02/03	mid lough	1
10/03	mid lough	1
02/04	54.41.65N 006.29.05W	1
28/04	Grove Flat	1
09/08	34.31.95N 006.30.92W	1
05/10	54.33.06N 006.25.47W	1
07/10	Maghery	2
26/10	54.41.04N 006.21.85W	1
28/10	54.37.57N 006.29.25W	1
28/10	54.34.73N 006.30.50W	1

(II) 2010 TO DATE:

Date	Location	No. of Nets
24/01	54.35.35N 006.30.92W	1
06/02	54.33.78N 006.27.41W	1
08/03	54.39.24N 006.24.46W	1
10/03	.Currans Quay	5
11/03	54.38.86N 006.24.86W	1
01/05	54.33.25N 006.22.80W	1
16/05	54.33.25N 006.25.15W	1
17/06	54.37.07N 006.26.37W	1
29/06	54.37.48N 006.29.20W	1

Lisburn Library

Mr P Givan asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how many people have (i) visited; and (ii) joined Lisburn library since the opening of the new building; and (ii) what assessment has been made by his Department of the services provided to the public.

(AQW 1449/11)

Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: Since the opening of Lisburn City library on 30 November 2005 there have been 1,287,208 visitors and 19,024 new members.

A specific assessment of Lisburn City libraries' services has not been made by my Department. However performance information supplied by Libraries NI demonstrate that Lisburn City library provides a wide and varied range of outreach programmes aimed at exploiting book, audio and visual resources for all ages, as well as enrichment programmes in Culture, Information, Heritage and Learning to enhance the library experience, increase participation, develop a love of reading and build cultural, social and economic capital.

As such these programmes assist in the delivery of Libraries NI's strategic themes and the Department's key objectives with regard to addressing social exclusion and building community identity.

It is also worth noting that in its first full operational year 2006/07, Lisburn City Library recorded the highest issues of any library in Northern Ireland at 243,099. In addition from the period 30 November 2005 to 31 March 2010 there were 39,097 Active Members, 970,674 Book and Non Book issues and 372,316 Computer Sessions.

Legal Services

Mr P McGlone asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how much his Department and its agencies paid for legal services in each of the last five years; and to detail the firms engaged.

(AQW 1458/11)

Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: In the past five financial years, the Department and its agencies incurred the following expenditure in respect of the provision of legal services:

2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10
£15,916	£20,867	£26,856	£7,172	£62,358

The table below details the firms and organisations engaged in each financial year.

Year	Supplier/Firm Engaged
2005-06	Conn & Fenton Mt Doherty Solicitors
	L'estrange & Brett Solicitors
	Mccartan Turkington & Breen Solicitors
	Murgitroyd & Company
	Department of Finance & Personnel
	Department of Agriculture & Rural Development
2006-07	Aidan Sands BI
	L'estrange & Brett Solicitors
	Crown Solicitors Office
	Department of Finance & Personnel

Year	Supplier/Firm Engaged
2006-07	Department Of Agriculture & Rural Development
2007-08	Adrian Wg Colmer
	L'estrage & Brett Solicitors
	Mr R Buchanan
	Murgitroyd & Company
	Patrick Diamond & Co
	Land Registers of Northern Ireland
	Department of Finance & Personnel
2008-09	Hsb Haughton
	Marine Coastguard Agency
	Northern Ireland Office
	Land Registers of Northern Ireland
	Department of Finance & Personnel
2009-10	Agnew Andress Higgins Solicitors
	Mr T Carroll
	Mr P Coll
	James Ballentine & Son
	John Mckee & Son
	Km Walsh Ltd
	Macauley Wray Solicitors
	Mr Gv Walker
	Muraghan & Fee Solicitors
	Richard Buchanan Consulting Ltd
	Sc Connolly & Co
	Department Of Finance & Personnel

Arts Funding

Ms A Lo asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure, given the historic lower level of arts funding in Northern Ireland compared to other parts of the UK and the Republic of Ireland, whether he will give special consideration to maintaining arts funding.

(AQW 1464/11)

Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: In conjunction with all government Departments, the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure faces a significant reduction in its budget and this inevitably puts all areas of spend under pressure.

Faced with this major challenge, I am currently working with my officials, the Arts Council and other stakeholders in an effort to ensure that the impact of cuts is minimised.

Once the Northern Ireland Executive has announced the final allocations for all the Northern Ireland Departments, I will give due consideration to the allocations of funding to all spending areas falling within my Department's remit.

Apprentices

Mr P Weir asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how many apprentices have a placement within his Department or any of its arms-length bodies for 2010/11.

(AQW 1504/11)

Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: There are currently no apprentices on placement within my Department or any of its associated arms length bodies.

Safer Stadia Programme

Mr C Lyttle asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure whether funding will be made available in the short term through SportNI for the Safer Stadia Programme to enable Irish League Soccer clubs to upgrade stadia.

(AQW 1603/11)

Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: In July 2010, Sport Northern Ireland launched a small grants programme aimed at assisting the owners of football, rugby and GAA grounds to ensure the safety and comfort of spectators attending fixtures at their venues. The Stadia Safety Programme - Urgent Works consists of two strands and provides assistance towards infrastructure improvements and the purchase of safety equipment. A maximum of £30,000 is available under each strand. I understand that 15 football clubs were eligible to apply to this programme and that 14 applications were received under the infrastructure strand and 15 applications under the safety equipment strand. These are currently under consideration by Sport NI.

Terracing at Sports Grounds

Mr K Robinson asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to outline the structural and safety considerations that were taken into account for terracing at sports grounds which resulted in a significant reduction of terraced capacity at the Oval football ground in Belfast compared to the terraced capacity reductions at Ravenhill and Casement Park.

(AQW 1614/11)

Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: Responsibility for assessing the structural and safety arrangements for terracing at individual sports grounds is not a matter for me but is the responsibility of district councils in Northern Ireland. Consequently, the structural and safety considerations that were taken into account in determining the safe capacity of terraces at the Oval football ground, Ravenhill and Casement Park, are a matter for Belfast City Council. I can, however, confirm that all district councils, including Belfast City Council, are required to assess structural and safety arrangements at sports grounds in relation to their compliance with The Northern Ireland Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds (commonly known as the "Red Guide"). This Guide sets out a range of standards in terms of physical arrangements (ie the design and condition of spectator facilities including terraces) and safety management arrangements (ie safety policies and procedures). Broadly, decisions on the numbers of spectators any district council will allow into a ground or onto terraces is dependent on how closely the venue's existing physical and safety management arrangements align with the Red Guide.

Safety of Sports Grounds (NI) Order 2008

Mr K Robinson asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure whether occasional concert venues such as the Botanic Gardens, Ward Park or the Giant's Park are subject to the same assessments as sports ground under the Safety of Sports Grounds (NI) Order 2008; and to outline the reasons for any difference in approach.

(AQW 1615/11)

Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: Occasional concert venues like Botanic Gardens, Ward Park or the Giant's Park do not fall within the terms of the Safety of Sports Grounds (Northern Ireland) Order 2006. Consequently, they are not subject to the same assessment criteria now established specifically for sports grounds under the Safety of Sports Grounds Order.

However, during the development of the Safety of Sports Grounds Order, consideration was given to bringing non-sporting venues and events, including parks and occasional concerts held there, within its provisions. It was, however, determined that this lay outside the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure's (DCAL) immediate statutory remit and control. It was also concluded that, unlike sports grounds, occasional concert venues, such as parks, could be subjected to appropriate assessment via existing entertainment licensing and related local government legislation.

Despite this, DCAL decided that it was still necessary, and lay within the Department's immediate statutory remit, to ensure that occasional concerts held at designated sports grounds came within the terms of the Safety of Sports Grounds Order. The relevant provision which now therefore applies to such events is set out at Article 4 (5) of the Order. This provision is intended to ensure that occasional concerts staged at designated sports grounds will be subject to assessments that are appropriate to the nature of the venue in which they take place.

Gaeltacht Quarter

Mr G Adams asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what action his Department has taken to implement the recommendations of the Dutton Report on An Ceathrú Gaeltachta / the Gaeltacht Quarter.

(AQO 384/11)

Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: The Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure facilitated Integrated Development Funding of approximately £1million towards meeting Dutton recommendations.

The Gaeltacht Quarter Development Company (An Cheathrú Gaeltachta Teo), a supporting steering group and secretariat were established and operated from July 2007 to July 2010 when DCAL funding ceased.

Consultants completed a Baseline Study and produced a Development Plan, Marketing Plan and Strategic and Business Plans for the area.

The Department along with the Department of Social Development, is also part funding a capital project involving the refurbishment and extension of the Irish Cultural Centre (Cultúrlann McAdam Ó Fiaich) on the Falls Road. Work started on this on 27 September 2010 and it is due for completion in July 2011.

As the Gaeltacht Quarter is primarily a regeneration project to be sustainable it will need to attract alternative sources of funding to take forward its plans.

Euro 2012 Qualifier in Serbia

Mr P Weir asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure whether his Department will be making representations to the International Federation of Association Football (FIFA) over Northern Ireland football fans being banned from attending the Euro 2012 qualifier in Serbia in September 2011.

(AQW 1704/11)

Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: I am aware that, as a result of a disciplinary hearing following crowd trouble in a match against Italy, the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) has ordered Serbia to play its next two home matches behind closed doors (with one match suspended). I understand that this ruling is expected to apply to the Northern Ireland team's game against Serbia in March 2011. I understand the Irish Football Association (IFA) is already in ongoing discussion with UEFA regarding the impact of its decision on both the IFA and the Northern Ireland football fans. I have written to the IFA outlining my support for them in these negotiations and indicated that I am happy for them to inform UEFA of this support.

Cross-border Bodies

Mr S Anderson asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure for his assessment of whether the cross border bodies under his Department's remit provide an efficient and effective service to the community and deliver value for money.

(AQO 389/11)

Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: As part of my Ministerial remit, I am responsible along with Minister Carey from the Department of Community, Equality and Gaeltacht Affairs (DCEGA) in Éire through the North/South Ministerial Council for two North/South Implementation Bodies, Waterways Ireland and the North/South Language Body (NSMC).

In relation to Waterways Ireland there may be a need to introduce a Board and I have asked officials to monitor the position within the organisation for efficiency and value for money.

The North/South Language Body comprises two Agencies, the Ulster-Scots Agency and Foras na Gaeilge (the Irish Language Agency).

The Ulster-Scots Agency's statutory remit is the promotion of Ulster-Scots culture, heritage and language. It meets its statutory remit through funding organisations and overseeing programmes and projects.

Foras na Gaeilge's statutory remit is the promotion of the Irish language. The Agency is currently reviewing its funding framework for the Irish language sector with a view to achieving significant benefits in relation to value for money and the effective delivery of Foras na Gaeilge's statutory obligations.

I met with Minister Carey recently to discuss my concerns about the effectiveness of North-South Bodies. I have asked officials to work-up short-term and long-term options to address my concerns as a matter of urgency in order to provide public confidence about value for money.

Sports Facilities: Disabled People

Mr K Robinson asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what improvements his Department has made to disabled access at sports facilities in the last three years.

(AQO 390/11)

Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: Responsibility for making improvements to disabled access at sports facilities rests, in the first instance, with the owners and operators of those facilities. All schemes that have received funding from Sport Northern Ireland over the last three years have been assessed for compliance with all relevant and current legislation including relevant disability discrimination legislation applying to owners and operators of sports facilities.

Furthermore in 2007, and as part of the implementation of the Safety of Sports Grounds (Northern Ireland) Order 2006, my Department published a "Northern Ireland Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds" which provides detailed technical information on safety standards at sports grounds. Chapter 13 of this guide sets out specific requirements for the provision of safe and accessible facilities for people with a disability.

In addition, in 2009 Sport Northern Ireland developed and published a 3-year Disability Action Plan, the aim of which is, in part, to promote the provision of adequate access to sports facilities for people with disabilities. As part of the delivery of this action plan, Sport Northern Ireland, in association with Disability Sport Northern Ireland, recently carried out an assessment of all best practice disabled legislation and together have produced a bespoke Northern Ireland accessible Design and Management Guidance document entitled 'Access to Sports Facilities for People with Disabilities, 2010'. This document exceeds all minimum standards and is applicable to all capital projects funded through Sport Northern Ireland.

Boucher Road Playing Fields

Mr C Lyttle asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure whether Boucher Road playing fields were considered as a site for a shared sports stadium.

(AQO 391/11)

Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: The Governing Bodies of Football, Rugby and Gaelic games were asked to provide their options on stadium provision to meet their long-term strategic needs. The recently completed Outline Business Case includes a detailed and rigorous analysis of not only the stadium options put forward by the Governing Bodies but also a range of variations on the options including the potential for a two sport stadium.

As the draft Outline Business Case on regional stadium provision for football, rugby and Gaelic games is currently under consideration by DFP and has yet to go to the Executive, it would be inappropriate to comment on the level of detail you have requested.

Sports Stadia

Mr P Maskey asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure when work is due to commence on the developments at Casement Park, Ravenhill and Windsor Park.

(AQO 392/11)

Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: Construction commencement dates cannot be determined at this point. Initially, this will depend on how soon the recommendations arising from the Outline Business Case can be considered by the NI Executive. Subsequently, and assuming Executive approval to proceed with the process, the next steps will include the Governing Bodies commissioning full design work, securing planning permission and procurement.

Furthermore, because of the varying nature of the stadiums it is likely that the individual sports will work to differing construction commencement dates.

Young Farmers' Clubs of Ulster

Mr S Moutray asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how his Department and its arms-length bodies have assisted the Young Farmers Clubs of Ulster in recent years.

(AQO 393/11)

Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: I commend the work of the Young Farmers Clubs of Ulster and the positive impact this organisation makes on our local community. Its aims, objectives and the diversity of its membership are consistent with my aspiration and commitment to a shared and better future for our society.

The Association has a strong arts and culture portfolio designed to encourage the development of our young people. The size of its membership, approximately 2,500, makes this one of the largest arts organisations in Northern Ireland.

On coming into Office I recognised the range and quality of the activities undertaken by the Association and called a meeting with its President to explore how my Department could potentially assist with this work. I would encourage the Association to explore and avail of potential funding opportunities available to it through Arms Length Bodies associated with my Department, and indeed opportunities across Government, to deliver the maximum for the thousands of young members across Northern Ireland.

I am pleased that the Association has recently met with Arts Council of Northern Ireland representatives and that the Director of Language and Education at the Ulster-Scots Agency has met with individual Clubs to explore potential funding opportunities. I would encourage further engagement.

Funding: East Antrim

Mr R Beggs asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure for his assessment of the proportion of culture, arts and leisure funding allocated by his Department to the East Antrim constituency since May 2007. **(AQO 394/11)**

Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: I should first of all point out that my Department does not allocate funding directly to constituencies. Instead it meets its objectives by funding a number of Arms Length Bodies which provide frontline services through a variety of projects and programmes across Northern Ireland.

The table below illustrates the amount of funding spent in the East Antrim constituency:

Funding Allocated to East Antrim	2007/08 £'s	2008/09 £'s	2009/10 £'s	2010/11 £'s	Total £'s
Total funding in East Antrim	2,901,319	612,462	2,508,299	1,354,409	7,376,489
Total Closing Budget	145,398,000	154,349,000	175,373,000	161,638,000	475,120,000
	2%	0.4%	1.4%	0.84%	1.55%

Note that in the case of Libraries in 2007/08 and 2008/09 no information has been available as the sponsor Department at that time was the Department of Education.

Boxing: Sectarianism

Mr M Storey asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what steps he has taken to address issues within the Ulster Branch of the Irish Amateur Boxing Association where clubs and competitors from a perceived Unionist background have been subjected to sectarian harassment over a prolonged period of time.

(AQO 395/11)

Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: I have already had a meeting with representatives of Sport Northern Ireland (SNI) and one boxing club from a perceived Unionist background which had raised issues with me over apparent sectarian harassment experienced by its membership over a prolonged period of time. During my meeting I expressed my grave concerns about the matter, especially in view of my commitment to a shared future, and emphasised that there is no place in sport for behaviour of this nature. As a result, SNI agreed to take the matter up with the governing body for boxing, the Ulster Provincial Boxing Council (UPBC). I understand SNI is currently in discussion with the club in question and in contact with the UPBC with a view to finding a resolution to the issues raised as a matter of urgency.

Since then, I have received correspondence on behalf of a second boxing club, again from a perceived Unionist background, which also claims to have experienced problems. I have forwarded this to SNI. Furthermore, within the past few days, another issue relating to amateur boxing has been raised with me and I will be writing to SNI, passing on the relevant information and asking them to add these to their investigation of the issues, again as a matter of urgency.

Budget

Mr J O'Dowd asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how he intends to maximise the provision of front-line services and reduce management and administration costs within his Department's arms-length bodies in the current financial climate.

(AQO 396/11)

Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: The outcome of the UK Spending Review has left Northern Ireland with cuts to both its current and capital expenditure budgets. My Executive colleagues and I will now need to agree on how this allocation will be shared among departments.

I am, of course, fully conscious of the need to protect front line services and to reduce management and administration costs where this is possible. The planning scenarios my Department is developing reflect this.

The challenge for my Department and its Arms Length Bodies will be to try to deliver and maintain frontline services by working together in more collaborative ways, sharing services and assets and generating additional income where possible.

I have requested that my officials undertake a review of all Arms Length Bodies funded by my department. The necessary mechanisms will be put in place to deliver any changes needed and to ensure that, wherever possible, front line services will be protected in the current difficult financial climate.

I must though emphasise that the level of savings required are such that front line services will inevitably be affected.

Department of Education

Strategic Review of the Education Workforce

Mr D Bradley asked the Minister of Education to detail the work carried out to date on the Strategic Review of the Education Workforce.

(AQW 1091/11)

Minister of Education (Ms C Ruane): Tá mé fós lántiomanta don Athbhreithniú Straitéiseach ar an Lucht Oibre Scoile, agus féadaim a dhearbhu go gcuirfead tús leis an athbhreithniú i mí na Nollag 2010.

I remain fully committed to the Strategic Review of the School Workforce and can confirm that the review will commence in December 2010.

An initial set of draft Terms of Reference were developed in 2008 however further progress has been affected by my Department's internal transformation process, which resulted in the creation of a dedicated Education Workforce Development Directorate, tasked with taking forward this work and the delay in the establishment of the Education and Skills Authority.

Budget 2010 has also changed the context within which this review will be undertaken and the updated draft Terms of Reference will need to reflect this new challenging environment.

Going forward I am establishing a Strategic Forum, the membership of which includes the recognised trade unions which will broaden the scope of involvement in the decision making process. It is my intention to provide these key stakeholders with an opportunity to shape and influence the revised Terms of Reference at the inaugural meeting in December 2010.

Defending Litigation Cases

Mr P Weir asked the Minister of Education what the legal costs were to her Department of defending litigation cases in each of the last three years.

(AQW 1138/11)

Minister of Education: Is soláthraithe sa tábla thíos atá mionsonraí ar chaiteachas a bhaineann le costais dlí i ngach ceann de na trí bliana seo a chuaigh thart ó 2007-08 go 2009-10.

Details of expenditure coded to legal costs in each of the last three years from 2007-08 to 2009-10 are provided in the table below.

	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10
£	1,016,824.72	2,155,542.99	39,761.29

The Department's accounting system does not differentiate between legal costs relating to defending litigation cases and legal costs relating to other matters. To disaggregate the costs relating to defending litigation cases and those relating to other matters would result in disproportionate costs.

Legal claims against the Department cover a range of issues and include legal challenges such as judicial reviews, employment issues and personal injury claims.

School Admissions

Mr T Lunn asked the Minister of Education how many (i) Irish-Medium schools; and (ii) Integrated schools failed to meet the minimum number of admissions required to receive funding in first year of opening, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 1161/11)

Minister of Education: Sna 5 bliana seo a chuaigh thart, de na scoileanna siúd a faomhadh trí phróiseas an Togra Forbartha, ní raibh ach cúig cinn ar theip orthu an figiúr tosaigh iontógála atá riachtanach a chomhlíonadh, agus ba iad na scoileanna siúd ná:

In the past 5 years, of those schools approved through the Development Proposal process, there have been only five that have failed to meet the requisite initial intake figure on opening and these are:

2007

- Gaelscoil na Daroige, Derry – subsequently republished a DP and satisfied criteria for recurrent grant-aid with effect from September 2009.
- Clogher Valley Integrated Primary School

2010

- Gaelscoil Choin Ri Uladh, Ballymena
- Gaelscoil na mBeann, Kilkeel
- Gaelscoil Leim an Mhadaidh, Limavady

School Maintenance

Mr P Givan asked the Minister of Education how much has been spent on the maintenance of schools in the Lagan Valley area in each of the last three years; and to detail the current backlog.

(AQW 1398/11)

Minister of Education: Tá an caiteachas ar chothabháil scoileanna i limistéar Ghleann an Lagáin mionsonraithe sa tábla thíos:

The spend on maintenance of schools in the Lagan Valley area is detailed in the table below:

2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
£1,634,156	£968,897	£1,026,723

The current backlog of maintenance of schools in the Lagan Valley area is £6,424,466.00.

Figures for voluntary grammar and grant maintained integrated schools are not readily available.

Schools from Different Sectors

Mr D McKay asked the Minister of Education to outline how schools from different sectors, in particular the controlled and maintained sectors, are working together and co-operating for mutual benefit.

(AQW 1421/11)

Minister of Education: Cothaíonn cuid mhór de pholasaithe mo Roinne go gníomhach comhroinnt agus comhoibriú idir scoileanna ar mhaithe le comhthairbhe. Ní amháin go bhfuil comhoibriú éifeachtúil ó thaobh costais de, ach soláthraíonn sé deiseanna, fosta, chun gníomhaíocht bhríoch idir páistí agus daoine óga ónar bpobal a chothú.

Many of my department's policies actively promote sharing and collaboration between schools for mutual benefit. Collaboration is not only cost-effective, but also provides opportunities for promoting meaningful interaction between children and young people from our communities.

In particular, the Extended Schools programme operates across all school sectors. To promote the practice of clustering DE provides an additional financial incentive to those schools that choose to work together as part of an Extended Schools clustering arrangement. In the 2009/10 year, out of almost 80 clusters operating across all 5 Education and Library Board areas, 40 involved partnership working between schools from both the controlled and maintained sectors.

Also, the Entitlement Framework (EF) all post-primary schools, including those from the controlled and maintained sectors, are already working together through Area Learning Communities (ALCs) to ensure that young people can have access to a much broader, better balanced and more economically relevant range of courses. That joint working provides opportunities for pupils and teachers to share experiences with, and learn from, one another. In a difficult resource context it also helps schools avoid situations where duplicate courses are offered to very small numbers of pupils, thereby ensuring better value for money.

Additionally, as Area Learning Communities provide a mechanism for schools to pool their resources and to plan provision at an area level in a coherent way, they create considerable potential to release resources for investment elsewhere within education.

Single Education System

Mr M Storey asked the Minister of Education if her Department has made an assessment of whether educating children in a single education system would (i) assist; or (ii) hinder the delivery of its responsibility to promote good community relations.

(AQW 1465/11)

Minister of Education: Ó ceapadh mar Aire Oideachais mé, méadaíodh líon na bpáistí a fhreastalaíonn ar scoileanna imeasctha ó 17,600 go chóir a bheith 19,400 agus sholáthair mo Roinn beagnach £166m de chistiú athfhillteach tarmhligthe agus de chistiú athfhillteach neamhtharmhligthe d'Earnáil na Scoileanna Imeasctha sa dá bhliain airgeadais 2007/08 agus 2008/09. Níl oideachas comhtháithe ach ina ghné amháin de chomhoideachas, áfach.

Since I became Minister for Education the number of children attending integrated schools has increased from 17,600 to almost 19,400 and my department has provided nearly £166m in total in delegated and non-delegated recurrent funding to the Integrated Schools Sector for the two financial years 2007/08 and 2008/09. Integrated education is, however, only one aspect of shared education.

I am committed to encompassing a wide approach to improving relations between our communities through educating children and young people to develop self-respect and respect for others, and to ensuring that equality and inclusion are the cornerstones of an education system which enables every learner to fulfil his or her potential.

Key issues and actions within the draft Community Relations, Equality and Diversity policy, which is currently at the public consultation stage, include promoting sharing and collaboration and encouraging meaningful interaction between children and young people.

Shared education and improved community relations are not mutually exclusive objectives, but are complementary approaches, underpinned by the same core values and ethos. Many of my department's policies already seek to promote sharing and collaboration between schools for the benefit of our communities. For example, the Entitlement Framework sits very clearly within my overall education reform programme and my department has established Area Learning Communities (ALCs) to provide the mechanism to enable schools to pool resources and plan provision at an area level.

However, until such issues as parental choice, breakaway entrance tests, community readiness and political will have been sufficiently addressed, there will be limitations as to how quickly the benefits of shared education can be realised within our communities.

Single Education System

Mr M Storey asked the Minister of Education if her Department has made an assessment of whether educating children in a single education system would (i) assist; or (ii) hinder the delivery of its community relations policy to 'encourage cross-community interaction and co-operation; to support and develop respect for each other's beliefs and backgrounds; and to encourage mutual understanding, recognition and respect for cultural diversity'.

(AQW 1466/11)

Minister of Education: Ó ceapadh mar Aire Oideachais mé, méadaíodh líon na bpáistí a fhreastalaíonn ar scoileanna imeasctha ó 17,600 go chóir a bheith 19,400 agus sholáthair mo Roinn beagnach £166m de chistiú athfhillteach tarmligthe agus de chistiú athfhillteach neamhtharmligthe d'Earnáil na Scoileanna Imeasctha sa dá bhliain airgeadais 2007/08 agus 2008/09. Níl oideachas comhtháithe ach ina ghné amháin de chomhoideachas, áfach.

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However, until such issues as parental choice, breakaway entrance tests, community readiness and political will have been sufficiently addressed, there will be limitations as to how quickly the benefits of shared education can be realised within our communities.

Middletown Autism Centre

Mr T Elliott asked the Minister of Education what discussions she has had with the Comptroller and Auditor General, before and subsequent to his 2009 report on the Middletown Centre for Autism; and for her assessment of paragraph 6.3.23 of the report.

(AQW 1607/11)

Minister of Education: Roimh fhoilsiú thuairisc 2009 an Ard-Reachtair Cuntais agus Ciste, chomhfhreagair feidhmeannaigh ón Roinn Oideachais agus ón Oifig Iniúcháireachta maidir le soláthar eolais ar Ionad Choillidh Chanannáin d'Uathachas agus maidir le litir ón Ard-Reachtair Cuntais agus Ciste inar lorgaigh sé tuairimí ar chothroime agus ar chruinneas fforasach na dréacht-tuairisce.

In advance of the publication of the Comptroller and Auditor General's 2009 report Department of Education and Audit Office officials corresponded in relation to provision of information on the Middletown Centre for Autism and in response to a letter from the Comptroller and Auditor General seeking views on the fairness and factual accuracy of the draft report.

No correspondence or discussions have taken place with the Northern Ireland Audit Office since the publication of the report.

I accept that paragraph 6.3.23 of Financial Auditing & Reporting: General Report by the Comptroller and Auditor General for Northern Ireland – 2009 is a fair and accurate assessment of the situation in respect of the Middletown Centre for Autism when the audit was undertaken. I am pleased to note the views expressed by the Comptroller and Auditor General in his overall findings that appropriate corporate governance arrangements are in place at the Centre.

The Middletown Centre for Autism is a joint project by the Department of Education and the Department of Education and Skills in the south. The development of the two key services that have yet to be fully implemented, the Educational Assessment Service and the Learning Support Service, will be considered when drafting the updated, phased multi-annual plan for the future development of the Centre taking account of international best practice and the development of autism services on the island of Ireland since the Centre was established.

To date, the Centre has delivered a broad range of training interventions to over 5,000 professionals and parents across the island. Feedback received on this training has been extremely positive and interest in the forthcoming training events remaining high.

The Research and Information Service continues to progress two island-wide research projects in relation to sensory issues and working memory for those on the autism spectrum. A new research bulletin was also published recently in relation to educational assessment

Middletown Autism Centre

Mr T Elliott asked the Minister of Education to detail (i) the capital; and (ii) revenue costs for the Middletown Autism Centre in each year since it opened; and for a breakdown of the contributions made to the centre by (a) Northern Ireland Departments; and (b) the Republic of Ireland in each year since September 2004.

(AQW 1608/11)

Minister of Education: Maoiníonn an Roinn Oideachais agus an Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna sa deisceart Ionad Choillidh Chanannáin d'Uathachas ar bhonn 50/50, agus ní ranníocann aon roinn eile rialtais sa tuaisceart cistiú.

The Middletown Centre for Autism is funded jointly on a 50/50 basis by the Department of Education and the Department for Education and Skills in the south with no other government department in the north contributing funding.

The overall project to establish the Centre has incurred costs by my Department as detailed in the table below. The figures are given for financial years since 2004 and includes all revenue and capital funding incurred by DE since that date. The south of Ireland has contributed an equivalent amount. The

DE Project administration funding associated with the Centre since that date has also been included. The Centre started operating in March 2007.

Year	Type	Amount
2004/05	Revenue	£176,273
	Capital - Purchase	£1,500,000
	Other	£52,922
	Total	£1,729,195
2005/06	Revenue	£56,304
	Capital	£0.00
	Other	£47,659
	Total	£103,963
2006/07	Revenue	£84,277
	Capital	£0.00
	Other	£54,946
	Total	£139,223
2007/08	Revenue	£376,117
	Capital	£130,842
	Other	£57,743
	Total	£564,702
2008/09	Revenue	£531,554
	Capital	£61,725
	Other	£44,548
	Total	£637,827
2009/10	Revenue	£621,622
	Capital	£54,388
	Other	£61,850
	Total	£737,860
2010/11*	Revenue	£304,598
	Capital	£4,590
	Other	£34,137
	Total	£343,325

*Up to 30 Sept 2010

This table excludes costs incurred prior to April 2004.

Middletown Autism Centre

Mr T Elliott asked the Minister of Education if she will help to co-ordinate an opportunity for representatives of the Middletown Autism Centre to give evidence at a meeting of the Assembly's Education Committee.

(AQW 1611/11)

Minister of Education: Láithrigh ionadaithe ó Ionad Choillidh Chanannáin d'Uathachas os comhair an Choiste Oideachais i mí na Samhna 2008. Tá mé cinnte go bhfreagródh Bord Bainistíochta an Ionaid go dearfach dá dtabharfadh an Coiste cuireadh eile dó.

Representatives from the Middletown Centre for Autism appeared before the Education Committee in November 2008. I am sure the Management Board of the Centre will respond positively should another invitation be extended by the Committee.

Child Protection Training

Mr P Weir asked the Minister of Education for how long child protection training provided to school governors remains valid.

(AQW 1636/11)

Minister of Education: Ba cheart go soláthrófaí oiliúint um Chosaint Leanaí do ghobharnóirí scoile ar a laghad uair amháin gach ceithre bliana. Cé go spreagtar gach gobharnóir chun oiliúint a sholáthraíonn na Boird Oideachais agus Leabharlann a dhéanamh, níl sí éigeantach. Ba cheart go dtabharfaí oiliúint um Chosaint Leanaí agus um Earcú agus Roghnú, ar a laghad, do ghobharnóirí scoile amháin a fhóinann ar phainéal agallaimh nó ar choiste a bunaíodh le haghaidh earcú nó roghnú na foirne atá le ceapadh i scoil, áfach.

Child Protection training for school governors should be provided at least once every four years. While all governors are encouraged to take up training provided by the Education and Library Boards, it is not compulsory. However at least one school governor serving on an interview panel or committee established for the purpose of recruiting or selecting staff for appointment to a school should be trained in Child Protection and Recruitment and Selection.

Rights Respecting Schools Awards

Mr P Weir asked the Minister of Education to list the schools which are currently participating in the Rights Respecting Schools Awards.

(AQW 1637/11)

Minister of Education: Ní choinníonn an Roinn Oideachas eolas ar scoileanna atá ag glacadh páirte sna Duaiseanna Scoileanna um Urramú Ceart.

The Department of Education does not hold information on schools participating in the Rights Respecting Schools Awards.

It is matter for individual schools to decide which resources, programmes or services they consider appropriate to support their curricular provision, including whether to take part in the Rights Respecting Schools Awards.

Stage 3 Child Protection Training

Mr P Weir asked the Minister of Education which Education Boards currently offer Stage 3 child protection training for school governors.

(AQW 1638/11)

Minister of Education: Sholáthair gach ceann de na 5 Bhord Oideachais agus Leabharlann an oiliúint a bhí riachtanach i roghnú agus in earcú na foirne, rud a dtugtar Snáithe 3 um Chosaint Leanaí air, i dtaca leis na baill siúd de Bhord Gobharnóirí agus a shuíonn ar phainéil roghnaithe.

All 5 Education and Library Boards provide the required training in the selection and recruitment of staff, known as Strand 3 Child Protection, for those members of a Board of Governors who sit on selection panels.

Running in the Playground

Mr J Craig asked the Minister of Education how many schools have a policy which forbids pupils from running in the playground.

(AQW 1651/11)

Minister of Education: Ní choinníonn an Roinn Oideachais an t-eolas seo.

The Department of Education does not hold this information.

Rules and policies on pupil behaviour are matters for schools to determine. All grant-aided schools are required, by law, to have measures in place to promote good pupil behaviour as part of their discipline policy. The Department has issued guidance to schools on this; however, it is for each school to decide, taking account of its own ethos and circumstances, what behaviours and situations will be covered by its discipline policy.

When developing a policy, a school community will decide on its position in respect of pupil behaviour in the playground. The school's position should be clearly set out in the discipline policy and the entire school community, including pupils, parents and staff, should be fully aware of it and its implications.

Budget 2010

Mr W Humphrey asked the Minister of Education what discussions she has had with school principals or their representatives in preparation for Budget 2010.

(AQO 400/11)

Minister of Education: Mar is eol don chomhalta, buailim le príomhoidí ar bhonn rialta agus pléimid tosaíochtaí d'oidreachas. Chomh déanach leis an Luan seo a chuaigh thart, chaith mé maidin an-táirgiúil le 600 múinteoir ó Phobal Foghlama Ceantair Bhéal Feirste Thuaidh agus ó gach scoil sa cheantar atá ag obair le chéile chun soláthar curaclaim do dhaoine óga a chinneadh.

As the member knows, I meet with principals on a regular basis and discuss priorities for education. Just as recently as Monday I spent a very productive morning with 600 teachers from the North Belfast Area Learning Community and from every school in the area, working together to determine curricular provision for young people.

The First Minister and deputy First Minister have requested a meeting with the British Prime Minister. Following those negotiations it is then up to the Executive to agree a Programme for Government and a draft Budget setting departmental spending plans which will issue for consultation. School principals, and indeed all education stakeholders, will be able to participate.

Consultants

Mr C Boylan asked the Minister of Education what action she is taking to reduce the use of consultants by her Department.

(AQO 403/11)

Minister of Education: Ní bhaineann mo Roinn úsáid as sainchomhairleoirí seachtracha ach amháin má bhíonn sé go hiomlán riachtanach agus bunaithe ar chás iontaofa gnó a chinntíonn luach ar airgead.

External consultants are only engaged by my Department when absolutely necessary and on the basis of a sound business case which ensures value for money. I have made clear the need to have rigorous and transparent processes in place. As a result, expenditure on the use of external consultants in my Department has fallen from £1,067,705 in 2007-08 to £180,484 in 2009-10.

Any such expenditure within the Department requires my approval and I would suggest that this practice of bearing down on the use of consultants should be extended to all Departments.

Shared Education

Mr K McCarthy asked the Minister of Education whether her Department plans to encourage shared education, which would result in financial savings.

(AQO 404/11)

Minister of Education: Tá a fhios ag an chomhalta ó thoghcheantar Loch Cuan go bhfuil cúrsaí airgeadais ar cheann amháin de na tosca a bhaineann le comhoideachas a leathnú – is iad na tosca eile a bheadh i gceist le haon chinneadh ná rogha na dtuismitheoirí, toilteanas an phobail agus tacaíocht pholaitíochta.

The member from Strangford will know that financial issues are only one factor in moving to shared education – parental choice, community readiness and political impetus are key factors in any such decision.

Equality of access to all types of school and the provision that they offer is vital if we are to truly achieve a shared education. That is something which has been lacking in our post-primary system because of academic selection, which creates and sustains injustice and inequality. It has no place in a modern, progressive and enlightened. I am determined to continue reforming our education system, ending academic selection and the resultant rejection of many of our children, and putting equality at the core of my department's policies.

I am fully committed to encouraging schools from all sectors to work together to ensure the best use of available resources in light of tight public finances. Indeed plans to establish the Education and Skills Authority would have seen financial savings, and in the absence of any agreement by this Assembly to progress this, I have implemented convergence plans to secure financial savings by reducing administration and releasing funding to frontline services.

My department has provided nearly £166m in delegated and non-delegated recurrent funding to the Integrated Schools Sector in total for the two financial years 2007/08 and 2008/09.

Many of my department's policies seek to secure savings through sharing and collaboration. For example, the Entitlement Framework sits very clearly within my overall education reform programme. Collaboration is a cost-effective means of delivering the aims of the Entitlement Framework and my department has established Area Learning Communities to provide the mechanism for schools to pool resources and to plan provision at an area level in a coherent way, with huge potential to release resources for investment elsewhere in education.

Key issues and actions within the draft Community Relations, Equality and Diversity policy, which has been issued for public consultation, include promoting sharing and collaboration and encouraging meaningful interaction between children and young people.

The International Fund for Ireland's Sharing in Education Programme supports the strategic objectives of the Fund by providing support for projects that enable young people to participate in shared educational experiences. As managing agent for the programme, my department is well placed to evaluate the benefits of shared education at first hand and to take account of identified benefits for future policy development.

However, until the issues of parental choice, community readiness and political impetus have been addressed, there are limits to how quickly any benefits from shared education can be realised.

Education and Training Inspectorate Report

Mr D McKay asked the Minister of Education for her assessment of the recent biennial report from the Chief Inspector of the Education and Training Inspectorate,

(AQO 405/11)

Minister of Education: Cuirim fáilte roimh an tuairisc chuimsitheach seo ón Phríomhchigire agus gabhaim buíochas leis agus lena chomhghleacaithe as an ról tábhachtach atá acu maidir le caighdeáin a ardú inár scoileanna. Bhuail mé leis an bPríomhchigire chun an tuairisc thábhachtach seo a phlé agus bhí áthas orm bheith leis ag an lainséil ar 13ú Deireadh Fómhair.

I welcome this comprehensive report from the Chief Inspector and thank him and his colleagues for the important contribution they make to raising standards in our schools. I have met with the Chief Inspector to discuss this important report and was pleased to join him at the launch on 13th October.

The Chief Inspector has reported improvements in overall education provision in pre-school, primary school and post-primary settings and the impetus my school improvement policy has given to raising standards. I welcome these improvements and I pay tribute to the work of those in daily contact with our children and young people.

I also welcome the good progress made by schools in implementing the revised curriculum. The report confirms what teachers have frequently told me, that the revised curriculum gives them much greater professional freedom to teach in a way that promotes pupils' enjoyment and engagement in learning. In addition, because of the new post-primary Transfer arrangements the primary curriculum is no longer distorted.

However, the Chief Inspector has again highlighted the need to raise standards further, especially in literacy and numeracy. I am committed to delivering further advances in literacy and numeracy and to closing the gap between those achieving at the highest levels and those who, perhaps because of disadvantage, disability or other barriers to learning, are not achieving in line with their full potential.

That is the focus of the range of policies I have been working to put in place since I became Minister – policies such as my school improvement policy, ending academic selection/rejection, the revised curriculum and entitlement framework, the literacy and numeracy strategy, the Way Forward for Special Educational Needs and Inclusion, the Extended Schools programme, the Achieving Belfast & Derry programmes, the pupil health and well-being programme, support for Newcomer and Traveller children, ensuring effective and coherent support for teachers and school leaders, and the establishment of ESA.

Education and Skills Authority: Funding

Mr P Givan asked the Minister of Education what financial resources have been allocated to the Education and Skills Authority to meet the cost of convergence and how much funding has been released to facilitate shared services between existing Education and Library Boards.

(AQO 406/11)

Minister of Education: Tá iontas orm nach eol don Chomhalta nach ann don Údarás um Oideachas agus Scileanna go fóill. Idir an dá linn, tá obair á déanamh ar choinbhéirseacht seirbhísí chun coigiltí a dhéanamh.

I am surprised that the Member is unaware that regrettably, the Education and Skills Authority does not yet exist. In the meantime work is being taken forward on convergence of services with the objective of making savings. I am ready to implement the Education and Skills Authority and I look forward to your Party's co-operation in making it happen. Given the political will, the Education and Skills Authority can be brought into being in line with the Executive's commitment. The case for this happening is now irrefutable. We need to shrink bureaucracy, reduce the number of Public Bodies, drive up standards and to create a modern professional structure to drive forward the strategic changes we now more than need ever to see.

Programme for Sharing, Cohesion and Integration

Mr J McCallister asked the Minister of Education to outline any discussions she had with the First Minister and deputy First Minister about the Programme for Cohesion, Sharing and Integration, prior to its publication for consultation.

(AQO 407/11)

Minister of Education: Rinneadh plé ar an Chlár um Chomhtháthú, Chomhroinnt agus Imeascadh ag an chruinniú den Choiste Feidhmiúcháin ar 22 Iúil agus bhí deis ag na hAirí go léir an dréachtchlár a phlé sular foilsíodh le haghaidh comhairliúcháin é.

The Programme for Cohesion, Sharing and Integration was discussed at the Executive meeting on 22 July when all Ministers had an opportunity to discuss the draft prior to publication for consultation.

Additionally, prior to the publication of the draft CSI Programme, my department provided OFMDFM with details of DE policies and programmes which contribute to achieving equality and positive good relation outcomes including recent changes to the curriculum addressing citizenship, cultural awareness, community relations, equality, diversity and inclusion; my policies for Travellers and newcomers; and my department's new Community Relations, Equality and Diversity in Education Policy, which is also currently subject to a public consultation.

Information on work which is being taken forward on a cross cutting basis with other departments and which contributes to the Programme for Cohesion, Sharing and Integration was also provided.

Nursery Schools: South Belfast

Ms A Lo asked the Minister of Education what steps she is taking to ensure there will be adequate nursery provision in the South Belfast area for the 2011/12 academic year.

(AQO 408/11)

Minister of Education: Tá mé tiomanta a chinntiú go mbíonn deis ag gach páiste áit chistithe réamhscoile d'ardchaighdeán a fháil. Is é is aidhm leis an Chlár um Leathnú Oideachais Réamhscoile (PSEEP) ná bliain amháin de sholáthar réamhscoile d'ardchaighdeán a chur ar fáil, sa bhliain roimh oideachas éigeantach, do gach páiste ar mian lena dtuismitheoirí é. Soláthraítear an Clár trí chur chuige comhpháirtíochta idir an earnáil reachtúil naíscoile, (naíscoileanna agus aonaid naíscoile atá ceangailte le bunscoileanna) agus áiteanna cistithe réamhscoile san earnáil dheonach agus san earnáil phríobháideach.

I am committed to ensuring that every child has the opportunity to avail of a quality funded pre-school place. The aim of the Pre-School Education Expansion Programme (PSEEP) is to provide one year of quality pre-school provision, in the year before compulsory education, for every child whose parents want it. The Programme is delivered through a partnership approach between the statutory nursery sector, (nursery schools and nursery units attached to primary schools) and funded pre-school places in the voluntary and private sector.

As soon as I became aware of the shortfall in places across the north of Ireland at the end of April, I made available up to £1.3m of additional funding to increase the number of funded pre-school places in order to assist in meeting the demand for those children who had not been placed.

Responsibility for the implementation of the PSEEP at local level, rests with each Education and Library Board's (ELB) Pre-School Education Advisory Group (PEAG). My Department is working closely with the Education and Library Boards to ensure the maximum uptake of places by children in their final pre-school year in 2011/12 and will continue to seek to address any areas of shortfall.

Public Expenditure: Young People

Mr G Savage asked the Minister of Education what action she is taking to ensure that any spending reductions do not disproportionately affect the most disadvantaged and vulnerable young people.

(AQO 409/11)

Minister of Education: D'iarr an Chéad-Aire agus an leasChéad-Aire cruinniú le Príomh-Aire na Breataine. Tar éis na gcaibidlí sin, ba faoin Choiste Feidhmiúcháin aontú ar Chlár um Rialtas agus ar dhréachtBhuiséad a leagann amach pleananna caiteachais ranna. Go dtí go dtarlaíonn sé sin, ní bheidh mé in ann mionchinntí ar chistiú do sheirbhísí oideachais san am atá le teacht. Déanfaidh mé mo dhícheall, áfach, chun a chinntiú go gcosnaítear na daoine is leochailí inár sochaí agus seirbhísí túslíne agus go sainaithnítear iad ar bhonn riachtanais agus go gcloíonn muid lenár ndualgais um chomhionannas.

The First Minister and deputy First Minister have requested a meeting with the British Prime Minister. Following those negotiations it is then up to the Executive to agree a Programme for Government and a draft Budget setting departmental spending plans. Until that happens, I will not be in a position to make detailed decisions on future funding for education services. I will however do everything in my power to ensure that the most vulnerable in our society and front line services are protected and targeted on the basis of need and that we adhere to our equality duties.

In addition, I will continue to put the needs of children with barriers to learning, whether they be identified learning difficulties or social, emotional or environmental impacts, at the heart of my Department's policies so that every pupil can have the opportunity to reach his or her full potential.

Education and Skills Authority

Ms C Ní Chuilín asked the Minister of Education whether it is possible to establish the Education and Skills Authority during the current mandate.

(AQO 410/11)

Minister of Education: Is féidir an tÚdarás um Oideachas agus Scileanna a bhunú go fóill taobh istigh de shaolré údarais an Tionóil reatha má bhíonn comhaontú polaitiúil ann. Ach caithfear é a dhéanamh go gasta. Tá an mhoill leanúnach ag déanamh dochair don chóras oideachais agus do mheanma na foirne, ag cur bac le hathchóirithe tábhachtacha agus ag cur acmhainní amú ar riarachán nach gá.

It remains possible to establish the Education and Skills Authority within the lifetime of the current mandate of the Assembly if there is political agreement to do so. However, the window of opportunity is limited. The ongoing delay is damaging the education system, demoralising staff, obstructing key reforms and wasting scarce resources on unnecessary administration.

Quangos

Mr F Molloy asked the Minister of Education what action she has taken to reduce the number of quangos attached to her Department.

(AQO 411/11)

Minister of Education: Laghdófadh feidhmiú an Athbhreithniúcháin ar Riarachán Poiblí líon na n-eagraíochtaí reachtúla oideachais ó naoi gcinn go ceann amháin, agus shábhálfaí thart ar £20 milliún in aghaidh na bliana ar riarachán. Mar gheall ar an mbrú ar bhuiséad an Choiste Feidhmiúcháin, tá gá níos géire ná riamh leis an athchóiriú ríthábhachtach seo.

Implementation of the Review of Public Administration in education would reduce the number of statutory education organisations from nine to one, saving approximately £20 million per year on administration. The pressure on the Executive's budget means that this key reform is needed more than ever.

Department for Employment and Learning

Comparable Service Delivery

Dr S Farry asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what benchmarking exercises his Department conducts to assess their spending profile relative to comparable service delivery in other jurisdictions.

(AQW 1481/11)

Minister for Employment and Learning (Sir Reg Empey): The Department carries out benchmarking exercises in Higher Education, Further Education and in respect to workforce development, primarily to inform policy development and help assess performance.

For example, as part of the development of a Regional Strategy for Widening Participation in Higher Education, my Department conducted a review of funding for existing Widening Participation initiatives that included benchmarking our spend and performance profile against comparable programmes in England, Scotland and the Republic of Ireland. I am pleased to note that Northern Ireland compared very favourably to the other regions in terms of value for money.

In addition, the development of the “Further Education Means Business” strategy, the current strategy for Further Education in Northern Ireland, was informed by a wide ranging review of regional, national and international policies and practices. More recently, the Department has considered practice in other parts of the United Kingdom in respect of excellence models in Further Education (FE) and FE funding models, and has participated, on a four country basis, in the reform of vocational qualifications across the UK, including how those qualifications are regulated.

The Department also compares retention and achievement rates with those in the rest of the UK. Success rates compare favourably with Scotland and Wales, but are below those in England.

As part of the re-contracting process of the Department’s professional and technical training programmes for workforce development, “Training for Success” and “ApprenticeshipsNI”, fact finding exercises were carried out with the other UK regions, including an examination of funding models and funding levels for comparable provision in other parts of the UK. Whilst there are differences in how each jurisdiction structures and funds its programmes these factors were taken into account in the design of the new delivery contracts for Northern Ireland

My Department’s Pathways to Work initiative has also been benchmarked against provision in Great Britain. An evaluation in 2007 demonstrated that Pathways in Northern Ireland performed at least as well as Pathways in Great Britain, with participating clients 10% more likely to be in work after Pathways interventions compared to non-participating clients.

Legal Services

Mr P McGlone asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how much his Department and its agencies paid for legal services in each of the last five years; and to detail the firms engaged.

(AQW 1510/11)

Minister for Employment and Learning: The attached table sets out the amounts paid by the Department and its three Non-Departmental Public Bodies for legal costs during the past five years:

Year	Department for Employment and Learning	Non-Departmental Public Bodies		
		Labour Relations Agency	Construction Industry Training Board	Ulster Supported Employment Limited
	£	£	£	£
2005-06	13,754	16,569	48,896	-

Year	Department for Employment and Learning	Non-Departmental Public Bodies		
		Labour Relations Agency	Construction Industry Training Board	Ulster Supported Employment Limited
	£	£	£	£
2006-07	17,338	24,429	62,423	-
2007-08	17,824	59,274	107,819	-
2008-09	9,221	16,114	164,293	2,628
2009-10	540	7,628	201,773	-

The above figures represent expenditure for the year ended 31 March, except for Construction Industry Training Board where the year end is 31 August.

The Department engaged the Departmental Solicitors Office (DSO) within the Department of Finance and Personnel, the Crown Solicitors Office and Mark Sinclair Solicitors. Amounts paid to DSO relate to costs in relation to legal representation in court cases.

The firms used by the three Non-Departmental Public Bodies were as follows:

1. Labour Relations Agency
Jones Cassidy Jones
Elliott Duffy Garrett
2. Construction Industry Training Board
Babington & Croasdaile
Cleaver Fulton Rankin
3. Ulster Supported Employment Limited:
Johns Eliot & Co

Fees Generated Through Enrolment of Foreign Nationals

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail the amount of fees generated by Universities and Colleges through the enrolment of foreign nationals in each of the last five years; and what proportion this is of total fees generated.

(AQW 1553/11)

Minister for Employment and Learning: Higher Education Institutions

The higher education sector does not use the term foreign nationals. Data was therefore requested on fees generated by non UK students in the last five years and the proportion of the total fees generated that this represented.

St. Mary's University College and Stranmillis University College had no non UK students who contributed fees in this period.

Queen's University Belfast (QUB) was only able to provide separate figures for overseas students but was unable to differentiate between fees generated by UK students and by students from elsewhere in the EU.

The University of Ulster (UU) was only able to provide the information requested for the last two years.

In Table One below, column one is the overseas fee income for QUB for the last five years, column two is the total consolidated income for QUB for the last five years and column three is the overseas fees as a percentage of the total QUB income for the last five years.

TABLE ONE: QUB

Year	Overseas Tuition Fees received by QUB £m	Total Tuition Fees received by QUB £m	Overseas Percentage of total Tuition Fees (%)
2005/06	6.3	225.9	2.8
2006/07	6.4	241.0	2.7
2007/08	7.1	258.4	2.7
2008/09	7.5	288.9	2.6
2009/10	8.3	293.7	2.8

In Table Two below, column one is the EU (Non UK) student fee income for the UU for the last two years, column two is the overseas student fee income for the UU for the last two years and column three is the non UK fees as a percentage of the total UU income for the last two years.

TABLE TWO: UU

Year	EU (non UK) Tuition Fees received by UU £m	Overseas Tuition Fees Received by UU £m	Percentage of total Tuition Fees (%)
2008/09	3,373	3,112	15.4
2009/10	3,811	3,490	13.7

Further Education Institutions

The table below details the amount of fees generated by the six Further Education Colleges through the enrolment of International Students (the FE Sector does not use the term foreign nationals to categorise students) for the last five years.

TABLE THREE: FURTHER EDUCATION COLLEGES

Year	International Tuition Fees received by FECs £'000	Total Tuition Fees received by FECs £'000	Percentage of total Tuition Fees (%)
2005/06	35	6,717	0.5
2006/07	103	11,231	0.9
2007/08	62	13,113	0.5
2008/09	80	15,009	0.5
2009/10	253	15,436	1.6

Further and Higher Education in South Antrim

Mr T Clarke asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what action he is taking to promote further and higher education in South Antrim.

(AQW 1579/11)

Minister for Employment and Learning: Further Education (FE) Colleges are responsible for the promotion and marketing of their own course provision. As the main providers of community education throughout Northern Ireland, Colleges continue to encourage access to Further Education by delivering a wide and varied curriculum through their main campuses and network of community outreach centres.

While not exclusive to South Antrim, my Department developed and implemented the Learner Access and Engagement Pilot Programme. This programme, which is currently being piloted, allows FE Colleges to contract with third party organisations for the provision of learner support. This support is being directed at those 'hard to reach' adults who are economically inactive, disengaged from the labour market, with few or no qualifications, to encourage them to enrol on and complete FE courses.

Higher Education Institutions are responsible for the promotion and marketing of their own course provision and do so, to potential students, school leavers, Further Educational institutions, Careers Advisers and other relevant stakeholders, through a variety of media. These include television, radio, print media, web advertising, careers fairs, school visits, on-campus events, billboard advertising, and school and business outreach activities.

Policy Screening Process

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to detail, for the period from May 2007 to date, (i) the number of policies his Department and its associated bodies have (a) "screened out" as having no Equality Impact; and (b) "screened in" as having an Equality Impact; (ii) the number of staff involved in the screening process; and (iii) the cost of the screening process.

(AQW 1593/11)

Minister for Employment and Learning: (i)(a) From May 2007 to date, the Department for Employment and Learning and its associated bodies have screened out, as having no Equality Impact, 115 policy changes/ new policies.

(i)(b) From May 2007 to date, the Department for Employment and Learning and its associated bodies have screened in 2 policies as having an Equality Impact.

(ii) The number of people involved in conducting screenings is not recorded. It would typically involve the policy lead and various support / professional staff as dictated by the particular needs of the policy being considered.

(iii) The cost of carrying out equality screenings is an intrinsic part of policy development and is not identified separately.

Higher Education Funding

Mr D McClarty asked the Minister for Employment and Learning for his assessment of the significance of the Browne Report 'Securing a Sustainable Future for Higher Education'

(AQO 421/11)

Minister for Employment and Learning: Given the interest and importance reflected in questions I want to take this opportunity to address concerns raised.

In the three weeks since both Lord Browne and Joanne Stuart's reports have been published, I am sure Members have all had an opportunity to begin to digest the detail and complexity of the recommendations.

As my predecessor, and party colleague, indicated when Lord Browne's report was published – the recommendations, if implemented as proposed by Lord Browne, have the potential to fundamentally change the Higher Education system for many future generations. Of course, Lord Browne's review is not just about fees, it proposes a total remodelling of Higher Education funding in England.

As the Assembly questions tabled indicate, there are clear differences in the recommendations of the two reports. The reasons for this are quite simple.

In Northern Ireland we led the way when, at the end of 2008, my predecessor commissioned Joanne Stuart to carry out an independent review of fees. At that time our fee and funding regime was similar to that in England and Joanne was carrying out her review in a relatively settled context.

During the course of the Stuart review, Westminster tasked Lord Browne with making recommendations on the future of fees policy and financial support in England. The reviews, while focusing on some

common issues, also had very different remits – their terms of reference were different and many more issues came within the scope of Lord Browne's report.

Furthermore, the different timescales for the reviews led to differences as the operating context changed. Joanne Stuart reported to my predecessor earlier this year when the full extent of the financial pressures was not yet clear. Since then, the economic landscape has changed rapidly and, in her report, Joanne Stuart made clear that her recommendations would need to be reviewed in the context of Lord Browne's report. It is vitally important that we have an informed, mature and responsible debate so Joanne Stuart has agreed to update her report now that Lord Browne's has been published.

It is, of course, only right that the implications of the Comprehensive Spending Review announced on 20 October are factored into any proposals that are forthcoming.

As my predecessor indicated in the Assembly last month, I and my officials are studying the detail of Lord Browne's proposals, including the recommendations relating to the removal of the cap on fees and the changes to repayment arrangements, and we are considering the options and potential implications for Northern Ireland. We are also awaiting the comprehensive response by the UK Government to Lord Browne's proposals.

Officials will be engaging with the external stakeholder group within the next few weeks to discuss the range of issues before us and it is my intention to bring forward a paper for public consultation as early as possible in the new year.

Ensuring fair access to higher education is clearly a key issue and it is worth noting that the existing fees regime has not impacted adversely on our participation rates.

Of course, there will not be any change to existing arrangements without full consultation with the Executive, Assembly and other stakeholders. There is currently a legislative cap on what fees Northern Ireland universities can charge and any change in this will need Assembly approval.

Sign Language Interpreters

Mrs M O'Neill asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what plans he has to increase the number of sign language interpreters being trained.

(AQO 418/11)

Minister for Employment and Learning: I am committed to delivering the personal pledge of my predecessor to enhance course provision in sign language in Northern Ireland. Vulnerable groups need to be protected despite current financial pressures. My Department is currently in discussion with potential providers to ensure that over £1m allocated for course provision meets with the expectations of the sign language community. That community was updated on proposals at a recent meeting. As part of the proposals, my Department has committed to increase, by at least twenty, the number of registered Sign Language interpreters in Northern Ireland. The funding will also allow for a sustainable training infrastructure and an increase in the number of qualified sign language tutors.

Universities: Dropout Rates

Mr W Clarke asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what is the total number of students from disadvantaged backgrounds who have dropped out of degree courses at Queen's University, Stranmillis University College and St Mary's University College, over the last three years.

(AQO 420/11)

Minister for Employment and Learning: Data on drop outs within Higher Education are available for full-time, first degree entrants only and are available only for those who do not return in the following academic year.

According to the Higher Education Statistics Agency, the number of drop outs from disadvantaged backgrounds, that is, those from Socio-Economic Classifications 5 to 7, at Queen's University in 2005/06, 2006/07 and 2007/08 was 65, 50 and 60 respectively.

There were fewer than 5 drop outs at Stranmillis University College each year and there was a total of 5 drop outs at St. Mary's University College in each of these years.

Graduate Internship Programmes

Mr S Neeson asked the Minister for Employment and Learning whether his Department will consider mainstreaming the Graduate Internship Programme.

(AQO 424/11)

Minister for Employment and Learning: The Graduate Internship Programme was introduced earlier this year on a pilot basis as part of a package of temporary measures designed to mitigate the effects of the current economic downturn.

The Programme offered 60 paid internships for 6 months in the voluntary and community sectors. The pilot has recently ended and a full evaluation is underway. I will take the findings of the evaluation into account, together with an assessment of prevailing labour market conditions, when considering the programmes and services my Department will offer next year. You will appreciate that my ability to extend this, and other programmes, will be dependant on the resources made available through the 2010 Budget process.

Prisoners: Education and Training

Mr A Maskey asked the Minister for Employment and Learning to outline how many courses his Department has provided, in total, for prisoners in Hydebank, Maghaberry and Magilligan Prisons over the last five years and how many prisoners in total have subsequently obtained qualifications.

(AQO 425/11)

Minister for Employment and Learning: Since 31 August 2005, 357 courses have been delivered within the 3 prison establishments. Of these, 325 courses were Essential Skills, and 32 were other courses. Only the Essential Skills courses were funded by my Department.

During the same period, a total of 2,531 qualifications were achieved, 2,317 of which were in Essential Skills and 214 were in other areas.

A breakdown of courses and qualifications by FE college, by prison establishment and by course type is provided at Annex 1.

In addition, the Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS) funds some of its own Essential Skills provision. Information provided by NIPS indicates that between 31 August 2005 and 31 July 2010 a further 1,088 Essential Skills qualifications were achieved within the prisons.

Further and Higher Education: Salaries

Mr P Doherty asked the Minister for Employment and Learning if he has brought forward any proposals to cap the pay of senior officials in Further Education Colleges and Universities.

(AQO 426/11)

Minister for Employment and Learning: Whilst the six Further Education Colleges are funded through recurrent block grant for the delivery of further and higher education, the Department does not earmark any funding specifically for pay purposes. The current three year Further Education Senior Staff pay agreement is due to expire in August 2011. Any proposed settlement will need to be compliant with the affordability limits set under Executive pay policy, including a pay freeze, if appropriate. The Further Education Sector, through the Association of Northern Ireland Colleges, has been advised of the need for pay restraint and I will be exercising my Department's right to approve future pay settlements for all staff within Further Education Colleges, to ensure these are compliant with the Executive's pay policy.

While recognising that universities have the right and responsibility to make their own decisions on the remuneration of their employees, I understand the need for pay restraint in relation to senior officials at a time of significant pressure on public sector budgets.

My predecessor and party colleague wrote to the Chairs of the Governing Bodies of both universities earlier this year asking them, and their Remuneration Committees, to be circumspect when determining any potential increases in the salary packages paid to Vice-Chancellors and senior staff.

In acknowledging that the universities need to pay appropriate salaries to attract and retain leaders of the highest quality, my predecessor emphasised that this must be balanced against the scale of pay increases, and indeed reductions, in wider society. A view which I completely support.

Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment

Directional Signs to Local Attractions

Mr D Kinahan asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what steps she is taking to amend existing regulations to ensure that white-on-brown directional signs to local attractions are more widely deployed as a marketing tool to promote and encourage tourism, particularly in relation to the Springhill and Sentry Hill attractions.

(AQW 1490/11)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (Mrs A Foster): The purpose of tourist signs is to guide a visitor to their destination by the most appropriate route during the latter stages of their journey. The signs also aim to assist traffic management ensuring the safe operation of the road network. Tourist signs are not a marketing or advertising tool.

It is not possible or desirable for every tourist facility to obtain signs, and therefore the Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB) and DRD Roads Service operate a joint policy to determine eligibility for signage. Roads Service determines all other operational matters relating to the siting of signs ensuring that junctions are not cluttered with so much information that they become confusing.

It is my understanding that white on brown directional signage directs persons to both Springhill and Sentry Hill and that this is in line with the policy i.e. at the latter stages of the journey "Signing will normally be from the nearest A or B class roads (up to a maximum distance of 5 miles from the establishment.)".

I can confirm that officials from my Department and the Northern Ireland Tourist Board will meet shortly to discuss the Northern Ireland Tourism Signing Policy. Following this meeting it is our intention to request a meeting with representatives from Roads Service to carefully examine any potential developments to the current policy.

Job Promotion

Mr J Dallat asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail the amount of funding allocated by her Department for job promotion in each constituency in each of the last three years.

(AQW 1525/11)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: Invest NI is the agency through which the Department of Enterprise Trade & Investment (DETI) provides funding to grow the private sector in Northern Ireland. Invest NI's focus is to increase business productivity, the means by which wealth can be created for the benefit of the whole community.

The primary mechanism through which Invest NI assists businesses to create new jobs and safeguard existing jobs is Selective Financial Assistance (SFA). Table 1 below provides information on the amount of SFA that Invest NI has offered in each Parliamentary Constituency Area (PCA) during the past three years. This represents the value of support which is expected to be paid during the life-time of these projects. However, it should be noted that Invest NI does not allocate budgets by geographic areas

such as PCAs. Assistance patterns are demand-led by those businesses which have come forward with projects suitable for Invest NI assistance.

TABLE 1: INVEST NI SELECTIVE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE (EMPLOYMENT RELATED) OFFERED BY PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY AREA (2007-08 TO 2009-10)

Parliamentary Constituency	Assistance Offered (£M)			
	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	Total
Belfast East	12.97	23.31	4.52	40.80
Belfast North	0.56	2.33	4.65	7.55
Belfast South	4.01	9.16	10.84	24.01
Belfast West	1.43	0.37	0.46	2.27
East Antrim	1.71	4.00	0.25	5.96
East Londonderry	2.91	0.50	0.41	3.82
Fermanagh and South Tyrone	7.26	3.77	1.11	12.15
Foyle	10.08	1.72	1.37	13.17
Lagan Valley	0.34	0.56	1.66	2.56
Mid Ulster	3.37	2.27	5.47	11.12
Newry and Armagh	4.87	7.01	1.33	13.21
North Antrim	3.06	1.61	0.86	5.52
North Down	1.11	7.10	0.66	8.87
South Antrim	0.57	1.47	0.97	3.02
South Down	0.55	7.09	1.52	9.16
Strangford	0.17	0.50	1.81	2.49
Upper Bann	0.97	0.72	12.41	14.11
West Tyrone	2.74	0.96	0.74	4.44
Total	58.71	74.46	51.04	184.21

Notes

1. Table totals may not add due to rounding.
2. Some of the assistance offered may not be paid if projects are not fully delivered by the client.

Invest NI and DETI also support projects that aim to promote innovation and capability development. Although not directly related to job creation, these activities will underpin business competitiveness and may lead eventually to growth and employment opportunities.

Policy Screening Process

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment to detail, for the period from May 2007 to date, (i) the number of policies her Department and its associated bodies have (a) "screened

out” as having no Equality Impact; and (b) “screened in” as having an Equality Impact; (ii) the number of staff involved in the screening process; and (iii) the cost of the screening process.

(AQW 1592/11)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: Since May 2007 DETI and its Non-departmental Public Bodies (NDPBs) have “screened out” 182 policies as having no adverse impact and “screened in” 3 policies to determine the extent of any differential impact.

Screening is mainstreamed throughout the Department and its NDPBs, therefore it is not possible to provide details of the number of staff involved in the process nor the associated cost.

Brown Road Signage

Mr P McGlone asked the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment what assistance her Department can provide to tourism-related businesses in erecting brown road signage.

(AQW 1639/11)

Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment: The process involved in the erection of white-on-brown signage for tourism related businesses is governed by the Tourist Signing in Northern Ireland Policy. This is a policy jointly agreed and operated by Roads Service, the Executive Agency within the Department for Regional Development (DRD), and the Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB). The policy can be viewed in full at www.nitb.com.

Eligibility for signage under the policy does not confer automatic entitlement to tourist signs. Where a tourist destination is deemed by NITB to be eligible for tourist signing and is proposed for inclusion in a local authority tourist signing plan, the final decision will be made by Roads Service. DRD own the process and make the ultimate decision on where signs should be erected.

Whilst I am keen to see tourism related businesses grow and prosper in these difficult economic times, the primary purpose of the Tourist Signing Policy remains the management of traffic and the safe operation of the road network. It is not intended that signs be used as advertising for the tourist destination. Signing should not be permitted that will provide an advantage to one commercial premise at the expense of another.

However, I can confirm that discussions regarding the Tourist Signing Policy have taken place between officials from my Department and NITB. It is our intention to progress these discussions further with representatives from DRD and Roads Service as appropriate in order to carefully review and examine the current policy.

Department of the Environment

Public Hire Taxis

Mr A Ross asked the Minister of the Environment how legislation in relation to the safety of public hire taxis compares to that in the rest of the UK.

(AQW 1018/11)

Minister of the Environment (Mr E Poots): In Northern Ireland as in the rest of the UK specific, European derived, legislation ensures that all vehicles, (including taxis) are constructed and maintained so that they are roadworthy and safe. In Northern Ireland, public service vehicle regulations apply additional requirements to public hire taxis (and private hire taxis) to provide a minimum level of passenger safety and comfort. In the rest of the UK local licensing authorities have the power to determine the additional safety and comfort requirements and these can vary in detail from one authority to the other. However, requirements in terms of the condition of the interior and exterior of the vehicle, signage and vehicle testing are similar across the whole of the UK.

Apprentices

Mr P Weir asked the Minister of the Environment how many apprentices have a placement within his Department or any of its arms-length bodies for 2010/11.

(AQW 1514/11)

Minister of the Environment: The Department and its arms-length bodies have not had any apprentices on placement during this financial year, 2010/11.

John Lewis Planning Application at Sprucefield

Mr P Weir asked the Minister of the Environment, given the delay in the public inquiry into the John Lewis planning application at Sprucefield, whether other major public inquiries into planning decisions should be brought forward in the interim to ensure that there are no further delays in the decision making process.

(AQW 1571/11)

Minister of the Environment:

- 1 The planning application by Sprucefield Centre Ltd was designated a major application under Article 31 of the 1991 Planning Order and referred to the Planning Appeals Commission (PAC) in December 2009 with a request to hold a Public Inquiry to consider representations to the application.
- 2 The PAC had previously written to the Department indicating that, because of existing commitments and staff resources, the Commission could only deal with one Article 31 case at a time.
- 3 The PAC, at the Department's request, retained the Sprucefield Inquiry at the top of the Article 31 list, which has delayed the hearing of other Article 31 cases.
- 4 However, on 20 October 2010 the PAC wrote to the Department indicating that, in view of the current delays in the process arising from the ongoing judicial review and the likely availability of additional resources, the Commission was now moving to process the current list of validly referred Article 31 cases.
- 5 The PAC hopes to process the majority of these with Public Inquiries and Hearings in early to mid 2011.
- 6 I can advise you that the PAC has already written to the Department to advise of arrangements for the holding of two conjoined Public Inquiries into major retail proposals in Newtownards, scheduled to commence on 21 February 2011.

Legal Services

Mr P McGlone asked the Minister of the Environment how much his Department and its agencies paid for legal services in each of the last five years; and to detail the firms engaged.

(AQW 1595/11)

Minister of the Environment: The total costs to my Department and its Agencies are tabled below.

	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
DOE	£866,461	£1,183,047	£1,235,759

These costs include both actual and notional costs incurred on behalf of the Department by the Departmental Solicitors Office.

I have not been able to provide figures for 2005/06 and 2006/07 due to the disproportionate cost of obtaining this information.

Below is a list of the firms and individuals engaged in the provision of these legal services

- Aiken J Mr
- Aldworth P Mr
- Brady J Mr Bl
- Brangam Alva Qc
- Brennan P Mr
- Carson & McDowell
- Coll P Mr Bl
- Comerton Jill
- Connolly Fionnuala Bl
- Cox A Mr
- Denton Wilde Sapte
- Departmental Solicitors Office
- Elliott Duffy Garrett – Solicitors
- Elvin D Mr Qc
- Eric Ltd
- Forsdick D Mr
- Gaia Law
- Gallagher R Mr
- Gibson H Ms
- Hamilton Jean
- Hanna N Mr Qc
- Hopley D Mr
- Hewitt & Gilpin – Solicitors
- Kerr Patricia
- Landmark Chambers
- Lewis P Mr
- Lieven N Miss Qc
- Linnegan A Mr
- Maguire P Mr Bl
- Maurici James Mr Bl
- McAteer Phillip Bl
- McCallion Maureen
- McCloskey B Mr
- McConnell & Fyffe
- McCullough A Mr
- McGleean Mr Bl
- McGuinness A Mr Bl
- McKay C Mr
- McKelvey Alice
- McLaughlin C P Mr
- McMillen D Mr Bl
- McShane + Co Solicitors
- Mould T Mr Qc
- Murnaghan Neasa
- Ni Courts And Tribunals Service
- Potter M Mr
- Quinn F Mr
- Ringland D Mr Qc
- Robinson M Mr
- Scoffield D Mr Qc
- Sharpe D Dr Bl
- Shaw S Mr Qc
- Simpson G Mr Qc
- Treasury Solicitor
- Wyatt D Prof. Qc

Planning Service Rural Design Guide

Mr P McGlone asked the Minister of the Environment (i) for an update on the progress of the Planning Service Rural Design Guide; (ii) when the guide will be made available for consultation to (a) the Committee for the Environment; and (b) the public; and (iii) to whom the document has been released to date.

(AQW 1641/11)

Minister of the Environment: The rural design guide is close to completion. I expect to circulate it in November to the Committee of the Environment. I will publish it for public consultation as soon as I have obtained Executive agreement to do so. To date the document has not been released beyond my Department and the project steering group.

Protection of Marine Environments

Mr D Kinahan asked the Minister of the Environment, in relation to the protection of marine environments, why his Department has yet to agree a position with the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development on the boundaries of non-disturbance zones.

(AQW 1648/11)

Minister of the Environment: The issue of setting up non-disturbance zones in Strangford Lough to protect the Modiolus (horse mussel) communities is a complex matter and there are firmly held views by the stakeholders involved which needed to be given careful consideration.

I can now report however that a position has been agreed with the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development who will shortly be bringing forward Regulations to establish pot fishing exclusion zones in the Lough.

Payment of Invoices

Mr D O'Loan asked the Minister of the Environment to outline each District Council's record in meeting the 10-day target for the payment of invoices since 1 April 2010.

(AQW 1653/11)

Minister of the Environment: The information requested is not held centrally by my Department but may be available from any individual council in which you have an interest.

District councils as independent statutory bodies are not yet bound by the 10 day prompt payment target that applies to all Northern Ireland government departments. However my officials, when advising councils about the form and nature of their 2009/2010 accounts, directed that they should aim to meet this target and put in place steps to measure the time taken to process payments which should be reported in their annual accounts.

Tyre Recycling Plant at Chapel Road, Mayobridge, Newry

Mr P J Bradley asked the Minister of the Environment for his assessment of the capacity of the tyre recycling plant at Chapel Road, Mayobridge, Newry; and, if he is aware, where the source is of the worn tyres that are being delivered to the depot.

(AQW 1670/11)

Minister of the Environment:

- (i) The operator has a waste management licence which permits him to accept up to 7,000 tonnes of waste tyres at the site per year. There have been breaches of the licence which NIEA required the operator to remedy and he has complied with these requests. I consider the waste management licence to be satisfactory, including the permitted capacity for waste tyres.
- (ii) The operator submitted an action plan during the summer and NIEA has been liaising with him regarding breakdowns of the equipment leading to stock piling of tyres. However the stockpiling is taking place outside the boundary of the licensed site.
- (iii) The operator is currently pursuing possible outlets for shredded tyres and has begun shipping material to Japan for fuel. He has complied with the paperwork required under the Transfrontier Shipment of waste and NIEA is content with this outlet. Agency staff have been on site to monitor this aspect and oversee the onward movement of the shredded tyres to Japan.
- (iv) The Agency has submitted a case to the Public Prosecution Service regarding the illegal storage of waste tyres and the PPS is currently assessing this file.
- (v) Planning Service has taken court proceedings against the operator in relation to the Stop Notice. The operator was given a 2 year conditional discharge on 21 June 2010 and prohibited from importing waste for 2 years. Planning Service's investigations are continuing in relation to the Enforcement Notice which is still in force.

- (vi) NIEA staff have noted from their inspections of records, site diary and weighbridge docketts as well as from discussions with the company that waste tyres are being sourced locally and from the ROI. The Agency does not hold details of the respective tonnages.

Learner Drivers with Dyslexia

Mr P J Bradley asked the Minister of the Environment what plans he has to ensure equality for learner drivers with a 100% dyslexic condition who are unable to pass the written theory element of the driving test. **(AQW 1671/11)**

Minister of the Environment: Three different accommodations are currently available to theory test candidates with reading and writing difficulties to assist them with taking their theory tests. These are:

- a reader who will sit with the candidate and read the questions and possible answers; and a recorder who will register the candidate's responses;
- 30 minutes of additional time or double time, depending upon the candidate's needs, for the multiple-choice questions part of the test; and
- an English-language audio voiceover, which is listened to through headphones and activated by the candidate touching the text on the screen.

The first two require the candidate to provide written evidence from a doctor or educationalist. No additional evidence is required from those who wish to use the voiceover facility.

All candidates are asked when they are booking their tests, if they require any of the available accommodations.

Department of Finance and Personnel

Staff Turnover

Mr C McDevitt asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail (i) the percentage of staff turnover within each Government Department; (ii) the number of staff recruited; (iii) the number of staff that left and the reasons why, broken down by (a) grade; (b) departmental staff; and (c) agency staff, in 2007, 2008, 2009, and the first six months of 2010.

(AQW 178/11)

Minister of Finance and Personnel (Mr S Wilson): The information requested has been placed in the Library. Validated information in respect of permanent staff for 2010 is not yet available. In view of the large number of grades within the Civil Service, the tables of permanent staff show general service and analogous grades.

Staff Salaries

Mr J Craig asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how many staff employed in each Government Department's agencies or arms-length bodies are paid (i) between £50,000 and £100,000; and (ii) over £100,000 per year.

(AQW 667/11)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: The numbers of staff employed in each Department's agencies or arms length bodies that are paid (i) between £50,000 and £100,000; and (ii) over £100,000 per year are detailed in the table overleaf.

Department	Staff employed in each Department's agencies or arms length bodies paid between £50,000 and £100,000 per year	Staff employed in each Department's agencies or arms length bodies paid over £100,000 per year
Dept of Agriculture and Rural Development	53	0
Dept of Culture, Arts and Leisure	25	1
Dept of Education	253	2
Dept for Employment and Learning	5	8
Dept of Enterprise, Trade and Investment	46	1
Dept of Finance and Personnel	32	1
Dept of Health, Social Services and Public Safety	2492	920
Dept of the Environment	35	0
Dept of Justice *	288	11
Dept for Regional Development	87	11
Dept for Social Development	46	3
Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister	42	7
Public Prosecution Service **	26	2

* DOJ was established on 12 April 2010.

** Prior to 12 April 2010 PPS was a legal office of the Northern Ireland Office.

Redundancies and Associated Costs

Mr J Craig asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how much money has been set aside for redundancies and associated costs in each (i) Civil Service Department; (ii) Department's agencies and arms-length bodies for (a) this financial year; and (b) the next financial year.

(AQW 753/11)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: The amount of money set aside for redundancies and associated costs in each (i) Civil Service Department; (ii) Department's agencies and arms-length bodies for this financial year is set out in the attached table. The table does not include information for next year as no Department was in a position to indicate how much funding, if any, would be available in 2011/12 until the outcome of Budget 2010 is clear. None of the money set aside in 2010/11 was to cover redundancies among NICS staff.

AMOUNT OF MONEY SET ASIDE FOR REDUNDANCIES AND ASSOCIATED COSTS IN CIVIL SERVICE DEPARTMENTS, THEIR AGENCIES, AND ARMS-LENGTH BODIES¹ FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2010/11

Department		2010/11
DE	Core Department ²	£9,000,000 ²
	Education and Library Boards	£6,013,000
DETI	Northern Ireland Tourist Board	£78,000 ³
	Consumer Council for NI	£1,140 ³
DHSSPS	Health and Social Care	£23,100,000
DRD	NI Transport Holding Company and NI Water	£7,300,000
OFMDFM	Economic Research Institute of Northern Ireland	£1,989,960 ⁴

Notes

- 1 Those Departments not included reported no funding set aside.
- 2 Up to £9,000,000 (associated costs) has been made available by DE to employing authorities to manage redundancies.
- 3 Already paid in the current financial year, no further money has been set aside.
- 4 Resources, unspent in 2009/10, carried forward as an accrual into 2010/11.

Civil Servants Car Parking Spaces in Belfast

Mr C McDevitt asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how many car parking spaces are currently available in Belfast city centre exclusively for civil servants.

(AQW 1029/11)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: There are currently 2,024 spaces available in Belfast City Centre for the use of civil servants.

Interreg IVA Projects

Mrs D Kelly asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for an update on spending on Interreg IVA projects.

(AQW 1347/11)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: By the end of September 2010, 222 project applications had been received seeking funding under the INTERREG IVA Programme. Of these, 46 projects worth approximately £132 million, have been approved. The approved projects are listed in the table overleaf.

The INTERREG IVA Programme has met and exceeded its annual EU spending targets to date. The Programme's Managing Authority, the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB), forecasts that the 2010 target, although challenging, will also be achieved.

Lead Partner	Project Name	Value (£)
IBEC/CBI Joint Business Council	IBEC/CBI Joint Programme 2007-2013	£1,586,784
Dundalk Institute of Technology	ICE	£2,253,973

Lead Partner	Project Name	Value (£)
University of Ulster, Jordanstown	Success through Succession	£1,552,212
Northern Regional College	I Factory	£2,907,342
Enterprise Northern Ireland	Tradelinks II	£1,675,258
ICBAN	HAATCH	£909,091
ICBAN	Traded Services	£100,000
ICBAN	Workspace at Eniskillen Airport	£1,281,818
ICBAN	Innovation Enterprise	£2,499,660
Loughs Agency	Marine Tourism & Angling Development	£3,636,364
Donegal County Council	Sail West	£6,386,405
NEP	The Gobbins & Sliabh Liag	£5,058,696
DHSSPS	Putting Patients First	£24,000,000
Centre for Cross Border Studies	Ireland/Northern Ireland Cross Border Co-operation Observatory	£1,441,098
CMAL Scotland	Small Ferries Strategic Plan	£255,000
COMET	Bio Recorders Network	£215,339
COMET	Administration Costs	£353,595
EBR	Administration Costs	£388,793
ICBAN	Administration Costs	£400,161
NEP	Administration Costs	£199,683
NWRCBG	Administration Costs	£308,027
Donegal County Council	Women in Public Life	£817,223
DHSSPS	Driving Change	£1,257,421
RNIB	Sensory Engagement Project	£1,866,037
EBR	Energy Efficiency & Micro Generation	£778,814
ICBAN	Central Border Region Spatial Planning Initiative	£1,456,995
Cedar Foundation	ConneXions	£469,943
EBR	Promoting Balanced & Sustainable Cross Border Development	£700,000
NEP	Business Improvement Project	£716,000
NWRCBG	Urban & Village Renewal	£909,091
NWRCBG	SPACEial	£545,455

Lead Partner	Project Name	Value (£)
EGSA	Deaf Communications Infrastructure Development Project	£1,000,000
EBR	Environmental Action for Biodiversity	£879,090
Scottish Association for Marine Science	BioMara	£5,450,981
Scottish Government	ISLES	£1,600,000
DETI	Project Kelvin	£27,272,727
RSPB	Halting Biodiversity Loss	£2,000,000
Agri-Food & Biosciences Institute	Development of targeted ecological modelling tools for lake management	£1,545,755
Donegal County Council	Practical Implementation of Freshwater Pearl Mussel Measures	£1,818,182
Maritime & Coastguard Agency	Ireland, Northern Ireland, Scotland Hydrographic Survey Project	£3,296,384
Geological Survey of Northern Ireland	Geo-environmental survey of the North of Ireland **	£5,189,149
Queens University Belfast	Controlling priority invasive non-native riparian plants and restoring native biodiversity	£3,000,000
Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute	Agricultural Need for Sustainable Willow Effluent Recycling	£3,320,000

* 3 Further Letters of Offer have been issued under the theme of Technical Assistance to the value of £10,909,091 representing full commitment under this theme.

** Northern Ireland and the contiguous border counties of the Republic of Ireland (Louth, Monaghan, Cavan, Leitrim, Sligo and Donegal)

Community-based Groups

Mr P Weir asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what grants are currently available from his Department, or any of its arms-length bodies, to community-based groups for capital build for premises. **(AQW 1409/11)**

Minister of Finance and Personnel: My department, through the Special EU Programmes Body, is responsible for a number of schemes which provide grants to various bodies, including for capital purposes such as building premises. These grants are subject to meeting the relevant eligibility criteria and are not specifically targeted either to community-based groups or for capital build on premises.

Legal Services

Mr P McGlone asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how much his Department and its agencies paid for legal services in each of the last five years; and to detail the firms engaged.

(AQW 1457/11)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: The amount spent on legal services in each of the last three years is provided in the table below:

	Legal Services £'000	DSO Notional costs £'000	Total £'000
2009/10	657	551	1,208
2008/09	504	638	1,142
2007/08	1,995	382	2,377

The information is provided on the basis of financial years representing the basis of preparation of the Department's accounts.

For the financial years 2006/07 and 2005/06 this information could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Details of the suppliers, as taken from the Department's accounting system, are provided in the attached table.

DETAILS OF SUPPLIERS

- Addleshaw Goddard
- Arthur Cox N.I
- Babington & Croasdale.
- Ballentine James & Son
- Barr Gillan & Co
- Bernard McCloskey
- Boal Anderson & Co Solicitors
- Brendan Kearney & Co
- Brennan Paul S
- Breslin McCormick & Co
- C & J Black Solicitors
- C T McAlpine & Son Solicitors
- Carson & McDowell Solicitors
- Casey & Co Solicitors
- Cleaver Fulton (50 Bedford Stre)
- Coll Peter Mr BI
- Colmer Adrian BI
- Connolly Sc
- Copeland McCaff(Po Box 9)
- Cox Arthur
- Crawford & Lock(7/11 Linenhall)
- Creighton & Co
- Crown Solicitors Office
- Cumming Samuel & Son Solicitors
- Curran Luke & Co
- David Mcmillen
- Denise A McBride
- Dennis Kennedy
- Denton Wilde Sapte
- Departmental Solicitors Office
- Devlin Alistair Lib
- DLA Piper
- Doris & McMahon Sols
- Duffy Pa & Co Solicitors
- Elliott-Trainor Partnership
- Fahy John & Co
- Francis J Madden
- Gaston Graham &(73 Hollywood Roa)
- George Howland
- Gordon Bell & Son
- Hagan John P
- Hanna Francis & Co Solicitors
- Harrison's
- Henvey Gerald P
- Hewitt & Gilpin Solicitors
- Hinds & Small
- James G Rice(33 Church Stree)
- James Murland & Co
- James T Johnston & Co
- John Quinn
- Jones & Cassidy, Solicitors
- Keown Crossley Solicitors
- King & Boyd
- L'estrangé & Brett Solicitors
- Lovells
- Macaulay James J Solicitors

- | | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| ■ MacAulay Wray | ■ McKeone & Co | ■ Seamus Sweeney |
| ■ MacElhatton & Co Solicitors | ■ McKinty & Wright Solicitors | ■ Shaw Stephen J Mr |
| ■ MacKenzie & Dorman Solicitors | ■ McManus And Kearney | ■ Shean Dickson M(14-16 High Stre) |
| ■ Maguire & Corrigan | ■ McNinch James W & Son | ■ Simmons Meglaughlin & Orr |
| ■ McBurney & Co Solicitors | ■ Messrs Thompson McClure Solicitors | ■ Smyth Trevor & Co Solicitors |
| ■ McCallum O'kane | ■ Miss J Simpson Bl | ■ Stewarts Solicitors |
| ■ McCann & Mccann Solicitors | ■ Murgitroyd & Company Ltd | ■ T S Mcallister & Son |
| ■ McCartan Turkington & Breen Solicitors | ■ Neasa Murnaghan | ■ The Executive Council |
| ■ McCoubrey Hinds | ■ Ni Court Service | ■ The Treasury Solicitor |
| ■ McGale John Kelly & Co Solicitors | ■ O'Hara John Qc | ■ Thomas Taggart (27 Church St) |
| ■ McGleenan Bl | ■ O'Reilly Stewart Solicitors | ■ Trevor Smyth & Co |
| ■ McGuinness & Canavan | ■ O'Rorke Mcdonal(29 The Roddens) | ■ Wb Thompson & Company Solicitors |
| ■ McIntosh | ■ Page White & Farrer | ■ Wilson Nesbitt Solicitors |
| ■ Mclvor Farrell | ■ Peden & Reid Solicitors | ■ Wolfe Martin |
| ■ McKee John & Son | ■ Peter Dornan & (Metropole House) | ■ Woodall Brian |
| ■ McKenna Daniel A & Co | ■ Potter Michael | ■ Worthington Solicitors |

Comparable Service Delivery

Dr S Farry asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what benchmarking exercises his Department conducts to assess its spending profile relative to comparable service delivery in other jurisdictions. **(AQW 1493/11)**

Minister of Finance and Personnel: My department carries out various benchmarking activities to compare against other organisations, learn and improve. For example, IT Assist has used benchmarking to establish that the cost per user of £1,200 compares very favourable to the GB Public Sector Flex contract (circa £1,700 for a similar service) and an estimated average government cost in GB of £2,362. Other examples undertaken by DFP include benchmarking of legal services by the Departmental Solicitor's Office and benchmarking of Land and Property Services frontline services such as mapping, valuation, rate collection and registration against comparable GB services.

In addition, DFP uses some of the public sector corporate service benchmarking indicators produced by the UK Audit Agencies and is exploring the potential to utilise these indicators further to improve service delivery and deliver efficiencies.

Through the DFP Quality Programme, areas of good practice will be identified which will help to embed benchmarking activities.

Humanist Wedding Ceremonies

Mr C McDevitt asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel whether he has any plans to introduce legislation which would afford Humanist wedding ceremonies the same status as Christian weddings, given that under current legislation Humanist ceremonies require two services, one being at a registry office or approved venue and the other at the couples chosen location. **(AQW 1495/11)**

Minister of Finance and Personnel: Marriage legislation was the subject of extensive review in Northern Ireland a few years ago and widely consulted on. The Marriage (Northern Ireland) Order 2003 provides for two types of marriage ceremony; a religious marriage solemnised by an officiant i.e. a member of a religious body registered to carry out this function; and a civil marriage carried out by a registrar/deputy registrar appointed by a local registration authority as a statutory office holder for this purpose. There was no approach from anyone on this matter either at the pre-legislation public consultation stage or during the actual legislative stages. There are at present no plans to make changes to existing legislation.

Central Procurement Directorate

Mr J Dallat asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what steps Central Procurement Directorate has taken over the last three years to promote small and medium sized enterprises to bid for Government and other public sector contracts; and to detail the amount of money invested in these promotions.

(AQW 1524/11)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: Government recognises the important contribution that small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) make to the economy of Northern Ireland and in response to the economic downturn my department established the Construction Industry Forum for Northern Ireland (CIFNI) Procurement Task Group in December 2008.

Following the publication of the Task Group Report, in April 2009, Central Procurement Directorate (CPD) and the Centres of Procurement Expertise (CoPEs) engaged with the Construction Industry Group for Northern Ireland to develop proposals specifically aimed at maximising opportunities for SMEs.

These measures have been incorporated into a standard Pre-Qualification Questionnaire (PQQ) template to be used to shortlist firms for invitation to tender for works contracts. The PQQ streamlines the assessment of contractors' health and safety competency; includes proportionate minimum standards for financial standing for individual firms; and accommodates applications from smaller enterprises to come together as consortia to bid for government contracts. CoPEs have agreed that, since 1 September 2010, all prequalification will, as far as possible, follow this process.

In recognising that not all SMEs will be in a position to contract directly with the public sector, Government also seeks to maximise the opportunities for those SMEs to benefit from public sector contracts through participation within the supply chain.

CPD and the CoPEs have agreed measures aimed at improving payment progress to subcontractors. These actions, developed in response to the CIFNI Procurement Task Group Report, mean that in new construction works contracts tendered after 1 March 2010 the main contractor is required:-

- to comply with a revised 'Code of Practice for Government Construction Clients and their Supply Chains' which includes a 'Fair Payment' Charter; and
- to provide a report to the Project Manager on payments made to subcontractors at each project meeting.

In addition, to emphasise the commitment of Government's Construction Clients to payment probity within the supply chain:-

- payments to subcontractors will be a standing item on the agenda at project meetings; and
- the client's Project Manager shall carry out periodic checks with subcontractors on the payment performance of the main contractor.

CIFNI is a collaborative interface with the private sector focused on the construction industry. In June 2010, CPD established a Business and Industry Forum for Northern Ireland (BIFNI). This Forum provides a strategically focused interface between representatives from CPD, the CoPEs and the wider business community for non-construction related matters. Through BIFNI the parties can consider issues of mutual interest, including opportunities for SMEs and social economy enterprises (SEEs).

CPD also introduced eSourcing NI, an electronic tendering portal, in May 2008 and it is now operational across all CoPEs. The portal provides a single source for all CoPE procurement opportunities. It simplifies and standardises the tendering procedure thereby reducing the cost and time required by SMEs to participate in the procurement process.

Since March 2008 CPD has participated in 41 'Meet the Buyer' events attended by over 2300 businesses. These events are aimed at increasing potential suppliers' knowledge of how to access Government procurement opportunities.

CPD is in the process of reviewing its extant guidance on increasing access for SMEs and SEEs wishing to do business with the public sector. The current guidance aims to:-

- increase public sector purchasers' awareness of how these sectors operate and disseminate best practice; and
- provide advice to SMEs and SEEs wishing to tender for public sector business.

This guidance is publicly available from CPD's website. It is anticipated that the revised version will be published in Spring 2011.

CPD is in the lead on taking forward the recommendations made by the Committee for Finance and Personnel Inquiry into Public Sector Procurement. The recommendations, many of which are targeted at increasing access for SMEs and SEEs, are scheduled to be implemented over the course of 2011.

Making Government procurement opportunities accessible by SMEs and SEEs is one of a number of CPD's policy objectives and the associated costs are not recorded separately from other policy developments. However, the external cost of providing the eSourcing NI system for use by all the CoPEs is £250,000 per annum.

Policy Screening Process

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail, for the period from May 2007 to date, (i) the number of policies his Department and its associated bodies have (a) "screened out" as having no Equality Impact; and (b) "screened in" as having an Equality Impact; (ii) the number of staff involved in the screening process; and (iii) the cost of the screening process.

(AQW 1548/11)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: Since May 2007 the Department has carried out 49 screening exercises, of which 13 were "screened in" for full EQIAs. The remainder were "screened out" as having little or no impact upon the promotion of equality of opportunity.

Information in the form requested on the number of staff involved and the cost of the screening process is not readily available and could only be compiled at disproportionate cost.

Civil Service Applicants

Mr B Wilson asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel, for each of the last three years, how many and what percentage of (i) applicants; and (ii) successful applicants for the post of (a) administrative assistant; and (b) administrative officer in the Civil Service had degree level qualifications.

(AQW 1558/11)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: Information on degree level qualifications is not gathered from applicants for administrative assistant or administrative officer competitions in the Northern Ireland Civil Service.

Apprentices

Mr P Weir asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how many apprentices have a placement within his Department or any of its arms-length bodies for 2010/11.

(AQW 1568/11)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: There are currently 2 students placed with DFP under the Programme-Led Apprenticeships Programme.

Central Procurement Directorate

Mr P McGlone asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel for a breakdown of the rates charged by the Central Procurement Directorate for the services it provides.

(AQW 1584/11)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: The rates charged by the Central Procurement Directorate (CPD) for the construction related services it provides are:

Grade	2010/11 Hourly Rates £
Principal Professional and Technical Officer	72.11
Senior Professional and Technical Officer	61.04
Higher Professional and Technical Officer	45.84
Professional and Technical Officer	40.44

Supplies and Services procurement services to NICS departments are charged for on the basis of an annual block charge.

Outstanding Rates Debt

Mr S Hamilton asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel (i) to outline the public bodies, as indicated in the Institute of Revenues Rating and Valuation report, which had outstanding rates debt at the end of the last financial year; (ii) how much was attributable to each public body; and (iii) in each case, for an explanation of this outstanding rate debt.

(AQW 1585/11)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: Public Body and Treasury Valuer rate accounts represent approximately £140 million of rates due each year. Land & Property Services has a small Public Bodies Team which works closely with ratepayers to maintain account information, for instance as properties move in and out of occupation and ownership, or properties are altered. These changes occur on a regular basis, meaning that the rates owed also change and amendments have to be made to bills during the rating year. During 2009-10, the LPS team nearly completed a thorough exercise to update all data related to public body and Treasury Valuer accounts. This has proved extremely effective in ensuring early payment of monies in 2010-11. Work remained to complete the cleansing of the most complex public body account at the end of 2009-10.

The cleansing of account information is very important for all accounts, not least for public bodies, as Managing Public Money Northern Ireland requires Accounting Officers to be able to validate all invoices and bills which are passed for payment. The maintenance of up to date information on rate accounts requires continuous effort because of the changes referred to in the previous paragraph.

The information requested is provided in the attached table.

Organisation	Debt (£)	Reason
NI Water	1,924,974	Resolution of complex issues regarding rateability and identification of a number of properties. All undisputed properties paid.

Organisation	Debt (£)	Reason
Ministry of Defence	837,624	Resolution of legal queries regarding rateability of a number of properties.
Belfast Education & Library Board	439,915	Queries re valuation list entries and additional bill issued late in the year.
Department of Regional Development	249,915	Problems for ratepayer processing payments through shared services centre.
South-east Health & Social Care Trust	187,244	Payment received in late March and processed in early April.
Belfast City Council	171,984	Additional bill issued late in the year.
Northern Health & Social Services Board	138,712	Additional bill issued late in the year.
Homefirst Community Trust	128,173	Additional bill issued late in the year.
Foyle Health & Social Care Trust	96,763	Additional bill issued late in the year.
University of Ulster	70,039	Accounting problems in allocating funds to the account in the LPS rating system.
Education & Skills Authority	59,433	Resolution of billing issues being addressed between LPS and the ratepayer.
Boundary Commission of NI	58,856	Bill issued late in the year.
Queen's University Belfast	56,388	Additional bill issued late in the year.
Southern Health & Social Services Trust	53,029	Administrative complications in the ratepayer organisation.
NI Fire & Rescue Service	50,422	Additional bill issued late in the year.
Various small debtors	168,768	
Total	4,692,239	

LPS and the ratepayers were engaging on all matters listed above and a reasonable and responsible approach was adopted throughout by the ratepayers involved.

Comprehensive Spending Review

Mr P Weir asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the level of proposed capital spend as a result of the Comprehensive Spending Review; and what reduction this represents in real terms.
(AQW 1598/11)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: The UK Spending Review announcement on 20 October 2010 determined the capital DEL funding available to the Executive over the next four years. The allocations to Northern Ireland were:

£ Million	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Capital DEL	903.4	858.9	780.6	803.8

This represents a real terms reduction of 40.1 per cent by 2014/15 on the 2010/11 capital DEL starting position. In addition to these capital DEL allocations the Executive also has available to it £200 million per annum of Reinvestment and Reform Initiative borrowing as well as any capital receipts realised by departments throughout this period.

Comprehensive Spending Review

Mr P Weir asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel, in light of the Chancellor's announcement on the Comprehensive Spending review, what is the proposed revenue spend for the block grant in each year of the CSR period; and what reduction this represents in real terms.

(AQW 1599/11)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: The table below sets out the Spending Review settlement in relation to Resource DEL.

£ MILLION

	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
Current DEL (NI Spending Review Settlement)	9,886.7	9,836.7	9,858.9	9,927.1	9,985.4
Real terms % decrease on 2010-11		-2.4%	-4.3%	-6.1%	-8.0%
Real terms £m decrease on 2010-11		-237.9	-447.4	-647.2	-863.7

These figures include the Department of Justice and the Public Prosecution Service. They do not equate to the spending power available to the Executive as they exclude regional rates income.

Suicide

Mr D Hilditch asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how many people under the age of 25 years old in Carrickfergus died by suicide (i) in the last twelve months; and (ii) between October 2008 and October 2009.

(AQW 1619/11)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: The last twelve months is interpreted to mean the last calendar year.

In the 2009P calendar year there were two deaths registered due to 'suicide and self-inflicted injury'¹ or 'undetermined injury whether accidentally or purposefully inflicted'², where the deceased was resident in Carrickfergus Local Government District and aged under 25.

Mortality statistics are reported quarterly, between October 2008 and December 2009 there were two deaths registered due to either 'suicide and self-inflicted injury'¹ or 'undetermined injury whether accidentally or purposefully inflicted'² where the deceased was resident in Carrickfergus Local Government District and aged under 25 years.

Suicides are referred to the coroner and take time to be investigated. Therefore there is often a period of time between when the suicide occurs and death registration. The suicides above may therefore have occurred outside the registration period indicated.

- 1 International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision codes X60-X84, Y87.0
 2 International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision codes Y10-Y34, Y87.2
 P 2009 data is provisional

Cancer Deaths

Mr C McDevitt asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel how many people (i) in total; and (ii) in each Health and Social Care Trust area died from cancer in each year since 2003; and how the total figures compare with the rest of the UK.

(AQW 1697/11)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: The attached table gives the number of deaths registered due to cancer¹ in Northern Ireland, in each Health and Social Care Trust area and in the UK for each year between 2003 and 2009P. A population age standardised mortality ratio has also been calculated to compare Northern Ireland data with the UK.

In 2005 the Northern Ireland cancer mortality rate was 1% lower than the UK rate and in 2006 it was 1% higher than the UK rate and in all other years Northern Ireland's cancer mortality rate was similar to the UK rate.

Registration Year	Number of Cancer Deaths Registered							Northern Ireland SMR (UK = 100)
	Health and Social Care Trust					Northern Ireland	United Kingdom	
	Belfast	Northern	South Eastern	Southern	Western			
2003	953	919	708	658	519	3,757	154,903	100
2004	901	974	713	623	546	3,757	153,677	100
2005	891	959	700	605	580	3,735	153,764	99
2006	904	957	729	688	570	3,848	154,567	101
2007	945	959	760	618	588	3,870	155,948	100
2008	974	984	724	719	570	3,971	157,071	100
2009P	871	965	731	746	572	3,885	156,492	100

- 1 International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision codes C00-C97

P 2009 data is provisional

NI Aggregates Levy Credit Scheme

Mr T Gallagher asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what steps he is taking to offset the Treasury decision of 26 October 2010 to suspend the NI Aggregates Levy Credit Scheme, the likely impact of this decision on the construction and quarry industries and the possible threat posed for the thousands of jobs associated with these industries.

(AQW 1699/11)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: I was extremely disappointed that the decision had to be taken to suspend the Aggregates Levy Credit Scheme following the European General Court's judgement annulling its State Aid approval. This was unfortunately unavoidable as continuing the Scheme would have been unlawful, leaving the UK open to legal challenge and, potentially, could have resulted in the local industry having to repay the credit received under the Scheme. The Scheme has been very

important for the quarrying industry locally and has resulted in significant environmental improvements being made within the industry.

I fully recognise that the Scheme's suspension will have serious consequences for both the quarrying and construction industries at a time when they are already facing severe financial pressures. However the Economic Secretary, Justine Greening MP, has confirmed that the Coalition Government still supports the Scheme and will be pressing the European Commission to put an alternative Scheme in place as soon as possible.

I immediately briefed QPA, contacted the treasury and this led to a one month delay to reduce the impact on firms which already had signed contracts on the basis of the levy being in place. Officials and I will be working closely with HM Treasury colleagues to try to have a replacement Scheme reinstated as soon as possible.

Staff Mileage Claims

Mr A Easton asked the Minister of Finance and Personnel what was the cost to his Department of staff mileage claims in the last financial year.

(AQW 1742/11)

Minister of Finance and Personnel: The cost to my Department of staff mileage claims in 2009-10 was £933,358.

Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety

Patients with Epilepsy

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether his Department will follow the example of the Department of Health in England to ensure that patients with epilepsy, who are already on a brand name drug to control seizures and maintain quality of life, will not be offered a generic substitute drug.

(AQW 1399/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (Mr M McGimpsey): I note the Department of Health in England's recent decisions regarding generic substitution. My Department's policy position remains that generic medicines should be prescribed in preference to branded products where appropriate.

However, it is for the clinician, in consultation with their patient, to decide on the most appropriate course of treatment for the patient. A prescriber is able to opt out of generic substitution if it is their clinical judgement that it is appropriate to do so. In these circumstances the named brand will be dispensed by the community pharmacist.

Fire and Rescue Service

Mr T Burns asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many times the Fire and Rescue Service has had to attend false alarms at students halls of residence in each of the last five years, broken down by the location of the halls; and for an estimate of the total cost of answering these calls.

(AQW 1401/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The information requested is shown in the tables below. Costs are based on an average Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service (NIFRS) cost per mobilised incident.

NIFRS: NUMBER OF MOBILISED ATTENDANCES TO FALSE ALARM CALLS

Year	University Campus					
	UU Magee	UU Coleraine	Queen's	SHAC*	Stranmillis	UU Jordanstown
2005/06	9	3	230		1	2
2006/07	10	2	23	5	-	1
2007/08	7	-	4	1	-	-
2008/09	8	-	4	-	-	-
2009/10	13	-	13	-	-	-

NIFRS: ESTIMATED COST OF MOBILISED ATTENDANCES TO FALSE ALARM CALLS

Year	University Campus					
	UU Magee	UU Coleraine	Queen's	SHAC*	Stranmillis	UU Jordanstown
2005/06	£18,598	£6,199	£475,277	£0	£2,066	£4,132
2006/07	£22,245	£4,449	£51,164	£11,123	£0	£2,225
2007/08	£15,289	£0	£8,737	£2,184	£0	£0
2008/09	£20,372	£0	£10,186	£0	£0	£0
2009/10	£35,009	£0	£35,009	£0	£0	£0

* SHAC is a registered charity providing accommodation for students and young people.

Family Support

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the amount allocated in the 2008/09 financial year by his Department to each Health and Social Care Trust for family support, including family support panels; how the allocation was spent in each Trust; and the amount of underspend in family support in each Trust for that year.

(AQW 1406/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Funds for family support are not specifically ring fenced within children's social services in line with the Department's preferred approach of giving commissioners the flexibility to meet the disparate needs of their resident population. As such it is not possible to identify any over or under spends as resources form part of the overall social services expenditure.

Family support covers a wide range of services that promote and safeguard families including mental health, domestic violence and substance abuse. The mixture and focus of children's social services provided depends on the profile of the local population. The table below sets out Trust expenditure on the family support services in 2009/10 the latest year for which such detailed information is available.

HSC Trust	Belfast	Northern	South Eastern	Southern	Western	Total Expenditure
2008/09 £m	11.3	8.7	6.5	8.5	11.3	46.3

Source: Trust Financial Returns

Attacks on Members of the Fire and Rescue Service

Mr J Dallat asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail (i) the number of attacks on members of the Fire and Rescue Service in the last twelve months; (ii) the number of personnel injured in these attacks; (iii) the amount paid out in compensation as a result; and (iv) the cost of repairs to vehicles and equipment.

(AQW 1447/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: During the period 1 October 2009 – 20 October 2010 there were 33 attacks on members of the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service (NIFRS).

Six firefighters were injured as a result of these attacks.

To date, NIFRS has not paid out any compensation as a result of attacks on firefighters during this period.

The total estimated cost of repairs to vehicles and equipment is £15,930.

Subarachnoid Aneurysms

Mr S Moutray asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what assessment has been made of the long-term advantages of coiling subarachnoid aneurysms as opposed to clipping them; and what is the long-term prognosis for patients in receipt of each procedure.

(AQW 1450/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The international subarachnoid aneurysm trial which included patients treated in Belfast published a long term follow up of patients with ruptured aneurysm in 2009. The study demonstrated slightly increased survival at 5 years for those receiving coils (89%) against those treated by clipping (86%). The proportion of survivors at 5 years who were independent was the same between the groups (82%). They concluded that there was an increased risk of bleeding from a coiled aneurysm compared with a clipped aneurysm but the risks were small.

The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) issued Interventional procedure guidance on coil embolism of unruptured and ruptured intracranial aneurysms in 2005. For unruptured aneurysm they noted mortality at 1 year was 9% for endovascular repair (which includes coil embolism) compared with 12% for surgery (which includes clipping).

Subarachnoid Aneurysms

Mr S Moutray asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many operations to coil subarachnoid aneurysms have been carried out in each of the last five years.

(AQW 1451/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The number of operations to coil subarachnoid aneurysms in each of the last five years is shown in the table below.

Year	2009/10	2008/09	2007/08	2006/07	2005/06
Number of procedures	105	75	70	61	67

Source: Hospital Inpatient System

Post Exposure Prophylaxis

Ms A Lo asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 408/11, whether hospitals are following the guidelines regarding Post Exposure Prophylaxis, specifically guidelines contained in the Department of Health report 'HIV post exposure prophylaxis, Guidance from the UK Chief Medical Officers' Expert Advisory Group on AIDS: revised 2008', which requires

hospitals to keep adequate records on administration of Post-exposure Prophylaxis to ensure adequate management and follow-up of all patients given the course.

(AQW 1472/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: I have been advised that Trusts comply with the guidelines regarding Post Exposure Prophylaxis, specifically those contained in the Department of Health report 'HIV post exposure prophylaxis, Guidance from the UK Chief Medical Officers' Expert Advisory Group on AIDS: revised 2008'.

Patient Complaints

Mr A Easton asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many patient complaints were received by the Health Service in each of the last four years.

(AQW 1473/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Information on the number of complaints received by the Health Service in each of the last four years is not available.

Prescriptions

Mr D Hilditch asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many prescriptions have been (i) written; and (ii) dispensed in Carrickfergus since April 2010.

(AQW 1502/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety:

- (i) The information requested is not available.
- (ii) There were 134,192 prescriptions dispensed, and presented for payment by community pharmacies in the Carrickfergus Council Area between April 2010 and July 2010. The count includes prescriptions issued by all types of prescribers including doctors, nurses and dentists, and also includes items prescribed and dispensed by pharmacists under the minor ailments scheme. Only drugs dispensed in primary care are included as drugs prescribed and dispensed in hospital cannot be captured centrally due to the use of different hospital IT systems.

This information was supplied by the Family Practitioner Services, Information and Registration Unit - HSC Business Services Organisation..

Prescriptions

Mr D Hilditch asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many prescriptions were (i) written; and (ii) dispensed in the Carrickfergus area between November 2009 and 1 April 2010.

(AQW 1503/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety:

- (i) The information requested is not available.
- (ii) There were 151,282 prescriptions dispensed, and presented for payment by community pharmacies in the Carrickfergus Council Area between November 2009 and March 2010. The count includes prescriptions issued by all types of prescribers including doctors, nurses and dentists, and also includes items prescribed and dispensed by pharmacists under the minor ailments scheme. Only drugs dispensed in primary care are included as drugs prescribed and dispensed in hospital cannot be captured centrally due to the use of different hospital IT systems.

This information was supplied by the Family Practitioner Services, Information and Registration Unit - HSC Business Services Organisation.

GP Out-of-Hours Service in Limavady

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 696/11 and AQW 7620/10, why an Equality Impact Assessment was not deemed necessary for the reconfiguration of the GP Out-of-Hours service in Limavady.

(AQW 1526/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: I refer the Member to the explanation provided in my response to AQW 696/11.

Cataract Procedures in the Royal Victoria Hospital

Ms A Lo asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many complaints have been received since January 2008 in relation to cataract procedures in the Royal Victoria Hospital.

(AQW 1528/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Information on the number of complaints that have been received since January 2008 in relation to cataract procedures in the Royal Victoria Hospital is not available.

Cataract Procedure

Ms A Lo asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety if patient consent is required before a trainee or a junior member of medical staff is permitted to carry out a cataract procedure.

(AQW 1529/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Patient consent is always required prior to any surgery. Patients are informed that their surgery may be carried out by a junior doctor or trainee when they are added to the inpatient waiting list and when the patient's consented is being sought for surgery.

Cataract Procedures in the Royal Victoria Hospital

Ms A Lo asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how the outcomes of cataract procedures carried out in the Royal Victoria Hospital are monitored or evaluated.

(AQW 1530/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Cataract surgical outcomes are reviewed twice yearly as part of the audit cycle. Results are peer reviewed with other Trusts throughout the UK in order to evaluate performance.

Impact of Smoking-related Diseases on Public Health

Mr M Storey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how his Department gathers information in relation to the impact of smoking-related diseases on public health.

(AQW 1531/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The primary source of morbidity information in relation to the impact of smoking-related diseases on public health is the Hospital Inpatient System. This records information on patients admitted to acute hospitals as inpatients or day cases. Death figures are compiled by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) and published in the Annual Report of the Registrar General. The attributable percentage of admissions and deaths for a number of smoking related diseases has been calculated using a standard methodology devised by the former Health Development Agency.

Accident and Emergency Provision at the Causeway Hospital

Mr M Storey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 769/11, why he was unable to outline the discussions he had with the Northern Health and Social Care Trust; and if he is now in a position to outline these discussions.

(AQW 1532/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: I remain committed to the configuration of hospital services as set out in Developing Better Services (DBS). Causeway hospital will continue to provide access to a wide range of acute services including Accident and Emergency services. No discussions have taken place between the Trust and myself specifically in relation to the A&E provision.

Registered Residential and Nursing Homes

Mr J Craig asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number of registered residential and nursing homes that are currently operational, including their locations, the funding they receive from his Department and the number of residents they facilitate.

(AQW 1535/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Details of all residential and nursing homes, bed capacity and their locations can be found at www.rqia.org.uk/. I have been informed by HSC officials that details of funding paid to individual residential or nursing homes are subject to fluctuation and are not collated centrally, and so could only be provided at a disproportionate cost.

Care Packages

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many patients were retained in hospital due to the lack of a care package for each of the last six months, broken down by hospital; and what is the average daily cost to keep these patients in hospital.

(AQW 1538/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: It is assumed that this question refers to the number of patients whose discharge from hospital was delayed, where the principal reason for the delay relates to or, could possibly be contributed to, the 'lack of a care package'.

Currently, my Department has a PfA waiting time target to ensure the effective discharge of patients from an acute setting. This target requires that:

"From April 2010, the HSC Board and Trusts should ensure that 90% of complex discharges take place within 48 hours, with no discharge taking longer than seven days. All other patients should be discharged within six hours of being declared medically fit."

With this in mind, the number of complex discharges taking longer than 48 hours and simple discharges taking longer than 6 hours are detailed in the table overleaf for each of the last six months, broken down by hospital.

During September 2010, there were a total of 16,994 discharges from Hospitals in Northern Ireland. Of these, 608 (3.6%) discharges were delayed longer than the current waiting time targets specified by my Department (6 hours for simple discharges and 48 hours for complex discharges). Similar information has been recorded during each month since April 2010, when on average 3.7% of all discharges were delayed longer than the current waiting time targets.

NUMBER OF COMPLEX DISCHARGES WAITING LONGER THAN 48 HOURS AND SIMPLE DISCHARGES WAITING LONGER THAN 6 HOURS, BY HOSPITAL (APRIL – SEPTEMBER 2010)

Hospital on Discharge	April 2010	May 2010	June 2010	July 2010	Aug 2010	Sept 2010
Altnagelvin Hospital	109	122	126	122	115	106
Antrim Hospital	58	57	50	49	69	57
Belfast City Hospital	57	60	63	58	57	65
Cancer Centre - BCH	4	5	4	5	1	8
Causeway Hospital	18	17	24	17	12	12
Children's Hospital	1	4	3	0	4	0
Craigavon Area Hospital	67	63	66	61	61	60
Daisy Hill Hospital	17	17	21	19	13	9
Downe Hospital	26	36	31	51	20	31
Erne Hospital	45	31	36	31	37	37
Lagan Valley Hospital	33	34	31	26	34	38
Mater Hospital	45	24	27	30	41	31
Mid-Ulster Hospital	9	5	5	6	8	6
Musgrave Park Hospital	4	3	7	5	8	10
Royal Victoria Hospital	32	63	49	42	42	47
Ulster Hospital	133	123	104	72	95	83
Whiteabbey Hospital	11	6	7	8	7	8
Total	669	670	654	602	624	608

Source: Admissions & Discharges Universe

It is not possible to provide the average daily cost for keeping these patients in hospital, as the cost of a hospital stay is dependent on the level of treatment and/or care provided.

Policy Screening Process

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail, for the period from May 2007 to date, (i) the number of policies his Department and its associated bodies have (a) "screened out" as having no Equality Impact; and (b) "screened in" as having an Equality Impact; (ii) the number of staff involved in the screening process; and (iii) the cost of the screening process.
(AQW 1560/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety:

- (i) The number of policies 'screened out' and 'screened in' is shown in the table below. It is important to note that in many instances policies which have been 'screened out' may have identified an equality impact but it is either not significant, and will be subject to monitoring, or mitigating actions have been taken to render an EQIA unnecessary.

	Screened Out	Screened In
DHSSPS	254	6
Arms Length Bodies	1,145	53

- (ii) The number of people involved in conducting screenings is not recorded. It would typically involve the policy lead and various support / professional staff as dictated by the particular needs of the policy being considered.
- (iii) The cost of carrying out equality screenings are an intrinsic part of policy development and are not identified separately.

Children With a Learning Disability Living in Fermanagh

Mrs M O'Neill asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number of children with a learning disability aged (i) 0-5 years old; (ii) 6-10 years old; (iii) 11-15 years old; and (iv) 15-18 years old currently living in Fermanagh, broken down by electoral ward.
(AQW 1565/11)

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

Apprentices

Mr P Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many apprentices have a placement within his Department or any of its arms-length bodies for 2010/11.
(AQW 1569/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: I can advise that currently there are no apprentices with placements within the Department of Health Social Services and Public Safety or any of its 17 Arms Length Bodies.

Comparable Service Delivery

Dr S Farry asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what benchmarking exercises his Department conducts to assess its spending profile relative to comparable service delivery in other jurisdictions.
(AQW 1575/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The Public Expenditure Statistical Analyses is a HM Treasury publication that allows UK wide comparison of public expenditure and this is the main

source of data used when the Department conducts benchmarking exercises in assessing its spending profile with other jurisdictions. The most up to date information from 2009/10 shows that planned spend per head, which includes capital and recurrent expenditure, on Health in Northern Ireland is 2% lower than the average spend on Health across the UK. Our spending per head on social care is lower than all countries except England. Work carried out following the Appleby report indicated that we should be spending 35% more than England on social care and we are not spending that.

TOTAL IDENTIFIABLE SPEND PER HEAD 2009/10 - PLANNED

	Scotland £	Wales £	NI £	England £
Health	2,066	1,956	1,881	1,896
Fire	72	79	48	50
PSS	598	624	519	465

Source: Treasury PESA 2010

Northern Ireland has lower capital spending per head than Scotland and Wales for health and social care functions.

Prescriptions

Mr D Hilditch asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many prescriptions have been (i) written; and (ii) dispensed in Larne since April 2010.

(AQW 1577/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety:

- (i) The information requested is not available.
- (ii) There were 114,581 prescriptions dispensed, and presented for payment by community pharmacies in the Larne Council Area between April 2010 and July 2010. The count includes prescriptions issued by all types of prescribers including doctors, nurses and dentists, and also includes items prescribed and dispensed by pharmacists under the minor ailments scheme. Only drugs dispensed in primary care are included as drugs prescribed and dispensed in hospital cannot be captured centrally due to the use of different hospital IT systems.

This information was supplied by the Family Practitioner Services, Information and Registration Unit - HSC Business Services Organisation.

Prescriptions

Mr D Hilditch asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many prescriptions were (i) written; and (ii) dispensed in the Larne area between November 2009 and 1 April 2010.

(AQW 1578/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety:

- (i) The information requested is not available.
- (ii) There were 139,069 prescriptions dispensed, and presented for payment by community pharmacies in the Larne Council Area between November 2009 and March 2010. The count includes prescriptions issued by all types of prescribers including doctors, nurses and dentists, and also includes items prescribed and dispensed by pharmacists under the minor ailments scheme. Only drugs dispensed in primary care are included as drugs prescribed and dispensed in hospital cannot be captured centrally due to the use of different hospital IT systems.

This information was supplied by the Family Practitioner Services, Information and Registration Unit - HSC Business Services Organisation.

Translation of Departmental Papers

Mr A Bresland asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how much his Department spent on the translation of departmental papers into (i) Irish; and (ii) Ulster-Scots in (a) 2007/08; (b) 2008/09; and (c) 2009/10.

(AQW 1581/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The figures below record the cost of translation of departmental papers into Irish and Ulster-Scots.

Year	Irish	Ulster-Scots
2007/08	£3,678	£49
2008/09	£894	£467
2009/10	Nil	Nil

British Association of Social Workers' Social Work Bill

Mr C Lyttle asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what assessment he has made of the British Association of Social Workers' Social Work Bill; and whether he has considered the need for similar provision for Northern Ireland.

(AQW 1616/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: I have considered the British Association of Social Worker's Social Work Bill and can confirm that it is relevant for social work in England only.

Some of the proposals in the Bill are already in place in NI and others aimed at improving services and strengthening support for front-line workers are contained in the draft 10 year Social Work Strategy which was recently consulted on. As such, there is no need for similar provision in NI.

Illegal Sale of Cigarettes and Tobacco Products to Underage Children

Mr D Kennedy asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether he has any plans to introduce a fixed penalty system in relation to the illegal sale of cigarettes and tobacco products to underage children.

(AQW 1617/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The introduction of a fixed penalty system is one of a range of measures I am considering in order to strengthen sanctions against retailers who continue to flout the law with regards to underage sales of tobacco products.

The fixed penalty scheme option was included in a recent consultation which sought views on a number of proposals aimed at reducing the availability of tobacco products to children and young people. My Department is currently considering the responses to the consultation with the intention of introducing a Bill to the Assembly in the next mandate.

Illegal Sale of Cigarettes and Tobacco Products to Underage Children

Mr D Kennedy asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for his assessment of the consistency of approach employed by local authorities in relation to the guidelines for the enforcement of legislation concerning the sale of cigarettes to underage children; and whether he has any plans to tighten these guidelines.

(AQW 1618/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The enforcement of legislation relating to underage sales of tobacco products is the responsibility of local District Councils. While councils use a range of work activities to encourage compliance with the law, test purchase exercises are the

only reliable method of assessing legal compliance and providing councils with evidence to take legal proceedings.

I understand that some councils have been more proactive with regards to test purchasing than others. The Public Health Agency is hoping to address this through the Tobacco Enforcement Contract which details the services to be delivered by each Group Environmental Health Committee and Belfast City Council in exchange for funding.

My Department has not issued guidance to councils on the enforcement of age of sale legislation, and has no plans to do so. The Chief Environmental Health Officers' Group has adopted a template policy on the use of test purchases and has considered draft guidelines for the enforcement of legislation concerning the sale of cigarettes to underage children in line with guidance produced for England and Wales. These draft guidelines currently form the basis for District Council test purchasing exercises in Northern Ireland.

Free Prescriptions for Co-codomol

Mr D McNarry asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether there is an adopted code of practice between GP Medical Centres and pharmacists regarding the issuing of free prescriptions for co-codomol at a dispensing cost when same item can be purchased for £1.69.

(AQW 1633/11)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: There is no code of practice between GP Medical Centres and pharmacists regarding the issuing of free prescriptions for any medicine.

There are many medicines, including Co-codomol, that can be prescribed by a GP that are also available to buy over the counter. However, a GP will use their sound clinical judgement when deciding what to prescribe. GPs and pharmacists are aware of the role they have to play in prescribing and dispensing sensibly.

Department of Justice

Sex Offenders

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice how many sex-offenders are listed on records as living at addresses which in actual fact are not places of accommodation.

(AQW 831/11)

Minister of Justice (Mr D Ford): The recording of information provided by offenders subject to the notification requirements set out in Part 2 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003 (the 'sex offender register') is a matter for the Chief Constable, who is accountable to the Northern Ireland Policing Board. I am committed to respecting the operational independence of the Chief Constable and the role of the Policing Board.

The information requested is available by contacting the PSNI directly.

Cutting Prisoners' Hair

Mr T Burns asked the Minister of Justice, for each prison, to detail (i) the arrangements in place for cutting (a) male; and (b) female prisoners' hair; (ii) the cost to a prisoner of visiting a barber or hairdresser; and (iii) the cost to his Department of providing this service, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 1434/11)

Minister of Justice: Hair clippers and scissors are provided for the use of prisoners in Maghaberry and Magilligan prisons. There are no external visits to barbers or hairdressers and no cost is involved, other than the minimal cost of the clippers and scissors. There are no female prisoners in either Maghaberry or Magilligan prisons.

Hydebank Wood

Hair clippers and scissors are also made available for the use of inmates at Hydebank Wood. Arrangements are also in place for a hairdresser to attend the establishment on a regular basis both to teach hairdressing skills to the female prisoners and to provide a hairdressing service for both the male and female inmates where required. The hairdressing skills provided to female prisoners are an important element in developing vocational skills, self esteem and helping ultimately to reduce re-offending.

The cost of providing the hairdressing service, including the teaching element, for the last four years is set out below:

2009/10	2008/09	2007/08	2006/07
£1940	£4253	£2149	£2740

Figures are not available for 2005/06.

Prisoners Visits

Mr T Burns asked the Minister of Justice to detail for each prison (i) the number of prisoners who have been on visits in each of the last five years; (ii) the (a) location; (b) purpose; and (c) cost of each visit; and (iii) whether each visit was supervised or unsupervised.

(AQW 1436/11)

Minister of Justice: Limited numbers of prisoners are escorted by staff to undertake specific rehabilitation-focused activities. Only those on upper regime level are allowed to participate, after a full risk assessment has been completed. The activities are usually part of an accredited programme, such as the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme. I regard this as a valuable and cost-effective contribution to reducing the risk of re-offending.

Maghaberry

The delivery of the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme at Maghaberry Prison has included the following:

- In 2007, four prisoners were taken to Lough Erne and Craigavon Lakes for training one day per week over a course of eight weeks.
- In 2008/09, one prisoner was involved in training at Dundrum Bay, Lough Neagh and Strangford Lough one day per week over a course of eight weeks.
- In 2009, the same prisoner was also involved in training at Lough Erne one day per week over a course of four weeks for his Gold Award

Magilligan

In the last five years, Magilligan prisoners have been taken to a number of locations, i.e. Portrush, Portballintrae, Portstewart and Coleraine, for kayaking courses as part of a recognised qualification. All events were supervised by staff.

The numbers of prisoners attending these courses are set out in Table A:

TABLE A: TRIPS BY PRISONERS AT MAGILLIGAN PRISON

Calendar Year	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Number of Prisoners	16	7	4	8	0

Hydebank Wood

In the last five years Hydebank Wood inmates have been taken on a number of day visits for outdoor pursuits including hill walking and rock climbing (Mourne Mountains), cycling (Lagan Valley area) and canoeing (Belfast area). All events were supervised by staff.

The numbers of inmates attending these visits are set out in Table B:

TABLE B: TRIPS BY PRISONERS AT HYDEBANK WOOD

Calendar Year	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Number of Prisoners	0	10	0	0	8

In addition to these outdoor pursuit-based excursions, a number of trips have been arranged in relation to education and training:

- 2009/10: one juvenile inmate attended the Education Department of the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum (UFTM) at Cultra in relation to a handicrafts course which had been run with juvenile inmates at Hydebank Wood by UFTM staff;
- 2008/09: one prisoner attended a Prince's Trust celebration in Lisburn, with £10 for travel costs;
- 2008/09: six prisoners attended a Youth Awareness Day at Stormont in association with a demonstration by Fire Cadets; and
- 2006/07: six prisoners visited the Somme Centre, before appearing in the play 'Behold the Sons of Ulster'

Prisoners were supervised on all of these trips.

Sectarian Attacks in the Fountain Estate, Londonderry

Mr T Clarke asked the Minister of Justice, pursuant to AQW 985/11, why the PSNI does not record the number of sectarian attacks in the Fountain Estate, Londonderry; and whether there are any plans to start keeping such records.

(AQW 1448/11)

Minister of Justice: The manner in which the PSNI record offences is a matter for the Chief Constable, who is accountable to the Northern Ireland Policing Board. I am committed to respecting the operational independence of the Chief Constable and the role of the Policing Board.

You may therefore wish to direct your question to the PSNI.

Special Protection Scheme

Mr J Dallat asked the Minister of Justice how many Court and Tribunals Service staff have availed of the Special Protection Scheme in each of the last three years; and the cost to his Department.

(AQW 1452/11)

Minister of Justice: The Special Purchase of Evacuated Dwellings (SPED) scheme is also referred to as the Special Protection Scheme (SPS) and allows for the purchase of an owner occupied property where the owner has been intimidated or threatened.

Details of anyone availing of these schemes would not be disclosed as these would be treated in confidence.

Non-molestation Orders

Ms J McCann asked the Minister of Justice to detail (i) the current cost of obtaining a non-molestation order for a victim of domestic violence who is not entitled to legal aid; (ii) the average cost associated

where the respondent contests the Order; and (iii) the current earnings threshold for legal aid in relation to obtaining a non-molestation order.

(AQW 1460/11)

Minister of Justice:

- (i) The Northern Ireland Legal Services Commission (NILSC) holds information relating solely to legally aided applicants and respondents. Details of the costs of obtaining non-molestation orders privately, ie other than through legal aid, are not available.
- (ii) The average cost of a legally aided respondent defending non-molestation proceedings in the magistrates' court for that period was £478.

The information held by the Legal Services Commission on costs does not differentiate between contested and non-contested cases. The average cost a legally aided applicant taking proceedings for a non-molestation order (including both contested and non-contested cases) for the period 1 April 2009 – 31 March 2010 was £537.

- (iii) Legal Aid for the purpose of obtaining a non-molestation order is available through two schemes (depending on the court tier in which the order is applied). In both schemes the applicant's financial eligibility is determined based on an assessment of their disposable income and disposable capital. There are a number of statutory deductions and allowances which can be applied in both schemes in order to assess disposable income and capital.

Assistance by Way of Representation (ABWOR) Scheme

Disposable income threshold	Disposable capital threshold
£234pw (£12,168pa)	£3,000 (minimum)

Civil Legal Aid Scheme

Disposable income threshold	Disposable capital threshold
£9,937pa	£6,750

Police Officers Convicted of Speeding

Mr J Craig asked the Minister of Justice how many police officers have been convicted of speeding in each of the last five years.

(AQW 1461/11)

Minister of Justice: The issue of convictions of police officers for any offence is a matter for the Chief Constable, who is accountable to the Northern Ireland Policing Board. I am committed to respecting the operational independence of the Chief Constable and the role of the Policing Board.

You may therefore wish to direct your question to the PSNI.

Comparable Service Delivery

Dr S Farry asked the Minister of Justice what benchmarking exercises his Department conducts to assess its spending profile relative to comparable service delivery in other jurisdictions.

(AQW 1506/11)

Minister of Justice: The benchmarking exercises carried out in the Department of Justice, including its Agencies and NDPBs, are as follows:

Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunal Services (NICTS).

NICTS took part in the 2010 Central Government Benchmarking Exercise which was commissioned by HM Treasury in April 2010. The data collected covered activities such as Communications, Legal Services, Knowledge and Information Management and Grants Administration.

When establishing Civil Fee Income levels, NICTS consider the relevant comparable fees in England and Wales, where appropriate.

In terms of Criminal Legal Aid, NICTS has made use of benchmarking comparisons with other jurisdictions. The areas in which comparisons have been made are as follows:

Standard fees: NICTS compared the standard fees payable on over 200 cases with the comparable fees payable in England and Wales as part of the development of a policy on the remuneration of defence representation in the Crown Court.

Two counsel: NICTS compared the percentage of indictable only cases assigned more than one counsel in the Crown Court in Northern Ireland with the percentage of cases in England and Wales, in developing new rules setting out the criteria prescribing when a defendant at the Crown Court can be assigned more than one counsel.

Police Rehabilitation and Retraining Trust (PRRT).

PRRT consistently benchmarks all its services with similar providers, both in the public and private sector. However it is due to the unique nature of a number of its services and the demands of core clients, benchmarking exercises can be difficult to ensure like for like comparisons.

Over recent years, PRRT has been involved in tendering services in open procurement competitions – it ensures it seeks feedback on the outcome of these competitions to gain reassurance that its costs are broadly in line with its competitors.

A recent Arms Length Body (ALB) review examined the costs of our services and confirmed that these are competitive when compared to similar services being offered elsewhere.

It also has a number of external clients - Youth Justice Agency, Police Service of Northern Ireland, Occupational Health Service and Commission for Victims and Survivors, who carried out value for money exercises prior to contracting with the Trust. This again gives reassurance that costs can be benchmarked with other providers.

All of the Trust's services, clinical, personal development and training, are costed on a full cost recovery basis – there is no profit / surplus element built into its charges.

Northern Ireland Policing Board.

The Northern Ireland Policing Board is currently carrying out an Independent Assessment of its functions within the agreed Audit Commission/Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary framework used to assess England and Wales Police Authorities. The framework was subject to some minor revisions due to the different legislative frameworks under the Policing Board and Police Authorities in England and Wales operate. One entire theme within this assessment framework is Value for Money and Productivity.

Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI).

The Director of Finance and Support Services carries out a number of Benchmarking activities, detailed below;

- Procurement Value for Money Benchmarking in UK Public Sector.
- PSNI estates services engage in Benchmarking exercise as part of the UK Police Service Property Management Group.

- PSNI Finance completes a Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Finance Value for Money report with other Police Forces in England and Wales.
- Transport Services take part in benchmarking activities through the National Association of Police Fleet managers (NAPFM).

PSNI is not obliged to adopt the police report card scheme that all forces in England & Wales were required to report their performance against. However, some years ago Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary identified 5 forces in England & Wales that it deemed to be most similar to PSNI on a range of characteristics for comparison purposes. These Most Similar Forces (MSFs) are West Midlands, Nottinghamshire, Northumbria, Greater Manchester and West Yorkshire. The PSNI compares its performance on a range of indicators against these 5 forces on a regular basis, mostly through sourcing comparative information from the Home Office's dedicated police performance website called Iquanta.

Apprentices

Mr P Weir asked the Minister of Justice how many apprentices have a placement within his Department or any of its arms-length bodies for 2010/11.

(AQW 1570/11)

Minister of Justice: Whilst there have not been any external apprentices placed in the Department, there are 11 staff participating in an internal apprenticeship programme.

Access NI System

Ms A Lo asked the Minister of Justice whether he has any plans to simplify the Access NI system so that applicants do not have to be checked several times a year for each activity they undertake when working or volunteering with children and young people.

(AQW 1620/11)

Minister of Justice: AccessNI operates under Part V of the Police Act 1997. Subordinate legislation sets out who can obtain an enhanced disclosure for employment, including those who are working with vulnerable groups. AccessNI does not have any responsibility for legislation that sets out who is required to obtain such a disclosure. These requirements are set by others, including in some instances employers.

However AccessNI has a policy that certificates are not transferrable. This is because information in a certificate is only relevant on the day on which it is issued. If further convictions are accrued or police obtain further relevant information after the issue of a certificate there could be no guarantee that the information would still be correct in the future.

AccessNI, in common with all the disclosure services in the UK, is acutely aware of the fact that applicants can in some cases obtain several disclosure certificates over a short period of time. The proposed Vetting and Barring Scheme (VBS) would have addressed this to some extent in that it would have been possible to check a person's current status through a free on-line check.

The Westminster Government halted the introduction of the VBS in June pending a review. The terms of reference for that review have now been announced and the outcome will be known in early 2011.

In addition, HM Treasury has announced as part of the Comprehensive Spending Review that Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks will become more portable by "making greater use of electronic access for employers". Officials in AccessNI will work closely with their CRB counterparts to understand how Northern Ireland can benefit from this.

Finally, the problems highlighted can also be alleviated by organisations making sure that an enhanced disclosure check is necessary. There is evidence of checks being requested both where there is no requirement to do so and where eligibility for such a certificate is in doubt.

Internet Access for Prison Inmates

Mr T Burns asked the Minister of Justice to detail (i) the provision in place for internet access for inmates in each prison; (ii) the cost of providing these services; and (iii) the procedures in place for controlling and monitoring the use of the internet by inmates.

(AQW 1625/11)

Minister of Justice:

- (i) Inmate internet access is only provided for the purposes of education, research and exams. Supervised and strictly controlled Internet access to specific websites by inmates is provided in classrooms on 22 PCs at Maghaberry prison and on 7 PCs at Magilligan prison. There is currently no Internet access for inmates at Hydebank Wood prison.
- (ii) The initial cost of establishing Internet access for both prisons was £734. The recurring costs for this service are £4,347 per annum.
- (iii) Authorised inmates are permitted access only to approved website categories based on their learning needs. Inmates requiring access to the Internet as part of their course of study must read and sign an Acceptable Usage Policy. Inmate access to the Internet is controlled by both hardware and software systems. Access to facilities such as instant messaging and email are disabled. Internet access is supervised in the classroom by teachers and activity is logged in a central database which is routinely inspected by Headquarters ICT staff. Attempts to access unapproved websites are logged, monitored and challenged.

Violations of Internet Usage Policy by Inmates

Mr T Burns asked the Minister of Justice how many violations of internet usage policy by inmates were recorded in each prison in each of the last five years; and to detail the nature of the violations and the action that was taken against the individuals responsible.

(AQW 1626/11)

Minister of Justice: The number of violations is shown in the table below.

	Hydebank Wood	Maghaberry	Magilligan
2005	0	0	0
2006	0	0	1
2007	0	0	0
2008	0	0	0
2009	0	0	0

The nature of the misuse was the download of copyrighted material (i.e. music and video) from Internet file sharing networks in a computer build workshop. A full investigation also revealed the presence of three inappropriate adult sexual video files; these files did not contain images of children.

The workshop was shut down immediately and an internal investigation was conducted. This investigation examined the supervision of inmates while using Internet access facilities; the procedures for requesting, approving and installing Internet access facilities; and the physical and technical security measures put in place to ensure its proper and secure use. Weaknesses were identified and corrective action taken to address them.

It was concluded that it was not practical to bring charges against the supervising officer or prisoners.

NIPS subsequently introduced fuller policies and procedures in light of the incident, and reinforced staff training.

Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunal Service

Mr L Cree asked the Minister of Justice why a North Down constituent, Mr Colin Cooper, has not been afforded an opportunity to meet with representatives from his Department to discuss concerns about the complaints procedures of the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunal Service not being followed.

(AQW 1740/11)

Minister of Justice: My office last wrote to Mr Cooper on 27 September 2010 following my consideration of the points that he had raised in his correspondence.

I am satisfied that thorough consideration has been given to the issues Mr Cooper has raised. In the circumstances I do not think that a meeting with officials could add anything more to the very full exchanges which have already taken place.

Department for Regional Development

Public Buses Serving Crumlin and Glenavy

Mr T Burns asked the Minister for Regional Development to provide a quarterly breakdown of passenger numbers using all public buses serving Crumlin and Glenavy in each of the last five years; and the total amount of revenue generated by these services.

(AQW 1437/11)

Minister for Regional Development (Mr C Murphy): I have been informed by Translink that the information is not available in the format requested. However, the following tables show the amount of revenue generated together with the number of passenger trips taken on an annual basis for the last five years. Please note that school services are not included in these figures.

Revenue and Journeys - Boarding and Alighting at Crumlin and Glenavy

2005/06		
Stage	Revenue	Journeys
Crumlin Total	£128,691.06	54,906
Glenavy Total	£36,468.50	19,722
Grand Total	£165,159.56	74,628

2006/07		
Stage	Revenue	Journeys
Crumlin Total	£149,205.76	56,160
Glenavy Total	£45,171.05	22,532
Grand Total	£194,376.81	76,692

2007/08		
Stage	Revenue	Journeys
Crumlin Total	£182,561.15	72,353
Glenavy Total	£55,239.20	26,304
Grand Total	£237,800.35	98,657

2008/09		
Stage	Revenue	Journeys
Crumlin Total	£235,690.77	90,769
Glenavy Total	£69,484.44	31,578
Grand Total	£305,175.21	122,347

2009/10		
Stage	Revenue	Journeys
Crumlin Total	£227,808.45	89,198
Glenavy Total	£71,785.48	32,517
Grand Total	£299,593.93	121,715

Road Infrastructure in the Strangford Constituency

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister for Regional Development to provide a breakdown of the total investment in the road infrastructure in the Strangford constituency since May 2007.

(AQW 1550/11)

Minister for Regional Development: My Department's Roads Service does not maintain an analysis of its expenditure in the format requested. However, it does hold an analysis of total capital expenditure, on a financial year basis, by Council area. The most relevant Council areas in this case are Ards, Down and Castlereagh.

Roads Service's total expenditure on capital includes major capital schemes, minor capital schemes, street lighting renewal, land, capital structural maintenance and other capital activities.

Following the move of the NICS to International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) in 2009-10, and to comply with International Accounting Standards (IAS 16), structural maintenance activities, including resurfacing, reconstruction, surface dressing and drainage were deemed to be capital activities. These were previously classified as resource maintenance activities prior to 2009-10. Therefore, Capital Structural Maintenance is shown as nil in 2007-08 and 2008-09, in the attached Table.

Roads Service allocates its total budget for capital expenditure on roads across all the district council areas with major road improvements prioritised on a countrywide basis, taking account of a broad range of criteria, such as, strategic planning policy, traffic flow, number of accidents, potential travel time savings, environmental impact, accessibility and value for money. While the actual spend on a major works scheme may be within one district council area, the benefits of such schemes are not confined to that district council, constituency or county in which they are located.

The table below details total capital expenditure for the past three years covering the period 2007-08 to 2009-10 per council area.

District Council	Capital Activity	07-08	08-09	09-10
Down	Major Capital	294,000	341,000	272,000
	Minor Capital	523,000	512,000	672,000
	Road Lighting Capital	53,000	266,000	153,000
	Other Capital	107,000	157,000	171,000
	Land Under Acquisition	9,000	65,000	92,000
	Capital Structural Maintenance			2,517,000
	Total Capital	986,000	1,341,000	3,877,000
Ards	Major Capital	23,000	7,065,000	2,448,000
	Minor Capital	439,000	784,000	801,000
	Road Lighting Capital	178,000	195,000	230,000
	Other Capital	162,000	580,000	105,000
	Land Under Acquisition	1,158,000	43,000	46,000
	Capital Structural Maintenance			2,457,000
	Total Capital	1,960,000	8,667,000	6,088,000
Castlereagh	Major Capital		7,000	
	Minor Capital	811,000	252,000	1,902,000
	Road Lighting Capital	159,000	56,000	39,000
	Other Capital	346,000	115,000	341,000
	Land Under Acquisition		14,000	16,000
	Capital Structural Maintenance			1,525,000
	Total Capital	1,316,000	444,000	3,822,000

Cycling Budget

Mr C Lyttle asked the Minister for Regional Development whether the 98 percent cut in the cycling budget will impact on the proposed installation of two toucan crossings for the Comber Greenway section of the Cycle Network at the Kings and Beersbridge Roads in East Belfast.

(AQW 1557/11)

Minister for Regional Development: My Department's Roads Service has advised me that its work programme for this financial year has been finalised but officials will consider the provision of these toucan crossings, together with other schemes competing for inclusion within future works programmes.

However, as I am sure the Member will appreciate, funding for these types of schemes is limited due to budgetary constraints and consequently, the resources available for such works will be allocated on a scheme priority basis.

Policy Screening Process

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail, for the period from May 2007 to date, (i) the number of policies his Department and its associated bodies have (a) "screened out" as having no Equality Impact; and (b) "screened in" as having an Equality Impact; (ii) the number of staff involved in the screening process; and (iii) the cost of the screening process.

(AQW 1564/11)

Minister for Regional Development: I have detailed below the information requested. The information is provided for my Department and its associated bodies from April 2007, as opposed to May 2007, as records are kept annually from April to March and not broken down on a monthly basis.

(I) A) NUMBER OF POLICIES MY DEPARTMENT AND ITS ASSOCIATED BODIES HAVE "SCREENED OUT" AS HAVING NO EQUALITY IMPACT:

Year	April 2007 - March 2008	April 2008 - March 2009	April 2009 - March 2010	April 2010 - October 2010	Total:
Number	32	90	60	16	198

(I) B) NUMBER OF POLICIES MY DEPARTMENT AND ITS ASSOCIATED BODIES HAVE "SCREENED IN" AS HAVING AN EQUALITY IMPACT:

Year	April 2007 - March 2008	April 2008 - March 2009	April 2009 - March 2010	April 2010 - October 2010	Total:
Number	7	12	1	1	21

(ii) The number of staff involved in the screening process.

The duties associated with Section 75 have been mainstreamed and, as such all staff have a responsibility for screening and considering equality impacts of policies and procedures. I am therefore unable to provide the number of staff involved in the screening process.

(iii) The cost of the screening process.

As Section 75 is mainstreamed, I am unable to provide the cost of the screening process.

Burst or Leaking Pipes

Mr A Bresland asked the Minister for Regional Development how much water was lost through burst or leaking pipes in (i) 2005/06; (ii) 2006/07; (iii) 2007/08; (iv) 2008/09; and (v) 2009/10; and what was the estimated cost of these losses in each year.

(AQW 1589/11)

Minister for Regional Development: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) that leakage is not measured directly but is calculated based on a recognised water industry methodology. The methodology used to produce this figure was updated in agreement with the Utility Regulator and The Reporter in 2008, therefore NIW can provide figures for the period 2005/06 – 2007/08 and for the period 2008/09 – 2009/10. It should be noted that due to the change in methodology these figures should not be compared. The estimated volume of water lost through burst or leaking pipes for the years requested and the estimated cost is as detailed in the table below:

PERIOD 1 2005/06 – 2007/08

Year	Estimated Losses (MI/Day)	Total Estimated Cost (£M)
2005/06	178	4.7
2006/07	169	4.4
2007/08	157	4.1

PERIOD 2 2008/09 – 2009/10

Year	Estimated Losses (MI/Day)	Total Estimated Cost (£M)
2008/09	181	4.8
2009/10*	187	4.9

* The estimated losses figures include the impact of the extreme cold weather period December 2009 to January 2010.

Repairing Damaged, Leaking or Burst Pipes

Mr A Bresland asked the Minister for Regional Development how much was spent repairing damaged, leaking or burst pipes in (i) 2005/06; (ii) 2006/07; (iii) 2007/08; (iv) 2008/09; and (v) 2009/10. **(AQW 1590/11)**

Minister for Regional Development: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water that the cost of repairing damaged, leaking or burst pipes, which are part of the public water infrastructure, is as detailed in the table below. There is an element of leakage prevention included within these costs.

Year	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
Estimated Costs £M	8.3	7.3	8.8	7.5	6.8

Single Tender Actions and Contract Extensions

Mr P McGlone asked the Minister for Regional Development how many (i) single tender actions; and (ii) contract extensions without tender, were made by his Department in each of the last five years. **(AQW 1596/11)**

Minister for Regional Development: The numbers of single tender actions and contract extensions without tender in Roads Service were provided in my response to AQW 416/11 and AQW 417/11 which were answered on 1 October 2010.

For the rest of my Department the following table sets out the numbers of Single Tender Actions (STAs) and Contract Extensions (CEs) in each of the last five years.

Financial Year	Single Tender Actions	Contract Extensions without Tender
2005 / 06	7	2
2006 / 07	6	2
2007 / 08	-	1
2008 / 09	4	2

Financial Year	Single Tender Actions	Contract Extensions without Tender
2009 / 10	5	4
Totals	22	11

Water Service figurework is not included in the above table for 2005/06 and 2006/07 when it was an Agency of my Department as it did not routinely record instances of Single Tender Action or Contract Extensions at that time. The information sought could now only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

NI Water

Mr P McGlone asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail who attended the meeting in relation to NI Water, referred to in an email on 18 January 2010 from Lian Patterson in his Department to officials, Gary Fair and John Mills; and what was discussed and actioned at this meeting.

(AQW 1597/11)

Minister for Regional Development: Paul Priestly and Lian Patterson attended the meeting with me on 19 January to discuss the emerging evidence of procurement governance failings in Northern Ireland Water. I concluded at the meeting that, based on the prima facie evidence, the DRD and the NI Water Accounting Officers had no choice but to initiate an independent review.

Western Transport Corridor

Mr T Clarke asked the Minister for Regional Development for an update on the progress of the Western Transport Corridor; and for his assessment of whether budget cuts are likely to hinder its progress.

(AQW 1604/11)

Minister for Regional Development: I can advise that development work on the A5 Western Transport Corridor is progressing well and is on schedule to meet the next key milestone for the project, as agreed between the Executive and the Southern Government. This next milestone is the publication of the draft statutory orders and Environmental Statement later this month. Publication, which will be preceded by a series of public information days, starts the formal consultation period for the project and is likely to result in the holding of a Public Inquiry next Spring/Summer, when issues of concern can be debated.

In terms of funding, the Irish Government has recently reaffirmed its intention to contribute £400m to the A5 Western Transport Corridor and the A8 Belfast to Larne dual carriageway. However, the details of the Comprehensive Spending Review will have to be considered by the Executive before Departmental budgets can be established.

NI Water Staff

Mr G Savage asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail (i) the employment agencies that have supplied staff to NI Water since April 2007; (ii) the number of staff supplied by each agency; and (iii) the contract specifications and their value.

(AQW 1605/11)

Minister for Regional Development: Details of the employment agencies that have supplied staff to Northern Ireland Water (NIW) since April 2007, the contract details and the costs incurred against each agency, were set out in my response to AQW 650/11 on 19 October 2010.

I have been advised by NIW that it does not hold detailed records of the staff supplied by each employment agency and is therefore unable to provide the breakdown sought. I have asked the Chief Executive of NIW to forward the contract specifications to you.

Overgrown Roots of Mature Trees

Mr T Burns asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the number of incidents where pavements have had to be repaired because of damage caused by the overgrown roots of mature trees in each of the last five years; and the cost of carrying out these repairs.

(AQW 1629/11)

Minister for Regional Development: My Department's Roads Service has advised that it does not hold records for the whole of the North on the total number of incidents, or the cost of repair, where pavements have been damaged by tree roots.

However, given the higher concentration of street trees in the Greater Belfast area, information is available for Roads Service's Eastern Division, where records indicate that there are approximately 17,000 street trees.

Surface hazards, related to damage caused by tree roots, are identified by Roads Service during its cyclical inspections and the necessary repairs are programmed accordingly. The table below provides details of incidents, and associated costs, for each of the last 5 years in Eastern Division.

Footways Damaged by Tree roots		
Financial Year	Number of Incidents	Cost (£)
2005/06	69	4,177.62
2006/07	136	4,969.31
2007/08	180	8,078.86
2008/09	82	5,422.92
2009/10	154	7,996.53

Traffic Signage for Businesses

Mr P McGlone asked the Minister for Regional Development, pursuant to AQW 2884/10, for an update on his Department's policy on traffic signage for businesses.

(AQW 1640/11)

Minister for Regional Development: I have considered the options for relaxing my Department's policy for the provision of traffic signing for businesses and, while I am sympathetic to the current plight of many of these businesses, I believe that there is little scope to expand the existing policy without adversely impacting on the environment and road safety. Any relaxation could also lead to increased demand for such signing. This would have a significant resource impact in handling such requests, particularly defending refusals, and would ultimately impact on the delivery of other functions.

I should advise that the main purpose of direction signs is to guide road users to their desired destinations via the most appropriate route at the latter stages of their journey, particularly where destinations may be hard to find. While it is recognised that direction signs are perceived by businesses as being useful marketing tools, this is not the purpose for which they are provided.

Rapid Transit Systems

Mr T Burns asked the Minister for Regional Development for his assessment of the scientific evidence that suggests that light rail based urban rapid transit systems attract more people out of their cars than bus based urban rapid transit systems.

(AQW 1668/11)

Minister for Regional Development: When my Department commissioned independent consultants to investigate the viability of a Rapid Transit system for Belfast, the consultants were asked to consider

both light rail and bus based Rapid Transit technologies so that an assessment of the merits of both types of system could be carried out.

The consultants produced a Strategic Outline Case (SOC) for Rapid Transit in Belfast which found that, whilst a bus based Rapid Transit system was viable for the city, a light rail system was not. The SOC estimates that a bus-based system will cost some £150m compared to £590m for light rail based system along the same routes. The SOC found that bus based Rapid Transit would produce positive economic results but that light rail would not, as the likely numbers of passengers would not warrant the extra cost of light rail within the city. Affordability is assessed on the capital cost; the degree to which operating costs are covered by revenue; any subsidy requirement; and the benefits delivered by the system.

As recommended in the SOC, the design of the Belfast Rapid Transit system will consider the potential migration of the system to light rail in the future, should this become viable.

Water Storage

Mr C McDevitt asked the Minister for Regional Development to detail the current provision for water storage to ensure that adequate reserves of water are available should they be required.

(AQW 1680/11)

Minister for Regional Development: I have been advised by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) that its Water Resource Management Plan takes into account forecast water demand and the availability of water resources to meet that demand. The Plan is subject to regular review and has recently been revised for the period up to 2035. A draft Plan, which includes various options for meeting water demand over the planning period, was published recently for consultation and is available on the NIW website at www.niwater.com. It is anticipated that the final Plan will be completed by July 2011.

Department for Social Development

Rent Arrears

Miss M McIlveen asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the amount of rent arrears (i) recovered; (ii) written off; and (iii) carried forward by each Housing Executive district in each of the last three years.

(AQW 741/11)

Minister for Social Development (Mr A Attwood): The information requested in relation to the amount of rent arrears recovered and carried forward by the Housing Executive is not available as most current rent arrears are paid by tenants in conjunction with rental payments. The Housing Executive cannot disaggregate those payments made with respect only to rental charges and those with regards to rental arrears. Whilst it is possible to show general trends with regards to arrears recovery and to give a figure for the overall reduction each year, the current system does not allow the Housing Executive to provide statistical data on a more detailed basis.

The Housing Executive also has several initiatives in relation to rent arrears and continues to manage this area of business by:

- Money Advice/Support
- Focusing on new tenants
- Increasing options in methods of payment
- Increasing awareness availability of material
- Improvement Planning
- Increasing Targets

In relation to (ii), the table below details the amount of rent arrears written off for each Housing Executive district in each of the last three years:-

District	Total Written off for years ending*		
	2007/08 £	2008/09 £	2009/10 £
West Belfast	16,884	8,857	26,129
East Belfast	35,222	63,855	85,744
North Belfast	130,719	171,203	105,477
Shankill	123,857	81,923	44,333
South Belfast	18,750	61,349	54,350
Bangor	81,569	41,372	31,601
Newtownards	67,971	80,804	31,344
Castlereagh	52,164	34,742	42,896
Lisburn Antrim Street	83,851	15,016	55,050
Lisburn Dairy Farm	33,203	28,400	97,005
Downpatrick	54,860	27,484	25,954
Banbridge	30,262	11,090	21,507
Newry	26,836	37,980	49,742
Armagh	15,355	27,952	25,187
Lurgan/Brownlow	41,228	16,496	25,256
Portadown	19,450	21,173	43,731
Dungannon	19,291	30,445	24,665
Fermanagh	13,519	9,157	20,976
Ballymena	27,256	19,505	30,798
Antrim	32,686	24,329	14,951
Newtownabbey 1	16,406	36,315	16,857
Newtownabbey 2	38,179	16,513	11,357
Carrickfergus	34,752	49,446	7,342
Larne	20,650	27,407	14,524
Ballycastle	8,535	10,246	8,984
Ballymoney	13,507	12,560	2,267
Coleraine	37,154	55,601	36,665
Waterloo Place	33,216	1,853	19,041
Waterside	27,259	44,678	58,092
Collon Terrace	51,918	32,536	24,361
Limavady	19,332	3,762	12,977

District	Total Written off for years ending*		
	2007/08 £	2008/09 £	2009/10 £
Magherafelt	17,548	18,172	14,813
Strabane	31,835	9,653	30,097
Omagh	23,375	10,074	16,132
Cookstown	11,811	9,861	5,582

* Write off reasons include; debtor is deceased and has no estate or interested relatives; is resident outside N.I.; cannot be traced; has no means and is in receipt of benefits; debt is more than 3 years old; debt is less than £5

Support for Mortgage Interest Scheme

Ms A Lo asked the Minister for Social Development for his assessment of the impact on claimants of the decrease in the rate of payment under the Support for Mortgage Interest Scheme from 6.08 per cent to 3.8 per cent.

(AQW 883/11)

Minister for Social Development: From 1 October 2010 the standard interest rate under the Support for Mortgage Interest Scheme is set at a level equal to the Bank of England's published monthly average mortgage interest rate. The starting rate that applies from 1 October 2010 is 3.63 per cent (the rate published by the Bank of England on 31 August 2010). For simplicity of operation, future changes in the standard interest rate will only be triggered when the Bank of England published average mortgage rate and the standard rate in payment differ by at least 0.5%. When this happens the Bank of England average mortgage rate becomes the new standard interest rate.

Based on data (sample data of about 6,000 Support for Mortgage Interest claimants throughout the United Kingdom at November 2009) provided by the Council of Mortgage Lenders, it is estimated that 92% of current customers receiving help through the support for mortgage interest rules have mortgage interest rates below the old standard interest rate of 6.08%. The data also suggests that 50% of customers have mortgage rates less than 3.67%. Approximately 42% have rates between 3.67% and 6.08% with 8% having a rate above 6.08%.

Those customers who experience a shortfall under the new standard interest rate arrangement will still have the most of their eligible housing costs met by Support for Mortgage Interest. Based on conversations with the Council of Mortgage Lenders the Department would expect lenders to demonstrate forbearance in those cases. However, I have already expressed serious concern about the impact of these changes to the Welfare Reform Minister, Lord Freud, in Westminster, and my officials will be working with representatives from the advice sector, to monitor the impact of the changes, with a view to reviewing the position in a year's time and identify if other measures are feasible to address the situation.

Single Tender Actions

Ms C Ní Chuilín asked the Minister for Social Development how many single tender actions were issued by his Department and its agencies, including the Housing Executive, in (i) 2005/06; (ii) 2006/07; (iii) 2007/08; (iv) 2008/09; and (v) 2009/10.

(AQW 892/11)

Minister for Social Development: This information was provided in priority answer AQW 1076/11.

Falls Road Bus Depot

Mr P Maskey asked the Minister for Social Development whether his Department will retain an interest in the future of the Falls Road Bus Depot, as stated in the Andersonstown Gateway Feasibility Study document, or if it will remain as a bus depot for Translink.

(AQW 1074/11)

Minister for Social Development: I am fully aware of the ongoing concern about Translink's plan for the bus depot. I met with union members recently on the issue. The Andersonstown gateway Feasibility Study in March 2009 was a conceptual plan for the area in the short and longer terms and included future use of the Falls bus depot.

It will be for the community, government and all interested parties to determine the final end use of the lands covered by the study, including the Falls depot. There is no question of any decision being taken unilaterally on any parcel of lands which are part of the study.

Apprentices

Mr P Weir asked the Minister for Social Development how many apprentices have a placement for 2010-11 with his Department or any of its arms-length bodies.

(AQW 1208/11)

Minister for Social Development: My Department currently has two apprenticeship students in placements under the Programme Led Apprenticeships scheme.

Ilex, an arms-length body, sponsored by OFMDFM and DSD, has worked with the Kick Start to Work Programme to create four apprenticeships to date under the Peace Bridge contract awarded to Graham Construction.

The NI Housing Executive, a Non-Departmental Public Body for which my Department has responsibility, currently has seven apprentices.

In relation to contracts that my Department issues for procurement of goods and services I anticipate making an announcement on a significant extension of the graduate and apprenticeship requirements as part of those contracts for both the Department and Non-Departmental Public Body related procurements.

Housing Executive Away-days

Mr P Weir asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the number of staff hours spent on away-days by the Housing Executive in each of the last five years.

(AQW 1324/11)

Minister for Social Development: The total number of staff hours for the Housing Executive's away-days in each of the last five years is detailed in the table below:-

Year	No. of delegates	Total staff hours spent on away-days
2005	1080	7992
2006	630	4662
2007	885	6549
2008	1,544	11,426
2009	1,918	14,193

Notes

- Away days are classed as Business Planning and include a training element.
- The increase in events in 2008 and 2009 is due to the Modernising Programme.

Disability Living Allowance Appeals

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Social Development how many unsuccessful applicants for Disability Living Allowance appealed the decision in each of the last three years; and how many of these appeals were successful.

(AQW 1418/11)

Minister for Social Development: The information is not available in the format requested as appeals are received from both applicants who have been unsuccessful in applying for Disability Living Allowance (nil award) and from those awarded one of the eleven different rates of DLA but who are not satisfied with the particular rate awarded. DLA appeals are recorded on an overall number basis and not by different categories which distinguish an individual's benefit history. The table below details the total number of DLA appeals processed by the Appeals Service and the number that were successful.

Year	Total DLA Appeals Processed	Total Successful DLA Appeals
2007/08	5,834	1,716
2008/09	6,803	1,942
2009/10	6,157	1,836

Housing Executive New Build Homes

Mr G Robinson asked the Minister for Social Development how many Housing Executive new build homes were built in the East Londonderry constituency in 2009/10; and how many are planned for 2010/11.

(AQW 1419/11)

Minister for Social Development: The information is not available in the format requested as the Housing Executive manages the Social Housing Development Programme on behalf of the Department for Social Development and individual homes are built or acquired by housing associations. However, during the financial year 2009/10, housing associations acquired 43 social housing units in the East Londonderry parliamentary constituency. During the financial year 2010/11, the Social Housing Development Programme includes four schemes comprising 29 units programmed to start during this year.

Housing Executive Research

Mr P Weir asked the Minister for Social Development how much has been spent by the Housing Executive on research, including staff costs and printing, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 1431/11)

Minister for Social Development: The table below details the amount of money spent on research including staff costs and printing in each of the last five years:-

Year	Research £
2005/06	815,134
2006/07	1,269,429
2007/08	859,983
2008/09	704,918
2009/10	1,273,784

Vacant Properties

Mr A McQuillan asked the Minister for Social Development how many properties are currently vacant in the (i) Limavady Borough Council area; and (ii) Coleraine Borough Council area.

(AQW 1442/11)

Minister for Social Development: The table below details the Housing Executive and Housing Association properties currently vacant in the Limavady and Coleraine Borough Council areas:-

	Limavady Borough Council	Coleraine Borough Council
Housing Executive *	18	34
Housing Associations	4	4

* These figures include property awaiting imminent relet; major repairs; for decanting; and difficult to let.

Rural Regeneration

Mr A McQuillan asked the Minister for Social Development how much the Housing Executive has invested in the rural regeneration of the (i) Limavady Borough Council area; and (ii) the Coleraine Borough Council area in each of the last five years; and to detail the nature of the initiatives used.

(AQW 1443/11)

Minister for Social Development: The tables below detail the Housing Executive investment in rural regeneration in the Limavady and Coleraine Borough Council area in each of the last five years.

TABLE 1: LIMAVADY BOROUGH COUNCIL AREA

Year	Social Housing Development Programme £	Planned Maintenance £	Private Sector Grants £	Supporting People £
2005/06	81,785	273,700	669,900	188,008
2006/07	Nil	1,060,200	710,900	395,566
2007/08	Nil	81,000	811,400 *	408,905
2008/09	1,237,385	171,000	664,000	398,780
2009/10	Nil	333,700	658,700	281,620

* Includes a Group Repair Scheme consisting of 19 dwellings at a cost of £256,000

TABLE 2: COLERAINE BOROUGH COUNCIL AREA

Year	Social Housing Development Programme £	Planned Maintenance £	Private Sector Grants £	Supporting People £
2005/06	Nil	1,428,628	882,407	1,769,587
2006/07	266,738	688,148	461,854	1,906,886
2007/08	Nil	1,694,107	684,000	2,250,623
2008/09	Nil	Nil	632,000	2,165,766

Year	Social Housing Development Programme £	Planned Maintenance £	Private Sector Grants £	Supporting People £
2009/10	Nil	350,000	783,600	2,057,036

Notes:

- Social Housing Development Programme figures reflect the total approved grant for each rural scheme completed within the last five years.
- Planned Maintenance figures include schemes which include a rural element though the total value of the scheme may not have been dedicated to rural areas.
- Private Sector Grants and Supporting People figures are the totals for each of the entire Borough areas.
- The Supporting People information details accommodation based services only and excludes Floating Support Services.

Waiting List for Tenants to Purchase their Homes

Mr A McQuillan asked the Minister for Social Development how many tenants in the Coleraine Borough Council area are currently on the waiting list to purchase their homes.

(AQW 1444/11)

Minister for Social Development: I would refer the Member to the answer I gave in the Oral Assembly Question AQO 350/11 on 25 October 2010.

Legal Services

Mr P McGlone asked the Minister for Social Development how much his Department and its agencies paid for legal services in each of the last five years; and to detail the firms engaged.

(AQW 1459/11)

Minister for Social Development: The table below provides details of expenditure on legal services by my department and its agencies in each of the last five years including costs attributable to the Departmental Solicitor's Office.

Expenditure on Legal Services				
2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10
371,890	349,691	424,978	460,923	539,297

The table below provides details of firms engaged by my department and its agencies in each of the last five years. It should be noted however, that the figure-work also includes payments to counsel.

2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10
Berwin Leighton Paisner				
McCartan Turkington Breen Solicitors				
Beachcroft Wandsworth	Beachcroft Wandsworth Solicitors	Beachcroft Wandsworth Solicitors	Beachcroft Wandsworth Solicitors	McBurney & Co

2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10
Thompson McClure Solicitors	L'Estrange & Brett	Bernard Campbell & Co Solicitors	L'Estrange & Brett	L'Estrange & Brett
John Boston & Co Solicitors	John Boston & Co Solicitors	King & Gowdy Solicitors	King & Gowdy Solicitors	Mc Grigors Belfast
Elliott Duffy Garrett Solicitors	Bird & Bird Solicitors	Boyd Rice & Co Solicitors	Barr & Co Solicitors	Richard Freeman & Co
Campbell & Fitzpatrick's Solicitors	Ferris & Co Solicitors	John Ross & Son Solicitors	Conway, Todd & Co Solicitors	Conway, Todd & Co Solicitors
McGuinness & Canavan Solicitors	JB Stelfox & Co Solicitors	Joseph F McCollum Solicitors	Curran & Herron Solicitors	MacDermott & McGurk Solicitors
McShane & Co Solicitors	Wilson Nesbitt Solicitors	McCauley & Ritchie Solicitors	D & E Fisher Solicitors	
Messrs Gibson & Quigley Solicitors		McConnell and Fyfe Solicitors	Messrs Oliver Roche and Co Solicitors	
Mr GP Henvey Solicitors		Millar, Shearer & Black Solicitors	O'Hare Solicitors	
Patrick Fahy & Co Solicitors		A W G Colmer	Reid, Black & Co Solicitors	
Cousins Gilmore Solicitors			Thompsons McClure Solicitors	
Derry McGuinness & Company				

Pensioners Bungalows in Ballyree Drive, Bangor

Mr A Easton asked the Minister for Social Development if he would consider emergency repairs to windows and heating systems in the pensioners bungalows in Ballyree Drive, Bangor until money is available for further modernization plans.

(AQW 1474/11)

Minister for Social Development: I can confirm that the Housing Executive will continue to provide a response maintenance service to cover all emergency repairs that are needed to any of the properties at Ballyree Drive, Bangor. In addition, the Housing Executive has advised that proposals for Bloomfield Phase 2 (Ballyree Drive) are as follows:-

- Extensions to provide 2 bed bungalows with fire-safe layout
- New roofs
- External doors and windows
- Kitchens
- Bathrooms
- Internal doors and walls
- Gas heating

- Rewiring
- External works – fencing etc.

These works are programmed for April 2011 and are subject to the availability of funding.

Housing Executive Front Doors

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister for Social Development what is the time-frame for providing a Housing Executive tenant with a new front door following an assessment that one is necessary. **(AQW 1475/11)**

Minister for Social Development: Within the Housing Executive response maintenance process there are three classifications of work which are identified with the associated time allowances. These are:

- Emergency - time allowed 24 hours
- Urgent - time allowed 4 working days
- Routine - time allowed 15 working days

The time commences from the date the job is issued to the contractor.

Depending on the condition of the door a front door replacement could fall into any of the above classifications, but in the majority of cases the routine classification will apply. If the need to replace the door has been assessed as part of a scheme survey then the actual replacement date will be in accordance with the scheme programme.

Comparable Service Delivery

Dr S Farry asked the Minister for Social Development what benchmarking exercises his Department conducts to assess its spending profile relative to comparable service delivery in other jurisdictions. **(AQW 1494/11)**

Minister for Social Development: All of the main business areas within the Department have conducted benchmarking or cost comparison exercises at some stage.

The Social Security Agency has previously undertaken benchmarking exercises with the Department for Work and Pensions and the Department for Social & Family Affairs. However due to differences in organisation structures, service delivery arrangements, the nature of services provided and the costing methodologies of these organisations, direct comparisons are not always possible.

The Child Maintenance and Enforcement Division set very challenging targets around the cost of collecting child maintenance. Full analysis and comparison between Northern Ireland and Great Britain caseload and income levels is undertaken on an annual basis.

Housing Division benchmarks its principal budget of new social housing provision by comparing Cost Indicator Construction costs with Scottish Government figures (Scottish National Housing Association Grant Subsidy target benchmark). Maintenance costs (the second highest cost in the budget) was benchmarked against other jurisdictions in GB by Savills in the recent NI Housing Executive Stock Condition Survey and the unit cost was set using these comparable figures.

Benchmarking is an integral part of the development and implementation of a range of Urban Regeneration and Community Development programmes. For example as part of the initial roll-out process for neighbourhood renewal, benchmarking was carried out, both financially and operationally, between what was envisaged for Northern Ireland and similar schemes in operation in England, Scotland and Wales. Ongoing benchmarking is maintained through policy and operational review, supported by links between officials across the relevant jurisdictions and augmented by study visits by a range of practitioners.

Housing Stock

Mr A McQuillan asked the Minister for Social Development what is the current level of housing stock in the (i) Limavady Borough Council area; and (ii) the Coleraine Borough Council area.

(AQW 1496/11)

Minister for Social Development: At 30 September 2010, the total Housing Executive housing stock in the Limavady and Coleraine Borough Council areas was 1,468 and 3,082 respectively. In relation to Housing Association stock there were 329 units in Limavady and 857 units in Coleraine Borough Council areas. These figures are from 2009 and are the most up to date figures available from the Northern Ireland Federation of Housing Associations.

Red Sky Contractors

Mr P Maskey asked the Minister for Social Development how many complaints the Housing Executive received regarding the standard of work, or the time taken to carry out work, in West Belfast by Red Sky contractors, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 1498/11)

Minister for Social Development: The information is not available in the format requested as Red Sky was appointed as the EGAN contractor to West Belfast in March 2007. However, the table below details the number of complaints that have been officially registered via the Housing Executive's Complaints Management System.

	Informal complaints (District)	1st Stage complaints (Area)	2nd Stage complaints (Centre)	Total
2007	22	4	2	28
2008	32	10	1	43
2009	10	3	1	14
2010	3	5	0	8
	67	22	4	93

Social Security Office Site in Slieveban Drive

Mr P Maskey asked the Minister for Social Development what consultation his Department carried out with local people in Andersonstown before the decision was taken to build twenty houses on the old Social Security Office site in Slieveban Drive.

(AQW 1518/11)

Minister for Social Development: The site in question is still owned by the Department of Finance and Personnel and whilst it has been declared surplus and I have registered an interest in acquiring it for social housing, no decision has yet been made on the future ownership of the site.

However, I would be failing in my duty as Minister if I did not act promptly when land becomes available in areas of significant housing need for a potential new build scheme. Those on the waiting list would rightly ask serious questions if I delayed and the opportunity was lost. It is clear that there is good support for housing in this area and that the site lends itself to development.

I can assure the Member that should the site become available for social housing, full consultation with the local community will be undertaken at that time and in advance of any application for planning permission.

Rent Paid in the Private Rental Sector

Mr J Craig asked the Minister for Social Development what is the current average rent paid in the private rental sector compared to the social housing rental sector.

(AQW 1534/11)

Minister for Social Development: The information cannot be provided in the format requested as my Department does not hold information about the average rent paid in the private sector. However, the latest information regarding average rents in the social housing sector are as follows:-

Housing Executive	Housing Associations
£52.76 (for 2010/11)	£76.96 (for 2009/10)

Disability Living Allowance

Lord Morrow asked the Minister for Social Development, in each of the last three years, how many unsuccessful Disability Living Allowance claimants took up the option to have the decision looked at again; and how many had their initial refusal reversed.

(AQW 1556/11)

Minister for Social Development: The information is not available in the format requested as requests to have DLA decisions looked at again (reconsideration requests) are received from both applicants who have been unsuccessful in applying for Disability Living Allowance (nil award) and from those awarded one of the eleven different rates of DLA but who are not satisfied with the particular rate awarded. DLA reconsiderations received are recorded on an overall number basis and not by different categories which distinguish an individuals benefit history. The table below details the total number of DLA reconsideration requests received and the number that were successful. The main reason for successful reconsiderations is the provision of new information by customers following the initial decision.

Year	Total number of DLA Reconsideration Requests	Successful DLA Reconsiderations
2007/08	10,325	2,213
2008/09	9,017	2,575
2009/10	8,949	1,841

Policy Screening Process

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister for Social Development to detail, for the period from May 2007 to date, (i) the number of policies his Department and its associated bodies have (a) "screened out" as having no Equality Impact; and (b) "screened in" as having an Equality Impact; (ii) the number of staff involved in the screening process; and (iii) the cost of the screening process.

(AQW 1561/11)

Minister for Social Development:

- (i) & (ii) The table below shows the number of policies that my Department and its associated bodies* has screened out and screened in for EQIA respectively. The majority of the screened out policies are routine pieces of amending legislation to Social Security legislation and procedural Northern Ireland Housing Executive issues.

Screened out	Screened in
271	15

- (iii) & (iv) In line with the Equality Commission's guidance on Section 75 and the Department's Equality Scheme, equality considerations are mainstreamed into the business. Since equality screening is therefore part of the policy making cycle it is not possible to quantify the number of staff involved or the costs associated with the screening process.

*ILEX is jointly sponsored by OFMDFM and my Department. However it has been decided, to avoid repetition, that only OFMDFM answer will include Ilex's screening figures.

Child Maintenance Cases

Mr D Hilditch asked the Minister for Social Development how many Child Maintenance cases are currently (i) registered with the Enforcement of Judgements Office; and (ii) with the Legal Enforcement Post-Liability Order team.

(AQW 1576/11)

Minister for Social Development:

- (i) There are 481 Child Maintenance and Enforcement Division cases currently registered with Enforcement of Judgements Office ; and (ii) there are a further 185 cases with the Legal Enforcement Post-Liability Order team.

Housing Allocation in the Springfarm Estate in Antrim

Mr T Clarke asked the Minister for Social Development (i) how many people are currently awaiting housing allocation in the Springfarm estate in Antrim; (ii) how many houses in this area are currently vacant; and (iii) how many are in need of repair to bring them up to living standards.

(AQW 1582/11)

Minister for Social Development: At June 2010 there were 110 applicants on the waiting list for Springfarm estate. There are currently 66 vacant properties in the Springfarm estate. Of these, 59 are in need of considerable repairs to bring them up to living standards, six are currently undergoing extensive repair and 1 dwelling is currently on offer.

Fuel Poverty Levels

Mr S Hamilton asked the Minister for Social Development for the estimated fuel poverty levels in the United Kingdom; and in each UK region.

(AQW 1586/11)

Minister for Social Development: The 2009 Northern Ireland House Condition Survey reports the level of fuel poverty in Northern Ireland as 43.7%

The level of fuel poverty reported in England in 2008 was 15.6%.

Scotland and Wales are due to report new fuel poverty levels at the end of November 2010 and an overall United Kingdom fuel poverty figure will be reported when the most up to date information is available from all regions.

Northern Ireland Charities Commission

Mr T Elliott asked the Minister for Social Development to detail (i) the costs of the Northern Ireland Charities Commission in each year since it was appointed, broken down by (a) salaries; (b) expenses; and (c) administration; (ii) the number of times it has met; and (iii) the number of charities that are fully registered now.

(AQW 1609/11)

Minister for Social Development: The Charity Commission for Northern Ireland was established in June 2009. As detailed in its audited accounts for 2009/10 the costs are as follows:

- Salaries – £240,250

- Expenses – £6,092
- Administration – £122,738 (this includes rent, rates and all other running costs)

Since June 2009 the Commission has met thirteen times.

The Commission has been carrying out preparatory work in relation to its regulatory functions, including registration. However, due to a technical problem with the primary legislation it is not able to proceed to registration. This relates to application of the public benefit test which all local charities will be required to meet. Following discussions with legal counsel representing the Commission and the Attorney General for Northern Ireland, I have decided to amend the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008. A draft Bill is being prepared and will be introduced in the near future.

In the meantime the Commission has received records from HM Revenue & Customs which details the 7,000+ local charities registered with them for tax purposes. These records are being updated to enable the Commission to initiate its registration process once the amendment to the primary legislation is approved.

Charitable Funds by Registered Charities

Mr T Elliott asked the Minister for Social Development (i) whether details of the (a) collection; and (b) usage of charitable funds by registered charities are available to the public; (ii) what limitation is placed on the amount of funds that a charity can retain in investment or other accounts; and (iii) to whom the details of voluntary donations retained by a charity are reported.

(AQW 1610/11)

Minister for Social Development:

- (i) At present the regulation of street collections and most house to house collections are carried out by the Police Service for Northern Ireland (PSNI). Following the issuing of permits, PSNI District Commanders hold returns of the charitable collections made in their area.

My Department may grant an Exemption Order for house to house collections to a charity under section 3(1) of the House to House Charitable Collections Act (Northern Ireland) 1952. Those charities which have been granted an Exemption Order are required to file annual accounts of their house to house collections with the Department.

The Charities Act (NI) 2008 contains powers to enable the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland (CCNI) to regulate public charitable collections and to control fund-raising by charitable institutions. These powers have not yet been commenced and the PSNI retains responsibility for the authorisation of public collections. The Act also contains powers requiring all registered charities to produce annual accounts and reports and to provide these to CCNI. It is anticipated that this requirement will be introduced from 2012/13 and all accounts will be made publically available.

- (ii) There is no current limitation on the amount of funds that a charity can retain in investments or other accounts and this is primarily a matter for a charity's Trustees. One of CCNI's objectives under the 2008 Act is to promote the effective use of charitable resources and it will be required to produce advice and guidance for local charities on this issue. The issue of 'reserves' held by charities has been raised with me, and I have asked for the issue and size of 'reserves' to be scoped out.
- (iii) Details of all expenditure by charities, including voluntary donations, will be included in their annual accounts which will be subject to the regulatory framework to be established by CCNI.

Single People Under 35 years old Living in Rented Accommodation

Mr G Campbell asked the Minister for Social Development how many single people under 35 years old are currently living in rented accommodation; and for an assessment of how they will be affected by the Chancellor's statement on 20 October 2010.

(AQW 1612/11)

Minister for Social Development: It is not possible to accurately answer the question as information is only held in relation to Heads of Households. However broad estimates based on the 2009 Northern Ireland House Condition Survey indicate that 10,000 single heads of households under 35 live in the private rented sector and 5,000 in the social sector.

Clearly the two budgets in June and October with their housing benefit and welfare benefit changes will impact adversely on a wide range of groups including women, working families and single people under 35 years of age. I believe that by arguing against many of the changes, including opposition at Westminster, there is still the opportunity to reverse decisions. In addition the Northern Ireland Executive needs to put in place further measures to protect those in need and disadvantage. My Department will closely assess and monitor impacts on all groupings.

Disability Living Allowance

Mr A Easton asked the Minister for Social Development whether Disability Living Allowance will be included as part of the Westminster Government's proposals for a universal benefits system.

(AQW 1621/11)

Minister for Social Development: I expect full details of the universal credit to be set out in a White Paper to be published in the coming weeks. No doubt the paper will include the impact of the universal credit on the existing working age benefits framework. I value highly the role which disability living allowance plays in supporting people with disabilities to live their daily lives. I will be pressing the Westminster Government to ensure that adequate support remains in place for people with severe disabilities. I will raise this matter on 8 November when I next meet London Welfare Reform Ministers in London.

Disability Living Allowance

Mr A Easton asked the Minister for Social Development whether the mobility component of Disability Living Allowance will be removed as part of the Westminster Government's proposals for a universal benefits system.

(AQW 1622/11)

Minister for Social Development: The Westminster Government has made it clear that disability living allowance is under review. I intend to make sure that any reforms treat people with disabilities fairly. I recognise the importance of disability living allowance in supporting people with disabilities to remain independent and participate in society, particularly in Northern Ireland where we are still suffering from the legacy of the Conflict in terms of physical and mental health issues, and I will continue to press the Westminster Government to ensure that adequate support remains in place for people with severe disabilities. I will raise this matter on 8 November when I next meet London Welfare Reform Ministers in London.

New Build Housing Units and Developments

Mr S Hamilton asked the Minister for Social Development how many new build housing (i) units; and (ii) developments are currently unfinished.

(AQW 1635/11)

Minister for Social Development: The table below indicates the number of social housing schemes and units which have started on site but are not yet completed and the programme year where completion is anticipated.

Year of estimated completion	No of schemes currently on site	No of units
2010/11	48	728
2011/12	41	1047

Year of estimated completion	No of schemes currently on site	No of units
2012/13	5	347

Cyclical Maintenance

Mr F McCann asked the Minister for Social Development what elements of the Savills Report are currently being implemented by the Housing Executive; and whether this will lead to an end to cyclical maintenance.

(AQW 1676/11)

Minister for Social Development: Savills Housing Executive Stock Condition Survey assessed the current and future repairs and maintenance liabilities for Housing Executive based upon the works required to maintain the properties at Decent Homes Standard and to meet statutory obligations. Based on Savills recommendations the Housing Executive, working with my Department, has prepared a draft Housing Investment Strategy to cover the period 2011/12 to 2015/16. This Review allows, subject to available budgets, for external cyclical maintenance to be undertaken. The Housing Executive are also addressing Savills recommendations about reducing Grounds Maintenance and are preparing a bio-diversity strategy which will include provision of allotments for tenants with the first scheme at Ballybeen awaiting planning approval but expected this month.

Housing Benefit

Mr F McCann asked the Minister for Social Development how much Housing Benefit has been paid to the private rental sector in each of the last three years, broken down by constituency.

(AQW 1677/11)

Minister for Social Development: The information is not available in the format requested as the Housing Executive does not collate this information by parliamentary constituency. However, the table below details the amount of Housing Benefit paid to applicants living in the private rented sector in each of the last three years, by Housing Executive District Office area:-

District Office	2007/08 (£)	2008/09 (£)	2009/10 (£)
Belfast West	25,355.39	16,168.72	8,790.10
Belfast East	22,030.98	10,397.70	10,361.22
Belfast North	41,110.26	30,429.44	23,933.66
Belfast Shankill	23,943.13	4,895.44	1,520.23
Belfast South	16,804.10	16,717.89	7,903.66
Belfast North Private HB Unit	16,968,750.11	19,836,154.31	23,064,317.31
Belfast South Private HB Unit	10,144,424.88	11,860,956.46	13,872,897.71
Belfast East Private HB Unit	12,861,439.19	14,364,407.16	16,366,547.74
Belfast West Private HB Unit	18,772,815.65	21,981,173.77	25,079,965.19
Bangor	7,304,767.17	7,889,850.43	9,356,140.06
Newtownards	5,935,646.60	6,938,999.53	8,647,920.67
Castlereagh	3,699,902.36	4,320,622.68	5,219,034.13

District Office	2007/08 (£)	2008/09 (£)	2009/10 (£)
Lisburn Antrim Street	4,632,009.84	5,841,900.43	8,074,411.93
Lisburn Dairy Farm	4,090,281.75	4,570,023.75	5,159,200.04
Downpatrick	9,232,342.57	10,321,214.58	12,425,076.23
Banbridge	3,894,206.34	4,518,002.40	5,523,588.72
Newry	14,210,653.52	15,359,312.60	18,263,620.78
Armagh	5,772,945.26	6,509,505.20	7,864,921.32
Lurgan	7,942,638.28	9,307,097.11	11,145,827.37
Portadown	5,227,649.82	5,980,792.23	6,839,374.60
Dungannon	5,302,587.57	6,291,624.24	7,666,119.94
Fermanagh	5,397,022.65	6,383,524.98	8,011,147.86
Ballymena	5,942,969.73	6,681,072.29	8,265,920.13
Antrim	3,242,596.18	3,926,974.66	5,214,808.98
Newtownabbey 1	3,104,870.01	3,530,567.97	4,418,052.96
Newtownabbey 2	3,529,466.17	3,968,026.11	4,966,909.57
Carrickfergus	3,776,579.93	4,356,665.69	5,318,376.82
Larne	3,786,108.46	4,423,536.40	5,622,726.17
Ballycastle	2,309,342.23	2,590,143.78	3,085,699.14
Ballymoney	2,771,130.70	3,139,508.29	4,116,530.89
Coleraine	6,670,990.27	7,779,544.66	9,625,546.88
Waterloo Place	10,866,108.49	12,253,443.56	13,821,762.41
Waterside	10,342,879.61	11,036,180.06	12,512,335.03
Collon Terrace	8,498,256.95	9,261,051.37	10,325,137.70
Limavady	3,700,221.90	4,581,375.44	6,129,660.25
Magherafelt	2,870,205.75	3,411,941.70	4,665,978.85
Strabane	6,330,220.53	7,267,635.13	9,055,722.19
Omagh	6,864,601.26	7,823,854.59	9,226,081.36
Cookstown	3,169,215.01	3,911,418.93	5,082,475.26

Homeless in the North Down Constituency

Mr P Weir asked the Minister for Social Development how many people under the age of 18 years old in the North Down constituency are currently classified as homeless.

(AQW 1701/11)

Minister for Social Development: The information is not available in the format requested as the Housing Executive does not collate information by parliamentary constituency. However, as at 30 September 2010, eight people under 18 years old presented as homeless at the Bangor District Office which covers the North Down Borough Council area. Six were accepted as Full Duty Applicant status.

Community Care Grants

Mr P Weir asked the Minister for Social Development to detail the average time taken to process a Community Care Grant in (i) the North Down constituency; and (ii) Northern Ireland.

(AQW 1702/11)

Minister for Social Development: Performance data on Social Fund applications (including Community Care Grants) is not maintained by the Social Security Agency at individual Parliamentary constituency level. The average time taken by the Agency (April to September 2010) to process Community Care Grants in Northern Ireland was 11.9 days against a target of 12.0 days.

Northern Ireland Assembly Commission

Parliament Buildings

Mr J Dallat asked the Assembly Commission how much it has spent on (i) furniture and fittings; (ii) fixtures and fittings; (iii) heat and electricity; (iv) security and ushers; and (v) cleaning for Parliament Buildings in each of the last three years.

(AQW 1467/11)

The Representative of the Assembly Commission (Mr S Neeson): Please find below the figures that you requested.

(I) FURNITURE AND FITTINGS

2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
£139,259.94	£56,480.00	£121,770.40

(II) FIXTURES AND FITTINGS

These figures are included in (i) above.

(III) HEAT AND ELECTRICITY

2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
£263,592.00	£402,709	£278,477

(IV) SECURITY AND USHERS

2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
£2,135,189.67	£2,627,929.90	£2,785,241.99

(V) CLEANING

2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
£285,435.85	£293,373.60	£300,926.94

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Revised Written Answers

Friday 5 November 2010

(AQO 125/11)

The establishment of a standing secretariat for the British Irish Council has been discussed as one element of the BIC Strategic Review at recent BIC Summit meetings.

The core functions, staffing profiles, secondment arrangements and legal framework for the standing secretariat were endorsed by the Council at the Cardiff and Jersey Summit meetings on held on 20 February and 13 November 2009 respectively.

A decision on the location of the standing secretariat in Scotland was subsequently reached at the most recent BIC Summit which took place in Guernsey on 25 June.

Following that decision the Council tasked the BIC Co-ordinator's group of officials with taking forward work on setting up the Secretariat and agreeing a model for sharing the costs associated with its establishment and operation.

The Council will be considering a paper from the Co-ordinator's group on these matters at the next Summit meeting in the Isle of Man in December.

(AQW 732/11)

In acknowledging the absence of any generally accepted definition of 'rural' in Northern Ireland, an inter-departmental Urban/Rural Definition Group was established to identify and delineate settlements. This group recommended that settlements with a population of less than 4,500 should be regarded as 'rural'.

In relation to this answer the settlements-based definition outlined above has been used and population figures, relating to each library area, were determined from the 2001 census.

The following table shows the recurrent and capital investment in each rural library in each of the last three years.

	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
Broughshane	£338	£7,233	0
Carnlough	£5,376	£5,840	£4,895
Castledearg	£3,642	£1,302	0
Castlewellan	£4,015	£10,998	0
Crossmaglen	£62	£2,120	0
Crumlin	£102,705	£5,874	0
Cushendall	£487	£6,619	0
Draperstown	£673	£4,760	0
Dromore	£1,537	£19,836	0
Dungiven	£1,841	£87,686	£427,523
Fintona	£375	£4,793	£5,032
Fivemiletown	£4,699	£3,179	0
Garvagh	£1,300	£7,153	0
Gilford	£1,563	£4,818	£1,159

	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
Irvinestown	£4,065	£1,611	£1,500
Keady	£1,253	£1,215	£106,496
Kells & Connor	£473	£5,358	0
Killyleagh	£2,024	£2,594	0
Kilrea	£423	£5,344	0
Lisnaskea	£3,835	£14,361	£2,100
Maghera	£1,961	£1,859	£500
Moirá	£995	£1,514	0
Moneymore	£953	£3,690	£6,161
Moy	£1,471	£2,347	0
Newtownstewart	£43,144	£256,919	£307,328
Portaferry	£4,614	£4,327	£500
Portglenone	£40,308	£4,989	0
Rathfriland	£1,624	£1,000	£2,219
Richill	£1,798	£1,740	£3,756
Saintfield	£4,714	£2,312	0
Tandragee	£6,320	£3,805	£458
Whitehead	£6,517	£23,421	£355,721

There has also been £15,000 spent on mobile library provision in the last three years. Mobile libraries are vital in providing services to rural communities that have limited access to a static library.

Figures for 2009/10 were provided by Libraries NI and figures prior to 2009/10 were provided by the Education and Library Boards



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