

## **NICCY Summary: Written Assembly Questions week of 16<sup>th</sup> January 2015**

- **Together: Building a United Community**
- **Equality Commission Budget**
- **Equality Commission Court Cases**
- **Female Genital Mutilation**
- **Children's Rights and Child Protection Policies**
- **GCSE Grades**
- **Northern Ireland Commission for Catholic Education**
- **Drug Abuse in Schools**
- **Year 12 and Year 14 Student Examination Results**
- **Programme for Government 2011/15 Targets**
- **Statutory and Voluntary Youth Provision**
- **Community Relations, Equality and Diversity Funding**
- **Asperger Syndrome, Autism, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and Dyslexia**

- **New Education Authority**
- **Statutory Curriculum and Entitlement Framework**
- **Entitlement Framework Funding**
- **Funding for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Groups**
- **Reduction to Pre-school Funding**
- **Free School Transport**
- **Improving Literacy and Numeracy**
- **Community Relations, Equality and Diversity Funding**
- **Child Protection Registration Process**
- **Central Register for Children and Adults with Down Syndrome**
- **Non-Surgical Children's Heart Centre**
- **Marshall Report**
- **Transfer of Paediatric Cardiac Surgery to Dublin**
- **Domestic Abuse**
- **Neighbourhood Renewal Fund**

## Office of First and Deputy First Minister

### Together: Building a United Community

**Mr Trevor Clarke (DUP – South Antrim)** - To ask the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on Together: Building a United Community.

**Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness:** Work is progressing well across all seven headline actions that were announced alongside the publication of Together: Building a United Community.

The Department of Education announced the first three Shared Education Campuses on 2 July. A second call for applications issued on 1 October.

In respect of the United Youth Programme, the design team has produced a draft Outcomes and Principles Framework. A call for concept proposals was issued in September. Following a development phase during October and November, pilot applications were submitted in early December, with a view to commencing the pilot phase in early 2015.

With regard to summer schools/camps, a number of summer interventions/pilot schemes took place during summer 2014 and the Halloween mid-term break with more to follow later in the year. An evaluation of these interventions/pilot schemes, along with a series of co-design workshops, will be used to design and develop a programme of 100 summer schools/camps for summer 2015.

In relation to urban villages, stakeholder engagement is ongoing regarding the development of the first two locations, announced as the Lower Newtownards Road and Colin Town Centre.

Work on the removal of interface barriers continues, work to date has reduced this number from 59 to 53 and engagement is currently ongoing with 40 of the 53 remaining areas. A pilot project for the cross community sports programme will be delivered in 2014/15 in areas which have experienced interface tensions and significant deprivation. The pilot project will be aimed at 11-16 year olds and will have a proactive focus on females, ethnic minority and disabled participation.

Work to deliver the 10 shared neighbourhoods is progressing well. The first social housing development at Ravenhill Road is near completion. Construction works have also commenced on 3 other sites (Ravenhill Road Phase 2; Felden Mill, Newtownabbey and Crossgar, Saintfield).

In relation to the Review of Good Relations funding delivery the review was carried out by the Strategic Investment Board and was completed in September 2014. The recommendations contained within the review and their impact are currently being considered. The strategy commits to establishing a number of thematic subgroups under the auspices of the Ministerial Panel to reflect the strategic priorities arising from the strategy. These include:

- Children & young people
- Housing
- Community tensions/summer interventions
- Flags
- Interfaces

To date the Housing subgroup has been established and the Community Tensions subgroup will meet for the first time in the New Year. Work is progressing well in respect of the establishment of the Children and Young People subgroup.

In addition to the above, Together: Building a United Community outlines a number of commitments in addition to the seven headline actions and work is progressing across departments to take forward work in line with the strategic priorities of the strategy.

**(Oral Question)**

[Back to Top](#)

## Equality Commission Budget

**Mr Peter Weir (DUP – North Down)** - To ask the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail the total budget of the Equality Commission in each of the last five years.

**Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness:** The Commission’s total budget for the period is outlined in the following table –

Year	Total Budget *
2009/10	£7,040,791
2010/11	£6,984,845
2011/12	£6,682,716
2012/13	£6,558,622
2013/14	£6,502,707

\*In addition to the grant-in-aid provided by our Department each year, the Equality Commission also generates income. **(14th January)**

[Back to Top](#)

## Equality Commission Court Cases

**Mr Peter Weir (DUP – North Down)** - To ask the First Minister and deputy First Minister how many court cases the Equality Commission has initiated in each of the last five years.

**Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness:** The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland is an executive non-departmental public body sponsored by the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister. It is independent from Government and Ministers in respect of its operation. As such, the issue you have raised is a matter for the Equality Commission. **(14th January)**

[Back to Top](#)

## **Female Genital Mutilation**

**Mrs Sandra Overend (UUP – Mid Ulster)** - To ask the First Minister and deputy First Minister what steps are being taken by their Department to provide input on, and to co-ordinate, a cross departmental action plan to tackle Female Genital Mutilation.

**Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness:** Our Department is not co-ordinating a cross departmental action plan but will provide input to any action plan that is developed.

**(14th January)**

[Back to Top](#)

## Department of Education

### Children's Rights and Child Protection Policies

**Lord Morrow of Clogher Valley (DUP – Fermanagh and South Tyrone)** - To ask the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 40078/11-15, to provide an assurance that the relevant Education and Library Boards are meeting children's rights and disability rights criteria as well as full compliance with child protection policies and procedures in respect of all children in receipt of a Notice in Lieu, particularly those in cases which are currently under challenge for full statementing.

**Mr O'Dowd (The Minister of Education):** The Chief Executives of each Education and Library Board have confirmed that children's rights, including disability rights, and child protection policies and procedures are fully complied with regarding children in receipt of a Notice in Lieu, including those in cases which are currently under challenge for full statementing. **(13th January)**

[Back to Top](#)

### GCSE Grades

**Ms Caitríona Ruane (Sinn Féin – South Down)** - To ask the Minister of Education to detail the (i) percentage; and (ii) number of children that achieved at least five GCSEs at grades A\* - C in each of the last twelve years, broken down by (a) gender; (b) religious background; and (c) socio-economic background.

**Mr O'Dowd (The Minister of Education):** The information contained in the following tables refers to the achievement of pupils leaving mainstream grant aided post-primary schools during the academic years 2000/01 to 2012/13. A pupil's socio-economic background has been derived using free school meal entitlement.

Data covering the academic year 2012/13 are the most recent available. Equivalent figures for 2013/14 school leavers are scheduled for release in May 2015.

**Number and percentage of school leavers achieving at least five GCSEs at grades A\*-C, by gender, 2000/01 to 2012/13(1,2)**

Year	Boys		Girls	
	Number	%	Number	%
2000/01	6470	50.5	8121	65.8
2001/02	6473	50.5	8208	67.3
2003/04	7044	53.9	8522	67.8
2004/05	7157	55.4	8779	70.9
2005/06	7495	57.5	8899	71.2
2006/07	7323	58.2	8726	71.5
2007/08	7283	60.0	8836	73.9
2008/09	7470	64.4	8859	75.9
2009/10	7444	65.4	8970	78.4
2010/11	8026	67.7	8923	78.9
2011/12	8103	71.0	9160	82.1
2012/13	8750	74.5	9314	82.8

**Source: School Leavers Survey**

Notes:

1. Please note that in 2002/03 the School Leavers Survey was not undertaken due to software issues in schools.
2. Includes equivalent qualifications.



**Number and percentage of school leavers achieving at least five GCSEs at grades A\*-C, by religion of pupil, 2000/01 to 2012/13(1,2)**

Year	Protestant		Catholic		Other(3)	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
2000/01	6185	57.3	7465	57.4	941	69.2
2001/02	6376	58.0	7353	58.4	952	66.9
2003/04	6521	60.3	7976	60.4	1069	65.5
2004/05	6540	60.7	8139	64.1	1257	69.0
2005/06	6692	62.1	8418	65.4	1284	68.1
2006/07	6558	62.8	8316	66.6	1175	63.0
2007/08	6492	65.0	8195	68.6	1432	66.2
2008/09	6614	68.5	8276	71.6	1439	70.0
2009/10	6530	70.6	8377	73.4	1507	69.7
2010/11	6547	70.4	8883	76.1	1519	69.5
2011/12	6703	73.8	8982	78.8	1578	75.3
2012/13	7066	77.4	9232	80.4	1766	73.6

**Source: School Leavers Survey**

Notes:

1. Please note that in 2002/03 the School Leavers Survey was not undertaken due to software issues in schools.
2. Includes equivalent qualifications.
3. Other religion category includes Other Christian, No Religion and Non-Christian.

**Number and percentage of school leavers achieving at least five GCSEs at grades A\*-C, by free school meal entitlement, 2000/01 to 2012/13(1,2)**

Year	Not entitled to free school meals		Entitled to free school meals	
	Number	%	Number	%
2000/01	13030	64.5	1561	31.5
2001/02	13217	64.8	1464	31.7
2003/04	13791	68.0	1775	33.0
2004/05	14055	70.3	1881	35.6
2005/06	14622	70.2	1772	37.6
2006/07	14391	70.4	1658	37.9
2007/08	14634	71.9	1485	39.8
2008/09	14802	75.1	1527	42.9
2009/10	14709	76.6	1705	47.1
2010/11	15071	78.0	1878	48.8
2011/12	15149	81.4	2114	53.4
2012/13	15564	83.1	2500	58.5

**Source: School Leavers Survey**

Notes:

1. Please note that in 2002/03 the School Leavers Survey was not undertaken due to software issues in schools.
2. Includes equivalent qualifications. **(13<sup>th</sup> January)**

[Back to Top](#)

## **Northern Ireland Commission for Catholic Education**

**Mr Steven Agnew (GPNI – North Down)** - To ask the Minister of Education whether his Department provides funding to the Northern Ireland Commission for Catholic Education; and if so, how much.

**Mr O’Dowd (The Minister of Education):** My Department does not provide funding as a matter of course to the Northern Ireland Commission for Catholic Education. However payments have been made to the organisation for services rendered. **(13<sup>th</sup> January)**

[Back to Top](#)

## **Drug Abuse in Schools**

**Lord Morrow of Clogher Valley (DUP – Fermanagh and South Tyrone)** - To ask the Minister of Education, in light of the recent media report on the trebling of drugs seizures in schools in the last year, what action he is taking for pupils and teachers in respect of noting signs of potential drug abuse; and what input he is seeking, or has received, from other agencies and Departments. [Priority Written]

**Mr O’Dowd (The Minister of Education):** All schools are required by law to have in a place a drugs education policy and the statutory curriculum which is taught in all our grant-aided schools provides opportunities for children and young people to develop the knowledge and skills to deal with issues such as drug abuse. As with all aspects of the curriculum the specifics of what is taught and how it is taught is a matter for each teacher/school.

While the decision on resources to be used for delivery of the curriculum is a matter for each teacher/school, the Education and Library Boards (ELBs) in partnership with the Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) have made available curriculum resources for primary and post primary schools to support the delivery of the Personal Development Curriculum through a life skills based approach. The current resource for primary schools “Living Learning Together” and post primary schools “Insync” allow for the delivery of universal drug prevention education.

The Department also provides schools with guidance in relation to drugs and CCEA has been commissioned to review and update current guidance – the guidance will include advice about recognising the signs of substance abuse. In developing the guidance CCEA established an advisory group which consisted of representatives from the Public

Health Agency, the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust, the Police Service of Northern Ireland, the Education and Library Boards and the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools. It is intended that this work will be completed during 2015.  
**(13<sup>th</sup> January)**

[Back to Top](#)

### **Year 12 and Year 14 Student Examination Results**

**Ms Michaela Boyle (Sinn Féin – West Tyrone)** - To ask the Minister of Education for his assessment of the latest examination results for Year 12 and Year 14 students which show a significant increase in the number of young people achieving qualifications.

**Mr O’Dowd (The Minister of Education):** I welcome these latest statistics which again show significant improvement in the exam performance of Year 12 and 14 pupils. Overall these statistics paint an impressive and positive picture and are a result of hard work and effort on the part of the pupils and their teachers.

They are also evidence that the school improvement policies and programmes I have put in place are working for our young people.

- My focus on raising standards for all, on performance and on the key skills of literacy and numeracy is paying off.
- My focus on improving equity, on our most disadvantaged pupils and on those schools serving the most disadvantaged is paying off.

The education system is to be congratulated on meeting the challenges of raising standards. A focused and collaborative approach has so far yielded impressive results. However, while there is much to celebrate in these statistics we cannot afford to become complacent.

Our young people have demonstrated clear capacity to do well across many subjects but we need together to continue to support more of them to achieve in English and Maths. We all recognise the value of a high quality education and must ensure that this remains a priority for us all. **(14<sup>th</sup> January)**

[Back to Top](#)

## **Programme for Government 2011/15 Targets**

**Mrs Brenda Hale (DUP – Lagan Valley)** - To ask the Minister of Education whether he has made the Executive aware that his proposed cuts to education will result in his Department's failure to meet its Programme for Government 2011/15 targets.

**Mr O'Dowd (The Minister of Education):** The Executive has still to agree a Programme for Government beyond 31 March 2015 and it is therefore not yet possible to ascertain the full impact next year of any proposed cuts on the delivery of education services.

The proposed cuts form part of my Department's consultation on the draft Budget which closed on 29 December 2014. Officials are currently collating and analysing responses and until this is complete and the Executive agree a revised Budget, I will not be making any final decisions on the allocation of the education budget next year. However, as I have made clear on numerous occasions, I will continue to lobby my Executive colleagues for additional resources for education so that I can protect frontline services as far as possible and continue to deliver on my key priorities of raising standards and closing the performance gap. **(14<sup>th</sup> January)**

[Back to Top](#)

## **Statutory and Voluntary Youth Provision**

**Mr Nelson McCausland (DUP – North Belfast)** - To ask the Minister of Education for his assessment of the adequacy and equity of both statutory and voluntary youth provision.

**Mr O'Dowd (The Minister of Education):** Under Article 37 of the Education and Libraries (NI) Order 1986 each Board has statutory responsibility for the securing of adequate facilities for youth service activities. During the current financial year, I have provided resource funding totalling £33m for the youth sector to deliver those services assessed as needed in line with Departmental priorities within the resources available.

The Education and Training Inspectorate's Chief Inspector's Report for 2012 – 2014 found that the overall effectiveness of 92% of youth provision was evaluated as good or better. This was based on an assessment of both statutory and voluntary sector provision.

Future funding of youth services by the Education Authority and the Youth Council will be in line with the Regional Youth Development Plan and Priorities for Youth and, within the resources available. **(14<sup>th</sup> January)** [Back to Top](#)

## **Community Relations, Equality and Diversity Funding**

**Ms Claire Sugden (IND – East Londonderry)** - To ask the Minister of Education to detail the rationale behind the proposed removal of the remaining Community Relations, Equality and Diversity funding for education by his Department.

**Mr O’Dowd (The Minister of Education):** The proposal to end earmarked Community Relations, Equality and Diversity (CRED) funding is a direct consequence of the challenging budget reduction faced by my Department, in which I have sought to protect front line services.

Amongst the mitigating factors which I have taken into account as to the impact of the ending of CRED funding is the introduction of a £25m Shared Education Signature Project which seeks to improve educational (including reconciliation) outcomes.

I am currently considering responses to the budget proposal consultation which ended on 29th December 2014 prior to finalising the 2015/16 budget. **(15<sup>th</sup> January)**

[Back to Top](#)

## **Asperger Syndrome, Autism, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and Dyslexia**

**Lord Morrow of Clogher Valley (DUP – Fermanagh and South Tyrone)** - To ask the Minister of Education whether he will provide the legal document and/or policy for each Education and Library Board which states a diagnosis of Asperger Syndrome; Autism; Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder; and Dyslexia is not accepted if obtained privately.

**Mr O’Dowd (The Minister of Education):** Account is taken of private psychologists’ assessments as outlined in paragraphs 3.55 and 3.57 of the Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs which state:

- 3.55 - “The Educational Psychologist from whom psychological advice is sought must be employed by the Board, or engaged by it for the purpose.”
- 3.57 - “He or she should also be asked by the Board to consider any advice which parents may submit independently from a fully qualified educational psychologist.”

**(15<sup>th</sup> January)**

[Back to Top](#)

## **New Education Authority**

**Mr Peter Weir (DUP – North Down)** - To ask the Minister of Education to outline the timetable for the creation and implementation of the new Education Authority.

**Mr O’Dowd (The Minister of Education):** The Education Act 2014 received Royal Assent on 11 December 2014 and the Education Authority came into being as a body corporate the following day. It is intended that the functions, assets, liabilities and staff of the Education and Library Boards and Staff Commission should transfer to the Authority on 1st April 2015. A programme of work is now being undertaken to ensure that the Authority is operational from that date or as soon as possible thereafter. This programme includes the appointment of an interim Chief Executive, the recruitment of a Chair and Board members and other Day 1 critical projects relating to Finance, Human Resources and Governance. **(15<sup>th</sup> January)**

[Back to Top](#)

## **Statutory Curriculum and Entitlement Framework**

**Mr Peter Weir (DUP – North Down)** - To ask the Minister of Education what changes he intends to make to policy, guidance and statutory requirements for schools on the statutory curriculum and entitlement framework in light of budget cuts.

**Mr O’Dowd (The Minister of Education):** I have no plans at present to change current policies or statutory requirements.

My Department, in developing its draft budget within the overall resource context, has been mindful to protect the delivery of the curriculum in schools under the Aggregated Schools Budget. There is considerable flexibility for schools in how they deliver the statutory curriculum and I would expect all schools to make use of this flexibility in making sure that their curricular provision not only meets the requirements set out in the Education (Curriculum Minimum Content) Order (Northern Ireland) 2007 but also meets the needs of their pupils.

The additional funding support that I have provided for the Entitlement Framework was never intended to be a permanent funding stream, but has been provided as a contribution to the costs associated with developing a broad and balanced curricular offer at Key Stage 4 and post-16.

Despite the pressures on my education budget, I have set aside a sizeable element of funding – £4.9m - in the 2015/16 financial year to continue to support schools in delivering the Entitlement Framework requirements. The Entitlement Framework and the curriculum are about putting pupils first and that is what I expect schools to do. **(15<sup>th</sup> January)**

[Back to Top](#)

### Entitlement Framework Funding

**Mr John Dallat (SDLP – East Londonderry)** - To ask the Minister of Education how the reduction in Entitlement Framework funding will avoid less choice for pupils, larger class sizes and less opportunity for pupils to study in areas in which they are likely to achieve positive results.

**Mr O’Dowd (The Minister of Education):** The Entitlement Framework is about putting pupils first and that is what I expect schools to do – in their planning and in the courses they offer. Courses that should be economically relevant and individually engaging.

The additional funding support that I have provided for the Entitlement Framework was never intended to be a permanent funding stream, but has been provided as a contribution to the costs associated with developing a broad and balanced curricular offer at Key Stage 4 and post-16. It remains a fact that schools receive a core budget to pay for a range of matters including the curriculum, of which the Entitlement Framework is part.

I have listened to schools about the challenges they face in delivering the Entitlement Framework and as a result I extended the additional funding to support this work through to the end of the 2014/15 financial year. Despite the pressures on my education budget I have also set aside a sizeable element of funding – £4.9m - in the 2015/16 financial year to continue to support schools in delivering the Entitlement Framework requirements.

It remains important for schools to continue their good work and focus on meeting the full statutory requirements from September 2015 for the benefit of our young people.

**(15<sup>th</sup> January)**

[Back to Top](#)



## **Funding for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Groups**

**Mr Jim Allister (TUV – North Antrim)** - To ask the Minister of Education how much funding has been supplied by his Department to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender groups since May 2007.

**Mr O’Dowd (The Minister of Education):** The Department of Education has not provided any funding to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender groups since May 2007.  
**(15<sup>th</sup> January)**

[Back to Top](#)

## **Reduction to Pre-school Funding**

**Mr Robin Swann (UUP – North Antrim)** - To ask the Minister of Education, in relation to the proposed fifteen per cent reduction to pre-school funding, whether this will be completed by reducing (i) the number of places; or (ii) the funding allocated per child.

**Mr O’Dowd (The Minister of Education):** The Department’s 2015-16 Draft Budget was published on 25 November 2014.

This document, which set out the draft budget allocations and reduction proposals, was open for public consultation until 29 December 2014, running concurrently with the public consultation on the Executive’s Draft Budget. The Draft Budget proposes a reduction of £2.5m in the funding available for pre-school education provided in voluntary and private settings.

There has been an overwhelming response to the consultation (in excess of 21,000 responses) and work is ongoing by departmental officials to collate, analyse and evaluate the consultation responses.

I will continue to press for an improved final budget outcome for Education as part of the Executive deliberations to agree the 2015-16 Final Budget, which, it is planned, will be published towards the end of January 2015. **(15<sup>th</sup> January)**

[Back to Top](#)

## Free School Transport

**Mr Peter Weir (DUP – North Down)** - To ask the Minister of Education, when assessing the future of free school transport, what consideration will be given to families who cannot obtain a place at their nearest school because it is oversubscribed.

**Mr O’Dowd (The Minister of Education):** The final report on the Independent Review of Home to School Transport was released on 12 December. No decision has been taken on the future of the home to school transport policy. Any new policy arising from the review will be the subject of a public consultation. **(16<sup>th</sup> January)**

[Back to Top](#)

## Improving Literacy and Numeracy

**Mr John Dallat (SDLP – East Londonderry)** - To ask the Minister of Education what steps he will take to ensure that teachers and classroom assistants involved in improving literacy and numeracy continue to be available to those children with individual learning needs.

**Mr O’Dowd (The Minister of Education):** Legislation requires the support for children with special educational needs (SEN), specified within a statement of SEN, for example the provision of a classroom assistant supporting those with literacy and numeracy needs, to be provided from the date on which the statement is made. **(16<sup>th</sup> January)**

[Back to Top](#)

## Community Relations, Equality and Diversity Funding

**Mr John Dallat (SDLP – East Londonderry)** - To ask the Minister of Education what advice he is offering to schools that had been working to improve relations between communities through the school environment with support from Community Relations Equality and Diversity funding, which is no longer available.

**Mr O’Dowd (The Minister of Education):** Addressing community relations and citizenship issues is a minimum curriculum requirement across all Key Stages in the revised curriculum. As well as the funding delegated to schools, earmarked funding for Community Relations Equality and Diversity (CRED) and a supporting policy have been in place since 2011 to build capacity across the education workforce, disseminate good

practice and provide relevant CRED material, and significant progress has been made across all these areas. My advice to schools is that it is important that they continue to embed the good work that has already been done in this area.

As regards funding, the DE budget proposal consultation ended 29th December 2014. I am currently considering responses including views received on my proposal to end the earmarked Community Relations Equality and Diversity (CRED) funding. At the same time, substantial additional funding is being made available to encourage greater sharing in education and this work too will help improve relations between communities through the school environment. **(16<sup>th</sup> January)**

[Back to Top](#)

## Department of Health

### Child Protection Registration Process

**Ms Maeve McLaughlin (Sinn Féin – Foyle)** - To ask the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how the Child Protection registration process could be made more robust.

**Mr J Wells (The Minister for Health, Social Services and Public Safety):** Robust processes in respect of Child Protection registration are set out in the Regional Child Protection Policy and Procedures.

Similar to all processes within Health and Social Care, the Child Protection registration process can be, and is, continuously improved and made more robust through regular monitoring and review and the continuous application of learning from the implementation of the process itself.

Recent work to strengthen the Child Protection registration process includes improved involvement of children, young people and families in Case Conferences where decisions are made in respect of Child Protection registration and training of chairpersons of Child Protection case conferences to promote the consistent and robust application of thresholds in respect of Child Protection registration decision-making. **(14<sup>th</sup> January)**

[Back to Top](#)

### Central Register for Children and Adults with Down Syndrome

**Mr Oliver McMullan (Sinn Féin – East Antrim)** - To ask the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 39949/11-15, to outline the reasons for the refusal to introduce a central register for children and adults with Down Syndrome or for any other learning disability.

**Mr J Wells (The Minister for Health, Social Services and Public Safety):** My current assessment is that a central register, would not add sufficient value to planning processes to be worth the expenditure of effort and resource. I do not consider that it would be the most efficient way to gather information on the health needs of this group, or to be used as a basis of allocating resources.

Additionally, I share the concerns expressed that a register might be seen to stigmatise people falling into these groups, as others with specific needs do not need to be registered to access services.

The focus must be on refining and improving existing services and sources of information, and particularly the Directed Enhanced Services for people with learning disabilities - delivered through primary care and GP practices. This, and related initiatives, should assist in general health promotion, early detection and monitoring of conditions, and improve access to health and social care services generally for people with learning disabilities. **(14<sup>th</sup> January)**

[Back to Top](#)

### **Non-Surgical Children's Heart Centre**

**Mr Fearghal McKinney (SDLP – South Belfast)** - To ask the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an update on the financial cost of the proposed non-surgical Children's Heart Centre in Belfast.

**Mr J Wells (The Minister for Health, Social Services and Public Safety):** The cost of the Specialist Children's Cardiology Centre in Belfast, as proposed by the cardiology team from the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust in November 2014, is being finalised at present. My Department is working with officials from the Health and Social Care Board to establish the estimated cost of these proposals. I intend to make an announcement about the detail of those proposals following consideration of responses from the current consultation which ends on 23 January 2015. **(15<sup>th</sup> January)**

[Back to Top](#)

## **Marshall Report**

**Mr Fearghal McKinney (SDLP – South Belfast)** - To ask the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 38982/11-15, for a breakdown of the financial commitment his Department will undertake to implement the recommendations in the Marshall Report.

**Mr J Wells (The Minister for Health, Social Services and Public Safety):** I have established a Response Team to take forward the implementation of the recommendations in the Marshall Report. The Response Team, which is led by my Department, will consider the recommendations; provide me with a costed implementation plan by end March 2015.

On receipt of the plan, I will determine how costs can be met in the context of other pressures and priorities. I remain committed to delivering against the Marshall recommendations and to ensuring that the risk of sexual exploitation of children and young people in Northern Ireland is kept to a minimum. **(15<sup>th</sup> January)**

[Back to Top](#)

## **Transfer of Paediatric Cardiac Surgery to Dublin**

**Mr Fearghal McKinney (SDLP – South Belfast)** - To ask the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what action his Department has taken in relation to the implementation of the each key recommendation put forward in the report involving the transfer of paediatric cardiac surgery to Dublin.

**Mr J Wells (The Minister for Health, Social Services and Public Safety):** Without prejudice to the outcome of the consultation which ends on 23 January 2015, my Department has been working closely with the Department of Health in the Republic of Ireland to agree a draft action plan for implementing each of the 14 recommendations making up the all island model for Congenital Cardiac Services proposed by the International Working Group (IWG). The implementation of that action plan would only take place after my decision on the future of the service, which I intend to announce after consideration of the consultation responses. It is envisaged that a project team would be tasked with overseeing the implementation of each of the IWG's recommendations in an appropriately phased manner, should I decide to implement them.

As I said in my Oral Statement to the Assembly on 14 October 2014, the decision to proceed with planning during the consultation period is in keeping with the principle that precautions should be applied given the vulnerability of the sustainability of this service at the Belfast Trust. **(15<sup>th</sup> January)**

[Back to Top](#)

## Department of Justice

### Domestic Abuse

**Ms Claire Sugden (IND – East Londonderry)** - To ask the Minister of Justice how his Department is working with the Chief Constable to address increasing levels of domestic abuse, and to encourage victims to report crimes of this nature.

**Mr Ford (Minister of Justice):** Recorded incidents of domestic violence and abuse rose by 438 cases in 2013/14, which represents an increase of less than 1%. There was an increase of 1560 domestic violence and abuse crimes, which represents an increase of 14%. However, we recognise that domestic violence is an under-reported crime, and much effort goes into ensuring that victims have the confidence to come forward and report.

The increase in recorded crimes may be due in part to an increased awareness of the support services available and increased confidence in reporting any incidence of violence and abuse to the relevant authorities and agencies.

My Department jointly leads on Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse, along with the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety. This work is taken forward on a partnership approach across the statutory and voluntary and community sector.

The PSNI is a key partner both at the strategic and the delivery level and works closely with my officials and the other justice agencies, both on prevention work to increase reporting and ensuring a robust justice response when they do occur. **(15<sup>th</sup> January)**

[Back to Top](#)



## Department of Social Development

### Neighbourhood Renewal Fund

**Mr Jim Allister (TUV – North Antrim)** - To ask the Minister for Social Development to list the value of the funding provided by the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund since May 2011 to (i) controlled; (ii) maintained; (iii) Irish medium; and (iv) integrated schools and projects.

**Mr Storey (Minister for Social Development):** A table listing the value of funding provided by the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund since May 2011 to (i) controlled; (ii) maintained; (iii) Irish medium; and (iv) integrated schools and projects is detailed below;

Classification	Expenditure from 2011 to 2015 (£)
Controlled	3,335,828.17
Maintained	3,854,355.30
Irish Medium	18,036.20
Integrated	Nil
The following details funding to schools and projects which deliver services across more than one classification of school	
Controlled & Maintained	596,999.97
Controlled, Maintained & Integrated	2,692,359.81
Maintained & Irish Medium	387,548.51
All	91,012.52

NOTE: Caution should always be exercised in making comparisons across Neighbourhood Renewal areas and associated projects as a range of factors may influence expenditure. The main factors being the revenue investment in an area from lead Departments or from other initiatives; history of capital investment and or proposed capital investment in an area from other initiatives or mainstream sources'; size (population) of an area; geographical location and proximity to existing services; and priority needs identified in Action Plans.

**(15<sup>th</sup> January)**

[Back to Top](#)