

NICCY Summary: NI Assembly Written Answers for Week Ending 21st February 2014

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Together: Building a United Community

Mr Weir asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail the proposed process and timetable for the ten new shared campuses under Together: Building a United Community.

(AQW 29373/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The proposals for 10 new shared education campuses complements current work already underway within the Department of Education and will be targeted at infrastructure projects aimed at improving or facilitating sharing initiatives within local schools. The programme will target schools that can demonstrate the following types of sharing: shared facilities; enhanced facilities; and shared campus. A call for expressions of interest was made in January 2014 with a closing date for applications of 31 March 2014.

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Child Poverty Act 2010: Laying of Report

Ms Lo asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail the consequences of missing the deadline for laying the report to the Assembly under the Child Poverty Act 2010.

(AQW 30392/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We are required by the Child Poverty Act 2010 to Lay the Strategy in the Assembly by 24 March 2014. While it is unfortunate that we will miss this deadline, we have opted to extend the consultation period for the Delivering Social Change for Children and Young People until 31 March 2014. On balance and having sought advice on this matter, we believe this is the right decision to take, and one which will be welcomed by many given that we have received numerous requests for consideration of an extension to the consultation from a range of sources including the OFMDFM Committee.

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Sporting Clubs: Child Protection Obligations

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure what monitoring takes place to ensure that sporting clubs comply with their child protection obligations.

(AQW 30803/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: The governing bodies of sport in the north of Ireland have responsibility for ensuring that all affiliated sporting clubs are compliant with child protection obligations, including monitoring the compliance of these obligations. Through its governance programme, Sport NI, an arms length body of my Department, has introduced a process to assist all funded sport governing bodies to assess safeguarding standards. These standards are taken from guidance sponsored by the Department of Health and Social Services and Public Safety through “Our Duty to Care”. In addition, Sport NI has processes in place to ensure that any clubs, who apply for direct funding, comply with child protection obligations. Sport NI will continue to provide support to governing bodies on their child protection obligations.

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Positive Mental Health Among Pupils

Ms Fearon asked the Minister of Education how his Department is working to encourage positive mental health among pupils from an early age; and what action is being taken to improve school counselling services.

(AQW 30923/11-15)

Mr O’Dowd: The Department of Education (DE) promotes positive mental health and well-being of pupils in schools through a range of developments.

The Revised Curriculum for primary and post-primary schools has elements designed to develop the young person as an individual and to enhance young people’s own awareness of the stressors in their lives and their capacity to deal with them.

The “iMatter” Programme is intended to support the entire school community to be engaged in promoting resilient emotional health for all pupils. Under the programme a suite of homework diary inserts and posters on topics of concern to young people such as self esteem and coping with stress, worry and anxiety, and outlining sources of help are

prepared and distributed annually. Pupils are also alerted to a topical “Message of the Month” each time they access the C2K system.

The Department issued a “Guide to Managing Critical Incidents in Schools” along with a supporting DVD on 10 February. The Guide, commissioned by DE as part of the ‘iMatter’ Programme, is aimed at ensuring a regional approach to dealing with critical incidents and is designed to help schools be prepared for a critical incident and to ensure effective management before, during and after the event. The Guide is available on the DE website.

DE is a member of and funds the local Anti-Bullying Forum (NIABF) which brings together local statutory and voluntary organisations to help schools and organisations working with young people to develop appropriate strategies to prevent and deal with bullying behaviours. In August 2013 the Forum published “Effective Responses to Bullying” to support schools in the management of alleged bullying incidents. Further information is available at www.niabf.org.uk.

The Independent Counselling Service for Schools (ICSS) has been accessible to young people of postprimary age in mainstream schools since September 2007. This service was extended to postprimary aged pupils in special schools from January 2011 and has been widely welcomed by the schools involved. An average of 1432 pupils per month use the ICSS Service. As part of the current arrangements for support following a critical incident, pupils in primary schools have access to counselling support. Work will take place later this year on how access to the counselling service might be extended to primary aged pupils.

In October 2012 the Delivering Social Change programme provided funding for a series of six Signature projects, involving the establishment of 20 new nurture units to be rolled out in Primary Schools across the north of Ireland. Nurture Units offer a short term, focused intervention strategy which addresses barriers to learning arising from social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, aiming to develop and improve the child’s behaviour enabling them, after a short time in the nurture unit, to participate effectively within their mainstream class. DE provided financial assistance to a further 10 schools with existing nurture provision for the lifetime of the Signature Project (June 2015). Latest figures indicate that a total of 116 children, 75 boys and 41 girls, are currently attending the units.

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Integrated Education Schools

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Education to detail

- (i) how many new Integrated Education schools have opened; and
- (ii) how much of his budget has been used to promote integrated education, in each of the last five years.

(AQW 30948/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: No new integrated schools have opened in the last five years, nor have any Development Proposals, seeking to open new integrated schools, been published during that period. However, during the last five years, a Development Proposal to allow a school to transform from 'controlled' status to 'controlled integrated' was published and approved, as were three Development Proposals to increase enrolment numbers; two at integrated post Primary schools, and one at an integrated nursery school.

In relation to the amount of funding used to promote integrated education, Article 64 (2) of the Education Reform (NI) Order 1989 allows the Department to pay grants to a body, which has as an objective, the encouragement or promotion of integrated education. In fulfilment of this legislation, my Department provides funding annually to the Council for Integrated Education (NICIE). The amount of funding made available to NICIE during the last five years to promote and encourage integrated education is as follows:

2009/10	£579K
2010/11	£597K
2011/12	£613K
2012/13	£628K
2013/14	£646k

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Development of Integrated Education

Mr D McIlveen asked the Minister of Education how he plans to promote and develop integrated education.

(AQW 30949/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: Under Article 64 (1) of the Education Reform (NI) Order 1989, my Department has a statutory duty to encourage and facilitate the development of integrated education (i.e. the education together, at school, of Protestant and Roman Catholic pupils). I take this duty very seriously, and will continue to do so.

To help encourage and facilitate the development of integrated education, the Department of Education provides annual funding to help schools with the process of transformation to integrated status. This supports schools in the initial stages of the transformation process and with the employment of a teacher, from the minority community in the school, to assist with religious education. The budget available for 2013/14 is £185k. In addition, Article 64 (2) of the 1989 Order allows the Department to pay grants to a body which has as an objective the encouragement or promotion of integrated education. In fulfilment of this legislation, my Department provides funding annually to the NI Council for Integrated Education (NICIE). Funding of £646k has been allocated for 2013/14. I have met with officials from NICIE twice in recent months, to discuss proposals to further promote and facilitate the development and growth of integrated education. I remain willing to consider further innovative approaches which will facilitate the development of the sector. I recognise the vital and valuable contribution that integrated education, together with all other types of education, makes to building a peaceful and stable future for our children. Going forward, the Department of Education will ensure that it continues to have a rigorous approach to its duty to integrated education.

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International Review of Children's Heart Surgery

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to list the personnel appointed to the International Review of Children's Heart Surgery.
(AQW 30470/11-15)

Mr Poots: Three experts have been appointed to the Expert Group to carry out an Assessment of a potential all-island service for the future delivery of Congenital Cardiology and Cardiac Surgical services for both adults and children, recommending the most appropriate model that meets the population health needs and other requirements of both jurisdictions i.e. Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. They are:

- Dr John Mayer, Chair in Cardiovascular Studies at the Children's Hospital, Boston (to chair the Expert Group);
- Dr Adrian Moran, Consultant Cardiologist from the Maine Medical Centre, USA, and fellow of the American Academy of Paediatrics and the American College of Cardiology;
- Dr John Sinclair, Consultant Paediatric Cardiac Anaesthetist and Intensivist at Yorkhill Children's Hospital, Glasgow.

The Expert Group will be supported by specialist professional nursing representation and other expertise as required.

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Autistic Spectrum Disorder: Understanding the Needs of Children Northern Ireland Assessment

Mr McNarry asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether each child who is diagnosed with autistic spectrum disorder also has an Understanding the Needs of Children Northern Ireland assessment; and to detail give the number who have received each, broken down by Health and Social Care Trust.
(AQW 30667/11-15)

Mr Poots: The information requested is not readily available and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

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Protocol: 'Meeting the Accommodation and Support Needs of 16-21 Year Olds'

Mr F McCann asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail when the protocol 'Meeting the accommodation and support needs of 16-21 year olds'

- (i) is to be formally released; and
- (ii) will become operational.

(AQW 30871/11-15)

Mr Poots: There are several documents under development relating to this subject. It is assumed that the document referred to in this question relates to "Meeting the Accommodation and Support Needs of 16-21 year olds: Regional Good Practice Guidance Agreed by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive and Health and Social Care Trusts."

This good practice Guidance is jointly owned by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) and the five Health and Social Care Trusts (Trusts). Its development has been facilitated by the Regional Health and Social Care Board (HSCB) with assistance from the Department of Justice and the Youth Justice Agency and is currently in the final drafting stage. It should be noted that the draft Guidance, whilst not formally released, has been a focus of recent workshops. I have been advised that the lead agencies, which have been fully involved in its development, are currently working to the spirit, intent and requirements of the Guidance.

(i) The Guidance will be issued before the 30 April 2014. Prior to its release, the document will require formal endorsement and dissemination by the Trust Directors and the NIHE Chief Executive within their respective organisations for implementation. At the same time, the HSCB will formally issue the document to relevant voluntary and community organisations for information.

(ii) The Guidance will be operational from the point of issue and dissemination by the lead agencies.

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Hydebank Wood Young Offenders Centre and Prison: Detention of Children

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Justice, given that the Youth Justice Review and the Prison Review commented on the unsuitability of Hydebank Wood Young Offenders Centre for the detention of children, whether his Department will bring forward legislation to permanently end the detention of children with adults in Hydebank Wood Young Offenders Centre in all circumstances; and if so, to outline the timeframe for this. (AQW 30695/11-15)

Mr Ford: On publication of the Youth Justice Review Implementation Plan, I gave a commitment to remove all children from custody at Hydebank Wood Young Offenders Centre and no child has been held there since November 2012. Whilst this is currently being achieved by administrative means, I will be bringing forward legislation to underpin the position. A public consultation on this, and other aspects of custodial arrangements for children, has recently concluded and we are considering the responses with a view to making the necessary legislative amendments through the Fines and Enforcement Bill, which is scheduled for introduction in the autumn.

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