

## **NICCY Summary: Written Assembly Questions week of 5<sup>th</sup> December 2014**

- **Delivering Social Change**
- **Sure Start**
- **NI Autism Strategy and Action Plan**
- **Autism Act (Northern Ireland) 2011**
- **Autism Act (Northern Ireland) 2011**
- **Shared Education**
- **Controlled Schools Sectoral Body**
- **Policy for Schools**
- **Shared Education Campuses Programme**
- **New Education Authority**
- **United Youth Programme**
- **Young People and Employment**
- **Counselling Provision**

- **Child Sexual Exploitation**
- **Funding for Specialist Counselling Services**
- **Support Services for Children and Young People**
- **Paediatric Endocrine Service**
- **Paediatric Services**
- **Impact of extra funding for NHS**
- **Health Worker Training**
- **Paediatric Endocrine Service**
- **Children's Congenital Cardiac Services**
- **Travel Claims for Child's Heart Surgery**
- **Greater Transparency on Vetting Procedures**
- **Civil Injunctions**
- **Fuel Poverty**

## Office of First and Deputy First Minister

### Delivering Social Change

**Mr Daithí McKay (Sinn Féin – North Antrim)** - To ask the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on Delivering Social Change.

**Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness:** Considerable progress is being made in achieving positive outcomes through the delivery of the signature programmes. Not only are we already seeing tangible outcomes on the ground, the programmes will also inform joined-up and evidence-based policies that will, in time, provide a significant influence on mainstream programmes.

Work is also underway on the development of three signature programmes in partnership with Atlantic Philanthropies which will focus on Dementia, Early Intervention and Shared Education to improve the lives of those who need it most.

The first phase of the Bright Start Childcare Strategy (A Strategic Framework and Key First Actions) was launched on 25 September 2013. The Framework sets out a general direction of travel for the Strategy, while the 15 Key First Actions represent an initial response to the childcare priorities identified during public consultation and research. All 15 Key First Actions are now being taken forward and are being delivered through the School Age Childcare (SAC) Grant Scheme.

The first phase of Bright Start was intended as interim to the full Bright Start Childcare Strategy, which is currently in development ahead of its intended publication before the end of the current financial year.

Looking to the future and using a co-design process with stakeholders, a new Delivering Social Change Strategy for Children and Young People post 2016 will be developed.

The Executive is also working on a longer term approach to improve the quality of life for our communities in the areas of health, education, employment, family and community cohesion. The outcome of this work will be a framework for future social policy interventions and investment plans. **(2<sup>nd</sup> December)**

[Back to Top](#)

## Department of Education

### Sure Start

**Mr Nelson McCausland (DUP – North Belfast)** - To ask the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 37527/11-15, when the Independent Review of Sure Start will be published.

**Mr O’Dowd (The Minister of Education):** The Department expects to receive a final report by the end of the year.

I will wish to have an opportunity to consider the way forward for Sure Start taking account of the report findings, as well as wider Government and Departmental priorities and the overall budgetary position, after which the report will be published. (**2<sup>nd</sup> December**)

[Back to Top](#)

### NI Autism Strategy and Action Plan

**Mr Dominic Bradley (SDLP – Newry and Armagh)** - To ask the Minister of Education to detail the cross departmental projects (i) in place; and (ii) that are planned in response to the Autism Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 requirement for cross departmental collaboration to implement the NI Autism Strategy and Action Plan.

**Mr O’Dowd (The Minister of Education):** My Department will continue to work closely with the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety and other key Departments/Agencies to ensure that joined up working is effective for those children and young people who rely on the services of more than one sector.

There is currently a great deal of effective collaboration between Health and Education Autism Spectrum Disorder Services, ongoing and developing, in respect of diagnostic assessment clinics, support for pupils with autism and joint training programmes. In addition, the Education and Library Boards (ELBs) actively participate in Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services led diagnostic clinics.

Currently, the ELBs are involved in joint home-based or school/clinic based meetings with Health and Social Care Trust professionals to ensure seamless care and support is delivered at transition stages. Consideration is currently being given to the expansion of these co-ordinated health and education transition teams.

I remain committed to the close collaboration between the Education and Health sectors and other Departments in supporting pupils with special educational needs, including those with autism. **(2<sup>nd</sup> December)**

[Back to Top](#)

### **Autism Act (Northern Ireland) 2011**

**Mr Dominic Bradley (SDLP – Newry and Armagh)** - To ask the Minister of Education what steps his Department has taken in relation to implementing the Autism Act (Northern Ireland) 2011.

**Mr O’Dowd (The Minister of Education):** The NI Autism Act 2011 prescribed that the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety lead on the development and implementation of a cross departmental strategy. Subsequently, the Autism Strategy (2013-2015) and Action Plan (2013-2016) set out the NI Executive’s commitment to improving services and support for people with autism. My Department has been fully engaged in this process.

Both the Strategy and Action Plan have been developed through a process of collaborative and consultative working between people with autism, their families and carers, NI government departments and some key community and voluntary sector organisations.

My Department is working closely with the Education and Library Boards and the Middletown Centre for Autism on the implementation of the education-related actions; and will continue to work with other Departments in supporting pupils with autism. I recognise the importance of close collaboration between the Education and Health sectors and currently effective collaboration is ongoing and developing to support for pupils with autism.

I am confident that the key actions in the Autism Action Plan which require specific input from education sector bodies will ensure that children and young people with autism receive a high quality education that prepares them for life and work and enables them to fulfil their potential. **(2<sup>nd</sup> December)**

[Back to Top](#)

## **Autism Act (Northern Ireland) 2011**

**Mr Dominic Bradley (SDLP – Newry and Armagh)** - To ask the Minister of Education to detail the budget allocation for implementation of the Autism Act (NI) 2011, including the required compliance with the amended Disability Discrimination Act.

**Mr O’Dowd (The Minister of Education):** I am fully committed to supporting pupils with autism and since 2011/12 I have provided additional resources of £6m, over and above the core funding for all special educational needs, to support autism.

The NI Executive’s Autism Strategy and Action Plan is a key requirement of the Autism Act (NI) 2011. The strategy identifies that even though the initial Action Plan attached to the Strategy realistically assumes that there may be limited additional investment, this does not mean that progress on the development of autism services in the future cannot be achieved. My Department, through the Education and Library Boards and the Middletown Centre for Autism will continue to deliver and develop services to ensure the needs of children with autism are met and to provide support for parents/carers. This will be achieved through the innovative and efficient use of the considerable existing resources invested in this area. **(2<sup>nd</sup> December)**

[Back to Top](#)

## **Shared Education**

**Mr Steven Agnew (Green Party – North Down)** - To ask the Minister of Education whether his Department has undertaken its own research into shared education; and if not, whether it has funded any research on shared education.

**Mr O’Dowd (The Minister of Education):** There is an extensive body of international research regarding the effectiveness of school collaboration generally and in divided societies more particularly.

This has been supplemented by specific local research evidence on recent Shared Education pilot projects. There is an active and vibrant Shared Education research community in our universities.

I appointed a Ministerial Advisory Group to report on how best shared education could be advanced. They undertook a wide consultation and research as part of their work.

A major evaluation was undertaken by the Education and Training Inspectorate on the International Fund for Ireland funded shared education project. In addition, the 2013 School Omnibus Survey included a module of questions on Shared Education. The survey has provided an important baseline measure of participation, perceptions and costs associated with Shared Education. Shared Education will be included in future Omnibus Surveys.

The recently launched Delivering Social Change Shared Education Signature project will provide further local research evidence on Shared Education. A range of educational and reconciliation outcomes from the project will be fully monitored and evaluated.

Additionally my Department will undertake a consultation on a Shared Education Bill which I plan to bring to the Assembly. **(2<sup>nd</sup> December)**

[Back to Top](#)

### **Controlled Schools Sectoral Body**

**Miss Michelle McIlveen (DUP – Strangford)** - To ask the Minister of Education when the controlled schools sectoral body will be operational.

**Mr O’Dowd (The Minister of Education):** My Department has provided funding to support the Working Group which will establish a Controlled schools’ support body. This group recently submitted an application for funding of costs associated with the establishment and running of the controlled schools’ support body. My officials have requested further information to support this claim and will progress the necessary appraisal and approvals on receipt of this information. **(2<sup>nd</sup> December)**

[Back to Top](#)

### **Policy for Schools**

**Ms Claire Sugden (Ind – East Londonderry)** - To ask the Minister of Education what plans he has to bring forward policy for schools in each of the education sectors which are not provided for under the remit of the new Education Authority.

**Mr O’Dowd (The Minister of Education):** My Department makes policy and legislation in relation to all grant-aided schools. The Education Authority will inherit the role currently performed by the education and library boards, which is to deliver services in accordance

and legislation made by the Department.

In the case of voluntary grammar and grant-maintained integrated schools, the services currently provided by the education and library boards will continue to be made available by the Education Authority. These schools will continue to receive their Local Management of Schools (LMS) recurrent funding directly from the Department.

**(3<sup>rd</sup> December)**

[Back to Top](#)

### **Shared Education Campuses Programme**

**Mrs Sandra Overend (UUP – Mid Ulster)** - To ask the Minister of Education to detail the schools that were unsuccessful in the first call for expressions of interest in the Shared Education Campuses Programme; and to outline the reasons for this.

**Mr O’Dowd (The Minister of Education):** The schools which were unsuccessful under the first call to the Shared Education Campuses Programme are listed below.

- St Vincent de Paul Primary School & Ligoniel Primary School, Belfast
- Lilliput Complex
- St Malachy’s College, Belfast Royal Academy, Carr’s Glen Primary School
- St Mary’s Primary School, Brookeborough & Brookeborough Primary School
- Sperrin Integrated College, Magherafelt
- Duneane Primary School & Moneynick Primary School
- North Coast Integrated College, Ballysally Primary School, Millburn Primary School, Coleraine
- St Mary’s Convent, Magherafelt, Sperrin Integrated College, Holy Family Primary School, Magherafelt Primary School
- Royal School, St Catherine’s College, St Patrick’s College, Saints & Scholars Integrated Primary School, City of Armagh High School, Armstrong Primary School, Lisanally Special School, Armagh
- Newtownhamilton High School, St Paul’s High School, Bessbrook, Newry High School, St Joseph’s High School, Crossmaglen
- Holy Trinity Primary School, Cookstown & Cookstown Primary School

Ineligible applications:-

- ‘Brighter Futures’ Alternative Education Provision, Belfast; and
- North Belfast STEM Centre (Hazelwood Integrated College).



Of the 16 expressions of interest received, two were deemed to be ineligible, eight were deemed not to have met the essential criteria and six were considered as having met the essential criteria. These six were then scored and prioritised against the set criteria, with the three highest scoring projects selected to proceed to the next stage.

Individual feedback was provided to the proposals which were unsuccessful at the first call. They were advised that they could resubmit their application under the next call for proposals, if they considered they could address the issues identified in the feedback.  
**(3<sup>rd</sup> December)**

[Back to Top](#)

### **New Education Authority**

**Miss Michelle McIlveen (DUP – Strangford)** - To ask the Minister of Education when he intends to announce the membership of the new Education Authority.

**Mr O’Dowd (The Minister of Education):** My intention is that the full membership of the Board will be appointed by 1 April 2015. A press release will issue announcing the appointments at the appropriate time.

**(4<sup>th</sup> December)**

[Back to Top](#)

## Department of Employment and Learning

### United Youth Programme

**Mr Mike Nesbitt (UUP – Strangford)** - To ask the Minister for Employment and Learning to outline the current budget for the delivery of the United Youth Programme.

**Dr Farry (Minister for Employment and Learning):** The United Youth Programme is currently being developed through an innovative co-design process, which involves key stakeholders including young people themselves. As part of this co-design process organisations have been asked to come forward with concept proposals to test different approaches that could achieve the best outcomes for United Youth.

My Department is committed to this co-design approach and is keen that the pilot work will commence early 2015. I have set aside £1m for the current financial year to allow pilots to commence. However, confirmation of the necessary central funding to allow pilot work to be completed during the 2015/16 financial year is necessary to allow pilots to begin early in 2015. The number of pilots going forward will obviously depend on the level of funding secured.

United Youth pilot work will inform the shape of the eventual programme and provide more detail in terms of the cost of delivering it. **(2<sup>nd</sup> December)**

[Back to Top](#)

### Young People and Employment

**Mr Alex Easton (DUP – North Down)** - To ask the Minister for Employment and Learning how he is encouraging young people to look for employment.

**Dr Farry (Minister for Employment and Learning):** My Department is committed to offering a quality all age service to help individuals overcome barriers to work and to move towards and into work at the earliest opportunity. This Client Offer is delivered by Employment Service staff working throughout our network of 35 Jobs and Benefits Offices and Jobcentres.

The Client Offer includes an individually tailored Work Readiness Assessment and an action plan which sets out what the client needs to do to prepare for work. Within the Offer a range of support is available including Job Clubs, which include activities such as CV

building and interview techniques. These are delivered in partnership with local employers and community organisations. Staff may also refer clients to a range of programmes, specialist support and incentives when appropriate. Additional support is available, where appropriate, from my Department's Careers Service who support the Employment Service in assisting young people into work.

In relation to the 18 to 24 age group I introduced the Youth Employment Scheme in July 2012, which provides the opportunity for participants to undertake periods of work experience and skills development to gain the skills which employers are looking for so that they can compete for jobs. In addition employers who are offering a full-time permanent job can avail of up to 52 weeks subsidy with a training allowance.

As part of the Executive's Economy and Jobs Initiative my Department introduced First Start as a targeted intervention for unemployed 18-24 year olds. This provides a period of supported employment for a minimum of 6 months within either the private, public or third sector and is aimed at those young people who have been unemployed and claiming Jobseekers Allowance for at least 6 months. **(2<sup>nd</sup> December)**

[Back to Top](#)

## Department of Health

### Counselling Provision

**Mr Fearghal McKinney (SDLP – South Belfast)** - To ask the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether he has any plans to provide counselling provision for children and young people who have been sexually abused.

**Mr J Wells (The Minister for Health, Social Services and Public Safety):** Children and young people who have been sexually abused can also avail of counselling provision through existing Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, Psychological Therapies Services and the Family Trauma Centre.

My Department currently provides the regional Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) with £450,000 per year to provide specialist services in the aftermath of a sexual assault, rape or an incident involving childhood sexual abuse. The SARC offers a comprehensive range of services, which include emotional support for victims of sexual abuse and a 24-hour advice and information line.

In addition, counselling support is also available to children and young people who have been victims of abuse, through a range of community and voluntary sector organisations including Barnardo's, NSPCC and Nexus NI. **(1<sup>st</sup> December)**

[Back to Top](#)

### Child Sexual Exploitation

**Mr Fearghal McKinney (SDLP – South Belfast)** - To ask the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether he plans to establish adequate services and structures to address the projected increase reporting of individuals following a public awareness campaign on child sexual exploitation.

**Mr J Wells (The Minister for Health, Social Services and Public Safety):** The Health and Social Care Board continuously monitor's service demands and escalates pressures to the Department where necessary. An additional investment of £3,000,000 was made in this financial year to respond to the additional pressures in family and childcare services across all five Health and Social Care Trusts (HSCTs), associated with increasing numbers of looked after children.

It is likely that a public awareness campaign linked to child sexual exploitation will lead to greater demands on HSCT family and childcare services. This will be kept under review.  
**(2<sup>nd</sup> December)**

[Back to Top](#)

### **Funding for Specialist Counselling Services**

**Mr Fearghal McKinney (SDLP – South Belfast)** - To ask the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety whether he will safeguard funding for specialist counselling services for people in need of support during and following instances of child sexual exploitation.

**Mr J Wells (The Minister for Health, Social Services and Public Safety):** My Department currently provides the regional Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) with £450,000 per year to provide specialist services in the aftermath of a sexual assault, rape or an incident involving childhood sexual abuse. The SARC offers a comprehensive range of services, including 24 hour access to crisis support, forensic examinations, screening and treatment for sexually transmitted infections, emergency contraception and emotional support. The SARC also offers a 24-hour advice and information line. In addition, Nexus NI has secured a Health and Social Care Board contract to deliver counselling to survivors of sexual abuse across the five Health and Social Care Trusts. My department also provides grant funding to Nexus to cover its administration costs.  
**(2<sup>nd</sup> December)**

[Back to Top](#)

### **Support Services for Children and Young People**

**Mrs Jo-Anne Dobson (UUP – Upper Bann)** - To ask the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety why services are not in place outside the Western and Southern Health and Social Care Trusts catchment areas to support children and young people who have been subject to sexual abuse.

**Mr J Wells (The Minister for Health, Social Services and Public Safety):** Each of the five Health and Social Care Trusts (HSCT) provides a range of services, both therapeutic and supportive, for children and young people who have been subject to sexual abuse.

Some services such as Family Centres, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, Counselling Centres and Trauma Centres are provided on a Trust basis. Other services, such as the Rowan Sexual Assault Referral Centre, the Barnardo's NI Safe Choices Service and the Child Care Centre in Belfast have region-wide reach.

Some services are provided directly by the HSCT whilst others are provided in partnership with other agencies in the voluntary or community sectors, including NSPCC.

**(2<sup>nd</sup> December)**

[Back to Top](#)

### **Paediatric Endocrine Service**

**Mr Michael Copeland (UUP – East Belfast)** - To ask the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for his assessment of the current pressures on the paediatric endocrine service.

**Mr J Wells (The Minister for Health, Social Services and Public Safety):** The Belfast Health and Social Care Trust is receiving more referrals to this service than the Trust currently has capacity and this is impacting on waiting times. I understand that the Trust is presently advertising for a third consultant paediatrician for this team. It is expected that this appointment will reduce the capacity gap in this service and lessen the waiting time for patients.

Referrals to the paediatric endocrine service that are triaged as urgent are, on average, offered an appointment within six weeks. The current longest waiting patient, triaged as routine, without a date for first outpatient appointment is waiting 55 weeks.

With regard to the medical risk for patients awaiting an outpatient appointment; patients remain under the care of the referring consultant paediatrician until, at least, the first endocrinology appointment. Should a consultant consider a need to change the clinical urgency for their patients this may be communicated to the service. In addition, there is a 24/7 paediatric telephone advice service to all NI consultant paediatricians for any urgent queries. **(2<sup>nd</sup> December)**

[Back to Top](#)

## Paediatric Services

**Mr Chris Hazzard (Sinn Féin – South Down)** - To ask the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust meets local demand for paediatric services in South Down.

**Mr J Wells (The Minister for Health, Social Services and Public Safety):** The South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust provides both hospital and community paediatric services.

Acute paediatric clinics are held weekly in the Downe Hospital. These are delivered by a consultant paediatrician. The paediatrician is supported from acute services and liaises with colleagues in the Ulster Hospital should there be a need for hospital based care. Referrals are transferred across hospital sites within the Trust to ensure the shortest waiting time for patients.

Community paediatric services in South Down are provided in the Children's Centre in the Downe Hospital. Community paediatricians work in uni-disciplinary and multi-disciplinary clinics with allied health professionals and also with the community children's nursing team. (3<sup>rd</sup> December) [Back to Top](#)

## Impact of extra funding for NHS

**Mr Fearghal McKinney (SDLP – South Belfast)** - To ask the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, given the urgent issues around Health Service cuts, to explain the implications of the recent announcement by the Chancellor of the Exchequer of an extra £2 billion pounds for the NHS and its potential impact on the Health Service in Northern Ireland.

**Mr J Wells (The Minister for Health, Social Services and Public Safety):** The amount of additional funding to be allocated to Northern Ireland as a result of this announcement has yet to be confirmed by HM Treasury. Any allocation to my Department from these additional funds is a matter for the Executive to determine.

Clearly, I will want to access as much funding as possible to help alleviate some of the difficult financial restraints being placed on the health service and to help meet the increasing demands on health and social care services. (5<sup>th</sup> December) [Back to Top](#)

## **Health Worker Training**

**Mr Fearghal McKinney (SDLP – South Belfast)** - To ask the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, given that training is provided to health workers in each Health and Social Care Trust in relation to detecting, reporting and identifying instances of child sexual exploitation, whether this training is compulsory or voluntary.

**Mr J Wells (The Minister for Health, Social Services and Public Safety):** DHSSPS has categorized child sexual exploitation as a form of child sexual abuse since 1996.

Safeguarding children against sexual exploitation is the responsibility of all staff and hence is included in the mandatory induction programme provided to all new members of the HSC.

This issue is also addressed through various aspects of the mandatory training provided to HSC staff according to their professional roles and responsibilities. **(5<sup>th</sup> December)**

[Back to Top](#)

## **Paediatric Endocrine Service**

**Mr Michael Copeland (UUP – East Belfast)** - To ask the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number of annual referrals to the paediatric endocrine service in each of the last five years; and how this compared to capacity at the time.

**Mr J Wells (The Minister for Health, Social Services and Public Safety):** Belfast Health and Social Care (HSC) Trust provides a regional specialized Paediatric Endocrine service based in the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children. Whilst other Trusts may provide a local service for children and young people with diabetes or other endocrine disorders, this answer relates to patients referred to the regional Paediatric Endocrine service.

Belfast HSC Trust has advised that prior to 2012/13, all referrals for the Paediatric Endocrine service were recorded under the Paediatric Medicine specialty, and, as such, it is not possible to accurately identify prior to 2012/13 referrals for the sub specialty of Paediatric Endocrinology.



The table below details the annual referrals to the Paediatric Endocrine service since 2012/2013, broken down by referring HSC Trust.

Referring HSC Trust	Number of referrals in each financial year to the regional Paediatric Endocrine Service			Total Referrals
	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	
Belfast	44	89	38	171
Northern	43	82	42	167
South Eastern	30	86	34	150
Southern	31	80	35	146
Western	20	47	30	97
Not recorded	-	5	-	5
<b>Northern Ireland</b>	<b>168</b>	<b>389</b>	<b>179</b>	<b>736</b>

Source: Belfast HSC Trust

\*Please note 2014/15 includes figures up until week commencing 22nd November 2014.

Until January 2011, Belfast HSC Trust had 0.5 whole time equivalent (WTE) Consultant Paediatrician, who provided endocrine, diabetic and general medical clinics. Following their retirement, Belfast HSC Trust was unable to recruit a suitable candidate into this vacant post and therefore utilised locum Paediatricians when available.

However in October 2013, Belfast HSC Trust permanently appointed 1 WTE Consultant Paediatric Endocrinologist who also delivers diabetes services. In June 2013, Belfast Trust appointed an additional 1 WTE locum Consultant Paediatrician with special interest in Endocrinology and Diabetes. The Trust expects this post to be filled by a permanent member of staff in April 2015.

The Trust is currently advertising for a third consultant paediatrician for this team with a special interest in endocrinology and diabetes.

**(5<sup>th</sup> December)**

[Back to Top](#)

## Children's Congenital Cardiac Services

**Mrs Jo-Anne Dobson (UUP – Upper Bann)** - To ask the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for his assessment of the costs to his Department of his proposals for an 'All Ireland' service for children's congenital cardiac services; and how this compares to the historical costs of operating the service based in Belfast.

**Mr J Wells (The Minister for Health, Social Services and Public Safety):** As part of the process for preparing for implementation of the all island congenital cardiac service recommended by the International Working Group, which is subject to a period of public consultation, the detail of such a model and the associated costs will be agreed respective commissioners in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. I will announce details of this once I have made my final decision following the consultation exercise. At this stage, my understanding is that in moving to such a model the current need to transfer the majority of surgery and interventional cardiology cases to centres in England would be reduced over time as the proposed model is implemented, with most surgery and interventional cardiology instead taking place in Dublin. In doing so, the funding that is currently required to operate the surgical and interventional aspect of this service – some £5m annually – would be made available to fund the reconfigured service.

**(5<sup>th</sup> December)** [Back to Top](#)

## Travel Claims for Child's Heart Surgery

**Mr Robin Swann (UUP – North Antrim)** - To ask the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the average claim for a family who has had to travel outside of Northern Ireland for their child's heart surgery or treatment in the last twelve months.

**Mr J Wells (The Minister for Health, Social Services and Public Safety):** As stated in my response to AQW 38998/11-15, information is not readily available for the last twelve months as the Health and Social Care Board does not routinely analyse subsistence data in this way; however, following a one –off analysis of travel claims received by the Health and Social Care Board, information is available for the period from January 2014 to October 2014.

Based on the information obtained from this one-off analysis, the total reimbursement for the ten month period from January 2014 to October 2014 in respect of the 65 families was £31,488.20 which equates to £484.43 per family. **(5th December)** [Back to Top](#)

## Department of Justice

### Greater Transparency on Vetting Procedures

**Mr Fearghal McKinney (SDLP – South Belfast)** - To ask the Minister of Justice, in light of the recent publication of the Marshall Report regarding Child Sexual Exploitation, to detail any dialogue which has taken place with the authorities in the Republic of Ireland to establish greater transparency on Gardai vetting and Access NI, to ensure that perpetrators who cross the border are not in close contact with vulnerable children.

**Mr Ford (Minister of Justice):** The Report of the Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation, chaired by Professor Marshall, contained 17 key recommendations and 60 supporting recommendations. Responsibility for taking forward the recommendations crosses a number of Departments and agencies, including the Department of Justice. My Department will work with others in considering the recommendations, including DHSSPS and the Safeguarding Board as well as justice agencies.

In relation to AccessNI specifically, where an individual seeks to work with children or adults in vulnerable circumstances, an application is usually made for an enhanced criminal record check. If the individual either lives in the Republic of Ireland or has lived there in the previous five years, AccessNI will refer the application to Police Service of Northern Ireland. In turn PSNI will liaise with An Garda Síochána, using existing cross border arrangements for the exchange of police information and request any relevant information on the applicant. Where relevant information is available and provided to PSNI, this will be included within the enhanced disclosure certificate.

In addition, the Home Office recently agreed with the Irish Government to transfer details of a number of individuals with serious criminal convictions in that jurisdiction, but believed to be living in the United Kingdom, to the Police National Computer (PNC). This database is searched by AccessNI for every application made. The exchange of criminal information between countries is a reserved matter for the Home Office. **(1<sup>st</sup> December)**

[Back to Top](#)

## Civil Injunctions

**Lord Morrow of Clogher Valley (DUP – Fermanagh and South Tyrone)** - To ask the Minister of Justice, following the publication of the Marshall Report on child sexual exploitation, what consideration is being given to civil injunctions similar to those granted by Mr Justice Keehan at Birmingham High Court against a number of men believed to be sexually exploiting a child but where there is currently insufficient evidence to secure criminal convictions at this time; and whether he will discuss this with the Minister for Health, Social Services and Public Safety.

**Mr Ford (Minister of Justice):** I understand that in the case referred to the Council made use of existing powers to apply to the civil courts for an injunction to prevent a number of men coming into contact with children. It is my understanding that it is already open to Health and Social Care Trusts in Northern Ireland to apply for this type of injunction and courts would consider each case on its merits.

The Inquiry Report into Child Sexual Exploitation chaired by Professor Marshall contained 17 key recommendations and 60 supporting recommendations. Responsibility for taking forward the Recommendations crosses a number of Departments and agencies, including the Department of Justice. I, along with colleagues within the Justice System, will now consider carefully the Report and those Recommendations and will respond to the Inquiry with our plans for taking any actions forward.

In tackling child sexual exploitation, the Department of Justice will continue to liaise with the DHSSPS and the Safeguarding Board in their roles in the protection of children to ensure that where such crimes occur, agencies work together to protect and support victims and bring perpetrators to justice. **(4<sup>th</sup> December)**

[Back to Top](#)

## Department of Social Development

### Fuel Poverty

**Mr Alex Easton (DUP – North Down)** - To ask the Minister for Social Development how many households are deemed to be in fuel poverty.

**Mr Storey (Minister for Social Development):** The 2011 Northern Ireland House Condition Survey shows that 42% (294,200) of households in Northern Ireland were in fuel poverty.

*The Information provided in this response is governed by the Principles and Protocols of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. This is enforced by UK Statistics Authority.*

**(5<sup>th</sup> December)**

[Back to Top](#)