

NICCY Summary: Written Assembly Questions week of 9th January 2015

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Office of First and Deputy First Minister

Funding for Nurture Units

Mr Peter Weir (DUP – North Down) - To ask the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail the level of funding provided by their Department to nurture units, in each of the last three years.

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Nurture Units Programme is one of the six initial Delivering Social Change Signature Programmes, announced by us in October 2012.

Up to October 2014 Monitoring Round, we have allocated a total of £2.32m to the Nurture Unit Signature Programme, broken down in each of the last three financial years as follows:

- 2012/13£0.00m
- 2013/14£1.32m
- 2014/15£1.00m*

* As at October 2014

It is hoped that further funds will be allocated to this Signature Programme during the remainder of this financial year, and next. **(8th January)**

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Historical Abuse

Mr Steven Agnew (GPNI – North Down) - To ask the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on discussions with the Minister for Justice and Equality regarding the alleged historical abuse of children from Northern Ireland at Bethany Home and Westbank Orphanage in the Republic of Ireland.

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Our dialogue with the Minister for Justice, Equality and Defence, on this matter has been by way of correspondence.

We were heartened to note that the Taoiseach announced in June that Bethany Home would be included in the Commission of Inquiry into Mother and Baby Homes in the Republic of Ireland. The full scope of that Inquiry will not be known until its terms of reference are published. **(8th January)** [Back to Top](#)

Delivering Social Change

Mr Mike Nesbitt (UUP – Strangford) - To ask the First Minister and deputy First Minister what is the estimated (i) resource; and (ii) capital Departmental Expenditure Limit required for 2015/16 in order to administer Delivering Social Change, broken down by project.

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: In relation to the six Delivering Social Change Signature Programmes, announced by us in October 2012 and out of a currently known revenue budget of £14m, for 2015/16, it is proposed to allocate some £5.5m as follows;

- Literacy and Numeracy (DE) £2.9m
- Family Support Hubs (DHSSPS) £0.6m
- Parenting Support (DHSSPS) £0.3m
- Nurture Units (DSD/DE) £0.4m
- Social Enterprise Hubs (DSD/DETI) £1.3m

The full budget requirement has already been met in respect of DEL's Community Family Support Programme and no capital Departmental Expenditure will be incurred during 2015/16. **(8th January)**

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Historical Abuse Inquiry

Mr Mike Nesbitt (UUP – Strangford) - To ask the First Minister and deputy First Minister whether funding is guaranteed to ensure the completion of the Historical Institutional Abuse Inquiry; and if so, to detail how much has been allocated for (i) the remainder of the current budget year; and (ii) 2015/16.

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Historical Institutional Abuse Inquiry has been carefully planned and costed to ensure that it meets the needs of victims and survivors and fulfils its Terms of Reference. Funding for the Inquiry has been ring-fenced centrally.

The current estimated cost of the Inquiry is £15.7million. The financial implications for the 12 month extension requested by the Inquiry chairperson are presently under consideration. **(8th January)**

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Department of Education

Awareness of Domestic Abuse Educational Programmes

Ms Claire Sugden (IND – East Londonderry) - To ask the Minister of Education to detail the existing educational programmes which raise awareness of domestic abuse among young people; and whether he plans to introduce further programmes.

Mr O’Dowd (The Minister of Education): The Department supports education and awareness-raising through a number of approaches:

- DE funds the Women’s Aid Federation for the delivery of the ‘Helping Hands’ programme which addresses challenging issues for children of personal space, safety, planning, and awareness of acceptable and unacceptable behaviours. It supports the aims and objectives of the Primary Curriculum at Key Stages 1 and 2 and is designed for children aged between 8 and 11. Included within this is ‘Social Guardians’ training for primary teachers, allowing them to deliver and support the ‘Helping Hands’ programme.
- The Department also supports schools through the ‘iMatter’ Programme, in promoting resilient emotional health for all pupils by providing advice and support to post-primary aged pupils on issues such as sex abuse, domestic violence and abusive relationships.
- My Department is a contributor to the DHSSPS-led draft Domestic Violence and Sexual Abuse Strategy Section 2 of the draft contains 4 agreed priorities for Education viz:
 - Teachers will have the necessary skills to teach about sensitive subjects, including child abuse, domestic and sexual violence.
 - Teachers will be alert to pupils experiencing distress and trained to respond appropriately.
 - Teachers will have access to a range of age appropriate and evaluated resources to support the teaching and learning of sensitive subjects and;
 - Quality assurance arrangements will be established to ensure that the preventative curriculum offered in schools is effective.

These priorities will largely fulfilled by a project that has been commissioned from the NSPCC to develop an ‘effective preventative education programme’ involving a learning package of training, development and support for schools to implement delivery of ‘keeping safe’ messages to all primary school aged children.

The project will involve the development, roll-out and evaluation of a comprehensive Continuing Professional Development package of training, development and ongoing support for school leaders, teaching and nonteaching staff, and parents in the primary school sector. **(9th January)**

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Department of Health

Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Strategy

Ms Claire Sugden (IND – East Londonderry) - To ask the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an update on the Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Strategy.

Mr J Wells (The Minister for Health, Social Services and Public Safety): A public consultation exercise on the Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Strategy launched on 15 January 2014 and officially closed on 11 April 2014. The consultation received 69 responses.

All 69 consultation responses, as well as a summary Consultation Response Report, were published on the Department's website on 26 November 2014.

The Strategy is on course for publication in March 2015. **(8th January)**

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Medical Treatment outside Northern Ireland

Mr Robin Swann (UUP – North Antrim) - To ask the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 38997/11-15, whether the Board is producing a new policy or adapting an existing one on the subsistence and travel needs for families travelling outside of Northern Ireland for their child's medical treatment; and whether the Health and Social Care Board consulted with relevant organisations on this policy.

Mr J Wells (The Minister for Health, Social Services and Public Safety): The Health and Social Care Board's (HSCB) current approach to reimbursement for patient travel and subsistence costs is based on the policies used by legacy Health and Social Services Boards prior to their amalgamation into one regional Board. The Board now proposes to formalise these into one formal policy which will be publicly available on its website. This policy, which will apply to all patients and not just paediatric patients, will be the subject of a formal engagement exercise with relevant stakeholder groups and with a representative sample of patients who have previously sought reimbursement for costs associated with treatment outside Northern Ireland. **(8th January)**

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Child's Heart Surgery or Treatment

Mr Robin Swann (UUP – North Antrim) - To ask the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AQW 38999/11-15, to detail the average length of stay for families travelling outside of Northern Ireland for their child's heart surgery or treatment.

Mr J Wells (The Minister for Health, Social Services and Public Safety): The average length of stay for families travelling outside of Northern Ireland for their child's heart surgery or treatment is 16 days (17 days if travel time is included). The length of stay depends on the treatment needs of the patient, and varies between 1 and 116 days.
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Respite Services in Omagh and Derry City

Mr Fearghal McKinney (SDLP – South Belfast) - To ask the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail (i) the number of children receiving; and (ii) the cost of respite services in (a) Omagh; and (b) Derry City.

Mr J Wells (The Minister for Health, Social Services and Public Safety): 51 children are availing of residential respite services in Avalon House, Omagh (8 bedded unit). In 2013/14, the total annual running cost of statutory residential respite services at Avalon House, Omagh was £647,606.

34 children are availing of residential respite services in The Cottages, Londonderry, (6 bedded unit). In 2013/14, the total annual running cost of statutory residential respite services at The Cottages, Londonderry, was £531,935. **(8th January)**

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Department of Social Development

Welfare Reform

Mr Steven Agnew (GPNI – North Down) - To ask the Minister for Social Development, given the proposal to set aside £70m to fund a package of measures designed to mitigate the impact of Welfare Reform on the most vulnerable, to detail

- (i) what the proposal means with regards to Welfare Reform, including what has been agreed to date;
- (ii) what has not been agreed;
- (iii) when he anticipates the Executive coming to an agreement on this issue;
- (iv) how the "most vulnerable" will be defined; and
- (v) the rationale for the £70m figure.

Mr Storey (Minister for Social Development): Following the Stormont House Agreement, the Minister for Social Development will bring legislation before the Assembly in January to give effect to welfare changes alongside further work to develop and implement flexibilities and financial support from the block grant as part of a package of measures to support the most vulnerable. **(7th January)**

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