

NICCY Summary: Written Assembly Questions week ending 12 June, 2015

DRD strategy to protect young people from risks of reservoirs

<p>AQW 46381/11- 15</p>	<p>Mr David McIlveen (DUP - North Antrim)</p>	<p>To ask the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development what strategy her Department has in place to protect young people from the risks of reservoirs.</p> <p>My Department is responsible for managing flood risk in the north of Ireland and is bringing forward legislation to ensure dams do not fail and cause flood damage. My Department is not responsible for managing the safety of individuals in reservoirs. Responsibility for protecting people, including young people, from the risks that reservoirs pose rests with individual reservoir managers. As the owner of a significant number of reservoirs NI Water has recently offered information sessions to local schools to inform young people about the risks of entering the water in reservoirs.</p>
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Youth workers representation on newly formed Local Action Groups

<p>AQW 46182/11- 15</p>	<p>Ms Claire Sugden (IND - East Londonderry)</p>	<p>To ask the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development how rural groups and youth workers are being represented on the newly formed Local Action Groups.</p> <p>All Local Action Groups are self forming as per the European Regulation however their composition is required to be representative of the composition of the local rural area which they wish to represent and in particular be section 75 compliant. The Department has provided assistance through the NI Rural Network and the Rural Development Council to animate local communities towards formation of Local Action Groups for the incoming 2014/2020 NI Rural Development programme.</p> <p>As part of this process a sectoral event covering community organisations was held on 5th November 2014 and a specific event targeting youth was held on 16th December 2015.</p> <p>Within the formation process LAG members agreed their own composition requirements (as required under the LEADER methodology) and Board Selection criteria. Each new LAG has filled its board appointments through robust and transparent selection processes which are in line with the 'LEADER' approach i.e. bottom up, local people making local decisions.</p>
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Merger of Fane Street PS and potential for racist attacks

<p>AQW 46768/11- 15</p>	<p>Mr David McIlveen (DUP - North Antrim)</p>	<p>To ask the Minister of Education for his assessment of the proposed merger of Fane Street Primary School; and whether his Department has given any consideration to the possibility of an increase in the number of racist attacks following a merger. [Priority Written]</p> <p>It is a matter for the Education Authority, as managing authority for controlled schools, including Fane Street Primary School, to bring forward and publish a statutory development proposal (DP) if it wishes to make a change to the current pattern of education in the controlled sector. Should such a proposal be published, my Department will assess it and I will decide whether it should be approved.</p> <p>To date, the Education Authority has not published a DP in respect of Fane Street PS, or any other primary school in inner south Belfast. Until it does, I am not in a position to assess or comment specifically on any potential development proposal or individual school likely to be involved.</p>
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Support for young people during exams

<p>AQW 46741/11- 15</p>	<p>Mr David McIlveen (DUP - North Antrim)</p>	<p>To ask the Minister of Education what steps his Department is taking to ensure young people have adequate support during exams.</p> <p>The issue of support during exam time is primarily a matter for the individual schools however my Department does provide some resources. The iMatter 'message of the month' issued in May to all post primary schools, covered Exam Stress and provided some useful tips on dealing with it.</p> <p>The Independent Counselling Service for Schools is available in post primary schools for individual pupils who are experiencing stress or anxiety. Some schools have also used the new 'Drop In' Sessions over lunchtime to provide group sessions on coping with exam stress.</p> <p>The iMatter diary inserts, available on the www.deni.gov.uk site, cover a range of 20 topics including Coping with Stress, Worry and Anxiety and Coping with Schools. These include details of support websites and telephone helplines.</p>
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Records for equipment for children with special educational needs

<p>AQW 46648/11- 15</p>	<p>Mr Steven Agnew (GPNJ - North Down)</p>	<p>To ask the Minister of Education whether a record of equipment for children with special educational needs is kept to ensure resources are allocated efficiently and equipment is not purchased unnecessarily.</p> <p>The Education Authority has advised that all regions maintain a record of specialist equipment for children with special educational needs and that every effort is made to ensure that spare equipment is re-allocated where appropriate and that equipment is not purchased unnecessarily.</p>
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Efficient use of equipment purchase for children with special education needs

<p>AQW 46646/11- 15</p>	<p>Mr Steven Agnew (GPNJ - North Down)</p>	<p>To ask the Minister of Education what actions are being taken to ensure equipment purchased for children with special education needs is being used efficiently, including being properly stored, maintained and shared between schools.</p> <p>The Education Authority has advised that requests for equipment for children with special education needs are ordinarily considered following input from specialist health care professionals in the Health and Social Care Trusts who advise on the purchase of the most appropriate equipment to meet the assessed needs of the pupil.</p> <p>Inventories of equipment are maintained and updated on a regular basis. Databases are checked to ensure that spare equipment is made available for reallocation or re-use where appropriate and that equipment is not purchased unnecessarily.</p> <p>Equipment is catalogued and stored in designated storage facilities or within a school setting. Schools are advised to ensure that equipment is checked regularly for obvious defects and are responsible for the safe storage and maintenance of equipment in a school setting.</p>
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Minister's assessment of the high levels of statementing

<p>AQW 46620/11- 15</p>	<p>Mr Peter Weir (DUP - North Down)</p>	<p>To ask the Minister of Education for his assessment of why the level of statementing is so high.</p> <p>It is evident that the level of statementing has increased across the five regions of the Education Authority (EA) in recent years. However under legislation, if in light of a statutory assessment the EA decides that is necessary for it to determine the special educational needs (SEN) provision to meet a child's individual SEN, then it must make and maintain a statement of those needs.</p>
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Guidance on duties and responsibilities under Article 45 of Education and Libraries Order

<p>AQW 46619/11- 15</p>	<p>Mr Peter Weir (DUP - North Down)</p>	<p>To ask the Minister of Education whether he will bring forward guidance on the duties and responsibilities of education staff under Article 45 of the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986.</p> <p>Article 45 of the Education and Libraries (NI) Order 1986, sets out the duty of parents to secure full-time education for their children who are of compulsory school age. Where it appears that a parent is failing in their duty, the Education Authority (EA) has an obligation to ensure the child receives an efficient full-time education suitable to his age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs he may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.</p> <p>The EA is currently developing guidance on issues around school starting age and Elective Home Education. Both of these will include details of the statutory duties and responsibilities of both the EA and parents under Article 45 of the 1986 Order.</p>
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School actions to assist in screening of pupils' eyesight

<p>AQW 46564/11- 15</p>	<p>Ms Megan Fearon (SF - Newry and Armagh)</p>	<p>To ask the Minister of Education to detail what action schools can take to assist in the screening of pupils' eyesight.</p> <p>The Education Authority has advised that screening of pupils' eyesight is the responsibility of health professionals in the Health and Social Care Trusts who operate a screening programme in schools in Year 1. The schools support and co-operate in this process.</p> <p>Should school based support or teaching staff suspect an issue with eyesight, parents are contacted in the first instance and advised to make an appointment to have their child's vision assessed by an optician.</p>
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Measures in place for detecting dyslexia in pupils

<p>AQW 46563/11- 15</p>	<p>Ms Megan Fearon (SF - Newry and Armagh)</p>	<p>To ask the Minister of Education what measures are in place for detecting dyslexia in pupils.</p> <p>The Education Authority has advised that all schools in the north of Ireland follow the Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs in order to identify and assess pupils with special educational needs (SEN), including dyslexia.</p> <p>A range of capacity building projects are provided specifically to assist teachers to identify dyslexia including:</p> <p>Report of the Task Group on Dyslexia DE provided all schools with copies of the following materials to develop their understanding of dyslexia and provide them with guidelines on identifying and meeting the needs of pupils in their school in relation to dyslexia. Understanding Dyslexia: A guide for schools - CD-ROM; Understanding Dyslexia: Challenges and Opportunities Video; Dyslexia Friendly Learning Environment: booklet outlining indicators and strategies; Dyslexia awareness training was also developed on a regional basis and made available to schools on request.</p> <p>Good Practice Guidelines Booklet Provides guidelines on relevant and purposeful measures and adjustments to the classroom environment for pupils experiencing literacy difficulties, including dyslexia.</p> <p>SEN Resource File Provides teaching staff with details of support for SEN, including a section on reading, writing and spelling.</p> <p>Certificate of Competence in Educational Testing [CCET] Training Was made available to enable schools to carry out a range of assessments on pupils with SEN, including the detection of dyslexia type difficulties.</p> <p>SEN Literacy Project: A three year project delivered jointly by Stranmillis and St Mary's College, funded by the DE, provided schools with online and centre based training on the identification, assessment and the teaching of pupils with literacy difficulties in primary schools across the north of Ireland.</p>
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Education Authority publication of annual area profiles

<p>AQW 46509/11-15</p>	<p>Mr Steven Agnew (GPNI - North Down)</p>	<p>To ask the Minister of Education whether (i) the Education Authority will act as a single body and publish annual area profiles altogether or (ii) each sub-region will be in charge of publishing their own area profile.</p> <p>My purpose in introducing the publication of Annual Area Profiles was to give the public a clear picture of the shape of education provision in their area and to encourage informed local involvement in the area planning process.</p> <p>This remains the case regardless of the structures in place to administer education and therefore Annual Area Profiles will continue to be published for all schools now that the Education Authority has been established. The 2015 Annual Area Profiles will be published in the near future by the Education Authority.</p> <p>Area Plans will be reviewed, consulted upon and published on a three year cycle from 2016.</p>
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Ashgrove PS support following recent inspection

<p>AQW 46433/11-15</p>	<p>Mr Stewart Dickson (APNI - East Antrim)</p>	<p>To ask the Minister of Education, given the commitment to provide financial assistance to schools in formal intervention, as outlined in Every School is a Good School, why this has not been provided to Ashgrove Primary School to help them deal with the issues highlighted following their recent inspection.</p> <p>When a school enters formal intervention it is the responsibility of the school's Board of Governors to prepare and implement an action plan to address the areas for improvement identified. In taking this work forward the school will be supported by the Education Authority and, in the case of catholic maintained schools, the CCMS. The action plan will identify the support and resources required to address the areas for improvement. The Education Authority will provide guidance and support through its Curriculum Advisory Support Service (CASS).</p> <p>Schools in formal intervention do not automatically receive funding to assist them in addressing areas for improvement identified in an inspection report. However, if it is identified that particular action(s) will require additional funding for resources or support beyond that provided by the school or the EA CASS then the EA can submit a request for such funding to the Department. Such requests are considered on a case by case basis and subject to the</p>
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		<p>approval of a business case prepared by the EA and any subsequent bid for funding being successful.</p> <p>The EA has advised that Ashgrove Primary School has not identified any significant need for additional financial assistance. However, the EA will be happy to meet with the school should they wish to discuss resource needs.</p>
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Numbers of pupils supported by the Education Welfare Service

<p>AQW 46164/11- 15</p>	<p>Mr Roy Beggs (UUP - East Antrim)</p>	<p>To ask the Minister of Education to detail (i) the number of pupils who are currently supported by the Education Welfare Service in each constituency; and (ii) the number of pupils currently on the Education Welfare waiting list for support or investigation.</p> <p>The Interim Chief Executive of the Education Authority has advised that this information is not available by constituency; the information below sets out the position in each region of the Education Authority:-</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="560 1037 1396 2011"> <tr> <td colspan="2" data-bbox="560 1037 1396 1189">Number of pupils supported by the Education Welfare Service</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="560 1189 1166 1263">Belfast Region</td> <td data-bbox="1166 1189 1396 1263">1,119</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="560 1263 1166 1337">North Eastern Region</td> <td data-bbox="1166 1263 1396 1337">977</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="560 1337 1166 1411">South Eastern Region</td> <td data-bbox="1166 1337 1396 1411">628</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="560 1411 1166 1485">Southern Region</td> <td data-bbox="1166 1411 1396 1485">921</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="560 1485 1166 1559">Western Region</td> <td data-bbox="1166 1485 1396 1559">717</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="560 1559 1166 1635">Total</td> <td data-bbox="1166 1559 1396 1635">4,362</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2" data-bbox="560 1635 1396 1709">Number of pupils on Waiting List for support or investigation</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="560 1709 1166 1783">Belfast Region</td> <td data-bbox="1166 1709 1396 1783">146</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="560 1783 1166 1856">North Eastern Region</td> <td data-bbox="1166 1783 1396 1856">396</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="560 1856 1166 1930">South Eastern Region</td> <td data-bbox="1166 1856 1396 1930">215</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="560 1930 1166 2004">Southern Region</td> <td data-bbox="1166 1930 1396 2004">0</td> </tr> </table>	Number of pupils supported by the Education Welfare Service		Belfast Region	1,119	North Eastern Region	977	South Eastern Region	628	Southern Region	921	Western Region	717	Total	4,362	Number of pupils on Waiting List for support or investigation		Belfast Region	146	North Eastern Region	396	South Eastern Region	215	Southern Region	0
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		Western Region	89
		Total	846

Criteria used when considering application for the Voluntary Exit Scheme

AQW 46817/11-15	Mr Mike Nesbitt (UUP - Strangford)	<p>To ask the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail the criteria used by her Department when considering applications for the Voluntary Exit Scheme.</p> <p>The eligibility and selection criteria used by the NICS Voluntary Exit Scheme were published in the Scheme Information Booklet and also Frequently Asked Questions, all of which are available via the DFP website on the following link: http://www.dfpni.gov.uk/nics_voluntary_exit_scheme</p>
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Executive's Budget following Chancellor's latest announcement

AQW 46746/11-15	Mr Daithí McKay (SF - North Antrim)	<p>To ask the Minister of Finance and Personnel to detail what this years budget will be reduced by as a result of the Chancellors announcement that there will be further cuts. [Priority Written]</p> <p>I can confirm that the Executive's Budget will be reduced by £33 million Resource DEL and £5 million Capital DEL as a result of the Chancellor's latest announcement.</p>
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Number of young people treated for alcohol or drug addiction

AQW 46607/11-15	Mrs Dolores Kelly (SDLP - Upper Bann)	<p>To ask the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number of young people aged 12-25 years who have presented at (i) GP surgeries; and (ii) hospitals for treatment relating to alcohol or drug addiction in each of the last two years.</p> <p>Information on the number of young people aged 12-25 years who have presented for treatment relating to alcohol or drug addiction in each of the last two years at GP surgeries is not available.</p> <p>Information on the number of young people aged 12-25 years admitted to hospital with a diagnosis of an alcohol or a drug related condition, is given in the table below;</p>
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Individuals Admitted	2012/13	2013/14
Alcohol only	840	916
Drug only	427	406
Alcohol and Drug	263	252

Source: Hospital Inpatient System

This information on admissions due to alcohol or drugs has been sourced from the Hospital Inpatient System. This records information on patients admitted to acute hospitals as inpatients or day cases. It does not hold details of patients treated in the Primary Care setting. It also does not hold information on patients attending hospital as outpatients or who attended an Emergency Care Department and were not admitted, nor does it hold details of patients admitted to Mental Health Hospitals.

Support for foster parents and kinship carers

<p>AQW 46533/11- 15</p>	<p>Ms Claire Sugden (IND - East Londonderry)</p>	<p>To ask the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail what support, including financial, is afforded to foster parents and kinship carers for children within their care.</p> <p>All foster carers and formal kinship foster carers receive Foster Care Allowances; are allocated a supervising social worker to provide support and supervision; have access to a range of specialist and therapeutic supports as determined by the assessed needs of the child/young person; are provided with a range of learning and development opportunities as well as educational support for children in their care. In an informal kinship care arrangement, parental responsibility remains with the parent as does the responsibility to provide financial support. Within such arrangements, there is an entitlement to support services and a general duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in those arrangements who are deemed to be “in need”, within the definition of The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995.</p>
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Executive's steps to prevent female genital mutilation

<p>AQW 46329/11- 15</p>	<p>Mrs Jo-Anne Dobson (UUP - Upper Bann)</p>	<p>To ask the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what steps he is taking to work collaboratively with his Executive colleagues to prevent and respond to female genital mutilation.</p> <p>Officials from my Department participated in a cross-departmental working group led by the Department of Finance and Personnel to develop Multi-agency Practice Guidelines on FGM which were issued in August 2014. Prior to this, in October 2012, DHSSPS and DOJ jointly launched a Safeguarding Conference on Cultural Diversity which highlighted issues such as FGM. Cultural competence has also been highlighted as a priority in the North South Ministerial Council (NSMC) child protection work programme which was agreed in July 2012. Also, my Department has engaged with other Departments on the issue and with the Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland.</p>
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Discussion with Home Office on new legislation on legal highs

<p>AQW 46551/11- 15</p>	<p>Mr Peter Weir (DUP - North Down)</p>	<p>To ask the Minister of Justice what discussions his Department has had with the Home Office on the contents of any proposed new legislation on legal highs.</p> <p>I had written to previous Home Office Ministers highlighting the need for legislative change to tackle new psychoactive substances and I welcomed the letter on 14 May from the Home Secretary that advised me of the forthcoming publication of a Psychoactive Substances Bill that would apply across the UK. The Psychoactive Substances Bill aims to prohibit and disrupt the production, distribution, sale and supply of new psychoactive substances (NPS) in the UK. My officials, alongside those in DHSSPS, have been in regular contact with the Home Office discussing and commenting upon the detailed Clauses included in this Bill.</p> <p>My Department will continue to work in partnership across the Executive and other key stakeholders, in order to develop and maintain our efforts to remove these substances from our communities.</p>
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Strategy to tackle issue of legal highs

<p>AQW 46320/11- 15</p>	<p>Mr David McIlveen (DUP - North Antrim)</p>	<p>To ask the Minister of Justice whether his Department has a strategy in place to tackle the issue of legal highs.</p> <p>Whilst no individual Departmental strategy is in place on the specific issue of new psychoactive substances (NPS), my Department is a key contributor to the Executive's New Strategic Direction (NSD) on Alcohol and Drugs (Phase 2) led by the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety. This framework for reducing substance related harm clearly identifies NPS as an issue of emerging concern and includes a number of key outcomes around the scale of the issue and to raise awareness of the dangers of these products with the aim of preventing their misuse.</p> <p>Action continues to be taken at both a strategic level and at a local level. At a strategic level the Organised Crime Task Force Sub Group on Drugs continues to provide a key mechanism for partnership working to tackle these substances. My Department continues to encourage and support the actions of District Councils as they utilise existing legislation, such as the General Product Safety Regulations 2005, to remove these products from sale at a local level. In particular, the recent successful prosecutions by Belfast City Council, with the support of the Attorney General for Northern Ireland, have been an example to councils across the United Kingdom.</p> <p>NSD also outlines the commitment to work with colleagues across the UK jurisdictions in relation to the legal status of these products in order to prevent harm. Whilst this is a reserved matter, I have corresponded with Home Office Ministers and the Home Secretary to express the need for legislative change to restrict the availability of these substances.</p> <p>Consequently, I welcome the inclusion in the Queen's Speech of the Government's intention to bring forward measures to ban NPS. Officials from the Home Office are currently working with officials across all of the devolved administrations in order to ensure that the provisions of any future Bill reflect their particular legislative circumstances.</p> <p>My Department will continue to work in partnership with the Home Office, the Executive and other key stakeholders, in order to respond to the challenges presented by the emergence of these dangerous substances.</p>
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Steps Executive is taking to prevent female genital mutilation

<p>AQW 46376/11- 15</p>	<p>Mrs Jo- Anne Dobson (UUP - Upper Bann)</p>	<p>To ask the Minister of Justice what steps he is taking to work collaboratively with his Executive colleagues to prevent, and respond to, female genital mutilation.</p> <p>The joint DOJ and DHSSPS strategy <i>Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse in Northern Ireland</i> is currently being developed; this strategy recognises that domestic violence and abuse can manifest itself through the perpetration of unlawful activities and practices such as female genital mutilation.</p> <p>My Department has also been involved from the early stages in assisting in developing Multi-Agency Practice Guidelines on Female Genital Mutilation which were published in July by the Department of Finance and Personnel. These guidelines have been circulated to raise awareness of Female Genital Mutilation with agencies and stakeholders linked to the Justice system such as Policing and Community Safety Partnerships, Human Trafficking Support Service providers and Public Prosecutors.</p> <p>Female Genital Mutilation is a serious crime and I fully support the need to tackle violence against women and girls. When such crimes happen the Criminal Justice system will hold perpetrators to account for their actions.</p>
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Newry playground naming

<p>AQW 46220/11- 15</p>	<p>Mr David McIlveen (DUP - North Antrim)</p>	<p>To ask the Minister of the Environment for his assessment of the decision of the Equality Commission not to exert any further pressure to change the name of a Newry playground currently named after a convicted IRA terrorist.</p> <p>The Equality Commission has the legal responsibility and authority to consider what action is fitting in relation to such matters. The Newry, Mourne and Down District Council are, I understand, currently working on the Equality Commission's recommendation which deals with policy on such issues.</p> <p>Against that background, it would not be fitting for me to assess or comment on this ongoing situation.</p>
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