

NICCY Summary: Written Assembly Questions week ending 19 June, 2015

Child Poverty Act and child poverty threshold and reporting

<p>AQW 45382/11- 15</p>	<p>Mr Chris Lyttle (APNI - East Belfast)</p>	<p>To ask the First Minister and deputy First Minister whether the Child Poverty Act 2010 (Persistent Poverty Target) Regulations 2014 applies to Northern Ireland; and if not, what strategy the Executive has in place to define the persistent child poverty threshold and to report on it.</p> <p>The Child Poverty Act 2010 (Persistent Poverty Target) Regulations 2014, which came into force on 31 December 2014, set a target for persistent poverty for the UK of below 7% by 2020. There are currently no official statistics relating to persistent poverty here and we await official data from the UK Government. The Department for Work and Pensions are currently investigating development of new persistent poverty statistics, including a regional breakdown, and hope to be in a position to publish these by the end of the year. Any new statistics would be pre-announced and published in compliance with the UK Statistics Authority Code of Practice. We will report on the Persistent Poverty measure in the Executive's Annual Reports on Child Poverty once this information becomes available.</p>
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Update on age discrimination legislation

<p>AQO 8236/11- 15</p>	<p>Ms Megan Fearon (SF - Newry and Armagh)</p>	<p>To ask the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on age discrimination legislation on the provision of goods, facilities and services.</p> <p>We made a statement on 19 February giving a commitment to extend legislation to give legal protection from unfair age discrimination, to those aged 16 years and over, by those providing, goods, facilities and services. The statement also announced the intention to bring forward a consultation document setting out proposals for outlawing age discrimination. Our officials have met with departments and key stakeholder organisations to progress the development of the proposed consultation document. On the 15 April the Junior Ministers appeared before the Committee for OFMDFM to update Members on progress on the development of the consultation document.</p> <p>Subject to agreement, we intend to issue the consultation document in the near future.</p>
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Update on Age GFS

<p>AQW 46438/11- 15</p>	<p>Mr Fearghal McKinney (<i>SDLP - South Belfast</i>)</p>	<p>To ask the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the Goods, Facilities and Services legislation.</p> <p>We made a Written Ministerial Statement to the Assembly on 19 February 2015 announcing our decision to bring forward legislative proposals to prohibit unfair age discrimination by those providing, goods, facilities and services. The proposed legislation will apply to people aged 16 and over. We aim to issue a consultation document in the near future setting out our proposals for legislation. When we have concluded our policy consultation, and agreed a robust policy position, we will then consider all the options available to us for bringing this legislation before the Assembly.</p>
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Update on GFS consultation

<p>AQW 45985/11- 15</p>	<p>Ms Claire Sugden (<i>IND - East Londonderry</i>)</p>	<p>To ask the First Minister and deputy First Minister when the consultation document on the proposals for prohibiting unfair age discrimination by those providing goods, facilities and services will be issued.</p> <p>The consultation document is close to being finalised. Subject to agreement, we aim to issue the consultation document before the Summer Recess. The public consultation period will last for a minimum of 12 weeks.</p>
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Update on age GFS

<p>AQW 45988/11- 15</p>	<p>Ms Claire Sugden (<i>IND - East Londonderry</i>)</p>	<p>To ask the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail all of the steps taken, since the Written Ministerial Statement to the Assembly on 19 February 2015, to further the proposals for prohibiting unfair age discrimination by those providing goods, facilities and services.</p> <p>Following our Ministerial statement on 19 February 2015, departmental officials have been engaged in developing a policy consultation document and a supporting Equality Impact Assessment. Officials have also met with departments and key stakeholder organisations to progress the development of these documents. On 15 April 2015, the former Junior Minister Bell and Junior Minister McCann appeared before the Committee for OFMDFM to provide a progress update.</p>
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Actions and their effects since introduction of Autism Strategy

<p>AQW 46122/11- 15</p>	<p>Mr Jim Allister (TUV - North Antrim)</p>	<p>To ask the First Minister and deputy First Minister what innovative actions, and with what effect, have been taken since the introduction of the Autism Strategy.</p> <p>The Autism Strategy and associated Action Plan have been developed by the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to help improve access to services and support for people with autism, their families and careers, throughout their lives.</p> <p>While there are no specific actions in the Action Plan for OFMDFM, as it is not a service delivery department, OFMDFM is providing input on two issues: (i) Participation in World Autism Awareness day where, over the last three years, ILEX has provided facilities to four local Autism Charities to celebrate International Autism day and; (ii) Involvement in signposting to services for people with autism. In the case of the latter, former Junior Minister Bell and Junior Minister McCann met with the group, Parents Education as Autism Therapists in May last year.</p> <p>Additionally, as part of OFMDFM's research programme, we have funded Queen's University Belfast to carry out a research project entitled 'Helping the most vulnerable out of the poverty trap and reducing inequality: Policies, strategies, and services for individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder, including intellectual and neurodevelopmental disabilities'. The research is currently reaching the final stages and it is anticipated that it will be published later this year.</p>
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Steps to repeal the defence of reasonable chastisement

<p>AQO 7833/11- 15</p>	<p>Ms Megan Fearon (SF - Newry and Armagh)</p>	<p>To ask the First Minister and deputy First Minister, in their coordinating role for the Children and Young People Strategy 2006-2016, are they aware of any steps being taken to repeal the defence of reasonable chastisement to protect children.</p> <p>We are not aware of any steps being taken to repeal the defence of reasonable chastisement.</p>
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Parental leave for new foster parents

<p>AQW 46532/11- 15</p>	<p>Ms Claire Sugden (IND - East Londonderry)</p>	<p>To ask the Minister for Employment and Learning what provisions are in place to allow parental leave for new foster parents, including Kinship Carers.</p> <p>Entitlement to shared parental leave is available to new mothers and adopters and their partners (who may be the child's father or the other adopter).</p> <p>Entitlement to the right may arise for foster parents when a child enters a foster placement with them and there is a significant probability that the placement will become an adoptive placement. In those circumstances, entitlement to adoption leave and shared parental leave can arise prior to the formal placement for adoption.</p> <p>There are no broader arrangements for shared parental leave for foster parents or kinship carers.</p>
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Measures for local primary schools to enhance road safety in their area

<p>AQW 46631/11- 15</p>	<p>Mr Chris Hazzard (SF - South Down)</p>	<p>To ask the Minister for Regional Development what measures exist for a local primary school to enhance road safety in their locality.</p> <p>The safety of school children is one of my Department's highest priorities and over many years it has invested significantly in measures to reduce vehicle speeds and improve road safety for children. In the last three years road safety improvements have been provided at 73 schools as part of the School Travel and Safety Projects initiative.</p> <p>Dangers arising from road traffic at schools are varied and are assessed by experienced TransportNI traffic engineers. The engineers can call upon a number of safety measures to improve safety including provision of enhanced signing and lining, central islands, lay-bys, and traffic calming features such as road humps. A recent innovation has been the development of part-time 20 mph speed limits at schools. TransportNI's policy and procedure guide for safety at schools is available for download at www.drdni.gov.uk/rsppg_e070.pdf Since 2013, my Department and the Public Health Agency have funded an Active School Travel programme. This programme aims to encourage children to walk or cycle to school and provides walking and cycling skills training so that children can travel to school more safely. Infrastructure in the vicinity of these schools has also been provided under the programme.</p> <p>Each year schools throughout Northern Ireland have been invited to participate in this programme. Over 120 schools have done so in the past two years, and a further 65 schools will join the programme next school year. Officials are exploring the continuation of the programme beyond 2016.</p>
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DE actions to educate children and young people about online safety

<p>AQW 47092/11- 15</p>	<p>Mr David McIlveen (DUP - North Antrim)</p>	<p>To ask the Minister of Education what actions his Department is taking to educate children and young people about online safety.</p> <p>In schools, the duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils is the responsibility of a school's Board of Governors, and schools are required to have in place policies on discipline, bullying and the safe and effective use of the Internet and Digital technologies.</p> <p>In terms of educating our pupils about online safety, ICT plays a central role in the statutory curriculum and Using ICT, a cross- curricular skill, requires pupils to learn how to keep safe and display acceptable online behaviour. Support is available via the C2k ICT Managed Service which provides teachers with detailed advice and guidance on eSafety and resources are also available within the C2k Virtual Learning Environment, Fronter, for both staff and pupils. Teachers have access to an Internet Safety Room within Fronter which has a range of resources and eSafety policies. C2k also directly reaches pupils through the C2k News Desk which frequently raises issues of pupils' online safety, through news articles, highlighting current issues and providing Online Safety fact files and appropriate web resources for school use.</p> <p>In addition, there are links on the DE website to useful sites that can provide children and young people, as well as parents and carers with specific information and advice on a range of internet safety topics.</p> <p>The Department has also recently issued a circular letter to all schools and the Youth Council, containing advice provided by the PSNI and endorsed by the Safeguarding Board NI (SBNI) about how to stay safe online. The circular letter also includes advice for parents. This circular will be made available on the C2K Exchange.</p> <p>The Department also funds the work of the NI Anti-Bullying Forum (NIABF). As part of its remit, the Forum visits schools and works with staff and pupils to raise awareness of all forms of bullying, promote best-practice responses to bullying incidents and, if required, signposting the school and individuals to other sources of specialist advice and support.</p> <p>You may also be aware that the Department has endorsed the commissioning of the SBNI to produce a regional eSafety strategy and action plan and has contributed to the Terms of Reference to ensure that the needs of children and young people as well as parents are addressed within that strategy.</p>
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DE contribution to development of a cross-departmental internet safety strategy

<p>AQW 47012/11- 15</p>	<p>Mrs Sandra Overend (UUP - Mid Ulster)</p>	<p>To ask the Minister of Education how his Department is contributing to the development of a cross-departmental internet safety strategy.</p> <p>At its meeting on 29 January 2015, the Executive agreed to formally commission the Safeguarding Board (SBNI) to develop an e-safety strategy and action plan. Terms of Reference (TOR) have been developed and the SBNI has appointed a project manager to deliver the work within an 18 month timeframe. The aim is that the draft e-Safety strategy will be ready for consultation by the end of the financial year and the draft strategy and action plan will be presented to the Executive once complete.</p> <p>My Department has a very effective working relationship with the Safeguarding Board (SBNI) which is why I was pleased to endorse this proposal.</p> <p>My Department's involvement in agreeing the Terms of Reference for the project has ensured that two of the key aims of the strategy are to educate and support children young people and parent in developing the skills, knowledge and understanding to stay safe online, to recognise unsafe situations and to understand how to help children stay safe online and to promote safe and responsible behaviour in the use of internet and mobile technology and to keep up to date with developments.</p>
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Funding cuts to early years groups in 2015-16

<p>AQW 46987/11- 15</p>	<p>Mr Peter Weir (DUP - North Down)</p>	<p>To ask the Minister of Education to detail the extent of funding cuts to early years groups in 2015/2016.</p> <p>The Executive's Budget has been reduced by the Westminster Government by £1.5bn over the last five years. As a direct result of this reduction there is significantly reduced money to spend on frontline services such as Education. I have taken every action possible to protect Education funding and those frontline services within the Department of Education's (DE) remit. However, it is simply impossible to protect everything.</p> <p>The budget for the DE Early Years Fund, which is administered by Early Years the Organisation for Young Children (EYO), has been reduced by £2m in 2015/16. The residual 2015/16 Fund is enabling all (153) recipient groups to receive continued funding to the end of the current academic year i.e. 31 August 2015. Funding has not been removed from any of the settings. I will continue to review my budget and other opportunities for funding to establish if a Fund can continue beyond August. However any such fund will have to be open to all applicants, not just current recipients, and reflect the</p>
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		<p>policy priorities of DE. As part of the June monitoring round, I have submitted a bid of £2million to the Department of Finance and Personnel.</p> <p>Groups currently supported by the Early Years Fund which are also offering funded pre-school places within the Pre-School Education Programme (PSEP) will continue to be funded through the PSEP. In accordance with the Programme for Government commitment to ensure that at least one year of pre-school is available to every family that wants it, I have allocated sufficient funding to the Education Authority to meet the projected need for pre-school places for children in their final pre-school year.</p> <p>The pre-school admissions process for September 2015 has now concluded. DE officials have asked PEAG officers within the Education Authority to advise them of any groups participating in PSEP and receiving EYF support which have indicated that they are no longer able to provide places within the PSEP for September 2015. To date DE has not been made aware of any groups in this position. The PEAG officers will continue to monitor the situation and will take any necessary action to ensure that a place continues to be available for every child whose parent wants it.</p> <p>A number of groups in the Early Years Fund also receive funding from sources other than my Department. It is not therefore possible to identify the impact on settings without consideration of the full details including the financial position of each group.</p>
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DE transport pilot schemes

<p>AQW 46975/11- 15</p>	<p>Mr Chris Hazzard (SF - South Down)</p>	<p>To ask the Minister of Education whether his Department are involved in any transport pilot schemes; and if so, to detail the location; and reasoning for establishing the scheme.</p> <p>The Department of Education and the Education Authority are currently involved in the Integrated Public Passenger Transport Pilot which is taking place in the Dungannon District Council area under the auspices of the Department for Regional Development.</p> <p>The key objectives of the pilot project are to test the concept of a more joined-up approach to the delivery of publicly funded passenger transport services and how this could deliver improved operational efficiency and increased options for public transport users.</p>
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Keeping children and young people safe online

<p>AQW 46961/11- 15</p>	<p>Mrs Sandra Overend (UUP - Mid Ulster)</p>	<p>To ask the Minister of Education what actions his Department is taking to keep children and young people safe online in the absence of a cross-departmental internet safety strategy.</p> <p>The Department of Education is supporting the work that the Safeguarding Board (SBNI) has been commissioned to undertake by the Executive in relation to the development of a new eSafety strategy and action plan. Through its representation on the SBNI, the Education Authority will ensure educational input to this work.</p> <p>In schools, the duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils is the responsibility of a school's Board of Governors and, in the exercise of those duties, schools are required to have in place policies on discipline, bullying and the safe and effective use of the Internet and Digital technologies. The Department is currently taking forward new Anti-Bullying Legislation which will further strengthen the role of Governors in addressing all forms of bullying between pupils, including cyber-bullying. ICT plays a central role in the statutory curriculum and Using ICT requires pupils to learn how to keep safe and display acceptable online behaviour.</p> <p>The C2k ICT managed service, which provides a core ICT service for all grant-aided schools, has in place password protection, internet monitoring, web and email filtering and other eSafety related services. C2k also provides teachers with detailed advice and guidance on eSafety within an eSafety zone available via the C2k Exchange. Resources are also available within the C2k Virtual Learning Environment, Fronter, for both staff and pupils. Teachers have access to an Internet Safety Room within Fronter which has a range of resources and eSafety policies. C2k Helpdesk staff are fully briefed to deal with eSafety and Child Protection issues which are prioritised above all other calls.</p> <p>During May and June 2015, C2k, in conjunction with UK Safer Internet, ran a number of eSafety Conferences attended by over 400 school representatives. This year the PSNI also had an input into these sessions under the SBNI banner. C2k will offer all schools further training and support in the entire area of eSafety during the coming year.</p> <p>The DE website contains links to useful sites that can provide children and young people, as well as parents and carers, with specific information and advice on a range of internet safety topics.</p>
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Impact for DE on budget cuts

<p>AQW 46887/11- 15</p>	<p>Mr Chris Lyttle (APNI - East Belfast)</p>	<p>To ask the Minister of Education what steps he is taking to ensure cuts to his budget will have as little impact as possible on teachers' ability to effectively deliver the curriculum; and which areas of his departmental spending have been identified for efficiency savings to limit the impact on frontline services.</p> <p>As you are aware, the Executive's Budget has been reduced by the Westminster Government by £1.5bn over the last five years. As a direct result of this reduction there is significantly reduced money to spend on frontline services such as education. The scale of the budget reductions required in 2015-16 means that these cannot be delivered through efficiency savings alone, especially in light of the savings already delivered during the Budget 2011-15 period.</p> <p>Throughout the 2015-16 budget process my aim was to protect as far as possible frontline services and funding to schools. Therefore, following the final budget allocation and my wider education budget review I allocated £80m to the ASB. This funding will help ensure that schools can continue to deliver high quality education and enable them to plan according to their school's needs and priorities. This allocation also means that there has been no reduction in cash terms to schools delegated budgets, although in real terms, schools will still face pay and inflationary pressures in 2015-16.</p> <p>Given the degree of protection afforded to schools' budgets, there remains considerable flexibility 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 (NI) 2007 but also meets the needs of their pupils. I have taken every action possible to protect education funding and those frontline services within the Department of Education's (DE's) remit. Unfortunately, it is simply impossible to protect everything.</p> <p>In order to deliver a balanced 2015-16 Budget, a Savings Delivery Plan (SDP) was developed to address the £97.6m gap in funding facing education. This SDP is available to view in full on the DE website.</p> <p>The reality is that the full financial challenges facing schools have been alleviated, not eradicated. Given the overall resource funding gap of £97.6m facing education in 2015-16 it is essential that schools make the difficult decisions required to allow them to live within their budgets as a matter of urgency.</p> <p>In reaching my final decisions on the Budget reductions, I have:</p>
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focused on protecting frontline services as far as possible, promoting equality and raising education standards; • Secured the continuation of specific programmes that reflect DE's statutory responsibilities; • Continued to tackle social disadvantage; and <p>Ensured that support for children with Special Education Needs is prioritised. I acknowledge the demanding financial position still facing the education sector in 2015-16. It must be recognised that this constrained financial context is set to continue for the foreseeable future.</p>
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Update on pre school education review

AQW 46878/11-15	Mr Gregory Campbell (DUP - East Londonderry)	<p>To ask the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 45918/11-15, to detail when he expects to have the review into pre school education (i) completed; and (ii) published.</p> <p>I expect this review to be completed in the 2015/2016 academic year. I have not set a timescale for publication yet.</p>
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Primary school provision of school meals for own and other schools

AQW 46849/11-15	Mr Danny Kinahan (UUP - South Antrim)	<p>To ask the Minister of Education how many primary schools cook and serve school meals in their own premises for (i) their pupils; and (ii) other schools.</p> <p>There are a total of 541 primary schools that produce their own school meals on site. 181 of these also provide meals to one or more other schools.</p>
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Schools in need of a new school build

<p>AQW 46843/1 1-15</p>	<p>Mr Alex Easton (DUP - North Down)</p>	<p>To ask the Minister of Education to list all the schools in need of a new school build by order of priority.</p> <p>The Department of Education (DE) does not maintain a priority list of schools in need of a new school build; rather prioritisation is considered at the point when a further list of projects is being developed.</p> <p>I announced lists of projects to proceed in planning for new builds in June 2012, January 2013 and June 2014. These will be released to the market in the order of readiness, subject to budget availability. The protocol which was applied for the selection of schools for my June 2014 announcement is available on the DE website http://www.deni.gov.uk/protocol_for_selection_for_the_selection_of_major_capital_works - 24_june_2014_pdf_290kb_.pdf</p>
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Number of P1 pupils who are unplaced in a school

<p>AQW 46838/11-15</p>	<p>Mr Peter Weir (DUP - North Down)</p>	<p>To ask the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 45882/11-15, to detail how many of the 80 applicants still remain unplaced, broken down by constituency.</p> <p>The table below shows the number of applicants that remain unplaced, as of 12 June. Figures provided by the Education Authority.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="579 1258 1396 2011"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2" data-bbox="579 1258 1396 1406">AQ 46838 – PUPILS WHO HAVE NOT SECURED A P1 PLACE FOR SEPTEMBER 2015</th> </tr> <tr> <th data-bbox="579 1406 946 1476"></th> <th data-bbox="946 1406 1396 1476">Number of Pupils</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td colspan="2" data-bbox="579 1476 1396 1547">Belfast Region</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="579 1547 946 1619">West Belfast</td> <td data-bbox="946 1547 1396 1619">2</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="579 1619 946 1691">East Belfast</td> <td data-bbox="946 1619 1396 1691">4</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="579 1691 946 1762">Total</td> <td data-bbox="946 1691 1396 1762">6</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2" data-bbox="579 1762 1396 1834">North Eastern Region</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2" data-bbox="579 1834 1396 1939">All P1 applicants in the North Eastern Region have now been placed in primary schools</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2" data-bbox="579 1939 1396 2011">South Eastern Region</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	AQ 46838 – PUPILS WHO HAVE NOT SECURED A P1 PLACE FOR SEPTEMBER 2015			Number of Pupils	Belfast Region		West Belfast	2	East Belfast	4	Total	6	North Eastern Region		All P1 applicants in the North Eastern Region have now been placed in primary schools		South Eastern Region	
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Special Education Needs Literacy and Numeracy Programme

AQW 46691/11- 15	Ms Claire Sugden (IND - East Londonderry)	<p>To ask the Minister of Education for his assessment of the Special Education Needs Literacy & Numeracy Programme; and how he plans to continue meeting the needs of pupils who participate on this programme in 2015/2016.</p> <p>I understand that clarification was provided in relation to this question and that the information being sought is “how the special educational needs (SEN) framework will support the literacy and numeracy needs of pupils with SEN in the immediate to medium future; in the context of cuts to the Minister’s departmental budget.”</p> <p>Although the Executive’s budget has been reduced by the Westminster government by £1.5bn over the last five years, I have allocated an additional £10m to the Education Authority in 2015-16 to support frontline SEN services for those children that are most vulnerable or at risk of exclusion.</p> <p>It remains my priority to ensure that every child receives a high quality</p>
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education and has the opportunity to reach their full potential. To that end, the Education Authority (EA) has advised that it continues to offer a range of special education support and provision which is available to parents and schools for children with SEN, such as those with literacy and/or numeracy difficulties, including the following:

- specific learning difficulties awareness training to enhance the capacity of teachers to identify and respond appropriately in addressing pupils' needs;
- all Educational Psychologists are trained in the assessment and identification of SENs and provide a comprehensive range of support including recommendations and resources to parents and schools;
- a range of innovative strategies, resources and computer assisted programmes are available for pupils with literacy and/or numeracy difficulties for whom more traditional methods are unsuccessful;
- a range of measures to help pupils requiring support taking examinations.

A further range of capacity building projects are provided specifically to assist teachers including:

Good Practice Guidelines Booklet

Provides guidelines on relevant and purposeful measures and adjustments to the classroom environment for pupils experiencing literacy difficulties.

SEN Resource File

Provides teaching staff with details of support for SEN, including sections relating to literacy and numeracy.

Certificate of Competence in Educational Testing [CCET] Training

This training, which ended in June 2014, enables schools to carry out a range of assessments on pupils with SEN, including those with literacy difficulties.

SEN Literacy Project

A recently completed 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.

Special schools budget allocation in 2015-16

<p>AQW 46623/11- 15</p>	<p>Mr Peter Weir (DUP - North Down)</p>	<p>To ask the Minister of Education whether all special schools have been allocated a budget for 2015-16.</p> <p>Special schools do not receive budget allocations directly from the Department; their budgets are determined and allocated by the Education Authority. The Education Authority has confirmed that special schools have not yet been allocated a budget for 2015-16; however the Authority expects to make an allocation to special schools shortly.</p>
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School funding in light of budget cuts to the education sector

<p>AQW 46602/11- 15</p>	<p>Mr David McIlveen (DUP - North Antrim)</p>	<p>To ask the Minister of Education what strategy his Department has in place to encourage schools to look for innovative solutions and alternative funding streams in light of cuts to the education sector.</p> <p>The management of funds is delegated to schools through the Local Management of Schools scheme and all schools can seek voluntary contributions and undertake funding raising activities to enhance education provision for pupils attending their school. It is a matter for individual schools to investigate alternative sources of funding. However, I am conscious that more should be done to signpost schools to other sources of funding. I have therefore asked my officials to produce an easily accessible sources of funding toolkit for schools.</p>
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Update on the Voluntary Exit Scheme

<p>AQW 46792/11- 15</p>	<p>Ms Anna Lo MBE (APNI - South Belfast)</p>	<p>To ask the Minister of Finance and Personnel for (i) an update on the Voluntary Exit Scheme and (ii) what consideration is being given to Civil Servants who have been given a conditional offer.</p> <p>The Scheme Information Booklet indicated that the progress of the Scheme was dependent upon funding for compensation costs being made available as part of the Stormont House Agreement. It had been anticipated that this funding would have been confirmed by now. Unfortunately that is not the case. However, in order for the Scheme to proceed, conditional offers have been issued to those staff selected to leave in the first tranche at the end of September, subject to funding becoming available. All other applicants have been informed that they have not yet been selected, until the position becomes clearer.</p>
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		<p>I can confirm that on 29 May 2015, the Head of the Civil Service issued a note to all staff to update them on the decision to proceed with conditional offers and next steps.</p> <p>I appreciate the uncertainty this creates for those selected and hope that the funding position will be favourably resolved as soon as possible and before the end of August, which would be the cut-off point at which this group would have to be informed whether they are leaving on 30th September 2015, or not. Staff have been assured that they will be provided with an update on the funding position when it becomes clearer and how it will impact on the Voluntary Exit Scheme.</p>
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RQIA effectiveness in regulating social care

AQW 46970/11- 15	Mr Fearghal McKinney (<i>SDLP - South Belfast</i>)	<p>To ask the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for his assessment of the effectiveness of the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority in regulating social care considering they do not take account of the reductions in expenditure reducing on services whilst assessing the quality of care received by patients.</p> <p>The role and functions of the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority [RQIA] are governed by the legislation – the Health and Personal Social Services (Quality, Improvement and Regulation) (Northern Ireland) Order 2003 and related regulations.</p> <p>In regulating provision of services, RQIA assesses the quality of services delivered by establishments and agencies, against relevant regulations and published minimum standards. Inspection reports include, where necessary, quality improvement plans detailing what improvements are required to meet regulations and minimum standards, and an associated timescale.</p>
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Rationale behind decision to withdraw ADD-NI funding

AQW 46873/11- 15	Mr David McIlveen (<i>DUP - North Antrim</i>)	<p>To ask the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the rationale behind his decision to withdraw funding for ADD-NI. [Priority Written]</p> <p>No decision has been made on future core and grant funding arrangements. I am currently considering a range of options and intend to communicate my decision to those organisations, which received core grant in 2014/15, as soon as possible.</p>
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Cost of treatment for psychoactive substance abuse

<p>AQW 46858/11- 15</p>	<p>Mr Fearghal McKinney (SDLP - South Belfast)</p>	<p>To ask the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the cost of providing treatment for psychoactive substance abuse for each of the last five years five years, broken down by each Health and Social Care Trust.</p> <p>Substance misuse services based within each of the five Health & Social Care Trust areas are responsible for dealing with both alcohol and drug misuse. Many of the clients require support to recovery from misuse of multiple substances, including alcohol, illegal drugs, misused prescription drugs, and new psychoactive substances. Accordingly, information is not available in the format requested, as it is not possible to disaggregate substance misuse services from those that also deal with alcohol misuse. However, each year approximately £8 million is invested each year in support of our overall Strategy to prevent and address the harm related to substance misuse, the New Strategic Direction (NSD) for Alcohol and Drugs Phase 2, and a further approximately £8 million is invested in statutory alcohol and drug treatment services through the mental health budget.</p>
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Pressures legal highs are having on the health service

<p>AQW 46854/11- 15</p>	<p>Mr Thomas Buchanan (DUP - West Tyrone)</p>	<p>To ask the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for his assessment of the added pressures legal highs are having on the health service.</p> <p>It is difficult to get an accurate picture of how prevalent misuse of New Psychoactive Substances (sometimes mislabelled as 'legal highs') is and the subsequent impact on the Health Service. A survey in 2010/11 indicated that 2% and 2.4% of the population had taken Mephedrone (then legal but subsequently banned) and New Psychoactive Substances respectively. Figures from our treatment services in 2013/14 also indicated that 15% of those in treatment reported the use of Mephedrone.</p> <p>However, we are aware of presentations to Emergency Departments and admissions to hospital following the use of New Psychoactive Substances and other drugs. In these settings, it is very difficult to know exactly what a person has taken and what has caused their presentation. Overall there were 3,360 drug related admissions to hospital in 2013/14 and figures have remained broadly consistent since 2010.</p>
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Referrals due to use of legal highs

<p>AQW 46853/11- 15</p>	<p>Mr Thomas Buchanan (DUP - West Tyrone)</p>	<p>To ask the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the percentage difference in the number of referrals of children and adolescents to the Western Health and Social Care Trust due to the use of legal highs for each of the last three years.</p> <p>The number of people aged under 18 in the Western Health and Social Care Trust, presenting for treatment for New Psychoactive Substances, is outlined in the table below.</p> <p>Number of people in the Western Health and Social Care Trust who received treatment for New Psychoactive Substances 2011/12 to 2013/14</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="587 880 1396 1093"> <tr> <td>2011/12</td> <td><5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2012/13</td> <td>6</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2013/14</td> <td>19</td> </tr> </table>	2011/12	<5	2012/13	6	2013/14	19
2011/12	<5							
2012/13	6							
2013/14	19							

Number of children in Foyle who have been placed in hotel accommodation

<p>AQW 46732/11- 15</p>	<p>Mr Pat Ramsey (SDLP - Foyle)</p>	<p>To ask the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number of children in Foyle that (i) have been placed in hotel accommodation; and (ii) for how long in each of the last three years. [Priority Written]</p> <p>Figures supplied by the Western Health and Social Care Trust indicate that eight children in Foyle had been placed in hotel accommodation in the last three years. In each case specific circumstances led to this placement. The Trust provided a twenty four hour support package for each child during their placement in a hotel.</p> <p>Table 1 below details the total number of days children from Foyle were placed in hotel accommodation in each of the last three years.</p> <p>Table 1</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="528 1731 1396 1984"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>2012/13</th> <th>2013/14</th> <th>2014/15</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Total number of days children were placed in hotel accommodation during the year.</td> <td>2 days</td> <td>69 days</td> <td>322 days</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	Total number of days children were placed in hotel accommodation during the year.	2 days	69 days	322 days
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Occupational therapists and special educational needs assessments

<p>AQW 46649/11-15</p>	<p>Mr Steven Agnew (GPNI - North Down)</p>	<p>To ask the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number of (i) occupational therapists employed; and (ii) assessments for special educational needs that have been completed by each of the Health and Social Care Trusts in each of the last five years.</p> <p>At 31st March 2015, there were 984 (857.8 whole-time equivalent) occupational therapists employed within the Health and Social Care (HSC) Trusts, excluding bank staff, staff on career breaks and those with a WTE of less than 0.03. Table 1 below provides the number of occupational therapists employed by HSC Trust.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="536 804 1394 1232"> <thead> <tr> <th>HSC Trust</th> <th>Headcount</th> <th>WTE</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Belfast</td> <td>270</td> <td>239.76</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Northern</td> <td>228</td> <td>192.12</td> </tr> <tr> <td>South Eastern</td> <td>149</td> <td>133.67</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Southern</td> <td>207</td> <td>177.85</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Western</td> <td>130</td> <td>114.39</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Source: HSC Trusts – Human Resources, Payroll, Travel and Subsistence System (HRPTS)</p> <p>The information requested is not available and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.</p>	HSC Trust	Headcount	WTE	Belfast	270	239.76	Northern	228	192.12	South Eastern	149	133.67	Southern	207	177.85	Western	130	114.39
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Accessing services for kinship carers

<p>AQW 46561/11-15</p>	<p>Ms Claire Sugden (IND - East Londonderry)</p>	<p>To ask the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for his assessment of the disparity in accessing services for kinship carers depending on whether the kinship arrangements are formal or informal.</p> <p>Health and Social Care Trusts have a duty to maintain and support formal placements, as these children and young people in those placements are 'looked-after' children under The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995. As a result, 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; and are provided with a range of learning and development opportunities as well as educational support. In the majority</p>
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		of informal kinship care arrangements, parental responsibility, including provision of financial support, remains with the parent. 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 meaning of The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995.
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Kinship carers and employment

AQW 46534/11- 15	Ms Claire Sugden (IND - East Londonderry)	<p>To ask the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail any instances where kinship carers have been required to give up employment in order to meet the needs of children they care for, and if so, for his assessment of this issue.</p> <p>My Department does not collect information on this issue.</p>
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Update on Mental Health

AQW 46501/11- 15	Ms Maeve McLaughlin (SF - Foyle)	<p>To ask the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an update on the Mental Health Inpatient unit in Belfast; and the Hospital for Sick Children in the Royal Victoria Hospital.</p> <p>Mental Health Unit The development of the Acute Mental Health Unit at the Belfast City Hospital continues. The enabling and demolition work is underway and work on the main construction is currently scheduled to commence in February 2016. It is planned that the facility will be completed in May 2018.</p> <p>Regional Children’s Hospital This Executive priority project remains on schedule and it is anticipated that the handover of the facility will take place in December 2021. The first element of the Regional Children’s Hospital enabling contract was awarded on 13 May 2015. The precise timing of all capital investment projects remains dependent on budget availability.</p>
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UN Standard Minimum Rules for Administration of Juvenile Justice in NI

<p>AQW 47176/11- 15</p>	<p>Mr Colum Eastwood (SDLP - Foyle)</p>	<p>To ask the Minister of Justice whether the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice are applicable in Northern Ireland. <i>[Priority Written]</i></p> <p>The United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice have not been incorporated into UK law, and therefore are not directly applicable in Northern Ireland. They do, however, have persuasive authority and cognisance is paid to them when developing policies relating to children in the justice system.</p>
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Prevent of online criminals targeting vulnerable young people

<p>AQW 47091/11- 15</p>	<p>Mr David McIlveen (DUP - North Antrim)</p>	<p>To ask the Minister of Justice what actions his Department is taking to prevent online criminal gangs targeting vulnerable young people. <i>[Priority Written]</i></p> <p>There is work ongoing in a number of areas across Government and its agencies to raise awareness and prevent this sort of crime and also to address non-criminal problem behaviour. The Safeguarding Board's work, into which a number of Departmental agencies have an input, is particularly relevant in that regard. The Policing Board also has a target on the issue of cyber bullying in its Policing Plan.</p> <p>In terms of criminal gangs specifically, the PSNI, in conjunction with the Organised Crime Task Force sub-group on cyber-crime, is working on a strategy to deal with cyber-crime. This includes:</p> <p>Prevention – Awareness campaigns to alert the community to the threats posed by cyber enabled platforms. This incorporates a young persons' education programme involving the Public Protection Unit which is engaged with the Safeguarding Board. Work is ongoing to develop this awareness to prevent young people becoming victims.</p> <p>Protection – The development of effective liaison with social media providers, internet service providers and other industry contacts in this area to identify criminality and protect the community through collaborative partnerships with industry.</p> <p>Enforcement – PSNI is engaging with the National Crime Agency nationally and Europol and Interpol internationally to progress investigations and identify criminals targeting the Northern Ireland community.</p>
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Implications of the Mental Capacity Bill

<p>AQW 46789/11- 15</p>	<p>Mr Alastair Ross (DUP - East Antrim)</p>	<p>To ask the Minister of Justice whether the Office of Care and Protection will be retained after the establishment of the Office of the Public Guardian as proposed under the Mental Capacity Bill.</p> <p>The Department of Justice has been working with the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to establish indicative costs in relation to the Mental Capacity Bill.</p> <p>This work has estimated the costs for the establishment of the Office of the Public Guardian at £155,000 in the two years prior to implementation; £1.6m in Year 1; £1.4m in Year 2; and £1.8m in Year 3 and annually thereafter. These include estimated costs for IT, accommodation, training, staffing, and the investigatory function. The figures are based on a high level costing exercise and more work is required to refine them when the Office of the Public Guardian model is developed further.</p> <p>Many of the current functions of the Office of Care and Protection will transfer to the Office of the Public Guardian. However the Office of Care and Protection function to support the administration of court work will remain and may increase through the broadening of the jurisdiction to take in health and welfare matters.</p>
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