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Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister

Race Equality

Mr D Bradley asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister what progress has been made on updating race equality law.

(AQO 6142/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness (The First Minister and deputy First Minister):

We are currently considering the options for legislative reform. When we have made a decision we will outline our proposals. We intend that the consultation on the draft Racial Equality Strategy will begin shortly and there are a number of questions in relation to reform of the Race Relations Order included in the document.

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Racial Equality Strategy

Mr F McCann asked the First Minister and deputy First Minister when their racial equality strategy will go out for consultation.

(AQO 6138/11-15)

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: Following the most recent meeting of the Racial Equality Panel on 1 April, officials are refining the draft consultation document for the Racial Equality Strategy. This exercise is near completion and the public consultation of the revised Strategy will commence very shortly. The consultation will last at least 12 weeks. A number of events will be held in the areas of highest population for minority ethnic people and events will be facilitated in different languages where appropriate. We also intend to use social media to gather views from as many interested parties as we can. At the end of that exercise we intend to have a reinvigorated, contemporary and focused Strategy that will help improve the lives of our minority ethnic people for the next decade.

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Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure

Libraries NI's Strategy to Promote the Irish Language

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to detail Libraries NI's strategy to promote the Irish language.

(AQW 33404/11-15)

Ms Ní Chuilín: Libraries NI's strategy to promote the Irish language is based around my Líofoa campaign which aspires to make Irish more accessible to people across the north of Ireland. As part of this strategy, Libraries NI is working to expand its Irish language stock and since April 2011 has spent over £47k on Irish language material. Libraries NI's is endeavoring to make this existing, and any new Irish language information and reading material it acquires in the future, available in the majority of its libraries.

Currently almost 12,500 items of Irish language material (adults' and children's') are available for loan with larger collections deliberately located in branches where interest in the language is particularly strong. In addition Libraries NI holds an extensive collection of Irish language Heritage material which it is seeking to make more readily accessible to the entire community. Libraries NI continues to run an extensive programme of activities and events designed to promote interest in and the use of Irish. These include local Irish language reading groups and conversational circles, storytelling sessions for children, public talks and exhibitions.

Libraries NI will also be launching its 2014 Children's Summer Reading Challenge in June which will incorporate provision for Irish language speakers. The authority is also planning a bilingual workshop (Irish and English) for school children during Community Relations Week in the same month.

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Department of Education

Elective Home Education

Mr Campbell asked the Minister of Education what consideration has been given to how the relevant authorities in other regions of the UK address the issue of Elective Home Education.

(AQW 33615/11-15)

Mr O’Dowd (The Minister of Education): Whilst the issue of elective home education is a devolved policy area my Department actively seeks to ensure, as for any policy area, that appropriate consideration is given to how such matters are addressed in other jurisdictions including the south of Ireland, Scotland, England, Wales and further afield.

The Education and Library Boards are currently undertaking an open consultation on their draft guidelines for elective home education and have advised that, in developing the guidelines, information from a range of sources was reviewed. I understand that this included consideration of, for example, the elective home education policy in the South of Ireland, the “Elective Home Education Guidelines for Local Authorities” published in 2007 by the Department for Children, Schools and Families and Birmingham City Council’s Elective Home Education Policy.

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Schools: Physical Education

Mr Humphrey asked the Minister of Education to detail the number of schools in each education sector which offer dance as the physical component for (i) GCSE; and (ii) GCE Physical Education.

(AQW 33650/11-15)

Mr O’Dowd: The information requested is not collected. The Council for Curriculum Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) has advised that it holds records at subject level only i.e. candidates who have achieved specific grades in GCSE or GCE Physical Education. Although candidates may choose to study ‘Dance’ as one option/component of the specification, this level of detail is not recorded in the CCEA examinations database.

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Primary Schools: Curriculum

Mr Humphrey asked the Minister of Education to detail the number of primary schools in each education sector which offer (i) Irish dance; (ii) highland dance; and (iii) Scottish country dance as part of the curriculum.

(AQW 33653/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Department of Education does not collate information on the types of dance offered by schools in their delivery of the curriculum.

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Post-Primary School Curriculum

Mr Humphrey asked the Minister of Education to detail the number of post-primary schools in each education sector which offer (i) Irish dance; (ii) highland dance; and (iii) Scottish country dance as part of the curriculum.

(AQW 33704/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: While dance is prescribed as a specific area to be covered under the Physical Education (PE) Area of Learning of the statutory curriculum at primary level, it is not specified within the PE curriculum for post-primary pupils.

At post-primary level, Key Stage 3 pupils should have opportunities to increase their knowledge, understanding and skills through frequent and regular participation in a balanced programme of athletics, games, gymnastics and swimming. At Key Stage 4, schools have further flexibility with their PE provision as pupils should be enabled to plan and participate in a regular, frequent and balanced programme of physical activity. The content of this balanced programme is a matter for each school. Some post-primary schools may of course offer dance as an option within their PE curriculum, however the Department would not hold this information.

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United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

Mr Humphrey asked the Minister of Education to detail the obligations that his Department has under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child; and the mechanisms in place to ensure compliance.

(AQW 33706/11-15)

Mr O’Dowd: My Department is fully committed to the promotion and implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (the Convention). The principles and four categories of rights of the Convention clearly provide an important guiding framework for the development, implementation and review of Departmental policies, legislation and practice. The Convention places equal emphasis on all rights for children and recognises that these rights are indivisible and interrelated and that decisions with regard to one right must be made in light of all other rights in the Convention.

Reflecting this approach, my Department proactively works to ensure that children’s rights are respected, promoted, protected and fulfilled in the development and implementation of legislation and policy. For example, DE makes a vitally important contribution to the protection and fulfillment of children’s survival and development rights as detailed under articles 28 and 29 of the UNCRC (which relate specifically to a child’s right to a sound and suitable education) and also those under articles 24, 27, 30 and 41. In addition, the Department seeks to ensure that children’s protection and participation rights including, for example, those under articles 12, 13, 19, 34 are addressed and fulfilled in developing and implementing Departmental legislation/policy.

It is important to note, however, that whilst the Westminster Government ratified the Convention in 1991 it has not been directly incorporated into law in GB or the north. The Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister (OFMDFM) is the lead department here with responsibility for co-ordinating Departmental actions to ensure compliance with the Convention and my Department recently provided detailed information to OFMDFM setting out the actions taken by the Department in this regard. I understand that some of this information is reflected in the State Party’s 5th Periodic Report submitted to the United Nations on 23 May 2014.

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Woodlands Speech and Language Unit

Mr P Ramsey asked the Minister of Education what provision is available for Key Stage Two students in the new language classes replacing the Woodlands Speech and Language Unit.

(AQW 33736/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The Western Education and Library Board has advised that, from September 2014, there will be speech and language classes located at Ebrington Primary School, St. Anne's Primary School and Ballykelly Primary School. These classes will be able to cater for pupils with speech and language difficulties at Key Stages One and Two with provision being tailored to the individual learning needs of each pupil attending these units.

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GCSE and A Level Politics

Mr Weir asked the Minister of Education how many pupils studied (i) GCSE; and (ii) A Level politics in each of the last ten years.

(AQW 33784/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: The information requested is contained in the table below.

Number of Pupils who made one or more examination entry in Politics at either GCSE or A-level, 2003/04 – 2012/13

Year	Pupils with examination entries in GCSE Politics	Pupils with examination entries in A-level Politics
2003/04	0	1078
2004/05	0	1115
2005/06	0	1090
2006/07	0	1011
2007/08	0	978
2008/09	0	1018
2009/10	0	931
2010/11	0	1050
2011/12	0	992
2012/13	0	1001

Source: RM Education

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Shankill Manifesto for Education

Mr Humphrey asked the Minister of Education for an update on the implementation of the Shankill Manifesto for Education.

(AQO 6223/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I met with Nigel Dodds MP and Jackie Redpath of the Greater Shankill Partnership Board in December 2013 to discuss the Shankill Manifesto for Education. Since that meeting the Partnership Board has submitted a new proposal to the Department for the development of a framework for collaborative working by relevant agencies and partners with the aim of designating the area a 'Children's Zone'.

I am heartened by the commitment shown by the community leaders and their recognition that the community itself has a particular and significant role to play. I am committed to supporting the framework and their proposal to designate the area as a 'Shankill Children's Zone'. I understand that the community are not at the implementation stage and that there is still work to be undertaken with regard to the framework. However my officials have been working closely with Jackie Redpath and the Greater Shankill Partnership Board and will continue to do so.

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Free School Meals

Mr Brady asked the Minister of Education whether his Department will benefit from additional resources as a result of the Barnett Consequentials following the decision to extend Free School Meal entitlement in England.

(AQO 6227/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: All Barnett consequentials are unhypothecated and hence it is up to the Executive to decide on the use of any additional funding. However I met with the Finance Minister on Tuesday 27 May to discuss how this additional £38 million allocation could be utilised for educational purposes. I will continue to seek to maximise the funding allocated to the education sector.

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Education and Skills Authority

Mr Lyttle asked the Minister of Education when he will publish his list of alternatives to the Education and Skills Authority and their expected impact on Area Based Planning.
(AQO 6228/11-15)

Mr O'Dowd: I have submitted a paper to the Executive proposing that the five Education and Library Boards are replaced by one Education Board. This is needed to ensure that education administration will be compatible with our new local councils from 1 April, 2015. Key challenges such as Area Planning will be taken forward in the context of the Executive's agreement.

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Department for Employment and Learning

EU Youth Guarantee Scheme

Ms Fearon asked the Minister for Employment and Learning how he intends to engage with the recently returned Members of the European Parliament in relation to the establishment of a properly funded EU youth guarantee scheme.

(AQO 6243/11-15)

Dr Farry: The EU Youth Guarantee is a framework and not a scheme or programme. As our level of youth unemployment, while challenging, is less severe than in many other parts of Europe, Northern Ireland is not eligible for EU Youth Employment Initiative funding.

Through the range of DEL programmes, Northern Ireland is delivering a Youth Guarantee. All 16-17 year old school leavers have a guarantee of a training place through Training for Success with extended eligibility for those with a disability and from an in care background. 18-24 year olds can avail of a range of provision including further education, apprenticeships, foundation degrees, Steps to Work, and the Youth Employment Scheme. In addition my Department provides a comprehensive range of programmes for individuals who are not in employment, education or training supported through the Pathways to Success strategy and the European Social Fund.

My Department plans to allocate over half of the ESF funding for 2014-20 to programmes targeting young people. The ESF allocation to the new Programme for 2014-2020 will be €205 million, giving a total fund value of £417 million, including matched funding. In the new ESF Programme, there will be a specific focus on supporting young people who are not in education, employment or training; this will be through a ring-fenced allocation under Priority 1 of £50 million, which includes matched funding. In addition, young people who are not in education, employment or training will also benefit from activity under Priority 2, through the Community Family Support Programme, and under Priority 3, which will focus on apprenticeships and youth training. During his recent visit to Belfast, Commissioner László Andor acknowledged Northern Ireland's approach to supporting the Youth Guarantee framework.

My intention is to work in partnership with the recently returned Members of the European Parliament and anyone else who can help ensure that Northern Ireland maximises all opportunities within Europe, including funding opportunities.

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Department of Health

Disposable Nappies

Mr Agnew asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail

- (i) the incentives in place to promote the use of reusable nappies;
- (ii) the incentives he is putting in place to encourage parents to choose reusable nappies;
- (iii) for his assessment of the impact the gift of disposable nappies to parents of newborns by corporations has on the uptake of disposable nappies.

(AQW 33522/11-15)

Mr Poots: The Public Health Agency (PHA) issues The Pregnancy Book to all first time mothers which includes information regarding nappies in general and provides advice on both cloth and disposable nappies.

While the PHA does not provide direct incentives for the use of either type of nappy, The Pregnancy Book does advise that, “Washable cloth nappies are cheaper than disposable nappies, even when you take into account the cost of washing them at home or getting them washed by a laundry service. They are more environmentally friendly and are easily laundered in a 60°C wash.” It also provides advice on accessories needed to use cloth nappies (pins, liners, sterilising equipment etc) and links to information about local suppliers and laundry services.

New mothers are given free product sample-packs and information from Bounty, which is a charitable trust. The samples provide opportunities to ‘try before buying’. The packs are issued at the beginning of pregnancy and after a baby is born, and their contents are the responsibility of Bounty.

My Department does not hold information on the impact of these packs on the uptake of disposable nappies.

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Services Provided by Family Support

Mr McGlone asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what services are provided by Family Support; and to outline the availability of these services in each Health and Social Care Trust.

(AQW 33583/11-15)

Mr Poots: Family Support is broad term that covers a wide range of services delivered by HSC Trusts and other Agencies. These include:

- Family Intervention Teams;
- The Community Family Support Programme; and
- Family Support Hubs.

Family Intervention Teams are situated within each HSC Trust area and seek to safeguard and promote best outcomes for children and families through the provision of a professional, accountable and quality social work service. They deliver family support and child protection services. They also provide services to court and have the Gateway Service including the single point of entry to access Gateway.

The Community Family Support Programme is a Delivering Social Change signature project entitled 'Pathways to Employment for Young People'. This programme, led by DEL, is being delivered in five areas, based on the Health and Social Care Trust areas. Community Family Support Programme providers work in partnership with statutory agencies such as Health and Social Care Trusts and the Youth Justice Agency to support families.

A Family Support Hub is a multi-agency network of statutory, community and voluntary organizations that either provide early intervention services or work with families who need early intervention services. Delivering Social Change funding has been used to establish a further 10 hubs, bringing the total to 25 across Northern Ireland. This funding will also enable a minimum of 1700 additional family support interventions to be delivered, across a two year period, in addition to the interventions already being provided. The network accepts referrals of families who need early intervention family support and uses their knowledge of local service providers and the Family Support Database (www.familysupportni.gov.uk) to signpost families with specific needs to appropriate services.

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Department of Justice

Sexual Offences Act 2003 [Sections below relate to trafficking]

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice how many cases involving offences under

- (i) Section 57 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003;
- (ii) Section 58 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003;
- (iii) Section 58A of the Sexual Offences Act 2003; and
- (iv) Section 59 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003, are currently in the

(a) Magistrates Court; and (b) Crown court systems, broken down by court division.

(AQW 33659/11-15)

Mr Ford: The following table details the number of cases in the Magistrates' Courts by court division as at 27 May 2014. There were no cases in the Crown Court at this date.

Offence	Court Division			Total
	Ards	Belfast	Craigavon	
i) Section 57 Sexual Offences Act 2003	0	0	0	0
ii) Section 58 (1) Sexual Offences Act 2003	1	0	1	2
iii) Section 58 (1), (a) Sexual Offences Act 2003	0	1	0	1
(iv) Section 59 Sexual Offences Act 2003	0	0	0	0
Total				3

Source – Integrated Court Operations System.

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Cases Involving Articles 59 to 64A

Lord Morrow asked the Minister of Justice how many cases involving Articles 59 to 64A inclusive of the Sexual Offences (NI) Order 2008 are currently in the

- (i) Magistrates Court; and
 - (ii) Crown Court systems, broken down by order and court division.
- (AQW 33691/11-15)

Mr Ford: As at 29 May 2014, there are currently three cases in Belfast Magistrates' Court and two cases in Belfast Crown Court.

Two of the Magistrates' Court cases relate to charges under Article 63 of the Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008 (the Order), the remaining case involves charges under both Articles 63 and 64.

One Crown Court case relates to charges under Article 63 and the other involves charges under both Articles 63 and 64.

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Department for Social Development

Foreign Nationals Resident in Northern Ireland: Benefits

Mr McNarry asked the Minister for Social Development how many foreign nationals resident in Northern Ireland are in receipt of state benefits, including child benefit. (AQW 33213/11-15)

Mr McCausland (The Minister for Social Development): The payment of benefits in Northern Ireland is administered via IT systems which are owned and maintained by the Department for Work and Pensions. As these systems do not have the facility to record the nationality of claimants, the requested information is therefore not available.

In support of changes made to the Regulations introduced for European Economic Area nationals and for returning UK nationals claiming income based Jobseekers Allowance from January 2014, the Social Security Agency is currently gathering clerical information on the number of applications for income based Jobseekers Allowance from foreign nationals. Figures collected during January, February and March indicate that 667* foreign nationals (from the European Economic Area (EEA)) made a claim for income based Jobseekers Allowance. Of these, 419 were awarded income based Jobseekers Allowance.

Child Benefit matters are dealt with by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs and consequently my Department does not have access to the data in order to provide an answer to that element of the Member's question.

* The Department for Social Development's Analytical Services Unit is unable to provide the statistics that have been requested. The details provided have been taken from clerical data collected by Decision Makers during the dates stated. The management information provided is limited to standard reports with no facility to interrogate the system.

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