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Office of First and Deputy First Minister

Internet Safety Strategy

Mrs Sandra Overend (UUP – Mid Ulster) - To ask the First Minister and deputy First Minister to detail the timescale for the cross-departmental internet safety strategy to be brought to the Executive.

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: In June 2014, agreement in principle was obtained from the Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland (SBNI) to develop an e-safety strategy and action plan.

In the near future, the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety will submit a proposal, to commission the SBNI to take this work forward, to the Executive for approval. **(17th November)**

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Historical Child Sexual Abuse Inquiry

Mr Trevor Clarke (DUP – South Antrim) - To ask the First Minister and deputy First Minister whether they will continue to support the calls for cases, such as Kincora House, to be included in the United Kingdom historical child sexual abuse inquiry.

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: We are disappointed that the Home Secretary has decided not to include allegations of cover up by intelligence services and MI5 relating to abuse in Kincora boys' home in the Westminster independent inquiry panel into institutional failures in respect of child sexual abuse.

However, we have no doubt the Sir Anthony Hart is more than capable of carrying out such investigations as long as there is full co-operation from Westminster and all the evidence he requires is provided to him, given that he does not have the legal authority to compel evidence from Westminster departments and associated bodies.

It is too soon to be sure that the Inquiry will find itself able to deal satisfactorily with allegations of cover up by the Ministry of Defence or the Security Services, but we are heartened to note that consideration can be given at any time to bring it into the remit of the Westminster inquiry panel. [Back to Top](#)

Community Family Support Programme

Mr Fra McCann (Sinn Féin – West Belfast) - To ask the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on Community Family Support programme under the Delivering Social Change framework.

Mr P Robinson and Mr M McGuinness: The Community Family Support Programme is part of the overall approach by the Executive to tackle poverty and social exclusion.

The Delivering Social Change framework represents a new level of joined-up working by Ministers and senior officials across Executive departments to drive through initiatives which have a genuine impact on the ground and helping to break the long term cycle of multi-generational poverty.

It is about creating a new culture and focus on cross-cutting work to achieve social benefits. The Community Family Support Programme is providing support to 720 families; encouraging them to make life changing decisions, enhancing their prospects and assist in becoming full participants in society. This follows an initial pilot of the Programme which focused on the needs of 44 families, delivered between January and June 2013.

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Department of Education

Special Education Needs Teacher Training

Mr Danny Kinahan (UUP – South Antrim) - To ask the Minister of Education when training for teachers in Special Educational Needs was last reviewed; and what changes in provision have been implemented as a result.

Mr O’Dowd (The Minister of Education): Following the review of Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Inclusion, I have provided funding for a number of important capacity-building initiatives to support the proposals under that Review. These include: a SEN course at Masters level focused on support for children with literacy difficulties; an Early Years Pilot in Department of Education-funded statutory and non-statutory early years settings; and an Educational Assessment Pilot in almost 300 primary and post-primary settings.

A comprehensive SEN Resource File and leadership and management training for SEN Coordinators (SENCOs), has been made available to all grant-aided schools. Funding has also been made available for a one-day training course in leadership and management of classroom assistants, which will be offered to all SENCOs and delivered by board staff in this school year. As an extension to the SEN Resource File, Early Years Handbooks have been developed for staff in all funded pre-school settings.

My Department also funded joint working on SEN between the University of Ulster and Queens University to extend the SEN content of the PGCE. A pilot reading module was developed as part of the PGCE programme for student teachers to allow them to address literacy issues in post primary, and in particular, with pupils who have SEN. This module was mainstreamed in the 2013/14 academic year.

My Department is represented by a member of the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) in the European Agency for special needs and inclusion and currently participating in a European wide project on raising standards for all learners. Previously the ETI has participated in related projects including early years, ICT, SEN statistics across Europe and teacher education which combine to contribute to the raising of standards through policy information and development in special needs education.

In addition, officials are currently working on a revised strategy for teacher education. This will provide an overarching and coherent framework for teacher education and continuing professional development to strengthen the professionalism and expertise of teachers in all areas.

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Formal Consultations

Miss Michelle McIlveen (DUP – Strangford) - To ask the Minister of Education to detail the (i) parent groups; and (ii) parent organisations which have made representations in relation to formal consultations by his Department, in the last five years.

Mr O’Dowd (The Minister of Education): The details of the parents groups and parent organisation which have made representations to formal consultations by the Department of Education are detailed in the table below.

| Year | Consultation | Parents Groups / Parent Organisations |
|------|--|---|
| 2009 | Draft Food in Schools Policy | Academy Primary School, Saintfield Parent Teacher Association Ballymagee Primary School, Bangor Parents Hazelwood Integrated Primary School, Parent Teacher Association St Joseph’s Boy’s High School, Newry Parents Association Whitehouse Primary School, Newtownabbey Parent Teacher Association |
| 2010 | Draft Early Years (0-6) Strategy | Parents Advice Centre |
| 2012 | Learning to Learn – A Framework for Early Years Education and Learning | Parents Out Loud Parenting NI |

The Department has also commissioned parent organisations to carryout consultations with parents on its behalf. The details of these consultations are provided in the table below.

| Year | Consultation | Parent Organisations |
|------|--|----------------------|
| 2009 | Preparation of a leaflet for parents advising on the post-primary transfer process | Parenting Forum |
| 2013 | Review of the Common Funding Scheme | Parenting NI |
| 2013 | Fundamental Review of GCSE's and A Levels | Parenting Forum |

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Referral and Diagnosis of Autism

Mr Fearghal McKinney (SDLP – South Belfast) - To ask the Minister of Education what procedures are in place to ensure the proper referral and diagnosis of primary school children with autism, in order to receive any additional help and support that they require.

Mr O'Dowd (The Minister of Education): The responsibility for diagnosis of children with autism rests with the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety. Addressing the individual special educational needs (SEN) of a child with autism is not, however, dependent upon receipt of a diagnosis. The identification, assessment and provision for children with SEN, including those with autism, will be addressed in line with procedures outlined in the Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs.

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Diagnosis of Autism

Mr Fearghal McKinney (SDLP, South Belfast) - To ask the Minister of Education how he is currently engaging with the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety in relation to achieving adequate and timely diagnosis of autism in children within the primary education setting.

Mr O'Dowd (The Minister of Education): I acknowledge the importance of close collaboration between the Education and Health sectors in supporting pupils with special educational needs (SEN), including autism.

While the responsibility for adequate and timely diagnosis of autism in children rests with the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS), addressing the individual SEN of a child with autism is not dependent upon receipt of a diagnosis. The identification, assessment and provision for children with SEN, including those with autism, will be addressed in line with the procedures outlined in the Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs.

My Department will continue to cooperate with DHSSPS and other Departments, to support those pupils diagnosed with autism. **(18th November)**

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New Education Authority

Mr Steven Agnew (Green Party – North Down) - To ask the Minister of Education to detail how the role of the new Education Authority will differ from the work completed by each Education and Library Board.

Mr O'Dowd (The Minister of Education): The Education Authority will carry out all of the duties, roles and responsibilities of the education and library boards, with the exception that the Assembly has placed additional duties on the Authority to encourage, facilitate and promote shared education and the community use of school premises.
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Education in non school environment

Miss Michelle McIlveen (DUP – Strangford) - To ask the Minister of Education for his assessment of how many children are not educated in a school environment.

Mr O’Dowd (The Minister of Education): The best place for children and young people to be educated is in school. It is recognised, however, that for some young people a school placement cannot be sustained and education outside the school environment may be necessary to meet their educational and other needs.

This is known as ‘Education Otherwise Than At School’ (EOTAS) and legal responsibility for this rests with the Education and Library Board (ELB) in which the young person resides. EOTAS encompasses a broad range of ELB funded interventions, allowing for a flexible response based on the assessed needs of the individual young person. While normally delivered in a group setting within specialist centres, EOTAS can include ELB provided tuition services delivering one-to-one teaching, in a home or other setting.

Each year, my Department collects statistics on the number of pupils in EOTAS provision. Data is currently held to 2013. Figures for 2014 are in the process of being collated but are not yet available. The available figures, broken down by board area are in the table below:

| Date | BELB | WELB | NEELB | SEELB | SELB | Total |
|----------|------|------|-------|-------|------|-------|
| Oct 2009 | 225 | 155 | 179 | 161 | 146 | 866 |
| Oct 2010 | 236 | 129 | 190 | 128 | 143 | 826 |
| Oct 2011 | 172 | 87 | 192 | 125 | 111 | 687 |
| Oct 2012 | 141 | 103 | 159 | 65 | 116 | 584 |
| Oct 2013 | 164 | 90 | 64 | 134 | 106 | 558 |

*Figures are collated for the first week of October each year and include pupils in any form of ELB delivered EOTAS provision. They do not include children receiving Elective Home Education (EHE).

Under existing legislation a parent may educate his/her child at home. I understand that the ELBs are aware of 254 children who are being home educated. I would note, however, that this is likely to be an under-estimation of the overall figure as the ELBs may not be aware of those children who are currently being home educated if they have not previously been registered at school or brought to the attention of the ELB by any other individual or agency. **(20th November)** [Back to Top](#)

School Children Photographs on Pornographic Websites

Mrs Sandra Overend (UUP – Mid Ulster) - To ask the Minister of Education, in light of the revelations of the BBC Spotlight programme which revealed that photographs of schools girls appeared on pornographic websites, to detail what support (i) his Department; and (ii) each Education and Library Board have provided, and intends to provide, to the schools involved.

Mr O’Dowd (The Minister of Education): The BBC Spotlight programme did not contact the Department directly either about the making of this programme or in relation to its findings but did email the schools directly affected.

The Department contacted the programme makers for information about the content of the programme on being approached for advice from some of the schools concerned and from the 5 ELB Child Protection Support Services for Schools (CPSSS).

The main concern of schools, and the Department, was to ensure that pupil identities were protected and that pupils and their families were not distressed by the information revealed. The Department therefore liaised closely with the CPSSS to provide advice on how schools might respond to the issues highlighted.

The Department has not received any further calls subsequent to the programme airing and has no intention at this time of issuing any further specific advice on this issue. Any school that requires additional support and advice may contact the relevant ELB CPSSS.
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Home Schooling

Mr Gregory Campbell (DUP – East Londonderry) - To ask the Minister of Education to detail the change in the estimated numbers of primary school age children who have been home schooled between 2003 and 2013.

Mr O’Dowd (The Minister of Education): The Education and Library Boards (ELBs) have advised that the number of primary school age children educated at home of whom they are aware for 2003 and 2013 are as follows:

| Year | BELB | SELB | NEELB | WELB | SEELB | Total* |
|------|------|------|-------|------|-------|--------|
| 2003 | 4 | 58 | 29 | 5 | 1 | 97 |
| 2013 | 11 | 21 | 38 | 13 | 20 | 103 |

*The data reflects the position at October of each year.

This is likely to be an under-estimation of the overall figures as the ELBs may not be aware of those children being electively home educated if they had not previously been registered at school or brought to the attention of the ELB by any other individual or agency. **(20th November)**

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Department of Environment

Cycling Legal Requirements

Mr Paul Frew (DUP – North Antrim) - To ask the Minister of the Environment whether there is any legal requirement for children to wear helmets whilst cycling on public roads or any plans to introduce such a requirement.

Mr M Durkan (The Minister of Environment): There is no legal requirement for cyclists, either adults or children, to wear helmets whilst cycling on public roads in Northern Ireland or any other part of the United Kingdom.

The topic of cycle helmets has been a controversial one for many years. Although a good deal of research has been done in this area, no consensus has been reached on whether the wearing of helmets should be made compulsory. Taking this into account, along with the practicalities of enforcement, the possible impact on levels of cycling and the potential loss of wider environmental and health benefits, I am not persuaded that making helmets mandatory is the right option. I therefore have no current plans to introduce such a requirement.

My Department does however view the wearing of helmets as best practice when cycling, and promotes this in a number of key ways.

The Cycling Proficiency Scheme (CPS) is offered to all primary schools in Northern Ireland and is very popular. The objectives of CPS are to teach children in years 5, 6 and 7 how to ride their bicycles safely, to learn the basics of the Highway Code and help them become safer road users. In 2013 CPS was delivered in 538 schools with 8,365 children being trained. All children are encouraged to wear helmets during this training and many schools include the wearing of helmets in their school policy.

In order to further promote road safety amongst cyclists, and in particular children, my Department is developing a new Education Pack on cycling for use in primary and post primary schools. The pack, due for release early next year, is intended to initiate discussions about road safety and the choices that cyclists make on the road.

In April this year, I launched a cyclist safety campaign aimed at reducing road deaths and serious injuries involving cyclists by positively influencing the relationship between cyclists and drivers. The campaign is supported by the message “Respect Everyone’s Journey”.

The message encourages drivers to look out for cyclists and encourages cyclists to take steps to increase their own safety. As such, the cyclists depicted in the advert are all wearing the correct helmet, as advised in the Official Highway Code for Northern Ireland.

My Department's policy on the use of cycle helmets is clear. All cyclists are encouraged to wear an approved helmet – one that conforms to current regulations, is the correct size and fits properly. (20th November)

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Department of Health

Domestic and Sexual Abuse Strategy

Mrs Dolores Kelly (SDLP – Upper Bann) - To ask the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an update on the Domestic and Sexual Abuse Strategy.

Mr J Wells (The Minister for Health, Social Services and Public Safety): A Public consultation exercise on the Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Strategy launched on 15 January 2014 and officially closed on 11 April 2014. The consultation received 68 responses.

A Consultation Response Report has been prepared and will be published on the Department's website as soon as is practicable.

I have agreed with the Justice Minister that we will aim to publish the strategy by March 2015. **(17th November)**

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Autism Diagnosis

Ms Michaela Boyle (Sinn Féin – West Tyrone) - To ask the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, given the recent statistics that 1,300 children are waiting on autism diagnosis, what action is being taken to address this as a matter of urgency.

Mr J Wells (The Minister for Health, Social Services and Public Safety): It should be stressed that diagnosis, as to whether or not a child has autism, only occurs after a thorough process of assessment, involving a number of professionals over a period of time which may last a number of months. It is therefore inevitable that there will be a period when children are awaiting diagnosis, as the assessment is not yet completed. It is however, the case that a number of children are also awaiting a first assessment. This is due to the increase in the number of referrals from eg GPs, Health Visitors and Educational Services, which have doubled since 2010/11, resulting in waiting times for assessment and support also lengthening. It is recognised that there is a shortfall in resources and this area has been identified as a core pressure requiring additional investment.

To help alleviate the length of waiting times, the HSC Board is reviewing the current operating models across all Trusts with a view to remodelling the assessment and diagnostic process. This should maximise the current capacity of the system. A new template to record waiting times in excess of 13 weeks will enable the Board to monitor average waiting times for commencement of assessment. As an interim measure, the Board are working with Trusts to agree, based on their respective capacity, a maximum waiting time. Once agreed, families will be made aware of the maximum time that they can expect to wait to commence the assessment process. **(18th November)**

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Willowgrove House, Banbridge

Mrs Jo-Anne Dobson (UUP – Upper Bann) - To ask the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to outline the proposed changes for short break services for children with a disability at Willowgrove House in Banbridge; and what consideration has been given to incorporating parental views on these changes, including whether the potential impact on the health and wellbeing of parents and their children is being considered.

Mr J Wells (The Minister for Health, Social Services and Public Safety): In keeping with *Transforming Your Care*, the Southern Trust is currently reviewing the short break provision it offers to children with disabilities with the aim of providing a more flexible, responsive, quality service, and a wider range of family oriented services in the community. This will provide an alternative option to the existing traditional residential short breaks units, such as Willowgrove House.

Family based carers may include childminders and short break foster carers, offering a service which is more flexible than a facility providing for a large number of children. It also allows carers and their children/family to develop a supportive relationship with another family. The Trust's aim is for all children with disabilities, under 12 years old, and assessed as requiring an overnight short break, to be able to avail of this in a family setting, wherever possible.

As the number and range of support services and options increases, it is anticipated that the numbers of children and young people using Willowgrove will decrease. In the meantime there will be no reduction in the service being offered by Willowgrove or the

other residential short breaks units within the Trust. The children and young people currently using the facilities will be able to continue to do so at a level that meets their assessed needs.

The Trust has arranged a number of meetings with parents over recent months to discuss potential developments in short breaks' provision, and the consultation process is ongoing. Parents' views and assessments regarding the impact of being a carer are also considered on an individual case basis for every child and family availing of overnight breaks. Parents will continue to be involved in discussions in relation to the development of the Trust's range of short breaks services. **(18th November)**

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Autism Diagnosis

Mr Fearghal McKinney (SDLP – South Belfast) - To ask the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what action is being taken to alleviate the length of waiting times in relation to primary school children being referred for autism diagnosis.

Mr J Wells (The Minister for Health, Social Services and Public Safety): Over the last few years demand for Autism Spectrum Disorder specific services has continued to rise. This increase is due in part to improvements in the early identification of children for assessment by General Practitioners, Health Visitors, and Educational Services. As a direct result of this sustained and continuing pattern of increased demand on autism services, the waiting times for assessment and support continue to lengthen. It is recognised that there is a shortfall in resources and this area has been identified as a core pressure requiring additional investment.

To help alleviate the length of waiting times, the HSC Board is reviewing the current operating models across all Trusts with a view to remodelling the assessment and diagnostic process. This should maximise the current capacity of the system. A new template to record waiting times in excess of 13 weeks will enable the Board to monitor average waiting times for commencement of assessment.

As an interim measure, the Board are working with Trusts to agree, based on their respective capacity, a maximum waiting time. Once agreed, families will be made aware of the maximum time that they can expect to wait to commence the assessment process. **(18th November)** [Back to Top](#)

Asperger Syndrome Assessments

Mr Declan McAleer (Sinn Féin – West Tyrone) - To ask the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail (i) the average waiting time for an Asperger Syndrome assessment in the Western Health and Social Care Trust; (ii) the provision in place to address the needs of people with Asperger Syndrome whilst awaiting assessment.

Mr J Wells (The Minister for Health, Social Services and Public Safety): The waiting time for an Asperger Syndrome assessment within the Children’s Autism Services in the Western Trust was 22 weeks as on 31 October 2014. Within adult services the waiting time is approximately 14 months. This is a historic anomaly as the Trust has only had capacity to undertake adult Autism assessments over the last year. It is hoped that all people on the waiting list will be seen within 13 weeks by March 2016.

Following referral of a child or young person for assessment, the Trust will issue the parent/carer with an acknowledgement letter which includes information regarding the assessment process and a link to the Trust’s web-site containing information on the Autism Service and a video clip of the assessment process. Whilst awaiting assessment, contact can be maintained with the referring agent for advice and guidance and access can be continued with other services, including those within the Trust, Education and the Community and Voluntary Sector.

Those on the adult waiting list can access a range of support services for advice, for example, their general practitioner services and the Trust’s Autism Coordinator/Team. If they have a co-existing mental health issue or learning disability they can access those services. There are also a range of voluntary specialist Autism voluntary providers, for example, Autism Initiatives, National Autistic Society and Autism NI who each offer support, advice and advocacy. **(19th November)**

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Mental Health Services

Mr David McNarry (UK Independence – Strangford) - To ask the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail (i) his plans for the future of mental health services; and (ii) the current (a) facilities; and (b) funding available for mental health services.

Mr J Wells (The Minister for Health, Social Services and Public Safety):

(i) Plans for the future of Mental Health Services in Northern Ireland are set out in the Mental Health section of the Bamford Action Plan, the HSC Board Commissioning Plan and the Department's Mental Health Service Framework.

In addition, the following strategies detail plans for specific Mental Health issues and conditions:

- Protect Life-Suicide Prevention Strategy;
- Psychological Therapy Strategy;
- Personality Disorder Strategy;
- New Strategic Direction on Drugs and Alcohol; and
- Mental Health Care Pathway-Promoting Recovery Approaches.
- These policies and strategies aim to improve the mental health of people in Northern Ireland; reduce the impact of the condition on people with mental health problems; and reduce the stigma associated with mental health conditions.

(ii) Health and Social Care Trusts provide a wide range of mental health services in a wide variety of settings and facilities, according to the individual's particular needs, including:

- Primary Care Talking Therapies Teams – accessed through GP;
- Community Mental Health Services – this involves care provided by one or more professionals such as social workers, psychiatrists, psychologists etc;
- Acute Mental Health Services – these services provide support at a time of crisis and can provide intensive home support and/or admission to hospital; and
- Specific services - these usually involve receiving care from a specialist team such as Alcohol/Drug Addiction, Eating Disorders, Psychological Therapies or Trauma, Personality and Forensic Services.

The funding invested by the HSC Board in Mental Health Services in 2013/14 was £247.3million. **(19th November)**

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Premature and Sick Babies

Mrs Jo-Anne Dobson (UUP – Upper Bann) - To ask the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for his assessment of the costs experienced by the families of premature and sick babies; and what assistance his Department can provide to these families.

Mr J Wells (The Minister for Health, Social Services and Public Safety): I fully appreciate that there are costs for parents and families associated with having a baby in neonatal care and that this can be an additional worry at an already difficult time. For this reason, our neonatal units offer various support services, which may include free accommodation for parents, free parking, meals, meal vouchers, kitchen facilities, and childcare/crèche facilities. The Health and Social Care Hospital Travel Costs Scheme also provides reimbursement of travel costs to hospital for health service treatment for patients and their dependents falling under certain criteria.

I am aware of the soon to be released report produced by the charities Bliss and TinyLife, which sets out the results of a recent survey on the costs faced by families of premature and sick babies. I will be giving careful consideration to the findings of this report, and my Department will work closely with stakeholders on any issues that are highlighted.

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Department of Justice

Revised Custodial Arrangements for Children

Mr Trevor Lunn (ALL – Lagan Valley) - To ask the Minister of Justice for an update on the outcome of his recent consultation on revised custodial arrangements for children.

Mr Ford (Minister for Justice): Following the publication of the consultation summary in May 2014, work has been ongoing to identify the necessary changes to legislation, and to draft instructions for the development of the proposed new custodial arrangements, including a new order.

What has become clear through this process is the complex nature of the proposals and the extent of legislative changes required to underpin something which is already working well in practice. Administrative arrangements have meant that no young person under 18 has been held in Hydebank Wood since 2012 and I intend to keep it that way.

Having considered these complexities, alongside comments made during the consultation on issues such as community sentences, I am now proposing to pause the introduction of this proposed legislation and go back to basics.

My Department will examine the entire youth sentencing structure with the aim of simplifying the system and ensuring more focused interventions which meet the individual needs of children and young people. I intend to create a system which is easier for the child to understand so that they are clear about exactly what is expected of them, and to reduce any unnecessary use of custody by maximising the community and restorative justice options that are available.

Overall, we will be working to ensure that the youth justice system is delivered in a way which utilises the available resources to best make Northern Ireland safer, and encourages and supports young people to desist from further offending.

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Task Force

Mr David McNarry (UK IND – Strangford) - To ask the Minister of Justice whether he will take steps to set up a Task Force comprising the PSNI, Immigration Office, Social Security Agency and Inland Revenue to detect illegal immigrants and employers, gang masters and anyone else involved in this `trade`.

Mr Ford (Minister for Justice): Immigration and the licensing of gangmasters are not devolved matters, and therefore do not fall within the remit of the Department of Justice. In respect of organised immigration crime, the Organised Crime Task Force has established a subgroup on immigration and human trafficking, although the main focus of this group is human trafficking, which is a devolved matter.

The subgroup includes representation from relevant statutory bodies including the Police Service of Northern Ireland; United Kingdom Visas and Immigration; Border Force; An Garda Síochána, the Gangmasters Licensing Authority, NSPCC and the Northern Ireland Safeguarding Board. **(20th November)**

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Access NI Procedures

Mr Roy Beggs (UUP – East Antrim) - To ask the Minister of Justice what plans there are to simplify the Access NI procedures to avoid the expense and delays involved with people having to make multiple applications for each organisation or charity.

Mr Ford (Minister for Justice): AccessNI checks are currently only valid on the day they are printed and issued. There is, at present, no mechanism to update this information. As a result AccessNI recommends that checks are not transferable between jobs.

Provisions to enable changes to the current system are contained in the Justice Bill 2014. If this legislation comes into force as drafted an applicant will, on seeking a new check, have the option to subscribe to the Update Service. Once in the Update Service an applicant's criminal record is updated with any new offences and changes in police or barring information are monitored. This means that a subscriber to the Update Service can present his or her check to an employer or voluntary organisation including when he or she changes jobs. This is known as portable disclosure. In turn that employer or organisation can go on-line free of charge to see if the information on the original check

has changed. This means that individuals may not have to re-apply for an AccessNI check, unless the individual is seeking to work with a different category of vulnerable people. **(20th November)**

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