NICCY Summary: Written Assembly Questions week ending 7 October 2016

Update on Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland

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| AQW 3990/16-21 | Mr Stewart Dickson (APNI - East Antrim) | **To ask the First Minister and deputy First Minister to outline their commitment to a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland.**The development of a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland is an excepted matter and is, therefore, the responsibility of the UK Government. However, we are aware that the UK Government proposes to replace the Human Rights Act 1998 with a British Bill of Rights. As details emerge on the proposals, we will wish to discuss them with the Westminster Government. |

Update on introduction of GFS legislation

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| AQW 3688/16-21 | Mr Richie McPhillips (SDLP - Fermanagh and South Tyrone) | **To ask the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on introducing legislation on Goods, Facilities and Services.**Public consultation on proposals to extend age discrimination legislation to the provision of goods, facilities and services closed on 8 October 2015. Following finalisation of the policy content of the proposed legislation the options available to us for bringing this legislation before the Assembly will be considered. |

Impact of benefit sanctions on children

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| AQW 3791/16-21 | Mr Andy Allen (UUP - East Belfast) | **To ask the Minister for Communities to outline how many children have been affected by benefit sanctions, in each of the last three years.**This information is not available from the Department. Data is available for the number of sanctions imposedfor Jobseeker’s Allowance claimants but cannot be broken down to identify children in the household.Employment and Support Allowance does not hold information on dependent children as there is no dependants increase payable for a child under Employment and Support Allowance. |

Impact of benefit sanctions on families

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| AQW 3790/16-21 | Mr Andy Allen (UUP - East Belfast) | **To ask the Minister for Communities to outline how many families have been adversely affected by benefit sanctions, ijn each of the last three years. [Priority Written]**This information is not available from the Department. Data is available for the number of Jobseeker’s Allowance sanctions imposed but cannot identify household breakdown nor how many sanctions an individual may have had imposed.Data is available for the number of Employment Support Allowance sanctions imposed but cannot be broken down into the number of claimants with families sanctioned. |

Update on Welfare Reform Order

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| AQW 3717/16-21 | Mrs Emma Little Pengelly (DUP - South Belfast) | **To ask the Minister for Communities for an update on the implementation of the Welfare Reform (Northern Ireland) Order 2015.**The Welfare Reform (Northern Ireland) Order 2015 was made on 9 December 2015 by Westminster and to date there have been 5 commencement orders to introduce various provisions within the Order. There have also been a series of regulations passed to implement future welfare changes in this Order. These have been made at Westminster with commencement dates in the future to align with IT and operational requirements.The welfare changes which have been made during 2016 have included the Benefit Cap which was introduced on 31 May and Personal Independence Payment which commenced on 20 June 2016. There have also been changes to how claimants can appeal social security decisions with the introduction of a mandatory reconsideration process and new fraud and error powers have also been introduced. Moving forward the new Discretionary Support service will replace discretionary aspects of Social Fund from the end of October and the time-limiting of contributory Employment and Support Allowance will begin on 28th November 2016.The next phase of Personal Independence Payment, which starts the managed migration of existing DLA claimants to the new benefit, commences in December and it is currently planned that housing benefit changes relating to under occupancy in the social rented sector will commence on 23rd January 2017. My Department has also recently agreed with the Department for Welfare and Pensions (DWP) that the roll out of Universal Credit will commence in September 2017.In addition, there have also been four sets of Welfare Supplementary Payments Regulations made through the Assembly. These provide the level of mitigation outlined in the Evason Report for the welfare changes which have already been implemented.All Regulations are available athttp://www.legislation.gov.uk/. |

Number of foodbanks

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| AQW 3508/16-21 | Mr Mark Durkan(SDLP - Foyle) | **To ask the Minister for Communities to detail the number of foodbanks, broken down by local council area.**My Department continues to work in partnership with food banks across Northern Ireland to ensure that those who are at that most vulnerable point are in receipt of all benefits, services and supports that they and their families are entitled to.Whilst this engagement continues at a local level, my Department has no role in monitoring or recording the number of food banks operating in Northern Ireland. The information is not held. |

DfC support for foodbanks

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| AQW 3507/16-21 | Mr Mark Durkan(SDLP - Foyle) | **To ask the Minister for Communities what his Department is doing to support foodbanks.**My Department recognises that food banks provide a service to individuals in times of real crisis in their lives. In that context, my staff on the ground have been proactive in working with the food bank network to ensure that those accessing food support are also assisted in drawing down the social security benefits and wider supports that they are entitled to.My officials have put in place a partnership model whereby Food Banks can ensure that every individual and family that finds itself in crisis and presenting in need of food support is referred directly into the Department’s Improving Benefit Uptake Service for a full and confidential benefit entitlement check. This assesses entitlement, not only to Social Security Benefits, but also to a wide range of additional government benefits, services and support.In addition, Food Banks have been offered a second layer of support - a named Community Outreach Officer, who will work closely with their staff and volunteers to ensure that anyone who needs further benefit advice or help with making a claim is given the support they need. If necessary, this support can be provided within their own homes. Community Outreach Officers’ contact details are shared to ease access to advice.A wide range of food banks in Northern Ireland have been provided with “Make the Call” promotional material and are actively encouraged to distribute these with every food box or parcel. It is hoped that by doing so, those presenting at food banks will be encouraged to have an entitlement check by telephoning the dedicated “Make the Call” freephone Benefits Advice Line (0800 232 1271).My department published research in 2015 into the causes of food bank use and the lessons learned from this has informed our ongoing service improvement andpartnership working. The Report, ‘An Insight into Food Banks in Northern Ireland’, is available on the Department’s website.More recently, as part of “A Fresh Start”, additional Executive funds were agreed to help mitigate the impact of Welfare Reform, with £1.65million allocated to research and pilot actions aimed at reducing food poverty by improving access to food through a network of community food shops and social stores/supermarkets over the next four years.Given the high level of interest and ongoing activity by a wide range of stakeholders in this area, I have commissioned a scoping study to identify the opportunities for that money to add value by bringing forward proposals for testing interventions that can be sustained and will make a difference in reducing food poverty.On an ongoing basis, my officials continue to engage with a wide range of food bank representatives to better understand people’s need and to join up services and support in a way that helps reduce the need for food banks in our society. |

Use of refuge centres by women and their children

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| AQW 3322/16-21 | Mrs Jenny Palmer (UUP - Lagan Valley) | **To ask the Minister for Communities to detail how many women and their children used a refuge centre in the period (i) 2014-15; and (ii) 2015-16.**The Northern Ireland Housing Executive, through the Supporting People Programme, funds 14 women’s refuges to provide 138 housing support units.The Northern Ireland Housing Executive has informed me that they do not hold information on how many women and children use the refuges. |

Breakdown of GCSE grades from 1996 - 2016

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| AQW 3784/16-21 | Ms Caitríona Ruane *(SF - South Down)* | **To ask the Minister of Education to detail the percentage and number of children that achieved at least 5 GCSEs at grade A\* to C in each year since 1996 to 2016, broken down by (i) gender; (ii) community background; and (iii) socio-economic background.**Information on the attainment of school leavers in 2015/16 will be available in May 2017. Figures for1995/96 and 2002/03 are not available.Tables 1 to 3 below detail the number and percentage of school leavers who achieved at least 5 GCSEs at A\*-C from 1996/97 to 2014/15.**Table 1: Number and percentage of school leavers achieving at least 5 GCSEs A\*-C (including equivalent qualifications) by gender, 1996/97 – 2014/15(1)**

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| Year | School leavers achieving at least 5 GCSEs A\*-C(including equivalent qualifications) |
|  | Boys | Girls | Total |
|  | Number | % | Number | % | Number | % |
| 2014/15 | 8762 | 76.9 | 9371 | 85.4 | 18133 | 81.1 |
| 2013/14 | 8621 | 74.1 | 9172 | 83.4 | 17793 | 78.6 |
| 2012/13 | 8750 | 74.5 | 9314 | 82.8 | 18064 | 78.5 |
| 2011/12 | 8103 | 71.0 | 9160 | 82.1 | 17263 | 76.5 |
| 2010/11 | 8026 | 67.7 | 8923 | 78.9 | 16949 | 73.2 |
| 2009/10 | 7444 | 65.4 | 8970 | 78.4 | 16414 | 71.9 |
| 2008/09 | 7470 | 64.4 | 8859 | 75.9 | 16329 | 70.2 |
| 2007/08 | 7283 | 60.0 | 8836 | 73.9 | 16119 | 66.9 |
| 2006/07 | 7323 | 58.2 | 8726 | 71.5 | 16049 | 64.7 |
| 2005/06 | 7495 | 57.5 | 8899 | 71.2 | 16394 | 64.2 |
| 2004/05 | 7157 | 55.4 | 8779 | 70.9 | 15936 | 63.0 |
| 2003/04 | 7044 | 53.9 | 8522 | 67.8 | 15566 | 60.7 |
| 2002/03(2) |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2001/02 | 6473 | 50.5 | 8208 | 67.3 | 14681 | 58.7 |
| 2000/01 | 6470 | 50.5 | 8121 | 65.8 | 14591 | 58.0 |
| 1999/00 | 6341 | 49.2 | 7919 | 65.0 | 14260 | 56.9 |
| 1998/99 | 6337 | 48.8 | 8172 | 65.7 | 14509 | 57.1 |
| 1997/98 | 6310 | 49.1 | 8186 | 64.0 | 14496 | 56.6 |
| 1996/97 | 6307 | 48.1 | 7662 | 60.8 | 13969 | 54.3 |

Source: School Leavers surveyNotes:Excludes special and independent schools.Due to considerable difficulties with new software installed in schools, the School Leavers survey was cancelled in 2002/03.**Table 2: Number and percentage of school leavers achieving at least 5 GCSEs A\*-C (including equivalent qualifications) by religion, 1996/97 – 2014/15(1)**

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| Year | School leavers achieving at least 5 GCSEs A\*-C(including equivalent qualifications) |
|  | Protestant | Catholic | Other(2) | Total |
|  | Number | % | Number | % | Number | % |  |  |
| 2014/15 | 6942 | 78.9 | 9426 | 82.7 | 1765 | 81.6 | 18133 | 81.1 |
| 2013/14 | 6794 | 77.4 | 9198 | 80.3 | 1801 | 74.9 | 17793 | 78.6 |
| 2012/13 | 7066 | 77.4 | 9232 | 80.4 | 1766 | 73.6 | 18064 | 78.5 |
| 2011/12 | 6703 | 73.8 | 8982 | 78.8 | 1578 | 75.3 | 17263 | 76.5 |
| 2010/11 | 6547 | 70.4 | 8883 | 76.1 | 1519 | 69.5 | 16949 | 73.2 |
| 2009/10 | 6530 | 70.6 | 8377 | 73.4 | 1507 | 69.7 | 16414 | 71.9 |
| 2008/09 | 6614 | 68.5 | 8276 | 71.6 | 1439 | 70.0 | 16329 | 70.2 |
| 2007/08 | 6492 | 65.0 | 8195 | 68.6 | 1432 | 66.2 | 16119 | 66.9 |
| 2006/07 | 6558 | 62.8 | 8316 | 66.6 | 1175 | 63.0 | 16049 | 64.7 |
| 2005/06 | 6692 | 62.1 | 8418 | 65.4 | 1284 | 68.1 | 16394 | 64.2 |
| 2004/05 | 6540 | 60.7 | 8139 | 64.1 | 1257 | 69.0 | 15936 | 63.0 |
| 2003/04 | 6521 | 60.3 | 7976 | 60.4 | 1069 | 65.5 | 15566 | 60.7 |
| 2002/03(3) |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2001/02 | 6376 | 58.0 | 7353 | 58.4 | 952 | 66.9 | 14681 | 58.7 |
| 2000/01 | 6185 | 57.3 | 7465 | 57.4 | 941 | 69.2 | 14591 | 58.0 |
| 1999/00 | 5927 | 56.6 | 7231 | 55.8 | 1097 | 66.6 | 14255 | 56.9 |
| 1998/99 | 5928 | 55.8 | 7451 | 56.8 | 1130 | 67.0 | 14509 | 57.1 |
| 1997/98 | 6030 | 56.6 | 7363 | 55.7 | 1103 | 63.1 | 14496 | 56.6 |
| 1996/97 | 5768 | 54.2 | 6963 | 53.6 | 1238 | 59.5 | 13969 | 54.3 |

Source: School Leavers surveyNotes:Excludes special and independent schools.Other includes Other Christian, No religion and Non-Christian.Due to considerable difficulties with new software installed in schools, the School Leavers survey was cancelled in 2002/03.**Table 3: Number and percentage of school leavers achieving at least 5 GCSEs A\*-C (including equivalent qualifications) by Free School Meal Entitlement (FSME), 1996/97 – 2014/15(1)**

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| Year | School leavers achieving at least 5 GCSEs A\*-C(including equivalent qualifications) |
|  | Non-FSME | FSME | Total |
|  | Number | % | Number | % | Number | % |
| 2014/15(2) | 14701 | 86.2 | 3432 | 64.6 | 18133 | 81.1 |
| 2013/14 | 15499 | 83.4 | 2294 | 56.6 | 17793 | 78.6 |
| 2012/13 | 15564 | 83.1 | 2500 | 58.5 | 18064 | 78.5 |
| 2011/12 | 15149 | 81.4 | 2114 | 53.4 | 17263 | 76.5 |
| 2010/11 | 15071 | 78.0 | 1878 | 48.8 | 16949 | 73.2 |
| 2009/10 | 14709 | 76.6 | 1705 | 47.1 | 16414 | 71.9 |
| 2008/09 | 14802 | 75.1 | 1527 | 42.9 | 16329 | 70.2 |
| 2007/08 | 14634 | 71.9 | 1485 | 39.8 | 16119 | 66.9 |
| 2006/07 | 14391 | 70.4 | 1658 | 37.9 | 16049 | 64.7 |
| 2005/06 | 14622 | 70.2 | 1772 | 37.6 | 16394 | 64.2 |
| 2004/05 | 14055 | 70.3 | 1881 | 35.6 | 15936 | 63.0 |
| 2003/04 | 13791 | 68.0 | 1775 | 33.0 | 15566 | 60.7 |
| 2002/03(3) |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2001/02 | 13217 | 64.8 | 1464 | 31.7 | 14681 | 58.7 |
| 2000/01 | 13030 | 64.5 | 1561 | 31.5 | 14591 | 58.0 |
| 1999/00 | 12723 | 63.1 | 1537 | 31.3 | 14260 | 56.9 |
| 1998/99 | 12908 | 64.1 | 1601 | 30.3 | 14509 | 57.1 |
| 1997/98 | 12735 | 63.8 | 1761 | 31.0 | 14496 | 56.6 |
| 1996/97 | 12259 | 61.8 | 1710 | 29.0 | 13969 | 54.3 |

Source: School Leavers surveyNotes:Excludes special and independent schools.The increase in the number of FSME pupils in 2014/15 coincides with an extension of the eligibility for free school meals under the Working Tax Credit free school meal criterion which was extended to post-primary pupils from September 2014.Due to considerable difficulties with new software installed in schools, the School Leavers survey was cancelled in 2002/03. |

Number of application for childcare fee support from School Age Mothers Programme

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| AQW 3776/16-21 | Mrs Sandra Overend (UUP - Mid Ulster) | **To ask the Minister of Education to detail how many applications were made for childcare fee support from the School Age Mothers Programme, since April 2011.**Since April 2011 there have been 324 applications for childcare fees support to School Age Mothers. None of these applications were rejected and 39 School Age Mothers are currently receiving support with childcare fees. |

Budget allocation to School Aged Mothers Programme

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| AQW 3775/16-21 | Mrs Sandra Overend (UUP - Mid Ulster) | **To ask the Minister of Education to detail (i) the current budget allocated to the School Aged Mothers Programme; (ii) a breakdown of how much is to be spent on each aspect of the programme; and (iii) how much of the budget has been spent to date.**The Education Authority has advised that they have allocated a budget of £680k for the School Age Mothers Programme in 2016/17. They are anticipating that this will be broken down as follows:Childcare costs £400k,Local co-ordinator costs £200k,Educational programmes £80k.The Education Authority’s expenditure in this regard as at 31 August 2016 was £193k. |

Specialist training for keeping children safe from abuse

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| AQW 3727/16-21 | Ms Catherine Seeley (SF - Upper Bann) | **To ask the Minister of Education , further to the announcement on 21 September 2016 from the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children regarding specialist teacher training on how to keep children safe from abuse, whether his Department will give proper consideration to developing a structured Relationships and Sexuality Education course for primary schools.**My Department has no plans to introduce a prescriptive Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) course for primary schools. The Education (Curriculum Minimum Content) Order (NI) 2007 specifies the minimum content for each area of learning of the curriculum. Teachers have considerable flexibility to select from within those areas the aspects they consider appropriate to the ability and interests of their pupils. At primary level, RSE is covered within the ‘Personal Development and Mutual Understanding’ area of learning.The Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment published revised RSE guidance for primary schools in August 2015 which contains advice on helping children to recognise inappropriate behaviour and touch and provides links to relevant resources. However, the guidance does not stray into the actual content of teaching and learning as this is a matter for each school. |

Improving outcomes from children in areas of deprivation

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| AQW 3704/16-21 | Mr Chris Lyttle (APNI - East Belfast) | **To ask the Minister of Education to outline what steps he is taking to improve the outcomes of children and young people in areas of deprivation and/or at risk of educational under-attainment.**I will focus on those policies and strategies that are driving improvement and which aim to support schools and teachers in their work to raise standards and overcome the barriers to learning which some pupils face. This includes Every School a Good School – theschool improvement policy; Count, Read: Succeed – the literacy and numeracy strategy; the curriculum; the Learning to Learn Framework; and the Teachers Professional Learning Strategy.I intend to work closely with schools, early years and childcare providers, the youth service and other education stakeholders to ensure that we identify and disseminate the most effective strategies so that,together, we can meet the needs and nurture the aspirations of our children and young people. |

Action to eliminate racist bullying in schools

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| AQW 3553/16-21 | Mr Chris Lyttle (APNI - East Belfast) | **To ask the Minister of Education what action he is taking to eliminate racist bullying in schools.**The Department’s publication “Pastoral Care in Schools: Promoting Positive Behaviour” offers detailed guidance, practical initiatives and case studies to support schools to tackle bullying. The guidance specifically states that racist, homophobic, sectarian or other offensive name-calling is a form of bullying and should be recognised as such.My Department funds the local Anti-Bullying Forum (NIABF) to raise awareness of bullying and provide a range of practical support, resources and guidance to schools, parents and pupils. The Forum’s website (www.endbullying.org.uk ) has a page dedicated solely to racist bullying and a leaflet has been produced entitled “What is bullying due to Race, Faith and Culture”, which provides advice and signposting for parents.The NIABF also runs an annual Anti-Bullying Week (ABW) programme. The focus for this year’s ABW, which takes place from 14-18 November, is “Together We Are Stronger”. This will particularly focus on bullying that is motivated by difference or prejudice, including racist bullying.The ‘Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016’ was granted Royal Assent on 12 May 2016. This will require schools to record details of all bullying incidents which occur, including their motivation. These records willallow schools to quickly identify and take action if an issue such as racist bullying is becoming a particular problem. While the provisions of this Act are not yet in force, I intend that they will be in place for the start of 2017-18 school year.The Department also places a significant emphasis on early, preventative education. Our curriculum at both primary and post-primary level contributes to promoting ‘good relations’ and is closely aligned with my Department’s Community Relations, Equality and Diversity in Education (CRED) policy. The CRED policy aims to contribute to improving relations between communities by ensuring learners, at each stage of their development, have an understanding of and respect for the rights, equality and diversity of all without discrimination. The policy seeks to provide children and young people with the skills, attitudes and behaviours needed to develop mutual understanding, recognition of and respect for difference.In terms of the curriculum itself, at primary level the “Personal Development and Mutual Understanding” area of learning explores topics such as responsibilities for self and others; human rights and social responsibility; causes of conflict and appropriate responses; valuing and celebrating cultural difference and diversity; similarities and differences between people; respect for others; and living as members of the community. At post-primary level, the “Learning for Life and Work” area of learning covers topics such as discrimination in greater depth under the subject “Local and Global Citizenship”.My Department’s Shared Education policy also provides opportunities for pupils to learn about each other from each other. The policy seeks to deliver educational and social benefits to learners; promote equality of opportunity; good relations; equality of identity; respect for diversity; and community cohesion. |

Guidance for children’s authorities on Children’s Services Co-operation Act

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|  | AQW 3518/16-21 | Mr Steven Agnew (GPNI - North Down) | **To ask the Minister of Education what consideration has been given to issuing guidance to children's authorities on the exercise of the functions of the Children's Services Co-operation Act, as allowed for under Section 7(1) of the Act.**The Member will be aware from my response to his previous question (AQW 2458/16-21), which asked whether I intend to publish explanatory notes and/or guidance in relation to the Children’s Services Co-operation Act, that the Act links directly to the development of the new Children and Young People’s Strategy. |

Education at Woodland Juvenile Centre

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| AQW 3493/16-21 | Ms Catherine Seeley (SF - Upper Bann) | **To ask the Minister of Education, pursuant to AQW 2547/16-21, to detail (i) the minimum number of hours of education a young person will receive in Woodlands Juvenile Centre; and (ii) how this compares to the number of hours the same young person would receive in mainstream education.**Under the Secondary Schools (Grant Conditions) Regulations (NI) 1973, pupils in a mainstream secondary school, should receive 22.5 hours of teaching per week. Latest information available shows that in 2014 young people in Woodlands received an average of 20 hours per week and in 2015, 15 hours.  The 2015 figures reflect short term difficulties in maintaining levels of teaching cover. These have now been addressed.  Woodlands must often address a complex mix of behavioural, medical, addiction, mental health and care needs for those young people held in detention; as well as considering their educational requirements. Any educational provision must accommodate very short periods of detention, for those held on remand, and theneed for the young people to be available for court proceedings and consultation with their legal representatives. Educational programmes are therefore tailored to meet the academic and personal development needs of each individual, any therapeutic interventions required while flexibly accommodating broken patterns of attendance.This is a similar approach to that followed by the Education Authority (EA) within its Education Otherwise Than At School (EOTAS) centres. In EOTAS, academic and vocational learning combine with other interventions to support both the educational attainment and personal development needs of the young person. In EOTAS all of these additional activities can count towards the weekly teaching requirement of 22.5 hours. In pursuing the transfer of the education service within Woodlands JJC to EA control, an EOTAS model has therefore been adopted to help maintain and enhance the current holistic, needs-based approach. |

Unused special school nursery places

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| AQW 3491/16-21 | Ms Catherine Seeley (SF - Upper Bann) | **To ask the Minister of Education , pursuant to AQW 2549/16-21, to detail the number of special school nursery units currently unused.**The Education Authority has confirmed that in the 16/17 academic year Fleming Fulton Nursery will not be accepting pupils with physical disabilities, all of whom will continue to attend Mitchell House Nursery; all nursery units in other special schools are in use. There continues to be no intention to formally close the nursery at Fleming Fulton and the position is subject to review. |

Emergency transport for pupils with learning disabilities

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| AQW 3451/16-21 | Ms Kellie Armstrong (APNI - Strangford) | **To ask the Minister of Education to outline the provisions in place when emergency transport has to be used to minimise the distress to pupils with learning disabilities.**The Education Authority (EA) has confirmed that itoperates a pool of spare vehicles that can be used in the event of a breakdown and alternative drivers are available should a regular driver be unavailable.An assurance is also required from private contractors,as part of the tendering process, to confirm that suitable contingency arrangements are in place to deal with breakdowns etc.  The nature of these contingency arrangements can vary but typically most private operators will also have spare vehicles and drivers to call on at short notice. |

Staff training on autism and learning disability awareness

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| AQW 3449/16-21 | Ms Kellie Armstrong (APNI - Strangford) | **To ask the Minister of Education whether his Department provides training for departmental staff on autism and learning disability awareness.**Departmental staff have access to three e-learning courses provided on-line by the NICS Centre of Applied Learning (CAL), as follows:Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Awareness;Disability Awareness for Frontline Staff;Diversity Now. |

Levels of Physical Education per week

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| AQW 3356/16-21 | Mr Chris Lyttle (APNI - East Belfast) | **To ask the Minister of Education to outline why in the School Omnibus Survey 2014 only 6 per cent of Year 1; 6 per cent of Year 2; 2 per cent of Year 3; 3 per cent of Year 4; 6 per cent of Year 5; 7 per cent of Year 6; and 7 per cent of Year 7 pupils spent the minimum recommended time of two hours Physical Education per week.**The Northern Ireland curriculum recognises the importance of providing teachers with the flexibility to plan their teaching to meet the needs of their pupils. It is therefore a matter for each school to determine how much time is devoted to Physical Education (PE) in the curriculum.At present I have no plans to introduce legislation to prescribe the amount of time that schools allocate to PE. |

Addressing Bullying in Schools Act

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| AQW 3353/16-21 | Mr John O'Dowd (SF - Upper Bann) | **To ask the Minister of Education to outline why his Department's website and associated links continue to refer to Board of Governors' legal responsibilities as set out in the Education and Libraries (NI) Order 2003 Article 17, 18 and 19 but makes no reference to Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016.**The Addressing Bullying in Schools Bill was introduced in the Assembly on 30 November 2015. After completing its Committee scrutiny and Assembly passage, it received Royal Assent on 12 May 2016, becoming the Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016.This legislation will:Provide a common definition of bullying;Require all schools to centrally record incidents of bullying, their motivation and their outcome; andRequire the Board of Governors collectively to take responsibility to the development, implementation, monitoring and periodic review of the school’s anti-bullying policies and proceduresBefore these new provisions can be brought into force, several pieces of additional work must be undertaken. There are:The preparation of supporting guidance for schools, Boards of Governors, parents, and pupils. This guidance will clarify how the new duties are to be applied by schools and Governors, how parents or pupils should inform the school about bullying incidents and what steps they can reasonably expect the school to take in response to an incident or complaint.Training for school staff and Governors in how they discharge their duties and record each incident; andThe creation of a new standardised recording system to be made available to all schools via the Classroom 2000 SIMS system.In the passage of the Bill, responding to concerns from both stakeholders and MLAs, Ministerial commitments were given that the Department would consult widely on these matters to ensure the guidance, training and new IT system were robust, easy to understand and use; and that they minimised any additional administrative burden for schools and Governors.My officials are working to meet these commitments and we currently expect the new provisions to be in force in time for the commencement of the 2017-18 academic year. All Departmental website links will be updated at that time. |

Newcomer pupils in West Tyrone

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| AQW 3341/16-21 | Mr Barry McElduff (SF - West Tyrone) | **To ask the Minister of Education (i) to detail the number of newcomer pupils who attend primary and post-primary schools in West Tyrone; and (ii) to outline any specific programmes which are aimed at improving their levels of educational attainment** In 2015/16, there were 499 Newcomer pupils attending primary or post-primary schools in West Tyrone.In relation to the educational attainment of Newcomer pupils, the Department is aware that some primary schools are very successfully using the Common European Framework of Reference for Schools to help assimilate newcomer children to the curriculum and in so doing improve their levels of educational attainment.To enable Newcomer children and young people to more effectively access the curriculum, my Department provides funding for the Education Authority’s Inclusion and Diversity Service. This Service provides vital assistance to schools, Newcomer pupils and their families including the provision of supports such as interpreting and translation services. Schools also receive an additional funding of approximately £1,000 per year, via the Common Funding Formula for each designated Newcomer for an initial period of three years. |

Guidance on Children’s Services Co-operation Act

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| AQW 3516/16-21 | Mr Steven Agnew (GPNI - North Down) | **To ask the Minister of Finance what work is being undertaken to produce guidance on the pooling of resources on the operations of the Children's Services Co-operation Act, as allowed for in Section 8(1) of the Act.**DoF officials are currently working with DE officials in developing guidance on the pooling of resources on the operations of the Children's Services Co-operation Act. This will be incorporated in the “In-year Monitoring of Public Expenditure Guidelines” in due course.  |

Number of children waiting adoption

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| AQW 3417/16-21 | Ms Paula Bradshaw (APNI - South Belfast) | **To ask the Minister of Health how many children are currently awaiting adoption.**At 23rd September 2016 there were 32 looked after children in the north of Ireland actively seeking adoptive placements through the regional Adoption Information System. |

Update on Mental Capacity Bill

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| AQW 3409/16-21 | Ms Nichola Mallon (SDLP - North Belfast) | **To ask the Minister of Health for an update on the Mental Capacity Bill; and whether she intends to bring forward any amendments to this Bill.**The Mental Capacity Bill received Royal Assent on 9May 2016, to become the Mental Capacity Act (NI) 2016.The Department is currently focusing on the implementation planning for the Act. There are no plans to bring forward any amendments to the Act at this time |

Update on new Protect Life Strategy

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| AQW 3407/16-21 | Ms Nichola Mallon (SDLP - North Belfast) | **To ask the Minister of Health to outline the timeline for consultation through to implementation of the new Protect Life Strategy.**Protect Life 2: a draft strategy for suicide prevention in the north of Ireland issued for public consultation on 9 September 2016. Consultation closes at 5pm on 4 November 2016. A post consultation report will issue in January 2017, with the final strategy planned for publication by March 2017. |

Waiting list for assessment for autism

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| AQW 3269/16-21 | Ms Joanne Bunting (DUP - East Belfast) | **To ask the Minister of Health, pursuant to AQO 222/16-21, how many people are on the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust waiting list for autism spectrum disorder assessments, broken down by age group.**Table 1, below, details the number of children on the waiting list for an autism assessment by age group at the 26thSeptember 2016 in the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust.Table 1

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| Age Group (years) | Total |
| 2<3 | 3<4 | 4<5 | 5 – 11 | 12 – 14 | 15 – 17 |  |
| 7 | 105 | 180 | 578 | 70 | 49 | 989 |

Source: Belfast Health and Social Care Trust – PARIS System |

Update on scoping study for youth justice review

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| AQW 4482/16-21 | Mr Pat Sheehan (SF - West Belfast) | **To ask the Minister of Justice for an update on the scoping study for the youth justice review, including the likely timing for public consultation on scoping study proposals.**Building on the progress made by the Youth Justice Review, and addressing those recommendations not yet met, was at the core of the work on the Scoping Study into children in the youth justice system. The first stage of the Study concluded in March this year and the findings were presented to the Assembly at the end of the last mandate. I am currently considering the high-level proposals made by the Steering Group during this first phase, with a view to establishing detailed recommendations which can provide the basis for Ministerial decisions.This is not something which my Department can achieve in isolation, however. The proposals are both wide-ranging and far-reaching, and will require partnership working across the Executive if they are to succeed. Working with our colleagues in other Departments is key to the long-term success of the proposals, and I am planning to have bilateral discussions with my counterparts in other Departments to progress this work.A public consultation will only be undertaken once detailed proposals are in place and an agreed way forward identified. This consultation may be as part of a wider exercise on a Justice Bill drafted to make any legislative changes required for implementation. |

Youth Justice recommendations following UN Committee state examination

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| AQW 4481/16-21 | Mr Pat Sheehan (SF - West Belfast) | **To ask the Minister of Justice to outline her plans following the recommendations, relevant to youth justice and that fall under the responsibility of her Department, made by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child following their most recent examination of the British Governments implementation of the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child.**I welcome the Committee’s examination of the UK Government in May and the Concluding Observations that were issued in July. That there are fewer recommendations for my Department than on previous occasions is, I think, a mark of the progress that has been made in youth justice in Northern Ireland. I recognise, however, that those we are left with are some of the most complex and difficult to address, and will require all parts of the Executive to work together if we are to bring about lasting change.I will take the Committee’s recommendations under consideration to see how we might give effect to them and build on the progress that has already been made |

Actions following Tackling Paramilitary Activity Report

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| AQW 4124/16-21 | Ms Paula Bradshaw (APNI - South Belfast) | **To ask the Minister of Justice to outline the specific steps she has taken to implement proposal B12 of the report on Tackling Paramilitary Activity.**The Probation Board for Northern Ireland (PBNI) have been tasked in the Executive Action Plan to lead work on the initiative for young men, as proposed in recommendation B12 of the Three Person Panel’s report. PBNI has appointed a coordinator to begin preparatory work on this programme of work. In 2016/17, this will involve working with partners in the voluntary, community and statutory sectors to develop the programme for full implementation from 2017/18, and running interventions aimed at providing mentoring support for young men in the community. |

Sexual offenses against children

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| AQW 3368/16-21 | Lord Morrow of Clogher Valley *(DUP - Fermanagh and South Tyrone)* | **To ask the Minister of Justice how many people have been (i) prosecuted; and (ii) convicted for sexual offences against a child in each of the last three years, broken down by court division.**Sexual offences involving children may be prosecuted under various legislation, including the Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008, the Sexual Offences Act 2003, the Children and Young Persons Act (Northern Ireland) 1968, the Punishment of Incest Act 1908, the Criminal Law Amendment Act 1885 and the Offences Against the Person Act 1861.The most recent three year period for which information in relation to prosecutions and convictions at court for sexual offences against a child is available is 2013 – 2015.**Prosecutions and Convictions at court for sexual offences specifying the involvement of a child by court division, 2013**

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| **Court Division** | **2013** |
|  | **Prosecutions** | **Convictions** |
| Antrim | 15 | 7 |
| Ards | 21 | 11 |
| Armagh and South Down | 10 | 8 |
| Belfast | 77 | 27 |
| Craigavon | 15 | 9 |
| Fermanagh and Tyrone | 17 | 12 |
| Londonderry | 17 | 6 |
| **Total** | **172** | **80** |

**Prosecutions and Convictions at court for sexual offences specifying the involvement of a child by court division, 2014**

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| **Court Division** | **2014** |
|  | **Prosecutions** | **Convictions** |
| Antrim | 15 | 10 |
| Ards | 18 | 9 |
| Armagh and South Down | 15 | 9 |
| Belfast | 55 | 33 |
| Craigavon | 15 | 10 |
| Fermanagh and Tyrone | 10 | 6 |
| Londonderry | 11 | 6 |
| **Total** | **139** | **83** |

**Prosecutions and Convictions at court for sexual offences specifying the involvement of a child by court division, 2015**

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| **Court Division** | **2015** |
|  | **Prosecutions** | **Convictions** |
| Antrim | 19 | 12 |
| Ards | 13 | 10 |
| Armagh and South Down | 10 | 6 |
| Belfast | 24 | 16 |
| Craigavon | 8 | 5 |
| Fermanagh and Tyrone | 10 | 5 |
| Londonderry | 6 | 5 |
| **Total** | **90** | **59** |

Note:1.Figures relate to cases where at least one offence was a sexual offence against a child, whether or not they were the primary offence at prosecution or conviction.2.The figures provided relate to convictions for all classifications of the offences specified.3.Figures relate to initial disposals at court: disposals as a result of appeals are not included.4. Figures relate to offences in the sexual offences category that specify the involvement of a child. Other offences, with more generic descriptions, but where the victim may have been a child, have not been included, as there is no way to identify victim age from data held. |

NICCY Summary: Written Assembly Questions week ending 14 October 2016

Update on PFG

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| AQO 361/16-21 | Mr Steven Agnew (GPNI - North Down) | **To ask the First Minister and deputy First Minister for an update on the Programme for Government 2016-21.**We have heard a very positive response to the consultation on the draft PfG framework.  Most respondents recognised that the approach we have outlined will deliver a range of outcomes for all our citizens and will improve their well-being through tackling disadvantage and driving economic growth. We are currently finalising the next iteration of the Programme which will issue for a further period of public consultation in the near future. We want to reaffirm our commitment to secure the maximum engagement from across the community to how we intend to deliver better outcomes for all.It will be a Programme that sets out the ambition the Executive has for all in our society. |

Consultation with children and young people on draft PfG

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| AQW 3975/16-21 | Mr Steven Agnew (GPNI - North Down) | **To ask the First Minister and deputy First Minister how they have consulted with children and young people on the draft Programme for Government; and what further plans they have to consult with this section of society.**A range of organisations representing the interests of children and young people have been involved in the development of the draft Programme for Government Framework to date, and has provided views in response to the recent consultation on the Framework. A number of initiatives were also taken by departments during the consultation period to encourage the involvement of their respective stakeholder communities in this process. The Department of Education, for example, wrote to all post-primary schools asking them to encourage and support engagement with the consultation by their pupils.We will launch a public consultation on a draft Programme for Government in the coming weeks and that will include publication of a child friendly version of the document as part of our consultation. We are committed to continuing to work with the children and young people's sector to ensure appropriate engagement in the development and implementation of the Programme. |

Formulation of anti-poverty strategy

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| AQO 431/16-21 | Mr Declan McAleer (SF - West Tyrone) | **To ask the Minister for Communities, when formulating his Department's anti-poverty strategy, whether he will take account of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights' report entitled Principles and Guidelines for a Human Rights Approach to Poverty Reduction Strategies.** View Original AnswerI am aware of the Report the member refers to and, indeed, agree with the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights when she says that ‘yet another feature of the Human Rights approach is that poverty reduction becomes a shared responsibility.’The definition of ‘overall poverty’ adopted by the UN includes social discrimination and exclusion.This is precisely why we have incorporated our work to tackle poverty in a much wider social strategy looking at all these inter-related issues.Our draft Social Strategy will recognise that measuring poverty on the basis of income alone will not show the full picture.The human rights approach set out in the Report‘ underlines the multidimensional nature of poverty, describing poverty in terms of a range of interrelated and mutually reinforcing deprivations, and drawing attention to the stigma, discrimination, insecurity and social exclusion associated with poverty’.The draft Executive Social Strategy will seek to promote opportunity for everyone and tackle poverty and social exclusion. |

Welfare Reform Order implications for accessible child care

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| AQW 4601/16-21 | Mr Eamonn McCann (PBPA - Foyle) | **To ask the Minister for Communities to outline how the regulations accompanying the Welfare Reform (Northern Ireland) Order 2015 take account of the lack of adequate and accessible child care in the region.**The Welfare Reform (Northern Ireland) Order 2015 and the regulations stemming from it, introduce a range of welfare reforms in Northern Ireland, including: Universal Credit; Personal Independence Payment; and the Benefit Cap. Universal Credit is the reform which is most relevant to the question of childcare availability.Under Universal Credit, parents will receive support for childcare costs no matter how many hours they work. Parents will receive support of up to 85% of childcare costs (up to a limit of £646.35 per month for one child and £1,108.04 for 2 or more children).Under the relevant legacy benefits, lack of adequate and accessible childcare can be accepted as, “good reason” for not complying with certain conditions of the benefit such as taking up suitable employment. This operational flexibility in relation to “good reason” will be carried forward under Universal Credit, in the application of Articles 31 and 32 of the Welfare Reform (Northern Ireland) Order 2015. To ensure that there is no restriction on the specific circumstances which can be taken into account, this operational flexibility will be in the guidance to support the regulations. |

Resources for Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme

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| AQW 4218/16-21 | Mr Mark Durkan (SDLP - Foyle) | **To ask the Minister for Communities if his Department has liaised with the Department of Education to ensure schools are adequately resourced to cater for pupils through the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme.**My Department and the Department of Education have been liaising through the Syrian Refugees Strategic Planning Group on issues relating to the education of young people who come to Northern Ireland under theSyrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme. Funding to meet education costs has been made available by the Home Office under this scheme. The claims in respect of this funding are submitted by my Department and the money is subsequently disbursed to the Department of Education. |

Powers to make an impact on child poverty

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| AQW 3973/16-21 | Mr Steven Agnew (GPNI - North Down) | **To ask the Minister for Communities what powers he has that can impact on child poverty.**The Life Chances Act requires us to publish and lay before the Assembly a Child Poverty Strategy, prepare and publish annual reports on the strategy and revisethe strategy every third year. The Executive’s first Child Poverty Strategy, ‘Improving Children’s Life Chances,’ was published in March 2011, annual reports have been produced and published and a review of the strategy was completed in its third year. The Executive’s revisedChild Poverty Strategy was published on 25 March 2016.Responsibility for poverty policy transferred to the new Department for Communities on 9 May 2016.While my Department takes the lead for poverty policy, tackling poverty is an Executive responsibility and one which can only be tackled by working together. My Department is specifically responsible for developing a draft Social Strategy, which will set out a new approach to tackling poverty and social exclusion in a more structured and co-ordinated manner, mainstreaming this work into the new Programme for Government. Work to tackle child poverty will be integral to this Strategy. I plan to bring the draft Social Strategy to the Executive in the coming weeks, with the intention of having it issued, subject to Executive approval, for public consultation. |

Road safety measures adjacent to schools

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| AQO 389/16-21 | Mrs Jo-Anne Dobson (UUP - Upper Bann) | **To ask the Minister for Infrastructure for an update on current legislation in relation to road safety measures adjacent to schools.**There is no specific legislation relating to road safety measures at schools, however existing legislation to set speed limits and to control waiting and parking is used to enhance safety in the vicinity of schools.My Department treats the safety of school children as one of its highest priorities and over many years 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.A recent innovation has been the development of part-time 20 mph speed limits at schools, especially at those on roads where the national speed limit applies and I have asked my officials to consider further refinements of this measure that would facilitate an increased provision. |

Costs for coaching for transfer tests

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| AQO 457/16-21 | Mr Cathal Boylan (SF - Newry and Armagh) | **To ask the Minister of Education whether any of the financial costs incurred by teachers coaching for transfer tests, including the production of associated materials, will be met by his Department or by the Education Authority.**The revised guidance on post-primary transfer issued on 7 September 2016, sets out how primary schools may supply support materials, carry out preparation for tests during core teaching hours, coaching in exam technique, and/or providing familiarisation with a testing environment.Schools are free to exercise this right in line with the wishes of parents and pupils, and in keeping with the principles of the common funding formula which delegates responsibility as to how a school spends its budget.There is no additional funding being made available to schools. |

Support for pupils from disadvantage backgrounds entering primary school

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| AQO 456/16-21 | Mr Edwin Poots (DUP - Lagan Valley) | **To ask the Minister of Education to outline any engagement his Department has had with the Public Health Agency to prepare pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds entering primary school.**Collaboration between education and health is crucial in the early years, as is the partnership with parents.Officials in my Department have been working in collaboration with the Department of Health (DoH), and the Public Health Agency (PHA) in delivering a range of projects as part of the Early Intervention Transformation Programme (EITP) Workstream 1. EITP is a Northern Ireland Executive / Atlantic Philanthropies Delivering Social Change Signature Programme.Workstream 1 of the EITP aims to equip all parents with the skills needed to give their child the best start in life. Each of the programmes within Workstream 1 – Getting Ready for Baby, Getting Ready for Toddler and Getting Ready to Learn are focused on universal services. The universal nature of the programmes will therefore include all children, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds.DoH leads on EITP Workstream 1 and DE leads on the Getting Ready to Learn element of this. PHA and the Education Authority are collaborating on the Getting Ready for Toddler programme which has aligned a named Health Visitor to every pre-school education setting with DE funded places. The PHA is in the pilot phase of introducing the 3+ Health Review, using the Ages & Stages Questionnaire, and this review is conducted by Health Visitors with parents in statutory and non-statutory pre-school education settings. The 3+ Health Review will identify children in need of additional support so that interventions can be agreed.The PHA also plays a prominent role in the Department’s Sure Start Programme, which provides targeted early years services to children aged 0-4 and their families in the top 25% most disadvantaged areas in Northern Ireland. Departmental officials liaise with PHA on the provision of Speech and Language support in Sure Start. DE also engaged PHA in the implementation of actions emanating from the independent review of the Sure Start programme. |

Budget for the Childcare Strategy

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| AQO 451/16-21 | Ms Nichola Mallon (SDLP - North Belfast) | **To ask the Minister of Education to outline his budget for the Childcare Strategy.**The Childcare Strategy is being delivered on a phased basis. The first phase, which was launched in 2013, comprises fifteen Key First Actions.These Actions are resourced from the Delivering Social Change Central Fund, which incorporates the earlier £12 million Executive Childcare Fund.To date, nearly £9 million has been allocated to the Key First Actions. These include the School Age Childcare Grant Scheme, which has awarded some £6 million to support more than 3,000 low cost childcare places, and projects supporting childcare for children with a disability.I hope to bring forward the full version of the Childcare Strategy to my Executive colleagues in the coming months, having taken account of the many consultation responses received, the Programme for Government and the opportunities that now exist to align childcare and Early Years initiatives.As funding to date has been from the Executive’s central funds, DE’s baseline budget does not include funding for implementing the final Childcare Strategy. The resources required to implement the Executive’s Childcare Strategy will be determined as the Strategy is finalised and agreed over the coming months. |

Update on process of area planning for primary schools

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| AQO 459/16-21 | Mr Danny Kennedy (UUP - Newry and Armagh) | **To ask the Minister of Education for an update on the process of area planning for primary schools.**Over recent months the Education Authority, CCMS and the sectoral support bodies have been working together to produce draft Area Plans for primary, post-primary and special school provision to cover the planning period April 2017 to March 2020. The Area Plans draw upon all available evidence to identify strategic priorities for action regionally, and across each of the eleven Local Government District planning areas.The Education Authority will publish the draft Area Plans which will be subject to an eight week period of public consultation this autumn. The outcome will inform the preparation of a supporting Annual Action Plan for the first year of the new planning period.The Annual Action Plan will contain details of specific proposals for action to determine the shape of education provision in local areas. These actions will include details of Development Proposals (DP) for named schools to give effect to the proposed changes and further statutory consultation will be undertaken for each DP. |

Funding of Childcare Strategy

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| AQW 4620/16-21 | Mr Andy Allen (UUP - East Belfast) | **To ask the Minister of Education whether he would consider using unspent Executive Childcare Fund monies to offset the cost of VAT added to childcare provided in a residential setting under the Childcare Strategy. [Priority Written]**The £12 million Executive Childcare Fund, which has been incorporated into the Delivering Social Change Central Fund, is being used to resource the Key First Actions of the Childcare Strategy, notably the Bright Start School Age Childcare Grant Scheme.I am aware of the issue of VAT being charged on home childcare. I understand that the Department of Health, which regulates childcare agencies, is looking into this matter. My officials will work with colleagues in the Department of Health to establish how this matter has arisen and what can now be done about it. |

Draft Childcare Strategy

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| AQW 4308/16-21 | Mr Chris Lyttle (APNI - East Belfast) | **To ask the Minister of Education to provide (i) a copy of the draft childcare strategy; and (ii) the consultation response analysis.**A draft version of the Childcare Strategy was published for public consultation in July 2015 and can be accessed on-line at www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/childcare-strategyConsultation on the Childcare Strategy ended in November 2015. Approximately 300 on-line and written responses were received in addition to the inputs from six consultation events and two specialised events, one for parents and one for children. A composite analysis of the consultation responses will be published on the Departmental website when complete.I hope to bring forward the full version of the Childcare Strategy to my Executive colleagues in the coming months, having taken account of the many consultation responses received, the Programme for Government and the new opportunities that now exist to align childcare and Early Years initiatives. |

Oakwood Special School Nursery

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| AQW 4276/16-21 | Mr Chris Lyttle (APNI - East Belfast) | **To ask the Minister of Education to outline (i) when occupational therapy provision was removed from Oakwood Special School Nursery; (ii) how this has been communicated to parents; (ii) for his assessment on the impact it has had on the developmental needs of children; and (iv) whether it is in breach of any statement of special educational needs of any child at the school.**Occupational Therapy delivered on site at Oakwood School is managed and provided by Belfast Health and Social Care Trust (BHSCT). During the summer term, the BHSCT determined that occupational therapy would not be delivered in the school but would be delivered in the community. This was communicated by the BHSCT to the parents concerned.However, I can confirm that officers in the Education Authority (EA) and BHSCT have made suitable arrangements that will allow for therapy to be delivered on the campus during the school day. This should be in place shortly and parents will be informed accordingly |

Boys attainment at GCSE

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| AQW 4247/16-21 | Mr Barry McElduff (SF - West Tyrone) | **To ask the Minister of Education (i) for his assessment why a significant percentage of boys do not achieve a C Grade or higher in GCSE Maths; and (ii) whether his Department proposes to revise the curriculum in the future as one measure for addressing this deficit.**There is a range of reasons which impact on the grades achieved by pupils in examinations. This includes issues such as pupil ability and motivation; teaching methods; school leadership; and the level of parental involvement. It is also important to note that for some pupils,achieving grades D-G does not represent underachievement.Sustained improvement is best achieved where schools are supported and trusted to devise their own school improvement strategies. Through classroom observation and analysis of formative assessment, teachers are able to use their professional judgement to assess if a pupil is underachieving.I will continue to focus on those policies and strategies that are driving improvement and which aim to support schools and teachers in their work to raise standards and overcome the barriers to learning which some pupils face. I will also ensure that effective practice emerging from these strategies will continue to be disseminated across the school system. |

Nursery placement for children with special educational needs

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| AQW 4198/16-21 | Ms Carál Ní Chuilín (SF - North Belfast) | **To ask the Minister of Education what plans his Department has to support the Education Authority in providing support to families that have had a reduction in hours in nursery placements for children with special educational needs.**Statutory responsibility for securing provision for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) rests with schools and the Education Authority (EA) which are responsible for identifying, assessing and, in appropriate cases, making provision for children with SEN.The EA has advised that individual special schools have elected to provide a variety of strategies to support parents and families.In addition, some special schools are complementing this work through their participation in the Early Intervention Transformation Programme which provides enhanced support for parents. |

Absence levels amongst traveller children

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| AQW 4184/16-21 | Ms Catherine Seeley (SF - Upper Bann) | **To ask the Minister of Education , given that their absence levels are six times higher than the average, to outline the plans his Department has to address the levels of absence amongst traveller children.**The attendance levels of traveller pupils have increased by 5.6% at primary level and by 8.1% at post-primary level since 2008/09.At present, the Department allocates an additional amount of funding to schools for each Traveller Child through the Common Funding Formula and through the Education Authority funds the dedicated Traveller Education Support Service (TESS) and the Education Welfare Service (EWS) who work closely together in order to improve the attendance of traveller pupils.The TESS 2016/17 Delivery Plan indentifies improving attendance as a key priority for how they will continue to engage with traveller families and the relevant schools to secure improved attendance.The EWS 2016-17 Action Plan also identifies capacity building, preventative work and pilot programmes in areas with high levels of poor Traveller attendance. |

Review of integrated education stakeholder engagement

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| AQW 4174/16-21 | Ms Kellie Armstrong (APNI - Strangford) | **To ask the Minister of Education whether he will be engaging with education stakeholders on the recommendations of the report on the Review of Integrated Education**. My officials have received a draft of the Review Panel’s report and are currently undertaking a factual check. I look forward to considering the final report once this work has been completed.The Panel has already undertaken considerable engagement with stakeholders including issuing a Call for Evidence in March this year. I will want to give careful consideration to the report’s findings before deciding what further engagement might be required. |

Update on Review of Integrated Education

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| AQW 4170/16-21 | Ms Kellie Armstrong (APNI - Strangford) | **To ask the Minister of Education for an update on the Independent Review Panel report on the Review of Integrated Education.**My officials have received a draft of the Review Panel’s report and are currently undertaking a factual check. I look forward to considering the final report once this work has been completed.The Panel has already undertaken considerable engagement with stakeholders including issuing a Call for Evidence in March this year. I will want to give careful consideration to the report’s findings before deciding what further engagement might be required. |

Costs with school children having Translink passes

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| AQW 4155/16-21 | Ms Michaela Boyle (SF - West Tyrone) | **To ask the Minister of Education to detail the costs associated with school children having Translink passes.**The Education Authority has advised that the total cost of providing home to school transport on Translink buses in 2015/16 was approximately:Ulsterbus - £29.5mMetro - £1.8m |

Number of children leaving primary school not able to read or write

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| AQW 4136/16-21 | Mr Alex Easton (DUP - North Down) | **To ask the Minister of Education how many children left primary school not able to read or write in the last academic year.**Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS), the international assessment undertaken here for the first time in 2011, provides an assessment of the literacy skills of our pupils in P6 (9-10 year olds). This study shows that we are the highest ranking English speaking region in the world in reading - 5th out of the 45 countries surveyed. It also highlighted that in reading, a fifth of our P6 children (19%) are performing at the advanced international benchmark – the highest level possible - compared with the international average of 8 per cent. In relation to the low benchmark, just 3 per cent of our pupils failed to reach this standard compared to an international average of 5 per cent.At a system level my department collects information at the end of Key Stage 2 which outlines the proportion of pupils at the expected level of progression in communication and using mathematics. The data for 2014/15 shows that in Communication, the proportion not achieving the expected level was 23.2% (the associated confidence levels are 21.9% and 24.5%)\*. However, not being at the expected level does not necessarily reflect an inability to read or write.Due to the effect of industrial action, 2014/15 data have been weighted to account for non-response bias. The best estimate is the mean figure drawn from the sample. The lower and upper estimates are for the 95% confidence interval. There is 95% certainty that the true population value lies between the lower and higher estimates. |

Use of free school meals as an indicator in rural areas

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| AQW 4055/16-21 | Mr David Ford (APNI - South Antrim) | **To ask the Minister of Education whether the use of free school meals can be used as an indicator that accurately represents poverty levels in rural areas.**Free School Meals is not used by the Department as an indicator of poverty in rural areas.  Free School Meals is, however, commonly used by DE as a proxy indicator of wider deprivation.  This is because it is highly correlated with the NISRA Multiple Deprivation Measure which comprises seven domains; deprivation income, employment, health, proximity to services, living environment, crime and disorder and income deprivation.It must be noted that the NISRA MDM guidance advised “that although the term deprivation is often synonymous with monetary poverty, it is important to note that only the income deprivation domain is intended to measure poverty in this sense” (Page 5)<http://www.nisra.gov.uk/deprivation/archive/Updateof2005Measures/NIMDM_2010_Report.pdf>Free school meals has a number of characteristics that makes it the most reliable indicator for identifying social deprivation i.e.it relates to the individual pupil, collecting information that is personal to the pupil’s family circumstances, and is therefore more robust than an area-based measure which assumes that everyone in the same area is alike;it is updated on an annual basis and is therefore current;it is available as part of the census return and is therefore easily gathered at school and pupil level;it is capable of independent validation; andit is highly correlated with the Multiple Deprivation Measure and with the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI).It provides an indication of the relative concentration of potentially ‘disadvantaged’ pupils in a given school in a way that no other indicator currently does. |

Number of cases of bullying in last year

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|  | AQW 3921/16-21 | Ms Carla Lockhart (DUP - Upper Bann) | **To ask the Minister of Education how many cases of bullying have been reported via schools in the last 12 months.**Schools are not currently required to record bullying incidences in school and the only figures available to the Department are for cases where bullying has been cited as the reason for a pupil being suspended or expelled. These figures are published annually by the Department and can be accessed via the following web-page.<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/pupil-suspensions-and-expulsions>The ‘Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016’ was granted Royal Assent on 12 May 2016. One of the specific issues this legislation is intended to address is to introduce a requirement for all schools to centrally record incidents of bullying, their motivation and their outcome. This will allow us, going forward, to quantify the true scale of the problem and any emerging trends which may require further specific interventions.While the provisions of this Act are not yet in force, I intend that they will be in place for the start of 2017-18 school year. |

Reasons for difference in GCSE grades

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| AQW 3824/16-21 | Mr Chris Lyttle (APNI - East Belfast) | **To ask the Minister of Education (i) for his assessment of why 35 per cent of pupils did not achieve a grade C or above in GCSE Maths in 2016; and (ii) to outline what steps he is taking to increase attainment.**1. There is a range of reasons which impact on the grades achieved by pupils in examinations. This includes issues such as pupil ability and motivation; teaching methods; school leadership; and the level of parental involvement. It is also important to note that for some pupils, achieving grades D-G does not represent underachievement.
2. I am encouraged by the improvement in overall performance at GCSE and A level. Sustained improvement is best achieved where schools are supported and trusted to devise their own school improvement strategies. Through classroom observation and analysis of formative assessment, teachers are able to use their professional judgement to assess if a pupil is underachieving.

I will continue to focus on those policies and strategies that are driving improvement and which aim to support schools and teachers in their work to raise standards and overcome the barriers to learning which some pupils face. I will also ensure that effective practice emerging from these strategies will continue to be disseminated across the school system. |

Number of teachers trained to support pupils with special needs

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| AQW 3811/16-21 | Ms Carla Lockhart (DUP - Upper Bann) | **To ask the Minister of Education to detail the number of teaching staff trained in dealing with autism, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and Asperger's.**The Education Authority (EA) has advised that training programmes have been delivered to tens of thousands of teachers and classroom assistants on autism, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and Asperger's to varying degrees since 1998 mostly through the legacy education and library boards. Schools may also have accessed training from external agencies. It is not possible therefore to provide the exact number of teachers that have received training.It is likely that the majority of nursery and primary teachers will have received some level of training and a high number of teachers in post primary schools will also have received awareness raising/training.In addition, Middletown Centre for Autism is funded by my Department to provide training in autism.   Asperger’s is now included under the broad umbrella of Autism Spectrum Disorder, and ADHD is a common comorbidity with autism and children with autism and the Centre provides guidance in all of these areas as part of its training provision.Since 2008 the Centre has provided training to 20,175 educational professionals in Northern Ireland, including teachers. |