

NICCY Summary: Written Assembly Questions week ending 20 November, 2015

Timescale for bringing age discrimination legislation to the Assembly

<p>AQW 49472/11- 16</p>	<p>Ms Claire Sugden (IND - East Londonderry)</p>	<p>To ask the First Minister and deputy First Minister whether they intend to bring age discrimination legislation to the Assembly before the end of the current mandate; and using accelerated passage if required. <i>[Priority Written]</i></p> <p>Public consultation on proposals to extend age discrimination legislation to the provision of goods, facilities and services closed on 8 October 2015. The consultation responses are currently being analysed and they will be taken into account when finalising policy proposals. We will then consider the options available to us for bringing this legislation before the Assembly.</p>
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School bus passes

<p>AQW 50307/11- 16</p>	<p>Mr Trevor Clarke (DUP - South Antrim)</p>	<p>To ask the Minister for Regional Development why there are occasions on which students are back to school before their travel passes are issued.</p> <p>Student travel passes are the responsibility of the Education Authority (EA). Translink produces travel passes for the Education Authority (EA). However, Translink can only produce a travel pass once it has been formally requested by the EA. Translink believe it is the capture of each individual pupil's travel requirements which is the main cause of delay.</p> <p>Translink has advised that there are two significant peaks in pass production every year.</p> <p>The first peak occurs in July and relates to passes required for eligible pupils who are starting secondary school for the first time and also for eligible pupils who are returning to school for another academic year.</p> <p>The second peak occurs in late August, usually after GCSE exam results are known, which leaves a short amount of time before the start of school term. This peak relates to passes for eligible pupils who may either stay on at the same school or change to another school or college.</p> <p>This year, Translink accepts it made changes to its services and timetables</p>
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		<p>relatively late in summer. This was due to negotiations with the Unite trade union who asked for time to endorse the changes. This was agreed at the time with my predecessor.</p> <p>In some cases these changes led to delays in the production of travel passes. However, authorisation letters for the affected pupils were provided to ensure that they could avail of free school travel on Translink services.</p>
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Funding for Women's Centre Childcare Fund

AQW 50900/11- 16	Mr Robin Swann (UUP - North Antrim)	<p>To ask the Minister for Social Development, pursuant to AQW 50676/11-16 and AQW 50677/11-16, whether he has requested that additional funding be made available under the Office and the First and deputy First Minister's Childcare Strategy to supplement the funding lost from the Women's Centre Childcare Fund.</p> <p>I have shared the evaluation of the Women's Centre Childcare Fund with the Office of the First and deputy First Minister and requested that the matter is considered in the context of the Childcare Strategy. In addition my officials have been engaging with OFMdFM with a view to ensuring the provision of pre-school childcare under the Strategy.</p>
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Funding for Women's Centre Childcare Fund

AQW 50677/11- 16	Mr Robin Swann (UUP - North Antrim)	<p>To ask the Minister for Social Development for his assessment of the work supported by the Women's Centre Childcare Fund.</p> <p>The Department recently commissioned an evaluation of the Women's Centre Childcare Fund, which has been an emergency measure since 2008. The evaluation concluded that the programme provided a wide range of positive impacts, both in relation to the development and well-being of children and also in supporting parents to access services and opportunities.</p>
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Funding for Women's Centre Childcare Fund

AQW 50676/11-16	Mr Robin Swann (UUP - North Antrim)	<p>To ask the Minister for Social Development what steps he is taking to extend the Women's Centre Childcare Fund post March 2016.</p> <p>I have indicated that, in the context of the OFMDFM Childcare Strategy, this will be the last year of funding under the Women's Centre Childcare Fund.</p>
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Funding for Women's Centre Childcare Fund

<p>AQW 50289/11- 16</p>	<p>Ms Claire Sugden (IND - East Londonderry)</p>	<p>To ask the Minister for Social Development, pursuant to AQW 50072/11-16, to detail (i) which groups received funding through the Women's Centres Childcare Fund; and (ii) what responsibility his Department has to ensure similar funding provisions remain as part of a new childcare strategy.</p> <p>The Women's Centres Childcare Fund Groups are: ATLAS Women's Centre Ballybeen Women's Centre Chrysalis Women's Centre Falls Women's Centre First Steps Women's Centre Footprints Women's Centre Greenway Women's Centre Kilcooley Women's Centre Magherafelt Women's Group Ltd Shankill Women's Centre Strathfoyle Women's Activity Group The Women's Centre Derry Waterside Women's Centre Windsor Women's Centre</p> <p>My Officials have been in discussions with OfMdFM Officials regarding the services to be covered under the new childcare strategy.</p>
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Prohibition of young people in licensed premises

<p>AQW 50774/11- 16</p>	<p>Mr Phil Flanagan (SF - Fermanagh and South Tyrone)</p>	<p>To ask the Minister for Social Development whether he has any immediate plans to amend the Licensing (NI) Order 1996 to remove the prohibition of young people being in licensed premises.</p> <p>The Licensing (Northern Ireland) Order 1996 (the '96 Order) provides that young people under 18 years of age are only allowed in the "bar area" of licensed premises up to 9.00pm where the court has granted a Children's Certificate to the relevant premises and certain safeguards are in place.</p> <p>Following a consultation in November 2012 on the reform of liquor licensing legislation in Northern Ireland, the Executive agreed to the drafting of a Liquor Licensing Bill which includes amendments to the '96 Order in relation to young people under 18 years of age in licensed premises.</p>
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		<p>Provided adequate safeguards are in place licence holders would no longer be required to apply for a Children's Certificate to allow young people in their premises until 9.00pm and certain licensed premises, including hotels, would be allowed to run non alcohol underage functions after 9.00pm.</p> <p>I am considering the draft Bill and will announce how I plan to proceed in due course.</p>
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Prohibition of young people in licensed premises

<p>AQW 50624/11- 16</p>	<p>Mr John Dallat (<i>SDLP - East Londonderry</i>)</p>	<p>To ask the Minister for Social Development whether he has any plans to change legislation to allow junior discos and other non-alcoholic social events to take place in hotels and licensed premises where trained staff are available to deal with child protection, health and safety and other services, that are not available elsewhere.</p> <p>Following a consultation in November 2012 on the reform of liquor licensing legislation in Northern Ireland, the Executive agreed to the drafting of a Bill which includes a measure to allow certain licensed premises, including hotels, to run underage functions provided adequate safeguards are in place.</p> <p>I am considering the draft Bill and will announce how I plan to proceed in due course</p>
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School education governing bodies

<p>AQW 50857/11- 16</p>	<p>Mr Peter Weir (<i>DUP - North Down</i>)</p>	<p>To ask the Minister of Education to detail the number of schools that are overseen by the (i) Council for Catholic Maintained Schools; (ii) Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education; (iii) Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta; and (iv) Governing Bodies Association Northern Ireland.</p> <p>The Council for Catholic Maintained Schools has a statutory responsibility to ensure the effective management of catholic maintained schools by their boards of governors. It is also the employing authority for teachers in catholic maintained schools. In this context the Council oversees 471 schools. While the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education, the Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta and the Governing Bodies Association Northern Ireland may work with schools in their respective sectors, they do not have any formal oversight role in respect of schools</p>
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Guidance for schools around cyber bullying outside school hours

<p>AQW 50758/11- 16</p>	<p>Mrs Sandra Overend (UUP - Mid Ulster)</p>	<p>To ask the Minister of Education to detail the guidance given to schools with regard to cyber bullying occurring outside of normal school hours.</p> <p>A school can only take action where any incident of bullying falls within the scope of its discipline policy. Typically this will restrict its ability to act to incidents occurring on school premises, within school hours, whilst pupils are travelling to or from the school, whilst they are representing the school or while pupils are otherwise under the control of school staff, such as during an organised school trip or after-school event.</p> <p>Beyond these circumstances, responsibility for addressing bullying incidents lies solely with the parents and guardians of the pupils involved and guidance for schools on handling “out of school” incidents has not therefore been deemed necessary.</p> <p>I am currently taking forward a new ‘Addressing Bullying in Schools Bill’ which will recognise cyber-bullying as one of the possible forms bullying can take. It was identified during the public consultation on this Bill that, disputes between pupils can begin with exchanges via social media before spilling over into physical or verbal bullying within the school itself. I recognise that in such complex situations it can be difficult for schools and parents to understand where they must take action and where they can expect the other party to do so.</p> <p>The supporting guidance to the Bill will therefore specifically address cyber-bullying, providing greater clarity for both schools and parents on the boundaries of their respective responsibilities; and suggesting best-practice approaches for each to follow where the responsibility to act lies with them. DE funds the regional Anti-Bullying Forum (NIABF). In addition to our guidance in support of the Bill, we have asked the Forum during 2015-16 to update its guidance on cyber-bullying and to prepare a section on cyber-bullying to extend its best practice guide for schools, “Effective Responses to Bullying Behaviour”.</p>
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Introduction of the Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Strategy

<p>AQO 9093/11- 16</p>	<p>Mrs Sandra Overend (UUP - Mid Ulster)</p>	<p>To ask the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to outline the reasons for the delay in introducing the Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Strategy for 2013-2020.</p> <p>Extensive engagement with a diverse range of stakeholders, severe financial pressures and the complex nature of the domestic violence and sexual violence, have been the main contributing factors to the delay.</p> <p>While I am aware that the Department of Justice has a number of issues to resolve with the Justice Committee, the development process is now largely complete and, in partnership with Minister Ford, I am currently giving active consideration to how my Department can deliver against the aims of the proposed Strategy in the exceptionally difficult financial environment in which we are now operating.</p>
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Update on paediatric cardiac services in Belfast

<p>AQO 9089/11- 16</p>	<p>Mr Chris Hazzard (SF - South Down)</p>	<p>To ask the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for an update on the development of Paediatric Cardiac Services in Belfast.</p> <p>We continue to provide excellent children's heart services in Belfast, and the commitment to developing a specialist Children's Heart Centre within the all-island Network was given in order to preserve and enhance the service. The plans for the Heart Centre are currently being progressed by the Congenital Heart Disease (CHD) Network Board within an overall implementation plan and business case which is expected to be submitted to my Department later this month for consideration and approval. It will describe the vision and standards for the all-island network, building on the model recommended by the International Working Group, including the role of the Belfast Children's Heart Centre within that model. The timeline for the development of the service, announced by my predecessor in October 2014 remains unchanged. That is the phased transfer of the majority of paediatric congenital surgical patients from centres in England to the Dublin children's heart centre will take place over the period 2016 to 2019 and the new Belfast Children's Heart Centre, or hub, will also become operational during this period.</p>
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Waiting times for Speech and Language Therapist appointments in Northern Trust

<p>AQW 50688/11-16</p>	<p>Mr Paul Frew (DUP - North Antrim)</p>	<p>To ask the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the current waiting time for an appointment with a Speech and Language Therapist in the Northern Health and Social Care Trust.</p> <p>Table 1 below details the number of patients in the Northern Health and Social Care (HSC) Trust waiting for an appointment with a Speech and Language Therapist (SALT), by duration of wait, at 30 September 2015. These are the latest figures available.</p> <p>Table 1: Patients waiting for an SALT appointment by duration of wait at 30 September 2015 in the Northern HSC Trust</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="491 846 1418 1216"> <thead> <tr> <th rowspan="2">Total No. of Patients</th> <th colspan="5">Waiting Time</th> <th rowspan="2">Total</th> </tr> <tr> <th>0 – 3 weeks</th> <th>>3 – 6 weeks</th> <th>>6 – 9 weeks</th> <th>>9 – 13 weeks</th> <th>> 13 weeks</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>283</td> <td>162</td> <td>119</td> <td>145</td> <td>154</td> <td>863</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Source: Health and Social Care Board</p>	Total No. of Patients	Waiting Time					Total	0 – 3 weeks	>3 – 6 weeks	>6 – 9 weeks	>9 – 13 weeks	> 13 weeks	283	162	119	145	154	863
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Life story service entitlement for care experience and adopted children

<p>AQW 50533/11-16</p>	<p>Mr Steven Agnew (GPNI - North Down)</p>	<p>To ask the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety what consideration he has given to making an independent life story service an entitlement for care experienced and adopted children. <i>[Priority Written]</i></p> <p>A regional Life Story Service for care experienced and adopted children is currently provided by the Family Care Society. As part of any future review of strategy or legislation as it relates to care-experienced or adopted children and young people, consideration will be given to how service provision for both groups of children could be further enhanced, including Life Story service provision.</p>
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Children travelling to England for medical treatments

<p>AQW 50278/11- 16</p>	<p>Mr Robin Swann [R] (UUP - North Antrim)</p>	<p>To ask the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number of local children that have travelled to England, Scotland, Wales or the Republic of Ireland for medical treatments, since the 10 September 2015.</p> <p>Information on the number of local children that have travelled to England, Scotland, Wales or the Republic of Ireland for medical treatment, since the 10th September 2015, is not available.</p> <p>However, information on the number of children that have been approved for travel to England, Scotland, Wales or the Republic of Ireland is available. The Health and Social Care Board (HSCB) have advised, as at Friday 6th November 2015, that since 10th September 2015, 36 children under 16 have been approved to travel to England, Scotland, Wales and Republic of Ireland for medical treatment. The HSCB have advised that ECR approvals information may include referrals for assessment.</p>
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Autism services referrals in last five years

<p>AQW 50261/11- 16</p>	<p>Mr Daithí McKay (SF - North Antrim)</p>	<p>To ask the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the number of referrals to autism services in each of the last five years.</p> <p>It is assumed that a referral to autism services means a referral for an autism assessment.</p> <p>Table 1 below contains the number of referrals received for an assessment for autism spectrum disorder (ASD) at year ending 31st March in each of the last five years.</p> <p>Table 1: The number of referrals for an assessment for ASD at year ending 31st March (2011 – 2015)</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="539 1597 1394 1856"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>2011</th> <th>2012</th> <th>2013</th> <th>2014</th> <th>2015</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>No. of referrals received for an ASD assessment</td> <td>1,647</td> <td>2,181</td> <td>2,465</td> <td>2,979</td> <td>3,394</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Source: HSC Trusts Information Systems Please note that these figures include referrals for both children and adults</p>		2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	No. of referrals received for an ASD assessment	1,647	2,181	2,465	2,979	3,394
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Funding for youth intervention schemes

<p>AQO 9106/11- 16</p>	<p>Mr David Hilditch (DUP - East Antrim)</p>	<p>To ask the Minister of Justice to outline any additional funding that can be allocated to local Policing and Community Safety Partnerships to continue the success of youth intervention schemes.</p> <p>Policing and Community Safety Partnerships are jointly funded by my Department and the Northern Ireland Policing Board. To date, approximately £2.2m has been allocated to support the work of PCSPs in 2015-16. I am pleased to confirm that further funding of £1.5m (£900k from DOJ and £600k from NIPB) has been released for PCSPs for the remainder of this financial year. It will be for the PCSPs to decide how best they can invest this money in services to improve community safety and public confidence in policing in their area.</p> <p>In addition to this core funding, I have been able to allocate nearly £117,000 of Priority Youth Intervention funding for projects aimed at disaffected young people who are vulnerable and at risk of involvement in violence and criminal activity, especially at times of heightened tension.</p> <p>Also in 2015, PCSPs have been successful in accessing approximately £199,000 from my Department's Assets Recovery Community Scheme. This is money which has been taken out of the hands of criminals and returned to the community to fund a wide range of community safety initiatives including youth diversionary and education and awareness projects.</p> <p>I will soon be inviting PCSPs to bid again for Assets Recovery funding for local community safety project delivery in 2016-17.</p>
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Youth Justice Agency

<p>AQW 50928/11- 16</p>	<p>Mr Alban Maginness (SDLP - North Belfast)</p>	<p>To ask the Minister of Justice, given the separate nature of the youth justice system, why the Youth Justice Agency has been aligned alongside the Northern Ireland Prison Service within the Department's Reducing Offending Directorate.</p> <p>The creation of a Reducing Offending Directorate within my Department, which incorporates the Youth Justice Agency, strategic policy on reducing offending amongst children, young people and adults, and the NI Prison Service, allows for the sharing of experience, research and knowledge and is ultimately to the benefit of the criminal justice system.</p>
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Cost of processing an Access NI application

<p>AQW 50860/11-16</p>	<p>Mr Alex Easton (DUP - North Down)</p>	<p>To ask the Minister of Justice what is the cost of processing an Access NI application.</p> <p>The cost for an AccessNI check is set out in regulations as follows; Basic check £26 Standard check£26 Enhanced check£33 Enhanced checks for volunteers are provided free of charge. These account for some 23% of checks. AccessNI operates on a cost recovery basis.</p> <p>By way of comparison with the disclosure regime in England and Wales, which is similar to ours, the cost of a Standard check is the same, while the Enhanced check is £11 cheaper here.</p>
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Reform of the youth justice system

<p>AQW 50768/11-16</p>	<p>Mr Patsy McGlone (SDLP - Mid Ulster)</p>	<p>To ask the Minister of Justice, given the Hillsborough Agreement's requirement for reform of the youth justice system, for his assessment of the impact on this reform of the Youth Justice Agency's alignment with the Prison Service, particularly in light of the recent Criminal Justice Inspectorate report on Maghaberry prison.</p> <p>The Hillsborough Castle Agreement provided for a comprehensive Review of the youth justice system, giving due consideration to international standards and children's rights.</p> <p>The Scoping Study on Children in the Justice System, which I announced in the Assembly on 19 May, is being undertaken with a view to building on the progress made against this Review and improving outcomes for children and young people by, in particular, keeping as many as possible out of the criminal justice system and providing effective, targeted support and intervention.</p> <p>The creation of a Reducing Offending Directorate within my Department, which incorporates the Youth Justice Agency, strategic policy on reducing offending amongst children, young people and adults, and the NI Prison Service, allows for the sharing of experience, research and knowledge and is ultimately to the benefit of the criminal justice system.</p>
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