

Northern Ireland Assembly Disability Monitor



MONDAY 28 SEPTEMBER 2009

**Centre on Human Rights for
People with Disabilities**

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A Last Week in Assembly

Monday 21 September 2009

Private Members Business

Financial Support for Sports Clubs

Danny Kennedy (UUP) begged to move the motion “that this Assembly calls on the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure to ensure that no sports club, which facilitates a commemoration or glorification of terrorism, receives financial support through his Department, either directly or indirectly.”

During the debate Dominic Bradley (SDLP) submitted that the Ulster Council of the GAA and the Irish Football Association have joined forces to support the Unite Against Hate campaign. The campaign’s message is simple:

“Hate crime is violent, wrong and will not be tolerated. There is no room in society for this.”

That campaign will promote leadership, optimism and hope and will offer a practical channel to encourage, empower and support people to express their opposition to hate crime. That is a positive contribution to society under present conditions. I welcome the fact that the sporting bodies also have programmes to promote health and well-being, to include people with a disability or special needs, to welcome new populations, to include all educational sectors in their games and to promote a shared future.

B This Week In Assembly

Thursday 1 October 2009

Health, Social Services and Public Safety Committee

Items for Business

1. Departmental briefing on proposals for autism legislation.

Witnesses to be confirmed.

C Written Answers to Questions

Week ending 25 September 2009

CULTURE, ARTS AND LEISURE

Special Olympics

Lord Morrow (DUP) asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how much funding his Department has allocated to the Special Olympics in each of the last three years. (AQW 206/10)

Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: The total amount of funding awarded to Special Olympics in each of the last three years by my Department is as follows:-

2006/07	£531,800
2007/08	Nil
2008/09	Nil
TOTAL	£531,800

In addition, Sport Northern Ireland has awarded Special Olympics £11,815 through the Awards for All Programme.

2012 Olympic Games

David McNarry (UUP) asked the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure how many athletes, and from which sports, who are expected to compete in the 2012 Olympic Games representing Great Britain and Northern Ireland have received, or are likely to receive within the next 12 months, funding from his Department. (AQW 251/10)

Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure: Sport Northern Ireland (SNI) is responsible for the development of sport in Northern Ireland including distribution of funding. SNI is currently providing financial assistance, through its Athlete Support Programme, to seven talented athletes

considered to have the potential to represent Great Britain and Northern Ireland in the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games as follows:-

Sport	Number
Archery	1
Wheelchair basketball	2
Hockey	2
Table Tennis	1
Smallbore shooting	1
TOTAL	7

SNI's Athlete Support Programme is presently closed for further applications. Consequently, the full number of talented athletes considered to have the potential to be part of the Great Britain and Northern Ireland team at the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games, and likely to receive funding from SNI within the next 12 months, will not be known until after the Athlete Support Programme reopens. SNI currently hopes to reopen this programme for further applications in October 2009.

EDUCATION

Physically Disabled Children

Lord Morrow (DUP) asked the Minister of Education how many physically disabled children are being educated in mainstream primary and post-primary schools in each Education and Library Board. (AQW 356/10)

Minister of Education: The number of pupils recorded as having Special Educational Needs with a physical classification is shown in the table below.

Primary and post primary pupils who are recorded as having
'physical' Special Education Needs – 2008/09

ELB	School type		Total
	Primary	Post primary	
BELB	101	100	201
NEELB	131	77	208
SEELB	101	70	171
SELB	151	118	269
WELB	113	72	185
TOTAL	597	437	1,034

Source: Annual school census.

Note:

1. Primary includes nursery, reception and year 1 – 7 classes.
2. The physical special educational needs classification includes needs such as: cerebral palsy, spina bifida and/or hydrocephalus, muscular dystrophy, significant accidental injury and any other physical need.
3. Figures relate to pupils in mainstream classes and special units within primary and post primary schools.

Children: Statemented

Peter Weir (DUP) asked the Minister of Education how many children have been statemented by each of the Education and Library Boards, in each of the last five years. (AQW 423/10)

Minister of Education: The Chief Executives of the Education and Library Boards have advised that the number of children who have received statements of special educational need in the last five years is as follows:-

	BELB	NEELB	SEELB	SELB	WELB
2004/05*	285	299	492	343	304
2005/06*	317	354	528	409	249
2006/07*	430	273	335	410	350
2007/08*	393	326	342	660	231
2008/09*	451	280	145	342	200

* academic years

The above figures refer to children and young people who received final statements of special educational need. They do not include those who may have received reviewed statements.

EMPLOYMENT AND LEARNING

Vulnerable Students

Lord Morrow (DUP) asked the Minister for Employment and Learning what emotional support services are in place in colleges and universities for vulnerable students, particularly those who are away from home for the first time. (AQW 132/10)

Minister for Employment and Learning: All Higher Education Institutions and Further Education Colleges in Northern Ireland provide a range of support services for vulnerable students, details of which are attached at Annex A.

Annex A

The University of Ulster

The University of Ulster has a system in place that supports all vulnerable students. This system operates both informally, via the Students' Union, and more formally, through the professional counselling and health services delivered by Student Support. The Counselling Service offers regular "drop in" sessions and, for students with existing mental health issues, the Register of Support Providers arranges mentoring and study support. The University also

has a Peer Mentoring system for students with mental health concerns.

The University's Student Support Outreach Adviser will, prior to the start of the academic year, make contact with new students coming from a background of care for whom the transition to a new environment may be particularly difficult.

For those students experiencing financial difficulties, due to delayed loan or grant payments, emergency payments are available from the Student Funding Advisor until a more detailed assessment of need can be made.

The University of Ulster also employs Resident Assistants who are more experienced students that are able to advise and assist with transitional concerns. In addition, all students participate in induction activities, including information on support services. Information is also available on the Student Support website, and on posters and printed materials throughout the University.

Queen's University Belfast

Queen's University's Welcome Week helps students familiarise themselves with the requirements of their chosen degree and the comprehensive range of services and facilities available within the University. The week includes Academic induction programmes and a range of social and practical events run by the University's central support services.

Each student has a Personal Tutor with whom they meet during their first week at the University. The Personal Tutor will act as a point of contact on all issues of concern, academic or personal, and will assist the student in accessing the full range of University support services.

The support services are based in the Student Guidance Centre. These include the following:

- The Counselling Service offers students access to professionally accredited counsellors.

- Disability Services staff liaise with all new students who have declared a disability and, together with the student, will determine non-medical support requirements.
- The Learning Development Service offers workshops and one-to-one consultations on a range of academic support areas, including stress management.
- A Careers, Employability and Skills Service.

Under the University's Student Care Protocol, students identified as having emotional support needs, and whose academic progression or attainment could be at risk, are flagged to the University's central support services and appropriate interventions made.

The University Accommodation Service employs three resident qualified Community Youth Workers who lead a team of 12 Residential Assistants and work with University staff to help new students integrate into University accommodation.

The Union, through its Advice Centre and its team of elected student officers, provides a Monday to Friday and out-of-hours information and advice service, covering issues such as academic problems, accommodation issues, debt management and general welfare matters. In addition, the Union administers a Hardship Fund that provides support for students in extreme financial difficulty.

The University's Students' Care Review Group meets on a regular basis to discuss issues relating to vulnerable students, and to assess and provide recommendations regarding support levels. The Students' Union may make appropriate referral to other support services, both within and external to the University, with the specific permission of the student.

St. Mary's University College

St. Mary's University College provides an Induction Programme, which is revisited twice during the academic year. College counseling is also available in addition to a ten person Student Support Team. All students have a Personal Development Tutor and are encouraged to use the pastoral support services available in the College.

Stranmillis University College

Stranmillis University College provides an on campus counselling service in addition to Queen's University's counselling service. Students are also encouraged to approach Hall Wardens, their Advisor of Studies, the Student Union President and the campus Nurse with any concerns. The University holds Communication Workshops, which offer peer guidance and support for students experiencing difficulties, and Exam Workshops designed to minimise stress. Financial assistance is also provided in the form of student bursaries.

Stranmillis University College maintains a Student at Risk Register which supports identified students. This confidential database is a joint project between the Stranmillis Counselling Service and the Occupational Health Department. The Advisor of Studies and the University's Head of Departments make recommendations to support any health needs. Support from the medical officer is provided during examinations to accommodate any students with difficult domestic situations.

Further Education (FE) Colleges

24/7 Carecall counselling service

Carecall provides a 24/7 counselling service for all FE students and staff. Some colleges have also employed College Health and Welfare Officers to provide a counselling service.

Staff and Student training sessions

Staff training awareness are held regularly to encourage staff to remain alert to student needs e.g. to be aware of students who become unusually quiet or behave differently. Carecall also offer training sessions for staff. A series of student training awareness sessions are completed through the college induction process.

Student Charter

Each FE College has a Student Charter outlining information and facilities which are available for students including support and counselling services.

Student Activities Focussed events

FE Colleges hold regular student focused events. Examples include drug and alcohol awareness and healthy eating seminars.

- Health Promotion Events

Colleges organise health days through the Health Promotion Agency. This involves bringing in the local pharmacist and other organisations such as Breakthrough, Menssana and NUS and the Royal College of Nursing to raise issues including alcohol & drugs awareness.

- Aware Defeat Depression – Sessions

The Southern Regional College (SRC) (Newry Campus) has in collaboration with Aware Defeat Depression held a number of sessions for students focusing on mental health issues.

- Choices DVD – Southern Regional College

Southern Regional College (SRC) has produced a DVD to raise awareness in relation to the following topics:

- Disability
- Drug and Alcohol Abuse
- Domestic Violence
- Emerging Communities
- Diversity
- Street Violence

Anti Harassment Policy for Students

An Anti Harassment policy is agreed by each individual college governing body to help prevent harassment and to help resolve any problems.

Careers Advice

Careers Officers are available at each of the six regional FE Colleges to provide information and support for students.

Disability Policy for Students

A disability policy is agreed by each individual College governing body to reflect local procedures and practices, in line with the Special Educational Needs and Disability (Northern Ireland) Order (SENDO).

Health Promoting College

The Southern Regional College (SRC) and the South West College (SWC) are presently involved with the Southern Health & Social Care Trust and the Western Health & Social Care Trust in developing a "Health Promoting College". This will be a three year project working in partnership to promote ongoing improvement and development of physical and emotional health of which suicide risk will be a significant component. This is a pilot programme which will, if successful, be rolled out to all across all six regional FE Colleges in due course.

ENVIRONMENT

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Unit in Templepatrick

Thomas Burns (SDLP) asked the Minister of the Environment if full planning permission has been granted to build a child and adolescent mental health unit in Templepatrick; and for an update on the status of this project. (AQW 327/10)

Minister of the Environment: My Department is processing a planning application for full permission for erection of a residential institution for child and adolescent care at 182 Templepatrick Road, Ballyclare.

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On 7 September 2009 a recommendation of approval was placed before Newtownabbey Council. Another MLA has requested a meeting with me to discuss the application and this will take place as soon as possible. At the Council meeting the Planning Officer agreed that no decision would issue until the request for the meeting was considered.

HEALTH, SOCIAL SERVICES AND PUBLIC SAFETY

Legislative Framework for Mental Capacity and Mental Health

Legislation in Northern Ireland

Dr Stephen Farry (Alliance) asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, pursuant to AWQ 8944/09, to report (i) on the number of responses to the Department's consultation on the Legislative Framework for Mental Capacity and Mental Health Legislation in Northern Ireland which made specific reference to the issue of a single bill versus separate pieces of legislation; and (ii) from that subset, the percentage of responses which argued for a single piece of legislation. (AQW 49/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Thirty seven responses to the Department's consultation on the Legislative Framework for Mental Capacity and Mental Health Legislation in Northern Ireland made reference to the issue of a single Bill versus separate pieces of legislation; of which approximately 76% indicated support for a single piece of legislation. Having carefully considered the views expressed in the consultation responses, I announced my intention to proceed with a single Bill on 10 September 2009.

Scoliosis

Kieran McCarthy (Alliance) asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to outline the provision made for people with a scoliosis condition. (AQW 86/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: Patients suffering from scoliosis have access to care and treatment from an
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appropriate part of the Health and Social Care sector depending on their individual needs, ranging from primary and community care to general orthopaedic and specialist scoliosis clinics.

Regional orthopaedic services are provided by the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust's orthopaedic department. Scoliosis clinics are held at Musgrave Park Hospital. Two consultants run 6 Wednesday morning clinics per month; if a 5 week month then 1 extra clinic is held. These clinics are also attended by a spinal liaison nurse to help patients and their parents prepare for surgery. Surgery is carried out at the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children. There is one scoliosis theatre list per month. From September capacity is to be increased to provide one week of paediatric scoliosis lists per month for 6 months to address those patients currently waiting for surgery.

Speech and Therapy Action Plan

Kieran McCarthy (Alliance) asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety when the planned speech and therapy action plan will be published. (AQW 87/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: It is anticipated that the draft Speech and Language Therapy Action Plan will be published for public consultation by the end of 2009.

Attention to Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

Lord Morrow (DUP) asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety how many cases of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder are currently diagnosed in (i) Fermanagh; and (ii) South Tyrone. (AQW 135/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: The information is not available in the format requested.

Foyle Epilepsy Action

George Robinson (DUP) asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to outline what action he intends to take following his recent meeting with representatives of Foyle Epilepsy Action. (AQW 504/10)

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety: At the meeting on Tuesday 15 September a number of issues were raised and I have asked Departmental Officials to take these forward with the relevant Health and Social Care bodies, Public Health Agency and other relevant Departments.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Disability Living Allowance

Jim Shannon (DUP) asked the Minister for Social Development how many Disability Living Allowance tribunal appeals have been deferred due to non availability of GP notes, in each constituency, in each of the last three years.(AQW 669/10)

Minister for Social Development: The information cannot be provided in the detail requested as The Appeals Service does not maintain statistical data on the basis of constituency areas.

The total number of Disability Living Allowance appeals adjourned for General Practitioner records are:

2006/07 526

2007/08 821

2008/09 1147