

27 February 2025

Dear Sir,

REFERENCE: FOI\25\11

Thank you for your correspondence dated 31 January 2025 in which you requested the following:

A table detailing when: (i) Assembly questions were tabled by MLAs and whether they were 2, 3 or 5 day prior[it]y questions or ordinary written question; (ii) when draft answers to said questions were provided to the Minister by officials; and (iii) when the answers were provided to MLAs broken down by political party.

Some of the information you have requested is covered by the following section of the Freedom of Information Act 2000: Section 21 (Information accessible to applicant by other means). Section 21 (Information accessible to applicant by other means) is an absolute exemption and there is no requirement to consider the public interest test.

The following information is available on the Assembly website – [Questions For Answer | Northern Ireland Assembly](#):

- Details of when an Assembly Question was submitted by each MLA to the Minister of Justice.
- The Political Party of each MLA.
- Date the question was answered by the Minister of Justice to the MLA.

The NI Assembly website does not include details of which Assembly Questions were priority questions and that is set out in the following table. All other questions answered by the Minister of Justice were not Priority Questions.

The following table includes a list of priority AQWs tabled to the Minister of Justice from 5 February 2024 (the date the NI Assembly resumed) to 17 January 2025.

Priorit y AQW No	2 Day, 3 Day or 5 Day Priority Questio n	Date AQW tabled	Date Provided to Minister	Date provided to MLA
20828	2	17/01/2025	21.01.25	22.01.25
20678	3	15/01/2025	20.01.25	20.01.25
20592	2	14/01/2025	16.01.25	16.01.25
20267	5	09/01/2025	14.01.25	16.01.25
20211	5	08/01/2025	10.01.25	14.01.25
19976	2	06/01/2025	09.01.25	10.01.25
20004	3	06/01/2025	09.01.25	10.01.25
20029	5	06/01/2025	08.01.25	09.01.25
19965	2	13/12/2024	17.12.24	18.12.24
19803	5	12/12/2024	16.12.24	17.12.25
18825	2	26/11/2024	27.11.24	29.11.24
18776	3	25/11/2024	27.11.24	29.11.24
18584	5	21/11/2024	27.11.24	29.11.24
18581	2	21/11/2024	25.11.24	26.11.24
18320	5	18/11/2024	21.11.24	22.11.24
17504	2	04/11/2024	06.11.24	07.11.24
17470	5	04/11/2024	08.11.24	12.11.24
17511	5	04/11/2024	06.11.24	07.11.24
17200	5	22/10/2024	23.10.24	29.10.24
17139	2	22/10/2024	24.10.24	24.10.24
17032	5	21/10/2024	24.10.24	28.10.24
16881	5	17/10/2024	21.10.24	23.10.24
16748	3	15/10/2024	18.10.24	21.10.24
16730	5	15/10/2024	22.10.24	22.10.24
16571	4	10/10/2024	16.10.24	16.10.24
16315	2	07/10/2024	09.10.24	09.10.24
14951	2	12/09/2024	17.09.24	17.09.24
12990	2	05/06/2024	07.06.24	10.06.24
12831	3	31/05/2024	04.06.24	05.06.24
12093	3	16/05/2024	22.05.24	22.05.24

12020	2	15/05/2024	17.05.24	20.05.24
10994	2	29/04/2024	01.05.24	02.05.24
10282	5	17/04/2024	22.04.24	23.04.24
10075	2	15/04/2024	16.04.24	17.04.24
9618	3	08/04/2024	12.04.24	12.04.24
9281	3	20/03/2024	25.03.24	26.03.24
9258	5	20/03/2024	25.03.24	26.03.24
9074	3	15/03/2024	21.03.24	21.03.24
8897	5	14/03/2024	21.03.24	21.03.24
8892	3	14/03/2024	21.03.24	21.03.24
8880	3	14/03/2024	21.03.24	21.03.24
8527	2	08/03/2024	11.03.24	12.03.24
8504	5	08/03/2024	14.03.24	15.03.24
8440	2	07/03/2024	11.03.24	12.03.24
8351	2	06/03/2024	11.03.24	11.03.24
8177	2	05/03/2024	07.03.24	08.03.24
7876	2	29/02/2024	04.03.24	05.03.24
7432	2	23/02/2024	28.02.24	28.02.24
7184	2	21/02/2024	22.02.24	23.02.24
7062	3	20/02/2024	22.02.24	23.02.24
6897	2	19/02/2024	20.02.24	21.02.24
6892	2	19/02/2024	22.02.24	22.02.24
5937	5	08/02/2024	12.02.24	13.02.24
5638	2	06/02/2024	09.02.24	09.02.24

It has been estimated that to extract similar information for Ordinary Written Questions would involve work considerably more than the appropriate cost limit; that is specified in regulations and for central government is set at £600. This represents an estimated cost of one person spending 24 working hours, at a cost of £25.00 per hour, to determining whether the Department holds the information, and then retrieve and extract that information.

It is estimated that it would take approximately 2 minutes per Written Question to extract information on when a draft response was provided to the Minister. On the basis that there are over 850 Ordinary Written Questions within the time period you have requested, that would take one member of staff in excess of 24 working hours and so the overall cost would be higher than the appropriate cost limit. Consequently, the department is not obliged to comply with that part of your request under section 12(1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

If you are unhappy with the result of your request for information you may request an internal review within two calendar months of the date of this letter. If you request an internal review please do so in writing stating the reasons to the address above.

If following an internal review you were to remain dissatisfied you may make a complaint to the Information Commissioner and ask the Commissioner to investigate whether the DOJ has complied with the terms of the FOIA. You can write to the Information Commissioner at:

Information Commissioner
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

The Commissioner will not investigate a complaint unless an internal review procedure has been carried out.

Further details on the role of the Information Commissioner and the handling of appeals can be found at: www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk

Yours sincerely

Records & Information Manager