

Answers to the Written Assembly Questions for answer on 10 February 2011

[R] signifies that the Member has declared an interest.

[W] signifies that the question was tabled in Welsh.

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To ask the Minister for Business and Budget

Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales): Will the Minister please give details of the Welsh Assembly Government's accounts with taxi firms across Wales, outlining the cost of each account during 2010 and, where possible, giving details of journeys made. (WAQ57073)

Answer issued on 16 February 2011

The Welsh Assembly Government, Ministerial Services Division, currently holds 5 taxi accounts across Wales. The cost of each account during 2010 was as follows:

Company	Cost (£)
Premier Cars, Cardiff	1,248
Stamp Cars, Connah's Quay	785
Station Cars, Wrexham	422
Vaughan's Taxis, Llangefni	827
Huw's Taxis, Caernarfon	629

Premier Cars is used by Ministers for local journeys when an official car is not available or it is more cost effective to use a taxi. This account is also occasionally used by officials for local journeys. The remaining accounts are mostly used for Airport and/or Railway Station transfers in the areas the companies are based.

Jonathan Morgan (Cardiff North): What has the cost been to the Welsh Assembly Government to fund grants to local service boards in each local authority since their inception and how is that cost broken down in each authority area. (WAQ57107)

Answer issued on 11 February 2011

During 2007-08, there were 6 pilot Local Service Boards (Caerphilly, Wrexham, Neath Port Talbot, Cardiff, Carmarthenshire and Gwynedd), each provided with £50,000 of development support grant funding. The Welsh Assembly Government then provided £50,000 grant to each of the 22 Local Service Boards during 2008-09 and 2009-10.

In 2010-11, a £13 million business case for European Social Fund support was approved. 15 LSBs in the Convergence area will now be able to access this European funding, with the development grant as match funds. For the other 7 LSBs not in the ESF convergence area, the £50,000 grant is still available.

Jonathan Morgan (Cardiff North): Will the Minister quantify the cost to the Welsh Assembly Government of the time spent by Assembly Government officials supporting the work of local service boards and how that cost is broken down in each authority area. (WAQ57108)

Answer issued on 11 February 2011

There is no additional cost to the Welsh Assembly Government in relation to the time spent by Welsh Assembly Government officials on each of the 22 Local Service Boards, the role is undertaken as an integral part of their responsibilities.

To ask the Minister for Children, Education and Lifelong Learning

Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales): Will the Minister list every occasion he has met a Vice Chancellor of a Welsh Higher Education Institution since the Minister's appointment. (WAQ57072)

Answer issued on 10 February 2011

The list of formal meetings is detailed below, together with a list of events where Vice-Chancellors may have been present.

DATE	MEETING
05/02/10	Meeting with Professor Richard Davies, Swansea University
09/03/10	Meeting with Professor Noel Lloyd, Aberystwyth University and Professor David Warner, Swansea Metropolitan University
19/04/10	Meeting with Dr Medwin Hughes, University of Wales Trinity St David
22/04/10	Meeting with Dr Peter Noyes, University of Wales, Newport
20/05/10	Meeting with Professor Michael Scott, Glyndwr University
21/05/10	Meeting with Professor Merfyn Jones, Bangor University
28/06/10	Meeting with Professor Marc Clement, University of Wales
08/07/10	Meeting with Higher Education Wales members
03/08/10	Meeting with Professor Noel Lloyd, Aberystwyth University
04/08/10	Meeting with Professor Richard Davies, Swansea University
05/08/10	Meeting with Professor David Warner, Swansea Metropolitan University and Dr Medwin Hughes, University of Wales Trinity St David
23/09/10	Meeting with Professor David Warner, Swansea Metropolitan University
15/10/10	Meeting with Dr Medwin Hughes, University of Wales Trinity St David and Professor David Warner, Swansea Metropolitan University
18/10/10	Meeting with Dr Peter Noyes, University of Wales, Newport and Julie Lydon, University of Glamorgan
01/11/10	Meeting with Dr David Grant, Cardiff University
10/11/10	Meeting with Higher Education Wales members
22/11/10	Meeting with Dr Medwin Hughes, University of Wales Trinity St David
09/12/10	Meeting with Julie Lydon, University of Glamorgan
13/01/11	Meeting with Hilary Boulding, Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama

DATE	EVENT/CONFERENCE/LECTURE
24/03/10	Book launch with the Open University
25/05/10	Public lecture at Cardiff University and dinner with Dr David Grant, Cardiff University
09-06-10	Public lecture for the Bevan Foundation
05/08/10	Launch of Swansea University's Hywel Teifi Academy
18/10/10	Speech at the South East Wales Economic Forum
03/11/10	Launch of University of the Heads of the Valley Initiative
11/11/10	Launch of Professor Dai Smith's new book
18/11/10	Speech at Universities Association for Lifelong Learning Conference

22/11/10	Cardiff University's Research Awards Ceremony
03/12/10	Speech at the Institute of Welsh Affairs Conference

Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales): Will the Minister make a statement on whether the proposals for schooling announced by the Minister on 2 February 2011 were approved by all the Minister's Cabinet colleagues and, if so, when. (WAQ57076)

Answer issued on 10 February 2011

My Cabinet colleagues and I considered the results of PISA 2009 in detail on 24 January 2011. We agreed that the results demonstrated systemic failure in schools in Wales and that the education system was not delivering the best learning outcomes for children and young people. The actions I outlined on 2 February derive from existing policy and legislation, except for those relating to the clauses in the Education Measure.

Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales): Will the Minister provide an update on plans to reorganise education in the Dinefwr area of Carmarthenshire. (WAQ57098)

Answer issued on 10 February 2011

Carmarthenshire County Council submitted an Outline Business Case (OBC) for the reorganisation of secondary education within Dinefwr to the Welsh Assembly Government in May 2010. A full educational evaluation was carried out by policy leads within DCELLS and detailed feedback was provided to the local authority in September 2010. Approval of the education case was granted and the Local Authority was advised to further develop any capital requirements in discussion with DCELLS.

The Local Authority carried out a series of meetings with stakeholders in November 2010, with the view to publishing statutory notices in February 2011, subject to Executive Board approval.

The Welsh Assembly Government has now given 'approval in principle' for £23.7m funding for the 1st phase of the programme (Dyffryn Tywi), subject to any necessary statutory proposals that may be required. Any approvals to date are without prejudice to all considerations or decisions that Welsh Ministers might be under a duty to make in connection with any statutory proposals for school organisation.

Mick Bates (Montgomeryshire): What is the average length of time per local authority in Wales for an investigation to be completed by the Independent Investigation Service administered by 'Servocadream'. (WAQ57102)

Answer issued on 16 February 2011

The Welsh Assembly Government's guidance is that a full investigation should usually take between 10-20 working days for completion and submission of the report to the chair of the staff disciplinary/dismissal committee, depending on the availability of witnesses for interview. Whilst the Welsh Assembly Government does not hold this information on a local authority basis, the all Wales average from October 2009 – October 2010 is 14 working days.

Mick Bates (Montgomeryshire): Will the Minister publish figures on the number of independent investigations carried out by 'Servocadream' per year for the past three years. (WAQ57104)

Answer issued on 16 February 2011

The contract for the Welsh Assembly Government's Independent Investigation Service (WAGIIS) was awarded to 'Servocadream' in mid October 2006 following an open procurement tendering exercise. The service was re-tendered in October 2009 and Servoca PLC were awarded the contract. The number of cases dealt with by Servoca PLC are not routinely published. However, I can tell you the number of independent investigations carried out by Servoca PLC for the past three years is as follows:

Mid October 2007 – Mid October 2008 - 52 cases

Mid October 2008 – Mid October 2009 - 68 cases

Mid October 2009 – Mid October 2010 - 67 cases

Mick Bates (Montgomeryshire): What is the budget for the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales for 2011/12, 2012/13, and 2013/14 and how much of this has been allocated to research. (WAQ57105)

Answer issued on 10 February 2011

Welsh Assembly Government budgets ratified on 8 February included grant in aid provision for the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) of £394 million in 2011-12, £380 million in 2012-13 and £380 million in 2013-14.

HEFCW provide core funding for research through its Quality Research (QR) funding stream with allocations to institutions based on the quality and volume of research submitted to the UK-wide Research Assessment Exercise. For the academic years 2008/09 to 2010/11, just over £215 million has been made available to the HE sector in Wales via QR funding.

HEFCW are currently considering QR funding arrangements for 2011/12 and beyond in the light of their budget settlement and their commitment to securing sustainable research excellence by consolidating funding around strong research active institutions and as such core research allocations are not known at this point in time. It is expected that HEFCW will make an announcement on future arrangements together with QR allocations to institutions for the 2011/12 academic year in March.

Alongside core research funding (QR), HEFCW also allocates additional strategic funding to support research-focused collaborations. Over the last three years, this funding has amounted to around £36 million and has been used to support a number of collaborative ventures including the Low Carbon Research Institute, the Bioscience and Environment Alliance, the Climate Change Consortium for Wales and the High Performance Computing Wales project. For the period 2011-12 to 2013-14, funding against existing commitments totals more than £13 million. Support for additional collaborative ventures will need to be considered by HEFCW in light of their overall budget settlement.

HEFCW also currently provide capital funding to support research infrastructure through its Research Capital Infrastructure Fund. This fund comprises Welsh Assembly capital grant to HEFCW together with match funding from DBIS. In 2010-11 more than £16 million was made available via this route. From 2011-12, a single DCELLS wide strategic capital fund is being established, and although this means that HEFCW will not receive a dedicated capital grant, a commitment has been made to maximise the amount of match funding available to secure UK wide capital funding for science research.

Jonathan Morgan (Cardiff North): How much money has the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales allocated to supporting charitable-funded research in 2011/12, 2012/13, and 2013/14. (WAQ57106)

Answer issued on 10 February 2011

Welsh Assembly Government budgets ratified on 8 February included grant in aid provision for the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) for the three year period 2011-12 to 2013-14.

HEFCW provide support for charitable funded research through its Quality Research (QR) funding stream. As many charities which fund research do not meet the Full Economic Costs (FEC) of the work, HEFCW's QR funding method includes two elements which help universities meet the FEC of charity-funded research. These are as follows:

- Since 2007/08 £3m has been provided annually by the Welsh Assembly Government for this purpose, in line with developments elsewhere in the UK. This amount has been updated annually in line with the rest of the QR grant and currently stands at approximately £3.1m.
- In addition, funding received by HEIs from charities for research is used as one of the criteria within the QR funding formula. In 2010/11, approximately £4.3m of the total QR funding (£73.9m) has been allocated on this basis.

HEFCW are currently considering QR funding arrangements for 2011/12 and beyond in the light of their budget settlement and as such QR allocations are not available at this point in time. It is expected that HEFCW will make an announcement on future arrangements together with QR allocations to institutions for the 2011/12 academic year in March.

Kirsty Williams (Brecon and Radnorshire): How much did the Welsh Assembly Government spend on fee grants and course grants for part-time HE students in 2008/09 and 2009/10, and how much has been budgeted for 2010/11 and 2011/12. (WAQ57109)

Answer issued on 10 February 2011

The expenditure by the Welsh Assembly Government on fee grants for part-time HE students was £2.2m in 2008/09 and £2.7m in 2009/10. The provisional forecasted budget for fee grants for part time HE students for 2010/11 is £2.8m and for 2011/12 is £2.7m.

The expenditure by the Welsh Assembly Government on course grants for part-time HE students was £4.4m in 2008/09 and £5.5m in 2009/10. The provisional forecasted budget for part-time course grants in 2010/11 is £5.6m and in 2011/12 is £5.7m.

The Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) also provides funding to higher education institutions to enable them to offer direct assistance in the form of a fee waiver to part-time undergraduate students who are unemployed and actively seeking work or who are in receipt of Department for Work and Pensions benefits. The total amount claimed by higher education institutions through this scheme was £604,388 in 2008/09, £768,534 in 2009/10 and £497,781 in 2010/11. The budget available for this scheme in AY 2011/12 has not yet been confirmed by HEFCW.

To ask the Minister for the Economy and Transport

Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales): What plans does the Minister have to open or reopen any new railway stations in Mid and West Wales. (WAQ57089)

Answer issued on 11 February 2011

We have been supporting TraCC, the Mid Wales transport consortium, to look at the feasibility of opening new railway stations at Bow Street and at Carno.

We are awaiting the completion of TraCC's final report and we will then consider its recommendations.

Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales): What is the Minister doing to make rail travel in Wales more convenient for elderly and disabled passengers. (WAQ57090)

Answer issued on 11 February 2011

I remain committed to making accessibility improvements for rail travel in Wales within my budget allocation.

I am committed to delivering the Wales Station Improvement Programme. This £40m programme, with £21m of Convergence Funding, includes a key focus on providing exemplary accessibility at, for example, Port Talbot Parkway, Pontypridd and Neath.

Following successful trials at Aberdyfi and Valley Stations, the Easier Access (Humps) Programme will be rolled out across all rural stations in Wales with a stepping height issue between the platform and train by the end of December 2011.

We have identified improved railway accessibility in Wales as a key priority for Control Period 5 in our discussions to date with Network Rail and the Office of Rail Regulation on the next High Level Output Statement, which will set funding and outputs for the railway across England and Wales for the period 2014-2018.

My £7.5 million investment to refurbish Arriva Trains Wales' fleet of Class 158 trains will include accessibility improvements.

To ask the Minister for Environment, Sustainability and Housing

Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales): Will the Minister outline her reasons for revising her decision to call-in the proposed housing development at Stradey Park, Llanelli. (WAQ57091)

Answer issued on 11 February 2011

Following call in of the application for approval of reserved matters in respect of the proposed residential development at Stradey Park, Taylor Wimpey sent the Welsh Ministers a letter under the judicial review pre-action protocol raising a range of legal issues relating to the call-in. Advice from Legal Services Division and from Counsel was that the appropriate course of action was to withdraw the call in direction and consider in detail Taylor Wimpey's letter rather than let matters proceed to the High Court.

Further advice from Counsel was unequivocal – the calling in of the application because of flooding issues would be regarded as unlawful by the Courts, which would take the view that the consideration of flooding issues related to the principle of development and caselaw has established that the principle of development cannot be revisited in a reserved matters application.

Counsel also advised that there were no other issues arising from the application that could be regarded as being of more than local importance, thereby justifying calling it in.

On the basis of Counsel's clear advice, I did not call in the application.

Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales): What plans does the Minister have to encourage the installation of solar panels on new build houses in Wales. (WAQ57092)

Answer issued on 10 February 2011

Whilst the Feed-in Tariff is stimulating solar photo voltaic activity amongst existing home owners, house builders have yet to adopt it in any significant numbers in their developments. Neither current Building Regulations nor planning policy require the use of either solar hot water or photo voltaic panels to achieve compliance.

To meet the target to reduce carbon by 55% I announced in July 2010 for the first changes to Welsh Building Regulations will, on the basis of current construction methods, require an element of renewable energy. Photo voltaic panels are likely to be an option for up to 8,500 new homes (5 year annual average). Our intention is that consultation on the changes to the Building Regulations takes place during 2012 which, on the basis of previous revisions, would mean we would see homes built to the higher standards from 2013/14.

Nick Bourne (Mid and west Wales): What is the Minister doing to promote access to inland waterways in Wales. (WAQ57093)

Answer issued on 10 February 2011

The Welsh Assembly Government has been keen to secure more opportunities for the public and visitors to Wales to enjoy Wales' extensive water resources on a responsible, safe and sustainable basis. We have been working with partners to find ways of encouraging local access agreements which allow for arrangements to suit the specific needs of local interests and environment. As a part of this work I chair the Water Recreation Ministerial Advisory Group (WRMAG - Round Table) which is made up of a broad range of water interests, including, the Environment Agency, the Countryside Council for Wales (CCW), Dwr Cymru Welsh Water, as well as angling and canoeing interests. A sub-group of the WRMAG has also been established to facilitate local agreements.

In addition to this there is an official led Water Related Recreation Steering Group, formed to implement the Environment Agency's Strategic Action Plan for Wales on water recreation, published in 2008. The Plan reviews existing provision and identifies potential opportunities and locations for new and improved water access. As a result work is due to be completed within the next two months of a map identifying opportunities for access to water which will be made available on the CCW website; and an over-arching code of conduct for water related recreation is being developed. Further codes will then be developed which will be directed specifically towards particular water activities.

Through the Splash Fund we have also provided in excess of £1.2 million over three years to support practical action to increase opportunities for water related recreation, which has supported over 60 projects throughout Wales so far. I have also secured over £400,000 in funding for 2011/12 to continue this work.

Finally, workshops are being organised for those local people who are most likely to be involved in negotiating local water access arrangements and agreements. The objective for the workshops is to show how a consistent and systematic approach to access arrangements can be balanced and combined with a flexible approach which allows for local circumstances; thereby promoting awareness, understanding and take-up of access agreements on some key stretches of inland water within Wales.

Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales): Does the Minister have any plans to review the regulation regarding the building of affordable housing in National Parks. (WAQ57094)

Answer issued on 10 February 2011

I do not have any plans to review national planning policy regarding the building of affordable housing in national parks. The National Park Authorities, along with all local planning authorities in Wales, bring forward their affordable housing proposals as part of their Local Development Plans (LDPs). LDPs are scrutinised by Assembly Government officials at the statutory consultation stages. This includes scrutiny of authorities' proposed site capacity thresholds above which affordable housing will be sought and their

viability assessments which indicate the amount of affordable housing that can be supported in the prevailing market conditions. Detailed site specific viability assessments should also be undertaken when planning applications are submitted. In addition, local planning authorities' delivery of affordable housing is monitored through the official statistical collection that was instituted in 2009.

Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales): Will the Minister make a statement on the effect of the boiler scrappage scheme in Wales. (WAQ57095)

Answer issued on 16 February 2011

I announced in February 2010 that £2.5m of funding would be made available for a boiler scrappage scheme to be targeted at householders over 60 years old and that would help up to 5,000 households.

The Boiler Scrappage Scheme closed on the 5 July 2010 after all the vouchers were issued in three months. The final number of vouchers reclaimed was 4707 and £2.35m was spent by the Assembly Government on replacement boilers for householders over 60 who would not have been eligible for the Home Energy Efficiency Scheme (HEES).

Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales): What is the Minister doing to encourage the building of affordable housing in Wales. (WAQ57096) *Transferred for answer by the Deputy Minister for Housing and Regeneration*

Answer issued on 11 February 2011

The Deputy Minister for Housing and Regeneration (Jocelyn Davies): Despite the difficult economic climate the Welsh Government has exceeded its target of delivering 6,500 additional affordable homes during the term of this Government, one year ahead of schedule. Official statistics released on 24 November 2010 show that 2,472 additional affordable homes were provided between April 2009 and March 2010, making a total of 6,707 homes in just the first three years of the Government.

Approximately £400m of capital funding from the Social Housing Grant Programme and additional resources from Strategic Capital Investment Funds (SCIF) 1 and 2 have been made available to support the provision of affordable housing. We are also looking at innovative funding mechanisms with our work on the Welsh Housing Investment Trust.

However, considerable housing need still remains in Wales and we are not complacent. We are in the process of introducing a new Intermediate Rent housing model which makes our funding go further. Through the Local Development Plan process local planning authorities must set a target for the number of affordable homes they intend to build.

We have issued additional guidance on delivering affordable housing using section 106 planning agreements and I have recently asked officials to up-date the Affordable Housing Toolkit to further assist local authorities and Housing Associations with mechanisms for delivery.

Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales): Will the Minister provide a timescale for the implementation of Paragraphs 6 to 9 of Schedule 2 of the Commons Act 2006 in Wales. (WAQ57099)

Answer issued on 14 February 2011

My officials are progressing the implementation of the Commons Act 2006 and the introduction of the provisions contained within Part 1, including Schedule 2 amendments, is recognised as a key priority. Part 1 of the Act also allows for the conversion of the registers to an electronic format. This is considered to be an important step prior to receiving applications to amend the register. My officials are assessing the

viability of introducing electronic registers and are in the process of drafting a business case for this project, the outcome of which will influence the timetable for the introduction of Schedule 2 and the wider provisions of the Commons Act 2006.

To ask the Minister for Health and Social Services

Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales): How many patients are waiting longer than (a) three months; (b) six months; (c) one year; (d) two years; (e) three years for a second cycle of IVF treatment. (WAQ57068)

Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales): How many patients are waiting longer than (a) three months; (b) six months; (c) one year; (d) two years; (e) three years for a first cycle of IVF treatment. (WAQ57069)

Answer issued on 11 February 2011

Waiting times for specialist Fertility Treatment are excluded from the 26 weeks Referral to Treatment target. The Policy for Assisted Fertility for Wales outlines a minimum wait of 12 months and a maximum wait of 18 months for the first cycle.

Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales): How many IVF patients have been treated in private hospitals or clinics at the NHS' expense in each year since 2006. (WAQ57070)

Answer issued on 11 February 2011

This information was held by the former Health Commission Wales who following NHS reorganisation ceased to operate on 1 April 2010. The information is now held by the Local Health Boards, through their joint work on the Welsh Health Specialised Services Committee (WHSSC). I have asked my officials to contact WHSSC to obtain the information and I shall write to you with this shortly.

Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales): What assessment has the Minister made of the impact on waiting lists of NHS patients being unable to access private IVF treatment paid for by the NHS. (WAQ57071)

Answer issued on 11 February 2011

There should be no impact on waiting times caused by the move to full NHS provided IVF treatment. The Welsh Health Specialised Services Committee intends to continue to fund the same number of cycles for Welsh patients in 2011/12 as in 2010/11 for both first and second cycles.

Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales): When will the Welsh Assembly Government ban NHS patients from accessing IVF treatment at the NHS' expense at the London Women's Clinic. (WAQ57074)

Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales): What facilities does the NHS have to accept IVF patients who will be prevented from accessing the London Women's clinic at the NHS' expense. (WAQ57075)

Answer issued on 09 February 2011

In line with our commitments under One Wales, Local Health Boards, through their joint work on the Welsh Health Specialised Services Committee's (WHSSC's) have planned and are implementing NHS provided IVF services to replace the use of private provision. The transition to an NHS service is planned to ensure that service standards and current waiting times are not adversely affected.

New referrals will be directed to the NHS service from 1 April 2011. WHSSC's priority is to ensure that patients' clinical continuity is not compromised and patients who have already been seen by the private provider will be able to complete their cycle of treatment.

Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales): What is the Minister doing to improve cancer services in Mid and West Wales. (WAQ57077)

Answer issued on 09 February 2011

It is for Local Health Boards in Mid and West Wales to plan and deliver high quality cancer services to meet the needs of their resident populations, in line with the National Cancer Standards and NICE guidelines.

Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales): Will the Minister provide an update about the implementation of the ASD Strategic Action Plan in Mid and West Wales. (WAQ57078)

Answer issued on 09 February 2011

Much has been achieved in mid and west Wales since the ASD Strategic Action Plan was launched in 2008. This has included the appointment of an ASD lead in each local authority; improved data collection across the region; the establishment of 'three counties' special interest group for professionals; the development of a bespoke specialist ASD team in Ceredigion; the provision of training on a range of ASD related issues; the development of an online support system for parents and carers in Carmarthenshire and translation in to Welsh of the primary school 'The Social Use of Language materials'.

Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales): Will the Minister advise what progress has been made in implementing Standard 2 of the 'All Wales Neonatal Standards' in Mid and West Wales. (WAQ57079)

Answer issued on 09 February 2011

The All Wales Neonatal Network has carried out a baseline assessment of compliance against the Neonatal Standards, which has shown that all Local Health Boards which provide these services, including Hywel Dda, have work to do to achieve the Standards, including Standard 2. Powys Teaching Local Health Board does not provide neonatal services. using the outcome of the baselines assessment, the Network has drawn up an action plan to drive forward the improvements needed.

Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales): What plans does the Minister have to reduce the number of maternity units in Wales. (WAQ57080)

Answer issued on 09 February 2011

The planning and delivery of services is a matter for Local Health Boards.

Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales): What is the Minister doing to improve stroke services in Wales. (WAQ57081)

Answer issued on 09 February 2011

It is for Local Health Boards in Wales to plan and deliver high quality stroke services to meet the needs of their resident populations, in line with national standards and guidelines.

Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales): What plans does the Minister have to improve kidney dialysis services in Gwynedd. (WAQ57082)

Answer issued on 09 February 2011

The all-Wales Renal Network is progressing its dialysis expansion programme and South Gwynedd was identified in the programme as a priority area in need of a new unit. The temporary unit at Alltwen Hospital has been open since February 2010 and the replacement permanent unit is expected to be operational in summer 2012.

Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales): Will the Minister make a statement on the Blood Borne Viral Action Plan for Wales. (WAQ57083)

Answer issued on 09 February 2011

Implementation of the Blood Borne Viral Hepatitis Action Plan for Wales 2010 – 2015 has begun and has already resulted in significant progress being made across Wales. This includes:

- All health boards having a Lead Clinician, Clinical nurse specialist and other support staff in place or being recruited.
- Annual testing of injecting drug users has begun for the identification of the three key blood borne viruses. The technology to undertake this testing has been developed in Wales.

A Programme Board and three sub-groups have been established to monitor progress of delivery of the action plan.

Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales): What is the Minister doing to improve rheumatology services in Mid and West Wales. (WAQ57084)

Answer issued on 09 February 2011

It is for Local Health Boards (LHBs) to plan and deliver rheumatology services which meet local needs. Our Service Development and Commissioning Directives for Arthritis and Chronic Musculoskeletal Conditions were issued in January 2007 and through these we have set out clear directives addressing the management of musculo-skeletal conditions and the actions needed to improve services across Wales. Good progress is being made to address the actions within the Directives with 87% of all actions completed by LHBs.

Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales): What is the Minister doing to improve cardiac services in Mid and West Wales. (WAQ57085)

Answer issued on 09 February 2011

It is for Local Health Boards in Mid and West Wales to plan and deliver high quality cardiac services to meet the needs of their resident populations, in line with the standards set out in the updated National Service Framework (NSF) for Cardiac Disease.

Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales): What plans does the Minister have to improve the provision of fertility treatment in Wales. (WAQ57086)

Answer issued on 09 February 2011

The provision of a second cycle to all Welsh patients from April 2010 represents a major step forward in the provision of fertility treatment and has been implemented by Local Health Boards through their joint work on the Welsh Health Specialised Services Committee (WHSSC) with the existing four care providers. Through the all-Wales Fertility Group, WHSSC will monitor the quality and effectiveness of services.

From 2011-12 onwards, WHSSC plans funding for related procedures such as sperm and egg donation and storage to ensure that Welsh patients have equity of access to the range of fertility treatments that are covered by the WHSSC Assisted Fertility Funding Policy.

Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales): What is the Minister doing to improve Ophthalmological services in the Hywel Dda Health Board. (WAQ57100)

Answer issued on 09 February 2011

Ophthalmology services in the region are the responsibility of Hywel Dda Local Health Board (LHB). I am aware of some capacity problems at Hywel Dda LHB and I have written to the Chief Executive. I have been assured that these are being dealt with.

To ask the Minister for Rural Affairs

Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales): Will the Minister provide an update on her plans to eradicate Bovine TB in Wales. (WAQ57097)

Answer issued on 14 February 2011

The bovine TB Eradication Programme continues to maintain its established regime of cattle surveillance, control and enforcement across Wales, which is currently considered as a single annual testing area following the findings of the TB Health Check Wales.

Two consultations have recently been completed; the first concerned the control of Tuberculosis in non-bovines, the second involved badger control in the Intensive Action Area (IAA). I am currently considering the responses to these with a view to making a final decision on how to proceed.

On 1 January 2011 Veterinary Improvement Notices (VINs) were introduced as a tool for veterinarians involved in the management of TB breakdowns, as set down in the Tuberculosis (Wales) Order 2010.

The vaccination of badgers has always been recognised as part of the TB Eradication Programme, we hope that it will provide a level of protection for healthy badgers. Officials have established an expert group of advisers to provide advice on the development of a badger vaccination policy for Wales.

The Welsh Assembly Government has been central to the UK TB Eradication Plan for 2011 which was formally approved by the European Commission in December 2010. In Wales' case, the plan sets out the measures included in the TB Eradication Programme.

Brynle Williams (North Wales): What consideration has the Welsh Assembly Government given to the introduction of a rod license for sea fishing during the Third Assembly. (WAQ57101)

Answer issued on 14 February 2011

Following the launch of the Wales Fisheries Strategy in 2008, the Welsh Assembly Government, in partnership with Commercial Fisheries, Aquaculture, Recreational Sea Angling and Inland Fisheries sectors, developed Implementation Plans which identify and prioritise key issues for each fisheries sector to achieve the goals of the Wales Fisheries Strategy.

The introduction of a rod license scheme for recreational sea angling has not been included as a priority for the current version of the recreational sea angling Implementation Plan and I therefore have no current plans to seek to introduce such a measure.

The Implementation Plans are subject to review and priorities may alter to include such issues in the future. Any introduction of new schemes would be subject to consultation with relevant stakeholders.

To ask the Minister for Social Justice and Local Government

Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales): Will the Minister make a statement on progress towards eradicating child poverty in Wales by 2020. (WAQ57087) *Transferred for answer by the Deputy Minister for Children*

Answer issued on 10 February 2011

The Deputy Minister for Children (Huw Lewis): The Child Poverty Strategy launched on 3 February sets out the Welsh Assembly Government's commitment to eradicate child poverty by 2020. The Strategy gives a clear account of what the Assembly Government can achieve in helping to reduce poverty particularly in the areas of improving health, education and economic outcomes for children in low income families during the next three years 2011-2014 by pursuing the strategic objectives to:

- reduce the number of families living in workless households;
- improve the skills of parents and young people living in low income households;
- reduce inequalities that exist in health, education outcomes of children and families by improving the outcomes of the poorest.

Whilst there is much that we can do, achieving our aim is dependent on the UK Government's continuing contribution to eradication of poverty in the non-devolved areas of tax and benefit payments, employment support and the continued recovery of the wider economy.

Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales): What is the Minister doing to promote credit unions in Wales. (WAQ57088)

Answer issued on 11 February 2011

The Welsh Assembly Government's continuing support for the credit union movement in Wales is set out in our Credit Union Action Plan, published in December 2010. A copy of the plan can be viewed by visiting the Welsh Assembly Government website at <http://wales.gov.uk/newsroom/socialjustice/2010/101209actionplan/?lang=en>.

