

Written Questions answered between 13 and 20 June 2002

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

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

Contents

- 2 Questions to the First Minister
- 3 Questions to the Deputy First Minister and Minister for Rural Development and Wales Abroad
- 5 Questions to the Minister for Culture, Sport and the Welsh Language
- 6 Questions to the Minister for Environment
- 8 Questions to the Minister for Finance, Local Government and Communities
- 10 Questions to the Minister for Health and Social Services

Questions to the First Minister

Corus

William Graham: Will the First Minister make a statement on the discussions he has held with Corus concerning its need to import steel? (WAQ18468)

The First Minister (Rhodri Morgan): Corus has made its position on imports clear to me on a number of occasions. Following the tragic events and subsequent loss of blast furnace no. 5 at the Port Talbot works last November, Corus faced a serious problem of how to sustain security of supply to its customers with an immediate and totally unexpected loss of slab production.

A proportion of the slab shortage is being attained from other Corus plants in the UK and the Netherlands. The remainder is purchased on the open market. This will continue until January 2003, when it is expected that the new blast furnace at Port Talbot will begin production, returning Port Talbot to balanced hot metal and strip mill production.

Film Studio Complex

Nick Bourne: What discussions has the Minister had over the possibility of building a £350 million film studio complex and creating up to 6,000 jobs in Rhondda Cynon Taff? (WAQ18470)

The First Minister: I met representatives of Dragon International Studios on 13 March. The project outlined its extensive plans for the site; the timetable for the building phase; and the range of forecast economic outputs.

Barnett Formula

Ron Davies: Will the First Minister make a statement on his submission to the House of Lords Select Committee review of the Barnett formula? (WAQ18471)

The First Minister: The House of Lords Select Committee on the Constitution is looking at inter-institutional relations in the United Kingdom in the context of devolution. The Barnett formula mechanism is just one element of the inquiry and was the subject of a separate submission by Edwina Hart, the Minister for Finance, Local Government and Communities.

Contact with the Crown Prosecution Service

Ron Davies: What contact has the First Minister or any member of his administration had with the Crown Prosecution Service following the submission of the file by South Wales Police regarding Mike German? (WAQ18472)

The First Minister: None.

Dirprwy Brif Weinidog Cymru (Cadeirio Cyfarfodydd Cabinet)

Owen John Thomas: Yn sgîl eich ateb i OAQ17078, a'ch llythyr eglurhaol dyddiedig 20 Mai 2002, pa mor aml wnaeth Mike German gadeirio cyfarfodydd o'r Cabinet pan oedd yn llenwi swydd y Dirprwy Brif Weinidog? (WAQ18478) [W]

Y Prif Weinidog: Dim un hyd yn hyn.

Deputy First Minister (Chairing of Cabinet Meetings)

Owen John Thomas: Further to your reply to OAQ17078, and your explanatory letter dated 20 May 2002, how often did Mike German chair Cabinet meetings in his capacity as Deputy First Minister? (WAQ18478) [W]

The First Minister: None to date.

Proportional Representation for Local Government Elections

Nick Bourne: When will the First Minister reply to my letter of 17 April 2002, seeking his response to the Deputy Minister for Local Government's statement that proportional representation for local government elections in Wales should be a condition of any future partnership agreement? (WAQ18617)

The First Minister: I replied on 15 May 2002.

Questions to the Deputy First Minister and Minister for Rural Development and Wales Abroad

Farms not Tested for Cattle Tuberculosis

Glyn Davies: How many farm holdings in Wales, which need to be tested for cattle TB every 12 months, have not been tested for over 12 months? (WAQ18602)

The Deputy First Minister and Minister for Rural Development and Wales Abroad (Michael German): 653.

Farms not Tested for Cattle Tuberculosis

Glyn Davies: How many farm holdings in Wales which need to be tested for cattle TB every two years have not been tested for over two years? (WAQ18603)

Michael German: 808.

Farms not Tested for Cattle Tuberculosis

Glyn Davies: How many farm holdings in Wales which need to be tested for cattle TB every four years have not been tested for over four years? (WAQ18604)

Michael German: 3,876.

Farms not Tested for Cattle Tuberculosis

Glyn Davies: How many farm holdings in Wales, which are judged to need testing for cattle TB every 12 months, had not been tested for over 12 months at 1 January 2001, and 1 January 2002? (WAQ18605)

Michael German: At 1 January 2001: 394; at 1 January 2002: 1,055.

Farms not Tested for Cattle Tuberculosis

Glyn Davies: How many farm holdings in Wales, which are judged to need testing for cattle TB every two years, had not been tested for over two years at 1 January 2001, and 1 January 2002? (WAQ18606)

Michael German: At 1 January 2001: 501, at 1 January 2002: 755.

Farms not Tested for Cattle Tuberculosis

Glyn Davies: How many farm holdings in Wales, which are judged to need testing for cattle TB every four years, had not been tested for over four years at 1 January 2001, and 1 January 2002? (WAQ18607)

Michael German: At 1 January 2001: 2,782, at 1 January 2002: 4,091.

Veterinarians Employed to Test for Cattle TB

Glyn Davies: How many vets were employed testing for cattle TB in Wales on 1 January 2001, 1 January 2002, and 1 June 2002? (WAQ18608)

Michael German: At 1 January 2001: 399, at 1 January 2002: 468, and at 1 June 2002: 467.

The majority of these veterinary surgeons are local veterinary inspectors who carry out testing duties as part of their day-to-day activities. Although approved for TB testing, they do not spend all their time testing but carry it out alongside their private practice responsibilities.

Budget for Cattle TB Testing

Glyn Davies: How many times has the Minister asked the Treasury to pay for increasing the budget for cattle TB testing during 2001, since 1 January 2002 and since 29 May 2002? (WAQ18609)

Michael German: Representations to the Treasury for increased resources for the State Veterinary Service to increase activity on bovine TB is a matter for the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. My officials and I are closely in touch with DEFRA on this issue.

Food and Animal Import Controls

Glyn Davies: How many times has the Minister discussed food and animal import controls with the Ministry for Agriculture Fisheries and Food/DEFRA between 1 January 2001 and 1 June 2002? (WAQ18610)

Michael German: My officials and I are regularly in touch with DEFRA and the Welsh Assembly Government is represented on the key working groups.

Food and Animal Import Controls (Milford Haven and Holyhead)

Glyn Davies: How many times were the animal and foodstuffs import controls at Milford Haven and Holyhead inspected between 1 January 2001 and 1 June 2002? (WAQ18611)

Michael German: No consignments of foodstuffs passed through the Milford Haven border inspection post during the period 1 January 2001 and 1 June 2002. Periodic checks are carried out by animal health officers at the ports of Fishguard and Pembroke with regard to live animals crossing on the ferries.

EU inspectors audited the border inspection post in October 2001. Work is currently being undertaken in order to comply with their recommendations regarding the border inspection post.

Holyhead is not a port designated for third country imports and as such there have not been any inspections of foodstuffs coming into the UK by ferry in the specified period.

Food and Animal Import Controls (Letters Written by the Minister)

Glyn Davies: Will the Minister publish the letters he has written calling for stronger import controls on animals and foodstuffs between 1 January 2001 and 1 June 2002? (WAQ18612)

Michael German: No. My officials and I maintain pressure on this issue in a variety of fora, including through correspondence, at meetings and in working groups.

Agri-monetary compensation

Glyn Davies: Will the Minister publish letters he has written to either the Secretary of State responsible for DEFRA or to the Chancellor of the Exchequer referring to agri-monetary compensation since 1 April 2002? (WAQ18613)

Michael German: No. My officials and I maintained pressure on this issue in a variety of fora, including through correspondence, at meetings and in working groups.

Killing Badgers

Glyn Davies: When did the Minister last report a farmer to the police for killing badgers and at what police station? (WAQ18615)

Michael German: My predecessor last reported a farmer on suspicion of killing badgers immediately after the last Agriculture and Rural Development Committee meeting.

Questions to the Minister for Culture, Sport and the Welsh Language

Arts Council of Wales (Foot and Mouth Crisis)

Kirsty Williams: Did the Arts Council of Wales award compensation to organisations due to losses incurred during the foot and mouth disease crisis and, if so, to whom, and to what value? (WAQ18463)

Jenny Randerson: The Arts Council of Wales made a payment of £2,035 to Gregynog Festival which incurred losses due to its event not taking place last year. Other revenue clients affected by the foot and mouth disease outbreak received their normal grant award, although they may not have been able to deliver their usual programme.

National Sport Training Sessions

Alun Pugh: Would the Minister make a statement on the use of north Wales as a location for holding national sport training sessions? (WAQ18464)

Jenny Randerson: According to the Sports Council for Wales, north Wales is a first-class location for holding national sport training sessions, especially in relation to water-based and other outdoor-based sports activities where natural resources are available.

However, as I have previously indicated, the sports council has advised governing bodies of sport in Wales that they should make a commitment to holding national training sessions throughout Wales. Moreover, they should adopt principles that attempt to minimise logistical disadvantage and should consider organising an all-Wales competition for selection purposes.

Sports Council for Wales's Expenditure

Brian Gibbons: What proportion of the Sports Council for Wales's spending has been in Communities First areas? (WAQ18465)

Jenny Randerson: The majority of the Sports Council for Wales's investment in local community sports projects is funded through Sportlot, the lottery fund for sport in Wales. Of the £46 million of Sportlot grants awarded to community projects throughout Wales, £10.6 million has been invested in schemes in the Communities First electoral divisions. This represents 23 per cent of the total investment made by the sports council to date, in the form of community grants.

The Welsh Assembly Government continues to focus its investment in sport, through the Sports Council for Wales's programmes, where it is most needed. Through its social inclusion in sport scheme, the sports council is attempting to remove barriers that prevent some people and communities from accessing the financial and other support services available to them.

Lottery Funding

Owen John Thomas: Will the Minister make a statement about the allocation of lottery funding for matters within her portfolio? (WAQ18466)

Jenny Randerson: My responsibilities in relation to lottery policy do not extend to making decisions on the allocation of funding to particular projects. The lottery distribution bodies take these decisions. The lottery has had a huge impact in Wales, with over £620 million allocated in Wales since its inception.

Pigeon Racing

William Graham: Will the Minister make a statement concerning the recognition of pigeon racing as a sport? (WAQ18467)

Jenny Randerson: Working together, the four home country sports councils have developed a system of formal recognition of sports to decide which activities should be eligible for support, to ensure the effective distribution of public funds. They have decided that a sport will not be a recognised activity for grant in aid support unless all four unanimously agree. Among the criteria against which the councils currently assess suitability for recognition remain requirements for the development of a high level of physical skill and effort. The sports council does not consider that pigeon racing fully meets that particular criterion.

Questions to the Minister for Environment

Film Studio Complex (Opposing Planning Permission)

Nick Bourne: Will the Minister justify the Welsh Assembly Government's decision to oppose planning permission for the £350 million film studio at Llanilid in Rhondda Cynon Taff, which could have created up to 6,000 jobs? (WAQ18458)

The Minister for Environment (Sue Essex): The direction letter issued on 15 May by the Welsh Assembly Government's Transport Directorate clearly stated the reasons why the local planning authorities should refuse the application as submitted for the film studio and associated development at Llanilid. The Transport Directorate is prepared to review its appraisal and the consequent direction subject to the developer overcoming the highway objections set out in the direction. A copy of the direction letter is given below.

'Dear Sir,

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (GENERAL DEVELOPMENT PROCEDURE) ORDER 1995 PROPOSED FILM STUDIOS AND ASSOCIATED DEVELOPMENT AT FORMER OPENCAST COAL SITE, LLANILID

In response to your authority's consultation about this proposed development, I enclose Form TR110, which directs the authority to refuse the application for the development, as submitted, for the reasons stated on the form.

Our stated policy, set out in Planning Policy Wales, is that "direct access to a motorway or motorway slip road would not be acceptable other than to a motorway service area...". This accords with UK National policy. For us to consider making an exception to this well established policy it would be necessary for the applicant to show that the development was of such significance to the economy, and so dependant on the provision of a dedicated motorway access that a new junction serving the development alone, in cul de sac form was justified. If, the new junction were required as part of a plan to integrate the development and any other proposals in the area into the wider transport network, including public transport, it would not be in conflict with established policy.

Alternatively, it is also considered from our preliminary analysis, that Junction 35, with suitable improvements that would need detailed agreement, could be engineered to accommodate the development traffic and future growth.

We must also draw attention to the fact that the submitted traffic projections would cause an unacceptable effect on the traffic flow on the M4 and its junctions. However, in our view this could be improved to an acceptable level by compliance with the South Wales Parking Guidelines for staff travelling to work by car and the adoption of appropriate travel plans.

We would stress that our decision relates to the proposed development as described in the application and supporting environmental statement, and would wish to make it clear that we are always prepared to review our appraisal, and the consequent direction, should further changes be made to the proposal in response to our comments. This should not be seen to prejudice our response to any revised application, which addresses the concerns set out above.

Yours sincerely

ROBERT CONE
HEAD OF NETWORK MANAGEMENT DIVISION
TRANSPORT DIRECTORATE'

Film Studio Complex

Nick Bourne: What discussions did the Minister have with the Minister for Economic Development over the Assembly Government's decision to oppose the £350 million plans to build a film studio complex and create 6,000 jobs in Rhondda Cynon Taff? (WAQ18459)

Sue Essex: I have had no discussions with my colleague the Minister for Economic Development over the Assembly's decision concerning the planning application for a proposed film studio and associated development at Llanilid.

Questions to the Minister for Finance, Local Government and Communities

Budget Out-turns for MEGs

Ron Davies: Will the Minister produce a table showing budget out-turns for each main expenditure group for the financial year 2001-02? (WAQ18499)

The Minister for Finance, Local Government and Communities (Edwina Hart): The information is set out in the following table:

£ million

Main Expenditure Group	Provision	Expenditure
Health and Social Services	3,311.4	3,307.2
Local Government	2,883.1	2,883.1
Education and Lifelong Learning	951.6	958.1
Housing and Local Government Other Services	553.3	531.6
Economic Development	453.6	444.4
Environment, Planning and Transport	315.1	310.1
Agriculture and Rural Development	252.1	214.2
Central Administration	130.6	127.4
Culture, Sport and the Welsh Language	66.1	66.4
Office of the Presiding Officer	23.4	21.0
Forestry	14.3	14.3
Estyn	10.1	8.4
Auditor General for Wales	2.2	2.1
Other Assembly Services	1.6	1.5
Welsh Administration Ombudsman	0.9	0.8
Total Assembly	8,969.3 (1)	8,890.6

1. The figures do not total due to rounding.

Setting up Community Councils

Brian Gibbons: What are the procedures for setting up community councils in Wales? (WAQ18622)

Edwina Hart: The procedures which communities would have to follow when setting up new town and community councils are set out in sections 28 and 29B of the Local Government Act 1972.

Local Authority Budgets

Pauline Jarman: Will the Minister make a statement on the impact implementing National Assembly initiatives has on local authority budgets? (WAQ18623) [R]

Edwina Hart: Local authorities get the majority of their resources from the National Assembly as revenue support grant. Included within the revenue support grant, which is unencumbered, is provision for implementing new burdens such as National Assembly initiatives or legislative changes. The mechanism for ensuring that the necessary provision is made has been agreed with the Welsh Local Government Association. The relevant Welsh Assembly Government policy officials consult the WLGA about the expected costs of the new burdens that will be placed upon authorities, and then reflect the need for additional resources in the Welsh Assembly Government's annual budget planning round. In addition, the WLGA prepares an annual statement on spending pressures which includes the expected costs of new initiatives for the forthcoming year. The statement for 2003-04 will be discussed at the meeting of the Consultative Forum on Finance on 27 June.

Devolution from Unitary Authorities

Nick Bourne: Will the Minister make a statement on the policy of the Government of Wales regarding devolution from unitary authorities to town and community councils? (WAQ18625)

Edwina Hart: I recently commissioned research into the role, functions and future potential of town and community councils from the Institute of Geography and Earth Sciences at the University of Wales, Aberystwyth. The researchers are due to report in April 2003. Decisions on policy with regard to devolving functions from unitary authorities to town and community councils will be made in the light of the research project's evidence, conclusions and recommendations.

The Right to Vote

Rosemary Butler: What measures is the Minister taking to ensure that no members of our community are being excluded from their right to vote in elections? (WAQ18626)

Edwina Hart: My officials and I are working closely with the Electoral Commission, the UK Government and Welsh returning officers to ensure that the Assembly elections in 2003 are as accessible as possible. In particular, I have urged returning officers to ensure their polling stations are fully accessible to disabled people and I have written to them asking for an update on the situation in their constituencies. Later this year, I will bring forward a draft order to provide an appropriate level of funding to meet these objectives.

The Electoral Commission will be undertaking publicity campaigns encouraging people to register to vote and to apply for postal votes. We will provide support and assistance in this.

Local Government Funding

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: What discussions has the Minister had with local government regarding the funding it receives to administer initiatives that result from Assembly Government policies? (WAQ18627)

Edwina Hart: The regular meetings of the Consultative Forum on Finance provide local government with the opportunity to discuss with the Minister the funding that it receives to administer initiatives that result from Welsh Assembly Government policies. At the next Consultative Forum on Finance meeting on 27 June, the Minister will receive a report of local authorities' assessment of their funding needs for 2003-04. In preparing this report, the Welsh Local Government Association has held discussions with Welsh Assembly Government officials on the likely costs of administering initiatives that result from Welsh Assembly Government policies.

Community Council Grants to South Wales Police

Janet Davies: Has the Minister had any recent discussions with the Community Council Association regarding community council grants to South Wales Police for local policing? (WAQ18628)

Edwina Hart: I have not met representatives of the Community Council Association recently. I meet representatives of the police authorities in Wales and the chief constables of the Welsh forces regularly. Neither the Community Council Association nor South Wales Police have raised with me the issue of community council grants for funding local policing in south Wales.

Homebuy Scheme

Owen John Thomas: What plans does the Minister have to extend the scope and availability of the homebuy scheme? (WAQ18630)

Edwina Hart: The use of homebuy is a matter for local authorities to determine according to the needs and priorities for housing in their respective areas.

I have already announced that I intend to review the operation of the scheme during the summer and will report on it to the Local Government and Housing Committee in the autumn.

Commercially Confidential Decisions

Alison Halford: Further to your answer to WAQ18236, does the Minister plan to ensure a record is kept of all decisions that are treated as 'commercially confidential'? (WAQ18634)

Edwina Hart: Currently there are no plans to keep a central register of all commercially confidential decisions. However all commercially confidential information is held with the relevant case notes on registered files for a period of seven years.

Questions to the Minister for Health and Social Services

Castleton (Surgery Provision)

Michael German: Will the Minister please explain what steps she is taking to ensure that Bro Taf Health Authority ensures adequate and local surgery provision in Castleton, near Cardiff, bearing in mind strong public opposition to the closure of the branch surgery in Castleton? (WAQ18460)

The Minister for Health and Social Services (Jane Hutt): Bro Taf Health Authority is responsible for ensuring that patients in its area have access to general medical services.

The practice of Dr R.P. Edwards and partners operates from its main surgery in St Mellons, and has three branch surgeries, one of which is in Castleton/Marshfield. Earlier this year, the practice asked the health authority for permission to close their branch surgery in Castleton. The main reasons for this were the limit of the range of services that could be provided from portakabin premises, the decreasing numbers of patients attending and practice difficulties in maintaining the service.

Gwent Community Health Council has taken the lead in obtaining comments from local people and a public meeting has been held. The health authority expects to receive the community health council's report and recommendations following the consultation exercise next week.

Bro Taf Health Authority will consider all facts and opinions before taking a decision on the practice's application to close the branch surgery. The decision is likely to be taken during the next month. Whatever the outcome, patient access to appropriate general medical services will be maintained.

Castleton (Contractually Obligated Hours)

Michael German: Can the Minister please tell me what action she has taken to ensure that the surgery in Castleton is open at its contractually obliged hours? (WAQ18461)

Jane Hutt: This is a matter for Bro Taf Health Authority, in conjunction with the general practitioners at the branch surgery.

The contracted opening hours of the branch surgery in Castleton are from 8.30 a.m. to 10.00 a.m. each weekday. There was a period during April and May when the practice changed its opening times to late morning/lunchtime. This was done without reference to Bro Taf Health Authority. Once the health authority was aware of this change, discussions took place with the practice, and arrangements were made

to reintroduce the established opening hours. The health authority is in regular contact with the practice and I understand that the established hours have since been maintained.

Criminal Records Bureau

Kirsty Williams: Has an assessment been carried out on the time taken to obtain police checks from the Criminal Records Bureau? (WAQ18462)

Jane Hutt: I am aware of the problems experienced through delays in the Criminal Records Bureau issuing disclosures. The Home Office has advised us that the CRB is currently turning around 25 per cent of disclosures within three weeks.

The CRB has published a set of customer service standards covering its target response times for disclosure applications. These are:

- 90 per cent of enhanced disclosures issued within three weeks;
- 95 per cent of standard disclosures issued within one week; and
- 95 per cent of basic disclosures issued within one week.

The bureau accepts that it is currently not meeting these service standards and has introduced a performance improvement plan and a number of short-term contingency measures to address this issue. They are confident that, over the coming few weeks, it will improve its performance and start to achieve its published service standards.

We will continue to monitor the position and, where appropriate, raise any concerns with the Home Office.

MRI and CT machines

David Davies: How many MRI and CT machines operate in Wales? (WAQ18469)

Jane Hutt: NHS trusts in Wales own and operate 20 computed tomography and nine magnetic resonance imaging scanners. In addition, another three MRI scanners are being delivered to, and commissioned by trusts over the coming weeks. A small number of CT and MRI scanners are also being operated in private hospital facilities in the principality.

NHS Chiropodists and Podiatrists

David Lloyd: How many chiropodists and podiatrists were employed in the NHS in each of the last five years? (WAQ18593) [R]

Jane Hutt: The number of chiropody staff directly employed by the NHS as of 30 September for the past five years is described in the table below.

	1997		1998		1999		2000		2001	
	No.	Wte	No.	Wte	No.	Wte	No.	Wte	No.	Wte
Scientific, therapeutic and technical staff										
Chiropody:										
Manager	8	8.0	8	8.0	9	9.0	9	9.0	8	8.0
Therapist	238	191.5	248	191.4	244	193.2	253	193.2	255	197.5
Technician	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Tutor	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1.0
Student/trainee	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Helper/assistant	31	24.8	33	26.5	30	24.1	30	22.9	37	28.3
Sub total	277	224.3	289	225.9	283	226.3	292	225.1	301	234.8

Health Care Assistants

Chiropody	1	0.0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
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Other support staff

Chiropody	8	6.8	6	5.3	6	5.3	-	-	-	-
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The Society of Chiropodists and Podiatrists

David Lloyd: Does the Minister intend to have meetings with representatives of the Society of Chiropodists and Podiatrists? (WAQ18595) [R]

Jane Hutt: Should the society so wish, and subject to my diary commitments, I would consider any request for a meeting.

Young Carers in Wales

David Lloyd: Will the Minister provide information on the number of young carers there are in Wales? (WAQ18596) [R]

Jane Hutt: We do not collect such information centrally. Research studies on young carers ('A Study of Young Carers In Wales'—University of Bangor), which we commissioned in 2001, reported that there was no accurate demographic information on numbers of young carers in Wales. Difficulties in estimating numbers arise from the varying definitions of young carers in use across Wales and the hidden nature of the population—children and young people do not always identify themselves as young carers. Copies of our 2001 research can be found on the Assembly's carers website.

Research commissioned by the Carers National Association in 1998 ('Young Carers in the United Kingdom'—Loughborough University) estimated that there were 20,000 to 50,000 young carers in the UK. This suggests that there could be some 1,200 to 3,000 young carers in Wales.

As part of this year's work programme for our implementation plan, 'Caring about Carers: A Strategy for Carers in Wales', we shall be seeking to introduce a standard definition of a 'young carer' that can be used by all agencies.

Children's Healthcare

David Lloyd: Will the Minister provide information, with regard to the proposed report of the Specialised Health Services Commission for Wales on specialised healthcare for the children of Wales, on how boundaries affecting 'critical mass' calculations are determined? (WAQ18597) [R]

Jane Hutt: The critical mass calculations contained within the SHSCW reports were based on advice from Medical Royal Colleges.

The Society of Chiropodists and Podiatrists (Requests for Meetings)

David Lloyd: Has the Minister received requests from the Society of Chiropodists and Podiatrists to meet them? (WAQ18598) [R]

Jane Hutt: I have received a request to meet representatives of the Society of Chiropodists and Podiatrists via your office. My diary secretary has written to the society asking them to contact her to make the necessary arrangements. At present we are still awaiting the society's response.

Consultations with Chiropodists and Podiatrists

David Lloyd: What percentage of the population has consulted a chiropodist or a podiatrist in each of the last five years; and what percentage of the population has been treated by a chiropodist or podiatrist? (WAQ18599) [R]

Jane Hutt: These statistics are not held centrally by the National Assembly.

Meniere's Disease

Alison Halford: Would the Minister detail the specialist services that are available via the NHS to Meniere's disease sufferers in Wales? (WAQ18631)

Jane Hutt: We do not hold centrally details of the services that are available for every medical condition. At present, it is the responsibility of health authorities in Wales to determine need and commission services for their populations.

Specialist 'Balance' Nurses

Alison Halford: What plans does the Minister have to train specialist 'balance' nurses to provide specialist care for those suffering from Meniere's disease? (WAQ18632)

Jane Hutt: At present, it is the responsibility of health authorities to commission appropriate services for their populations. This includes the responsibility for ensuring that those services are of good quality and staffed appropriately.