

Answers issued to Members on 26 March 2009

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

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

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Questions to the First Minister

Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales): Will the First Minister provide details of the number of people employed in the Welsh Assembly Government press office in each year since 1999? (WAQ53792)

Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales): Will the First Minister provide details of the annual running costs, including salaries, of the Welsh Assembly Government press office in each year since 1999? (WAQ53793)

The First Minister (Rhodri Morgan): There have been a number of changes in the structure of the Welsh Assembly Government's Communications division since 1999, most notably following the ASPB mergers, as a result of which a number of staff transferred in to the Government's press team from the former WDA and ELWa. It is therefore not possible to provide meaningful year on year figures. Also, some staff undertake press-related work in addition to other duties, such as the news service on the WAG website.

There are currently 28 staff (or full-time equivalents) engaged predominantly in press work supporting the First Minister, 8 Ministers and 4 Deputy Ministers, plus the Counsel General. Broad levels of cost for each post are shown below:

Post	Projected Salary Band Cost 08/09*
Assistant Information Officer (6 posts)	£27,965
Information Officer (6 posts)	£36,929
Senior Information Officer (9 posts)	£47,394
Grade 7 (6 posts)	£62,876
Grade 6 (1 post)	£77,808

* Note these figures are at point 4 for each band and are used for forecasting overall costs of posts, these include the additional employer's costs, including pension and national insurance.

Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales): How much has the Welsh Assembly Government spent on internal communications in each year since 1999? (WAQ53794)

The First Minister: This is a matter for the Permanent Secretary and I have asked her to write to you.

Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales): How much has the Welsh Assembly Government spent on direct marketing in each year since 1999? (WAQ53797)

The First Minister: The Welsh Assembly Government undertakes very little direct marketing and the figures for this number of years could only be produced at disproportionate cost.

Questions to the Deputy First Minister and Minister for the Economy and Transport

Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales): How much has the Welsh Assembly Government provided for campaigns and organisations to raise awareness of road safety issues in each of the last five years? (WAQ53803)

The Deputy First Minister and Minister for the Economy and Transport (Ieuan Wyn Jones): We have provided over £9.5million for campaigns and to organisations over the last 5 years to raise awareness of road safety.

A breakdown is provided below.

	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08
Expenditure on Road Safety Publicity	£114,520	£102,992	£167,842	£97,468	£128,450
Grant to Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents	£67,400	£118,210	£95,996	£99,878	£96,128
Grant to Safety Camera Partnerships	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	£8,450,000

In addition we have provided nearly £38 million to local authorities via our Local Road Safety Grant. We are unable to desegregate how much of this funding has been specifically allocated to campaigns.

Kirsty Williams (Brecon and Radnorshire): Will the Minister a) make a statement on the RIBS Contract awarded to British Telecom; b) detail the original budget for the contract, and c) detail the amount, if any, of that budget which remains? (WAQ53810)

The Deputy First Minister: Following an open, European level procurement exercise the five-year RIBS contract was awarded to BT Group in March 2006. On contract award BT started work on the broadband enablement of the 35 telephone exchanges in Wales which had been deemed unviable by the telecommunications industry. The broadband enablement of these 35 exchanges was completed in the summer of 2007 and benefited over 7,500 end-users. The Welsh Assembly Government contributed £1.24m to the exchange enablement.

Once the 35 telephone exchanges had been addressed work commenced to identify those premises, both business and residential, which, despite being connected to a broadband enabled exchange, could not receive a basic broadband service. These premises are known as broadband notspots. I have earmarked a possible £3.8m to address the remaining notspots over the next two years. The first six notspot areas to be addressed were agreed in the autumn of 2008 and Openreach commenced work on implementing solutions to these areas. Addressing these six notspot areas will benefit over 1,000 end-users and my Officials are now identifying the next areas that can be resolved.

Questions to the Minister for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills

Brynle Williams (North Wales): Will the Minister provide details, for each year since 1999, of the amount of pupils enrolled in primary schools in North Wales who did not have either English or Welsh as their first language? (WAQ53817)

The Minister for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (Jane Hutt): This information is currently not held centrally. However, we will shortly be consulting on proposals to collect first language data in the Pupil Level Annual School Census from 2011.

Questions to the Minister for Finance and Public Service Delivery

Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales): How much has the Welsh Assembly Government as a whole, spent on sponsorship in each year since 1999? (WAQ53798)

The Minister for Finance and Public Service Delivery (Andrew Davies): This information could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Brynle Williams (North Wales): Will the Minister detail, since 1999 a) the number and amount of Welsh Assembly Government grants given to Welsh businesses that have subsequently gone into liquidation or otherwise ceased trading; b) the amount of such grants that the Welsh Assembly Government has written off as unrecoverable c) the amount of such grants that the Welsh Assembly Government is currently pursuing for repayment? (WAQ53805)

Andrew Davies: This information could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Irene James (Islwyn): What indications has the Minister had that money invested in Icelandic Banks is affecting the delivery of public services in Caerphilly County Borough? (WAQ53821) *Transferred for answer by the Minister for Social Justice and Local Government.*

The Minister for Social Justice and Local Government (Brian Gibbons): Caerphilly County Borough Council have £15m deposited with two Icelandic banks. £5m is deposited with Landsbanki and £10m with the British based subsidiary Heritable. Negotiations between the UK Government and Local Government are ongoing with the Icelandic authorities in respect of Landsbanki. Ernst and Young, the administrators, are assessing the financial position of Heritable Bank. I have not received any indication that the money invested in Icelandic Banks is materially affecting the delivery of public services in Caerphilly. The Assembly Government has made regulations which enable all local authorities with money tied up in Icelandic banks to defer accounting for any potential loss until 2010-11 if they so wish.

Questions to the Minister for Health and Social Services

Andrew R.T. Davies (South Wales Central): Will the Minister make a statement on coterminosity in intra-NHS relations post-reorganisation? (WAQ53826)

The Minister for Health and Social Services (Edwina Hart): The new changes currently under way in the NHS create a new form of coterminosity through bringing primary and secondary and tertiary responsibilities together for a given local population within the same organisation.

Andrew R.T. Davies (South Wales Central): Will the Minister make a statement on the role of the Director of Therapies and Scientific Services? (WAQ53827)

Edwina Hart: The Local Health Board (Constitution, Membership and Procedures) (Wales) Order 2009 laid before the National Assembly for Wales on 25 March 2009 outlines my intention to include a Director for Therapies and Health Sciences on the Local Health Board.

Andrew R.T. Davies (South Wales Central): Will the Minister make a statement on the report of the Public Inquiry into the 2005 E.coli outbreak? (WAQ53829)

Andrew R.T. Davies (South Wales Central): Can the Minister confirm that the Welsh Assembly Government will be seeking to implement all the recommendations of the report of the Public Inquiry into the 2005 E.coli outbreak? (WAQ53830)

Andrew R.T. Davies (South Wales Central): What additional resources will the Welsh Assembly Government be providing to ensure that all food businesses in Wales use the Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points approach to avoid contamination of food? (WAQ53831)

Edwina Hart: The First Minister's statement of 24 March explains that we are carefully considering all of the report's recommendations and will be responding fully in due course. Not all of the report's recommendations are addressed directly to the Welsh Assembly Government. Where the recommendations do relate to us we are considering what action is appropriate and we expect others, including those with relevant statutory responsibilities, to do the same. We will be liaising with other organisations and facilitating wider consideration at a UK or higher level where necessary in considering our response.

The way in which the Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points approach to food safety is introduced rests primarily with the Food Standards Agency and local authority enforcement officers. It is not appropriate for me to comment at this early stage on how they may wish to respond.

There is little I can add at this stage, but I would like to emphasise our commitment to ensuring that lessons are learned, in order to minimise the chances of this kind of outbreak occurring in the future. We will continue to work with partners and enforcement agencies to ensure the highest level of public protection for the people of Wales.

The intention is to hold a Plenary debate on the report this Summer.

Andrew R.T. Davies (South Wales Central): Will the Minister make a statement on relations between the Welsh Assembly Government and the Food Standards Agency? (WAQ53828)

The Deputy Minister for Social Services (Gwenda Thomas): The relations between the Welsh Assembly Government and the Food Standards Agency Wales are good and are set out in an agreed Concordat. I meet with the FSA Chair and FSA Wales Board Member each year to discuss FSA issues including those in Wales and Welsh Assembly Government officials have regular meetings with FSA Wales colleagues. The Rural Affairs Minister and I met the Food Standards Agency's Chief Executive last week to discuss the Agency's initial views on the E.coli Public Inquiry Report.

Lynne Neagle (Torfaen): Will the Minister provide an update on the work being undertaken to improve neo-natal care in Gwent? (WAQ53832)

Edwina Hart: I recognise that there are particular issues regarding the provision of neo-natal care in Gwent, but I am taking action to improve neonatal services across Wales.

Health Commission Wales have identified the need for a dedicated Neonatal Transport System, a Clinical Information System and Managed Clinical Networks as priorities for improving Neonatal Services in Wales. Last year I announced an additional £2 million a year from 2009-10 to support this work across Wales.

Dr Jean Matthes is leading a group of clinicians to agree the model and implementation of a Neonatal Transport service. This will alleviate many of the pressures currently facing neonatal units. The

establishment of Neonatal Networks will ensure that good practice will be shared across Wales in the treatment of neonates.

The Welsh Assembly Government is also gathering additional workforce information from Neonatal Units to inform workforce development policy.