

## **Written Questions answered from 6 to 13 April 2000**

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

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## Questions to the First Secretary

### Members of the Welsh Industrial Development Advisory Board

**Dafydd Wigley:** Will the First Secretary name the members of the Welsh Industrial Development Advisory Board, specify under what criteria they were appointed, state how long they will be members of the board and answer whether any steps are taken to secure equal representation for all parts of Wales on the Board? (WAQ4683)

**The First Secretary (Rhodri Morgan):** Appointments to the Welsh Industrial Development Advisory Board are made in the same way as any other public appointment. New members were appointed earlier this year following open competition advertisement in *The Times*, *The Sunday Times*, *The Western Mail* and *Daily Post*. The selection process fully complied with the Assembly's Code of Practice on public appointments and the panel, which I chaired, included two independent advisers as well as Ann Jones and Mike German nominated by the Economic Development Committee. We particularly welcome applications from under-represented groups and under-represented areas in Wales, but appointments are based on merit.

WIDAB members must have the capacity, based on a successful business record, to give critical and informed commercial advice, or to give advice based on experience of working with companies through trade union activities. Members must have a sound understanding of industrial issues and be respected in the business and financial community. They must be able to take a view on economic, industrial and commercial issues beyond their immediate firm or profession. The key areas of expertise are listed in Section 13(3) of the Welsh Development Agency Act 1975 which says that members of the Board shall include persons who appear to have wide experience of, and to have shown capacity in, industry, banking, accounting, finance or the organisation or representation of workers. More generally, members also need to have knowledge of Wales, the Welsh economy, and the assisted areas.

With regard to regional selective assistance, the Board provides advice to me on applications for grant in excess of £250,000. In giving its advice, the Board has regard to the recommendations of officials which are based on the criteria governing the operation of the RSA scheme and a detailed appraisal of the case, including a technical and commercial report, a financial report, and a full economic appraisal where appropriate. The final decision on any application rests with me under authority delegated by the Assembly.

Membership of the Board is on a voluntary and unpaid basis. It has over the years provided an invaluable contribution to the economic regeneration of Wales, and continues to do so. I hold the Board and its work in the highest esteem and would want to put on record my gratitude for its work. The current membership of the Board is as follows:

Name	Occupation	Initial Appointment	End of Current Appointment
Keith Hodge OBE (Chair)	Ex Bank Director	1989 (Chair from 1 Jan 95)	31 Dec 2000
Sheila Drury OBE	Company Director	1 Jan 1995	31 Dec 2000
Gerry Long	Ex International Development Director	1 Mar 1998	31 Dec 2000
Jeff Maddock	Managing Director	1 Mar 1998	31 Dec 2000
Jim Driscoll	Ex Consulting Partner	1 Mar 2000	31 Dec 2002
Jim Hancock	Regional Trade Union Secretary	1 Mar 2000	31 Dec 2002

I am also pleased to be able to announce the appointment from 1 May of Annesley Wright, a managing director from north Wales, who is the third and final member to be appointed as a result of the recent selection process.

### **Raising the Assembly's Profile**

**Nick Bourne:** Will the First Secretary make a statement on raising the profile of the National Assembly for Wales in areas outside Cardiff in order to make the Assembly a more inclusive establishment and to raise public confidence? (WAQ4846)

**The First Secretary:** Public confidence in the Assembly will depend upon its actions and achievements, for which Members representing all parts of Wales have responsibility. That is why I and my Cabinet colleagues place such importance on initiatives such as Better Wales, which sets out a forward plan which is both genuinely inclusive and also of real importance to people across the whole of the Welsh nation. Cabinet Secretaries, including myself as First Secretary, follow a policy of fulfilling public engagements in all parts of Wales so as to improve the standing of the Assembly in areas away from Cardiff.

### **Meetings of the Council of Ministers (Representations)**

**Nick Bourne:** Will the First Secretary publish details of any representations from the Assembly, at the Council of Ministers meetings? (WAQ4855)

**The First Secretary:** Assembly Secretaries will report back to the Assembly as necessary on proceedings in any Council of Ministers meetings they have attended.

### **'Mapping Social Exclusion in Wales' (Assembly Web Site)**

**Michael German:** What discussions has the First Secretary had about placing the document, 'Mapping Social Exclusion in Wales' on the Assembly's web site? (WAQ4856)

**The First Secretary:** I am very keen to expand the information available on the web site and expect the Assembly to make considerable progress in this over the coming months. Statistical publications are high on our list of priorities for the expansion and future development of our internet presence. Both the initial report entitled 'Mapping Social Exclusion in Wales', which was the focus of an Assembly debate on 29 June 1999, and the recent publication were available to Assembly Members on the intranet on the day of publication.

## **Questions to the First Secretary on Economic Development**

### **Cardiff City and County Council and the Cardiff Barrage**

**Alun Cairns:** What monies, separated by capital and revenue, will be given to Cardiff City and County Council in relation to the hand over of responsibilities of the Cardiff Barrage as stated in both 165 agreements, each year over the next five years? (WAQ4839)

**The First Secretary:** The information requested is being collated. I will write as soon as possible and place a copy of my letter in the Library.

### **Review of Business Advice Given to Small Companies**

**Peter Black:** Will the First Secretary review the way that advice is given to small companies seeking to set up in business, by the Welsh Development Agency and other organisations? (WAQ4840)

**The First Secretary:** This matter falls within the remit of the Economic Development Committee's current review of business support and development. Meanwhile, those wishing to set up in business can readily access the wide range of available support by contacting Business Connect on 08457 96 97 98.

### **Paperwork in Small Businesses**

**Peter Black:** What plans are there to review the amount of paperwork encountered by small businesses, particularly when setting up in the first year? (WAQ4841)

**The First Secretary:** Last year the Government announced a new drive to remove unnecessary legislation and to cut red tape. This has already led to a simplification of the reporting arrangements by firms under the national minimum wage and the Working Time Directive.

According to the Small Business Research Trust, tax paper-work, including VAT, self-assessment, PAYE and NIC is overwhelmingly the most time consuming element and a number of other initiatives have been introduced to help reduce this burden, including the merger of the Inland Revenue with the Contributions Agency and the streamlining of VAT procedures.

The Assembly also plays its part, through consulting with and responding to the concerns of business and ensuring that through the regulatory appraisal process that the impact of proposed new Assembly regulations are carefully assessed before being approved.

### **Applications for Regional Selective Assistance**

**Peter Black:** How many small and medium-sized enterprises in Wales applied for regional selective assistance in each of 1998-99 and 1999-2000, and how many were successful in each year? (WAQ4842)

**The First Secretary:** The information requested is not readily available in the form required. The total number of applications for regional selective assistance received in 1998-99 was 142, 130 of which were subsequently approved, the remainder being rejected or withdrawn. In 1999-2000, 171 applications were received; to date 128 have been approved and 14 rejected or withdrawn; a further 29 are currently being appraised.

### **Failure Rates (In Receipt of Regional Selective Assistance)**

**Peter Black:** What are the comparative failure rates for small and medium-sized enterprises in receipt of regional selective assistance and those who are not, in the last two years? (WAQ4843)

**The First Secretary:** The question cannot be answered in the form requested as we cannot separately identify SMEs receiving RSA and information on business failures, as measured by value added tax de-registrations, is not able to separately identify SMEs or companies receiving RSA.

However, of the 802 offers of regional selective assistance made to businesses in the period 1994-95 to 1999-2000, our records show that 38 businesses have failed in the two years up to 31 March 2000. This is a failure rate of about 4.7 per cent. Although not directly comparable, the following table gives details of all VAT de-registrations in Wales for the last two years in which data is available:

	Stock of vat registered firms at start of year	De-registrations during year	Business failure rate
1997	75,415	6,320	8.4 per cent
1998	75,335	6,240	8.3 per cent

## **Correspondence with the European Commission**

**Nick Bourne:** Will the First Secretary publish the correspondence that he has had with the European Commission on problems with the single programming document relating to Objective 1 funding? (WAQ4844)

**The First Secretary:** I have received one letter from Commissioner Barnier, and am arranging for a copy of the letter to be placed in the Library. I expect to reply next week, and will also make a copy of the reply available in the Library.

## **Visits made to Brussels or Strasbourg**

**Nick Bourne:** Will the First Secretary publish details of any visits made to Brussels or Strasbourg as the Secretary for Economic Development, and will he publish details of any visits made to Brussels or Strasbourg as First Secretary? (WAQ4845)

**The First Secretary:** As the Secretary for Economic Development I accompanied the former First Secretary on a visit to Brussels on 26-27 January for meetings with Commissioner Barnier and with officials at UKREP and the Wales European Centre. I also visited Brussels on 2-3 March as Chair of the Committee on European Affairs; in the course of which visit I also spoke at a meeting of the European Policy Centre and, as First Secretary, had discussions with officials in UKREP and DG Competition.

## **Bid for Regional Selective Assistance (BAE Systems Broughton)**

**Michael German:** What would be the earliest possible date a re-submitted bid by BAE Systems Broughton for regional selective assistance could be discussed, given the delay in finalising the RSA map for Wales, and could such an application be received prior to the map being agreed? (WAQ4857)

**The First Secretary:** Applications for regional selective assistance can be made in advance of the assisted areas map being finalised and will be appraised in the normal way. If an offer of RSA is made in respect of such an application, it will be conditional on the location of the project being within the assisted areas defined by the new map, and on the level of assistance being within the appropriate aid ceilings. Decisions on applications are made as soon as practicable after receipt of a completed application.

## **Questions to the Secretary for Agriculture and Rural Development**

### **Free Conservation Advice Service**

**Glyn Davies:** Has the Secretary for Agriculture and Rural Development any plans to establish and fund a free conservation advice service? (WAQ4354)

**The Secretary for Agriculture and Rural Development (Christine Gwyther):** Advice on nature conservation is provided by the Countryside Council for Wales to a range of parties as part of its statutory responsibilities under the Environmental Protection Act 1990. In addition, the countryside and agriculture information service can provide advice on conservation to farmers and landowners in Wales.

I have no plans at present to extend these services.

### **Promoting the 'Made in Wales' Label**

**Nick Bourne:** Will Christine Gwyther seek to promote the 'made in Wales' label to promote excellence in Welsh food? (WAQ4531)

**Christine Gwyther:** Following identification of the need to review the whole issue of branding Welsh food including the use of a logo, as set out in the industry action plans for the lamb and beef, dairy and organic sectors, launched in March 1999, the Welsh Development Agency is considering, as part of the Assembly's agri-food strategy, ways of developing the marketing and promotion of Welsh food.

The Agency's food directorate has let a contract for a consultancy study to develop a strategy for food branding in Wales with the support of the key stakeholders. They have appointed consultants of international calibre called Springpoint to undertake the study and Snowdonia Business Information Centre will be working in partnership with Springpoint carrying out the Welsh language interviews on the market research. As a result of this, the Assembly will then consider the wider implications of branding Welsh products in general including a kite mark of excellence.

### **Importing Milk from Abroad**

**David Davies:** What steps has Christine Gwyther taken to satisfy herself that milk imported from abroad is produced with regard to the same standards of hygiene as milk produced in the UK? (WAQ4678) *Transferred from the Secretary for Health and Social Services.*

**Christine Gwyther:** All European member states are subject to the Milk Hygiene Directive, which is implemented in the UK under the Dairy Produce Regulations. We are unable to inspect imports of milk or milk products because there is a single market in these goods. However, the EC milk audit ensures that all member states are implementing this directive correctly, thus ensuring that hygiene standards are the same across the EU.

### **Visits to Brussels or Strasbourg**

**Nick Bourne:** Will Christine Gwyther publish details of any visits made to Brussels or Strasbourg as the Secretary for Agriculture and Rural Development? (WAQ4847)

**Christine Gwyther:** As Assembly Secretary for Agriculture and Rural Development, I visited EC Commissioner Franz Fischler in Strasbourg on 6 October 1999, and attended the Brussels Council of Agriculture Ministers meeting on 20 March 2000. In addition, officials attend meetings in Brussels on a regular basis.

## **Questions to the Secretary for the Environment, Planning and Transport**

### **Speed Restrictions in Newbridge on Wye**

**Nick Bourne:** Will the Secretary for the Environment, Planning and Transport consider speed restrictions to address safety concerns through the village of Newbridge on Wye on the main trunk road? (WAQ4536)

**The Secretary for the Environment, Planning and Transport (Sue Essex):** The A470 trunk road through Newbridge on Wye already has a 30mph speed limit in force.

My predecessor Peter Law, in his response to Kirsty Williams's question (WAQ2049JS) in November 1999 on Newbridge on Wye, noted that since the recent installation of speed cameras in the village, 85 percentile speeds had fallen by 4 mph to 37 mph. Dyfed-Powys Police has suggested to my officials that the current hypothecation scheme, whereby fines incurred for speeding will go back into road safety measures, will allow it to increase its use of speed cameras and it is thought likely that this will result in further reductions in the 85 percentile speed. We will monitor this situation.

As for concerns over safety, in the past three years there has only been one reported injury accident in Newbridge, and this was related to the minor road junction at the north end of the village. This would not normally be considered to be a bad accident record.

### **HGV Access Along the A49**

**Nick Bourne:** Has Sue Essex received any representations from people in the Knighton area in relation to HGV access into the town along the A49? (WAQ4686)

**Sue Essex:** I have received no such representations.

### **Litter Dropping and Dog Fouling**

**Kirsty Williams:** What plans does Sue Essex have to tackle the problems of litter across Wales and will she consider an all-Wales system of fines for litter dropping and dog fouling? (WAQ4863)

**Sue Essex:** There is a statutory duty to keep areas that are open to the public free of litter and refuse under the Environmental Protection Act 1990. Dog faeces are treated as litter by virtue of the Litter (Animal Droppings) Order 1991. Responsibility for enforcement of the legislation lies with local authorities, who can issue fixed penalty notices of £25 on anyone who drops litter.

The duties under the Act are backed up by the Code of Practice on Litter and Refuse which was revised and re-issued by the Welsh Office and the Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions last year. The Code of Practice sets out the legislative framework, response times for cleaning, expected standards of cleanliness and practical ideas for tackling the problems of litter.

## **Questions to the Secretary for Local Government and Housing**

### **Councillors' Expenses and Allowances**

**Geraint Davies:** What were the total councillors' expenses and allowances in each local authority in Wales during 1998-99 and 1999-2000? (WAQ4838) [R]

**The Secretary for Local Government and Housing (Peter Law):** Details of the basic and special responsibility allowances for councillors in each local authority in Wales for 1998-99 and those budgeted for 1999-2000 are set out in the independent members' allowances working group report 'Rewarding Community Service', a copy of which is available in the library of the National Assembly for Wales.

## **Questions to the Secretary for Post-16 Education and Training**

### **Athrofa Addysg Uwch Gogledd Ddwyrain Cymru**

**Elin Jones:** A wnaiff yr Ysgrifennydd Addysg a Hyfforddiant OI-16 ddatganiad ar yr ymchwiliad mewn i Athrofa Addysg Uwch Gogledd Ddwyrain Cymru? (WAQ4656)

**Yr Ysgrifennydd Addysg a Hyfforddiant Ôl-16 (Tom Middlehurst):** Fel y gŵyr yr Aelod, bu nifer o honiadau o gamymddwyn a chamreoli yn Athrofa Addysg Uwch Gogledd Ddwyrain Cymru. Ar fy nghais, mae Gwasanaeth Archwilio Cyngor Cyllido Cymru yn cynnal archwiliad i'r sefydliad ar hyn o bryd, a disgwylir y bydd adroddiad ar gael erbyn diwedd mis Ebrill neu yn gynnar fis Mai. Yr wyf yn siŵr y byddwch yn deall na allaf gynnig sylw ar yr honiadau nes i adroddiad y Gwasanaeth Archwilio gael ei dderbyn a'i ystyried, er mwyn osgoi effeithio ar ganfyddiadau'r ymchwiliad.

## **North East Wales Institute of Higher Education**

**Elin Jones:** Will the Secretary for Post-16 Education and Training make a statement about the investigation into the North East Wales Institute of Higher Education? (WAQ4656)

**The Secretary for Post-16 Education and Training (Tom Middlehurst):** As the Member is aware, there have been a number of allegations of malpractice and mismanagement at the North East Wales Institute of Higher Education. At my request, the Welsh Funding Council's Audit Service is currently conducting an audit at the institution, the report of which is anticipated to be available by the end of April or early May. I am sure you will appreciate that in order not to prejudice the findings of this investigation, I am not in a position to comment on the allegations until the WFCAS report has been received and considered.

## **Questions to the Secretary for Education and Children**

### **Welsh Medium Education (Average Spending Per Pupil)**

**Alun Cairns:** What is the average spending per head of pupil through the medium of Welsh language education at both primary and secondary level? (WAQ4659)

**The Secretary for Education and Children (Rosemary Butler):** The information is not collected centrally. Local authorities have the scope to recognise any additional costs arising from Welsh medium provision in their formulae for distributing their schools budgets, if they wish.

### **Llwynu School, Abergavenny**

**David Davies:** What were the reasons for Llwynu school, Abergavenny not being given a grant for an extra teacher? (WAQ4684)

**Rosemary Butler:** The data provided by Monmouthshire Local Education Authority in support of their bid for infant class size grant at Llwynu School, showed that the school could comply with the class size limit and maintain four classes with under 30 pupils across key stage 1 in 2000-01 without the need for grant, although there would be a need in 2001-02. Schools were only eligible for grant in this bidding round if need could be demonstrated in 2000-01.

Monmouth LEA has subsequently advised my officials that the data contained in their bid was incorrect and Llwynu School do indeed require grant funding in 2000-01. The LEA has confirmed that it will be able to fund the additional teacher at Llwynu school from within their overall grant allocation for 2000-01.

### **Inspection of Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Bryn y Môr, Swansea**

**Alun Cairns:** Will Rosemary Butler investigate the action necessary in order to meet the demands of the inspection under Section 10 of the Schools Inspection Act 1996, of Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Bryn y Môr, Swansea, with particular reference to the penultimate bullet point made under Section 18, key issues for action? (WAQ4825)

**Rosemary Butler:** I refer Alun Cairns to the answer I gave to his WAQ4664. It is not for me to investigate the actions that are required following an Estyn inspection. The post inspection action plan is for the governing body of the school. Progress against that plan is monitored by Estyn.



### **Investigating the Demand for Welsh-Medium Education (Over the Next 10 Years)**

**Alun Cairns:** Will Rosemary Butler investigate the expected demand fluctuations for Welsh-medium primary education over the next 10 years on a year by year basis? (WAQ4826)

**Rosemary Butler:** No. This is a matter for local education authorities.

### **Investigating the Demand for Welsh-Medium Education (Over the Last 10 Years)**

**Alun Cairns:** Will Rosemary Butler investigate the demand fluctuations at the lowest possible level for Welsh-medium primary education over the last 10 years? (WAQ4827)

**Rosemary Butler:** No. It is for local education authorities to monitor such trends and make appropriate provision.

### **Cost of Welsh and English Primary School Text Books**

**Alun Cairns:** Will Rosemary Butler investigate what is the average cost of Welsh medium-primary education school text books and the cost of English medium-primary school text books? (WAQ4828)

**Rosemary Butler:** I refer you to my answers to WAQ4657 and WAQ4658.

### **English-Medium Education (Average Spending Per Head of Pupil)**

**Alun Cairns:** Will Rosemary Butler investigate the average spending per head of pupils through English-medium education at both primary and secondary school levels? (WAQ4829)

**Rosemary Butler:** No. This information is not readily available.

## **Questions to the Finance Secretary**

### **Vehicles Owned or Leased by the Assembly**

**Glyn Davies:** Will Edwina Hart list the make, value and model of all vehicles owned or leased by the National Assembly for Wales which are used by members of the Cabinet? (WAQ4685)

**The Finance Secretary (Edwina Hart):** The vehicles owned by the National Assembly for Wales for use by Members of the Cabinet, the Presiding Officer, Deputy Presiding Officer, Secretary of State for Wales, Parliamentary Under Secretary for Wales, Permanent Secretary and other senior officials when available and appropriate are shown below:

<u>Make/Model</u>	<u>Year of Registration</u>	<u>Purchase Price</u>	<u>Market Value *</u>
Rover 820Si	1994	(£) 15,551	(£) 2,625
Vauxhall Omega 2.0 Select	1996	15,399	5,150
Vauxhall Vectra LS 1.8 Estate	1998	11,481	6,800
Vauxhall Omega Elite 2.5 Auto	1999	20,656	13,650
Ford Mondeo GLX 2.0 Auto	1999	11,747	9,250

\*As indicated in the current *Glass' Guide*.

### **Assembly Sponsored Public Bodies (Administration Costs)**

**John Marek:** Will Edwina Hart list the 10 Assembly sponsored public bodies whose administration costs were greatest in the year for which figures are available? (WAQ4860)

**Edwina Hart:** List based on outturn figures for 1998-99 for executive Assembly sponsored public bodies:

<b>Executive Assembly Sponsored Public Body</b>	<b>£ million</b>
Welsh Development Agency	22.497
National Museums and Galleries of Wales	10.452
Countryside Council for Wales	9.766
National Library of Wales	4.870
Cardiff Bay Development Corporation	4.470
Wales Tourist Board	4.125
Further Education Funding Council for Wales	2.558
Qualifications, Curriculum and Assessment Authority for Wales	2.515
Arts Council of Wales	1.582
Higher Education Funding Council for Wales	1.534

Further information on executive and advisory ASPBs can be found in 'Public Bodies' published by the Cabinet Office.

### **Questions to the Secretary for Health and Social Services**

#### **Expanding the East Radnorshire Day Centre in Presteigne**

**Nick Bourne:** Will the Secretary for Health and Social Services, in conjunction with Powys Social Services, see if an empty Powys County Council building in Presteigne could be made available for expansion of the east Radnorshire day centre in Presteigne? (WAQ4649)

**The Secretary for Health and Social Services (Jane Hutt):** I refer to my answer to your question WAQ4650.

#### **Supporting the East Radnorshire Day Centre in Presteigne**

**Nick Bourne:** Will Jane Hutt support the east Radnorshire day centre in Presteigne in its attempts to expand the service that it is operating? (WAQ4650)

**Jane Hutt:** The decision whether to expand the east Radnorshire day centre in Presteigne is a matter for Powys County Council in the light of their assessment of local need and the available resources.

### **Care Forum Wales**

**Alun Cairns:** What plans does Jane Hutt have to meet Care Forum Wales? (WAQ4665)

**Jane Hutt:** I have had no direct request to meet with Care Forum Wales and have no current plans to do so. Care Forum Wales is however represented on the social services White Paper implementation project board and on a number of the White Paper task groups.

## Capital Projects in the NHS

**Rod Richards:** Will Jane Hutt publish details of all capital projects in the NHS completed since 1980 valued at £1 million or more at today's prices? (WAQ4676)

**Jane Hutt:** Details of all capital projects in the NHS completed since 1980 and valued at £1 million or more at today's prices will be provided, but as the information required covers a period of 20 years, and the capital costs of each scheme will need to be indexed, it will take a few days to produce.

I will arrange for you to be given a written list of schemes once the information is available.

## Capital Projects Commissioned Since 1 May 1997

**Rod Richards:** Will Jane Hutt publish details of all the capital projects commissioned since 1 May 1997 valued at £1 million or more at today's prices? (WAQ4677)

**Jane Hutt:** Since 1 May 1997, 12 schemes valued at £1 million or more at today's prices, have been given approval by the Welsh Office/National Assembly for Wales to proceed, with funding provided centrally or under public-private partnerships. The schemes are:

- North Wales Cancer Centre
- North Wales Medium Secure Unit
- Morriston Hospital 2nd Cardiac Unit and Theatres Shell
- Ely Hospital Resettlement - Continuing Care Bungalows
- University Dental Hospital Asbestos Decontamination
- University Dental Hospital Fire Precautions
- University Hospital of Wales A48 Link Road
- Transfer of Acute Services from Cardiff Royal Infirmary to the University Hospital of Wales
- Velindre Hospital Radiotherapy Equipment Replacement
- Royal Glamorgan Staff Residences (PFI)
- Chepstow Community Hospital (PFI)
- Baglan Hospital (PFI)

The Secretary for Health and Social Services also announced, on 22 March, that £53 million was available from the Assembly's capital modernisation fund and the sale of NHS estates to fund a package of capital schemes in the NHS. The developments to be funded include:

- £8 million to tackle health and safety issues and improve the building at Prince Charles Hospital;
- £12.4 million for the development of a mental illness unit to serve the Rhondda and Taff Ely area;
- £12 million for the expansion of mental health facilities at the Caswell Clinic, Bridgend;
- £7 million for improvements to mental health facilities in Carmarthenshire;
- £4 million to help the Powys NHS Trust with a major programme of improvements to community hospitals;
- £1.5 million to fund repairs to the exterior of Bronglais Hospital, Aberystwyth;
- £0.75 million to improve maternity care and services at Witybush Hospital, Haverfordwest;
- over £0.5 million to allow the full integration of patient information systems between the University Hospital of Wales and Llandough Hospital;
- £4.8 million for the expansion and improvement in accident and emergency and critical care facilities at Morriston Hospital, Swansea.

In addition, approval was given for the proposed new community hospital at Porthmadog, Gwynedd, to proceed under the private finance initiative, and the Assembly has agreed to provide resources to help the North West Wales NHS Trust with the cost of this process.

The Assembly is considering a further range of proposals which, once approved, will increase the investment in the NHS by a further £28 million.

### **People with Learning Difficulties**

**Owen John Thomas:** How will Jane Hutt ensure that people with learning difficulties are not forced by financial constraints into the cheapest available option but that all their needs are fully taken into account at the eligibility criteria stage, as long as the Best Value criteria apply? (WAQ4711)

**Jane Hutt:** Decisions about the provision of services and other support for people with learning disabilities are a matter for each local authority. In reaching decisions local authorities should take into account their statutory responsibilities, identified needs, the views and preferences of the individual, the views of family/carers, relevant guidance and best value considerations. If individuals are unhappy with decisions made by a local authority then they can access the authority's complaints procedure.

### **Provision for People with Learning Disabilities**

**Owen John Thomas:** How will Jane Hutt ensure that people with learning disabilities are given choice in the provision made for them, particularly in residential provision? (WAQ4712)

**Jane Hutt:** The Assembly's learning disability strategy already promotes choice and for the individual to be able to express a preference as to the services or support provided. Ultimately it is for local authorities to determine matters, taking into account their statutory responsibilities, identified needs, the views and preferences of the individual, the views of family/carers, relevant guidance and Best Value considerations.

### **Human Rights**

**Owen John Thomas:** How will Jane Hutt ensure that human rights, particularly important for people with learning difficulties because they cannot exercise them for themselves, are built into the new policy on learning disabilities? (WAQ4713)

**Jane Hutt:** The Assembly's learning disability strategy is already based around the key principles that people with learning disabilities have a right to an ordinary pattern of life within the community, the right to be treated as an individual and the right to additional help and support in developing their maximum potential. The Assembly has established a learning disability advisory group to draft a service framework and I am confident that the issue of how people with learning disabilities can exercise rights by themselves or with support is being taken into account by the advisory group. In addition, the Assembly is required to ensure that in exercising its functions it complies with the requirements of the Human Rights Act 1998.

### **Equal Treatment for People with Learning Disabilities**

**Owen John Thomas:** How will Jane Hutt ensure that equal treatment is given to people with learning disabilities all over Wales, so that the necessary provision is available irrespective of on which side of a local authority boundary one is born? (WAQ4714)

**Jane Hutt:** The Assembly's learning disability strategy guidance sets out a framework to develop and improve community based support and quality of care. This will be reinforced by the service framework being drafted by the Assembly's learning disability advisory group.

### **Assessing People with Learning Disabilities**

**Owen John Thomas:** How will Jane Hutt ensure that people with learning disabilities are assessed fully as complex individual personalities, rather than merely having their disabilities assessed? (WAQ4715)

**Jane Hutt:** The Assembly's learning disability strategy promotes individual plans that address not only social care and health needs but also leisure activities, educational/training requirements and employment and accommodation needs. I believe that good quality care must not only meet the needs of people it supports, but must also reflect their goals, wishes and preferences and this is also emphasised in the guidance. The strategy's guidance also says that the dignity and self respect of individuals often depends on their ability to make everyday decisions and to feel that they are not only consulted but listened to.

### **The Importance of the Assessment Process**

**Owen John Thomas:** How will Jane Hutt ensure that people with learning disabilities and their carers are properly informed about the importance of the assessment process, their role in it and the range of options available? (WAQ4717)

**Jane Hutt:** In addition to our strategy guidance which has been widely disseminated and the advice/information available from statutory agencies, the Assembly also provides grant assistance to organisations who provide information and other support to people with learning disabilities, their families and carers. These organisations include People First Wales, the All Wales Forum of Parents and Carers, Mencap in Wales; the National Autistic Society and the Standing Conference of Voluntary Organisations for People with a Learning Disability in Wales (SCOVO). A recent example of helping to ensure that people have access to information, was the support the Assembly was able to give to Mencap in Wales for its free phone Learning Disability Helpline which was launched on 28 March 2000.

### **Improving the Survival Rates of Cancer Sufferers**

**Owen John Thomas:** What steps are being taken to improve the survival rates of cancer sufferers in Wales? (WAQ4718)

**Jane Hutt:** I can assure you that tackling cancer is one of the top priorities on the health agenda in Wales. The reduction of morbidity and mortality associated with cancer has been identified as a key priority for the NHS, recognising its significant impact on levels of economic and social well being in Wales. Health authorities will take account of this when planning the provision of cancer services through the development of their health improvement programmes.

Our strategic direction for improving the accessibility, and availability of high quality treatment for those suffering from cancer is set out in the Cameron report. Under the auspices of the cancer services co-ordinating group, minimum standards of cancer care designed to suit the needs of Welsh patients have been published. I expect these to be implemented across Wales. As well as improving services, we must concentrate our efforts on health promotion and prevention. For example, smoking is a known contributory factor in many cases of cancer. Stopping smoking is key to improving survival rates and, to this end, in 1999-2000, £500,000 was allocated to health authorities to set up new smoking cessation services. A further £300,000 was provided for smoking cessation training for primary care teams, a smoking cessation helpline, motivational advertising to encourage smokers to contact the helpline and production of no smoking day materials. In 2000-01, the budget allocated to smoking prevention and cessation initiatives has increased to £1.75 million.

### **Private Care Homes in Wales**

**Alun Cairns:** What are the costs to care for people in private care homes in Wales (both residential and nursing) in comparison with that of local authority alternatives? (WAQ4813)

**Jane Hutt:** Please refer to the answer I gave to your WAQ4814. Local authorities do not operate nursing homes.

### **Cost of Private Care**

**Alun Cairns:** What are the costs per week of private care homes (both residential and nursing) in comparison with maintaining such patients within NHS hospitals, commonly referred to as bed blocking? (WAQ4814)

**Jane Hutt:** Information about the costs of the provision of care in private care homes is not collected by the Assembly.

When it reported last spring, the Royal Commission on long-term care of the elderly estimated the average costs for all residential provision throughout the UK at £247 per week for a residential home and £337 per week for a nursing home.

Equivalent figures for the NHS are not collected centrally.

### **Private Residential and Nursing Home Sector**

**Alun Cairns:** Would Jane Hutt make a statement on the condition of the private residential and nursing home sector in Wales? (WAQ4815)

**Jane Hutt:** The independent residential and nursing home sector is a vital part of the provision of residential care. It accounts for around 80 per cent of the 30,000 places in Wales.

The independent sector is one of our partners in work on the implementation of the social services White Paper which contains a wide range of measures to improve the services offered to vulnerable people. The independent sector is represented on the implementation project board and on a number of the task groups.

The diversity of the independent sector means that it is not possible to give an overview of standards. The task of inspecting and regulating the homes is currently the responsibility of the local authority and health authority inspection units, but the Care Standards Bill currently before Parliament provides for these responsibilities to transfer to the Assembly. The Assembly has recently consulted widely on draft national required standards of services for the elderly including standards for residential and nursing homes and we are carefully studying the responses.

### **Waiting Times for Care in Homes**

**Alun Cairns:** What are the average waiting times, per local authority, from the initial application to enter (a) private residential homes, (b) private nursing homes and (c) local authority homes? (WAQ4816)

**Jane Hutt:** This information is not currently available. Consistent measures have not yet been fully developed across Wales. However, work researched by Swansea University on delayed discharge will help to identify common approaches. This is being explored by the emergency pressures taskforce.

### **Waiting Time for Receipt of Funding**

**Alun Cairns:** What is the average waiting time, per local authority, for the receipt of funding by private residential and care homes from social services for care offered within the said homes? (WAQ4817)

**Jane Hutt:** This information is not collected by the Assembly.

## Prostate Cancer

**Lynne Neagle:** How will the Assembly promote early diagnosis of prostate cancer in Wales? (WAQ4818)

**Lynne Neagle:** How will the Assembly work to improve awareness of prostate cancer among men in Wales? (WAQ4819)

**Lynne Neagle:** How will the Assembly promote better clinical treatment for men with prostate cancer? (WAQ4821)

**Jane Hutt:** I will answer all three questions together.

I recognise that early diagnosis of, and improving awareness of, male specific cancers is important as many men will admit to ignorance about cancer, and will often not visit their doctor until it is too late.

Health Information Wales, which becomes part of NHS Wales Direct shortly, provides a wide range of information on men's health issues, including prostatic cancer, directly to the public and health professionals.

Health Promotion Wales, which is now part of the Assembly, has supported a number of initiatives to promote awareness of men's cancers. For example, the Good Health Wales Awards recognised the excellent work carried out by PROGRESS (the Prostate Group, Research, Education and Support Services) at the Royal Gwent Hospital.

Health Promotion Wales has provided support and advice to the joint initiative launched by Cardiff Community Healthcare, Pontypridd and Rhondda NHS Trust and North Glamorgan NHS Trust which aims to raise awareness with men of warning signs and symptoms that cancer is emerging, and encourage them to seek immediate advice from their GP.

The National Screening Committee, which advises the Government and the National Assembly for Wales, has considered the evidence for introducing screening for prostate cancer and concluded that at this time, and with the current technology, there is no evidence of benefit resulting from population screening. Indeed current screening technologies could lead to a provisional diagnosis of prostate cancer for men without the disease, and follow up procedures could consequently cause unnecessary harm to healthy men. However, the evidence is currently under review.

The National Assembly for Wales is committed to providing a high quality health service for the people of Wales. We have a clear all Wales strategic direction for cancer services, as set out in the Cameron report, and the cancer services co-ordinating group has published minimum standards for all cancer services which includes prostate cancer.

A key recommendation of the Cameron report is the provision of high quality cancer centre services based at Cardiff, Swansea and north Wales. These services are being networked across Wales and linked to local acute hospitals providing cancer care by multidisciplinary specialist teams working across trust boundaries.

I welcome the £9.75 million made available for cancer care over the next three years from the new opportunities fund (a non departmental public body created by the National Lottery Act 1998). It will be used to support national and local strategic priorities, reduce inequalities in health, encourage best practice and stimulate innovative developments.

I also announced, on 25 October 1999, a further £3.5 million to fill key gaps in specialist provision, and £500,000 towards a national service framework for cervical screening.

I welcome the recent announcement by the Chancellor of the Exchequer of extra money for health. The Assembly is working with the NHS in Wales to ensure that the money is used for better resourcing, priority health and health services such as cancer services.

### **Use of Private Residential and Nursing Care Home Beds**

**Alun Cairns:** What action is Jane Hutt taking to make use of private residential and nursing care home beds in Wales to relieve bed shortages in Wales? (WAQ4820)

**Jane Hutt:** This will be considered initially, along with other issues, by the emergency pressures taskforce which I have set up.

### **Role of Local Health Groups**

**Lynne Neagle:** What plans does Jane Hutt have to develop the role of local health groups? (WAQ4822)

**Jane Hutt:** Local health groups are central to the development of the NHS in Wales. They will play a vital role in developing the primary care strategy and be instrumental in achieving the objectives for health set out in 'Better Wales'.

Local health groups are uniquely placed to contribute to the health improvement programme, assess needs, identify inequalities and engage the local community and health care professionals in the priority setting and planning process, monitoring service quality, recommending changes to secondary and tertiary and developing primary care services.

In this, the first year of operation, they have taken stock of their position, built up their organisations and established necessary relationships and partnerships. I authorised a major conference in Llandrindod Wells on 16 March—involving all key players in local health groups and their partners within the service, local government and the voluntary sector—to take stock of current development and explore the prospect for future development. A conference report will be issued shortly and that will provide the basis of a consultation exercise to determine how individual local health groups will develop having regard to relevant local circumstances and the views of the major partners in the area.

I have already made substantial financial resources available both this and next year to assist their development.

### **Supporting Private Residential and Nursing Homes**

**Alun Cairns:** What action is Jane Hutt taking to support private residential and nursing homes in Wales? (WAQ4823)

**Jane Hutt:** I refer to the answer given to your WAQ4815.

### **Joint Consultative Committees**

**David Melding:** Subsequent to the Health Act 1999, how many joint consultative committees have been retained in Wales? (WAQ4831)

**Jane Hutt:** Section 32 of the Health Act 1999 repeals the statutory requirement for joint consultative committees. It has yet to be brought forward in Wales, therefore all joint consultative committees in Wales should still be in operation.



## **Occupational Health Services**

**David Melding:** Does Jane Hutt have any plans to allow the NHS to offer occupational health services to businesses in Wales? (WAQ4832)

**Jane Hutt:** There is scope for the NHS providing such a service, and this is already offered in some parts of Wales.

In line with 'Securing Health Together', the forthcoming new occupational health strategy for Great Britain, we will encourage the inclusion of measures in local health improvement plans to promote better access to occupational health services.

## **Vacancies for Pathology Staff**

**David Melding:** How many vacancies for pathology staff currently exist in Wales? (WAQ4833)

**Jane Hutt:** The latest data available on the number of vacancies for laboratory staff in the NHS in Wales is for 30 September 1998. This data is taken from trust workforce plans and shows 11.3 whole time equivalent vacancies out of 711 staff in post for qualified medical laboratory scientific officers (MLSOs). Data is not collected for other grades of laboratory staff.

The next workforce planning data collection is due into the Assembly by the end of April 2000 and this will include vacancy data for September 1999 for MLSOs.

## **A 'Junior Consultant' Grade**

**David Melding:** Does Jane Hutt have any plans to introduce a 'junior consultant' grade in Wales? (WAQ4834)

**Jane Hutt:** There are no specific plans at present to introduce a 'junior consultant' grade. Future negotiations on revising the current consultant contract are likely to include the role of the individual consultant in the clinical team, current working practices and the accommodation of those consultants who might wish to change their role as they become older.

## **Deaths of Patients Waiting For Heart Surgery**

**David Melding:** How many patients died in 1999 while waiting for heart surgery at the University Hospital of Wales? (WAQ4836)

**David Melding:** How many patients died in 1999 while waiting for heart surgery at Morryston Hospital? (WAQ4837)

**Jane Hutt:** The numbers of patients who died in 1999 while waiting for heart surgery cannot be separately identified from information held centrally by the National Assembly for Wales. However, I am keenly aware that there are people whose wait for heart surgery is unacceptably long.

The Specialised Health Services Commission for Wales has recently reviewed specialised cardiac services for adults and has identified the need for significant investment. I have recognised this need and have provided an additional £1.5 million to help ease the severest pressures on cardiac services in 2000-01.

The Assembly will also be able to consider further the SHSCW report's recommendations in view of the extra resources being made available for health services following the budget.

In addition, health authorities need to take into account the findings and considerations of the SHSCW report when planning and prioritising their services in their health improvement programmes.

The implementation in Wales of the national service framework for coronary heart disease will enable further improvements in cardiac services to be achieved. The steering group led by Dr Gillian Todd, Director of SHSCW, intends to develop an implementation plan by September this year designed to suit the needs of Welsh patients with the aim of improving cardiac services over the next 10 years.

### **Ambulance Response Time**

**Nick Bourne:** Has Jane Hutt received any representations from people in the Aberystwyth area in relation to the response time of ambulances? (WAQ4848)

**Jane Hutt:** I have recently received correspondence from the Aberystwyth Town Forum expressing their concern at ambulance response times in the Aberystwyth area.

### **Improving Ambulance Response Time**

**Nick Bourne:** What measures are being taken to improve the response times of ambulances in Ceredigion? (WAQ4849)

**Jane Hutt:** The Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust is currently operating several pilot schemes in an attempt to improve response times in Ceredigion. The trust is working with the British Heart Foundation to train members of the community in life-saving techniques and the use of defibrillators and it is introducing the use of rapid response vehicles, such as cars and motorbikes, manned by paramedics, to ensure early intervention. The trust is currently evaluating the effectiveness of these schemes but believes that both offer the opportunity for significant improvements in response times in Ceredigion and other rural areas.

### **Residential Provision for People with Learning Difficulties**

**Lorraine Barrett:** Does Jane Hutt have any plans to re-examine the residential provision available for people with learning disabilities in Wales? (WAQ4864)

**Jane Hutt:** I have no plans to do so. Our existing strategy already promotes choice and for the individual to be able to express a preference. Ultimately it is for local authorities to determine matters taking into account their statutory responsibilities, identified needs, the views and preferences of the individual, the views of family/carers, relevant guidance and best value considerations.

### **Co-operating Provision for People with Learning Disabilities**

**Lorraine Barrett:** Does Jane Hutt have any plans to examine the co-operation of provision across local authority boundaries for people with learning disabilities? (WAQ4865)

**Jane Hutt:** It is for local authorities to consider and determine whether they should provide services using joint arrangements. Under Best Value, local authorities are under a duty to review the way they provide all services and consider all options in future delivery patterns. Local authorities should take every opportunity to continue to improve the services they provide whether that is through joint arrangements or otherwise. People with learning disabilities and other people making use of local authority services would expect no less.

## **Guidance on the Assessment Process and Local Authority Eligibility Criteria**

**Lorraine Barrett:** Does Jane Hutt have any plans to issue guidance on the assessment process and local authority eligibility criteria for the provision of services to people with learning disabilities and their carers? (WAQ4866)

**Jane Hutt:** In 2000-01, the Social Services Inspectorate for Wales will be reviewing the existing guidance and best practice relating to community care assessments and care management for all vulnerable adults and their carers.

### **Body Piercing**

**David Melding:** Will Jane Hutt investigate the possible health risks posed by body piercing and introduce regulations on all body piercing outlets in Wales? (WAQ4872)

**Jane Hutt:** Local authorities in Wales currently have powers to register, make byelaws for and inspect businesses providing tattooing, ear piercing, electrolysis and acupuncture. Currently they do not have powers to regulate cosmetic body piercing businesses. However, many such businesses will be undertaking tattooing and/or ear piercing, which would come under the local authority's powers. They will, therefore, have the opportunity to work with businesses offering body piercing and to promote hygienic and safe practices. Some local authorities have used local acts to introduce byelaws to cover cosmetic body piercing businesses.

Local authorities also have general enforcement powers under health and safety at work legislation. This allows them to use improvement and prohibition notices and, ultimately, to prosecute if they judge that there is a risk to customers' health and safety.

Body piercing organisations, local authorities and the Public Health Laboratory Service have produced guidance and advice on cosmetic body piercing. The Medical Devices Agency has issued guidance on benchtop steam sterilisers. Such guidance should serve to promote hygienic and safe practice and to drive up standards.

### **The Carcinogenic Dangers of Cannabis Smoking**

**David Melding:** Will Jane Hutt emphasise in health promotion strategies the carcinogenic dangers of cannabis smoking? (WAQ4873)

**Jane Hutt:** Smoking cannabis over a long period of time may increase the risk of respiratory disorders, including lung cancer. This risk has been highlighted in drug education leaflets commissioned by the National Assembly for Wales and distributed through the Welsh Drug and Alcohol Unit. The refocused substance misuse strategy for Wales, which will be launched next month, emphasises the importance of developing national and local prevention campaigns to raise awareness (particularly among children and young people, their parents and others who work with them) of the range of harmful effects of illegal drugs, alcohol and other substances which can be misused.

The harmful effects of drugs are also addressed in the national curriculum. Both the existing and the revised programmes of study for science require that pupils should be taught about the harmful effects that drugs can have. This is reinforced by the new personal and social education framework for Wales, which will be implemented from September 2000, alongside the revised programmes of study for the national curriculum. The framework includes references to drugs education at all four key stages.

### **Number of Registered Nurses Leaving the Profession**

**David Davies:** How many registered nurses left the profession in a) 1996, b) 1997, c) 1998 and d) 1999? (WAQ4879)

**Jane Hutt:** This information is not currently collected centrally.

### **Reducing the Use of Temporary Nurses in Wales**

**David Davies:** Are there plans to reduce the use of temporary nurses in Wales and do these plans involve the appointment of full time nurses? (WAQ4881)

**Jane Hutt:** There will always be a need for well managed, good value temporary staff to cover service needs due to staff turnover, sickness, absence and so on. The National Assembly for Wales is, however, keen for the NHS to reduce any dependency on temporary staffing by reviewing recruitment and retention issues in totality.

Presently, there are no difficulties in recruitment into nurse training across Wales. With the average vacancy rate for qualified nurse, midwife and health visitor posts across Wales being only 3.7 per cent of the establishment, (equivalent to around 726 posts), it is true to say that there is not an all Wales problem. However we recognise from the breakdown of figures that there are problems within certain trusts and, in particular, in certain specialities which tend to place the highest demand on bank and agency staff. We have therefore chosen to address these issues in a number of ways. In particular;

- A conference to review the workforce planning process will take place in July of this year. This will bring together key stakeholders in addressing workforce planning issues for the future.
- From September 2001, a new model for the preparation of nurses will be introduced. This will continue to provide a wide entry gate into the profession. The new approach will enable stepping on and stepping off points for students to promote flexibility in their education and training. Current plans are also exploring the demand for cadet schemes and programmes which will support and encourage health care assistants to enter professional training.
- Last year we funded return to practice courses to encourage qualified nurses back into the profession and we are currently reviewing the effect that this initiative had on the service.
- In response to the recent recruitment and retention campaign in England we will be meeting with representatives of the relevant professional organisations and unions to discuss their views on these issues and possible solutions to them.
- We also intend to approach specific trusts that have been identified as having specific recruitment and retention problems to discuss possible solutions to their local problems.
- We are also actively participating in the Audit Commission report on bank and agency staff and have membership of the steering group

Finally, it is our intention that the human resources strategy for NHS Wales 'Delivering for Patients' which is due to be launched in June will help to promote more flexible and supportive working arrangements to aid retention and hence lessen the need for temporary staff.

Whether these plans will result in the appointment of full time nurses cannot be answered since the solutions introduced will be specific to the local problems identified, and it is likely that a variety of initiatives will be introduced.

### **Average Cost of Cataract Operations or Hip Replacement Operations**

**Nick Bourne:** Will Jane Hutt confirm that, taking the average cost (as stated in the Welsh Office report 'Activity and Costs in Welsh Hospitals'), 26,316 cataract operations or 8,197 hip replacement operations could be performed for £25 million? (WAQ4882)

**Jane Hutt:** As explained in my response to your previous questions on this subject, WAQ4067 and WAQ4068, it is impossible to isolate the exact cost of either cataract or hip replacement operations within the relevant diagnostic related groupings outlined in the Welsh Office report 'Activity and Costs in Welsh Hospitals'. It is also important to recognise that this report reflects the cost of undertaking procedures at current activity levels. In calculating costs of additional activity, 'step up' costs would need to be considered, as any increase in facilities, equipment and staff could clearly have an impact on the average cost of a procedure.