

Answers to the Written Assembly Questions for answer on 11 February 2010

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

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

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To ask the Minister for Children, Education and Lifelong Learning

Paul Davies (Preseli Pembrokeshire): How many children in Wales have been taken on holiday by their parents during term time in each of the last five years. (WAQ55591)

Answer issued on 12 February 2010

The information is not collected centrally but is held by local authorities and schools.

Paul Davies (Preseli Pembrokeshire): What plans does the Welsh Assembly Government have to introduce a system of penalty notices based on the UK Government model for holiday absences of pupils during term time. (WAQ55592)

Answer issued on 12 February 2010

We have no current plans to introduce fixed penalty notices in Wales.

Andrew RT Davies (South Wales Central): What steps is the Minister taking to promote political education for children in both primary and secondary schools. (WAQ55598)

Answer issued on 12 February 2010

The school curriculum in Wales provides opportunities for pupils to develop a practical understanding of their rights and of the links between political decisions and their lives. Pupils are encouraged to become active citizens in their communities both local and global.

Active citizenship is one of five key themes in the Personal and Social Education (PSE) Framework for 7 to 19-year-olds in Wales. Decisions on the precise content and model of delivery of PSE in primary and secondary schools lie with head teachers and governors working with local authorities and partners. This gives schools the flexibility to focus on aspects of active citizenship that are particularly relevant to their situation while meeting the requirement to provide a broad based programme with a balanced treatment of political issues.

Andrew RT Davies (South Wales Central): What steps is the Minister taking to combat cheating in GCSE and A-level examinations. (WAQ55599)

Answer issued on 10 February 2010

The qualifications regulators, DCELLS in Wales, Ofqual in England and CCEA in Northern Ireland, publish annually the GCSE, GCE and AEA Code of Practice which sets out the arrangements that identify and deal with cases of malpractice to make sure standards are maintained. All GCSE and GCE awarding bodies must adhere to the code of practice and also follow common rules published by the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) on dealing with malpractice. The awarding bodies are responsible for monitoring and investigating cases of suspected malpractice and imposing penalties on candidates and centres found to be in breach of the common rules. DCELLS with its fellow qualifications regulators monitor the awarding bodies' compliance in dealing with cases of malpractice and publish annually data on malpractice across the five GCSE and GCE awarding bodies across the three countries.

In addition to the regulations on dealing with malpractice DCELLS is also taking proactive steps to deal with the issue. DCELLS funds a Wales Centre Support team who provide training and advice to all school examinations officers in Wales. This advice includes guidance on preventing malpractice and on the correct procedures to follow when malpractice is suspected.

To ask the Minister for Health and Social Services

Andrew RT Davies (South Wales Central): What steps is the Minister taking to support groups such as the Alzheimer's Support group, which specifically work with young sufferers of dementia-related illnesses. (WAQ55594)

Answer issued on 12 February 2010

Funding for support groups for Alzheimer's and other mental health conditions will be carefully considered as my officials engage with LHBs to ensure there is more equitable funding to the mental health third sector across Wales in the future. I require LHBs to fully consult with all stakeholders on any likely changes in funding and to develop a framework to take this issue forward after 2010/11.

Support groups will also be encouraged to consider other sources of funding. The Welsh Assembly Government Third Sector Grants Guide can be found at: <http://new.Wales.gov.uk/topics/housingandcommunity/grants/?lang=en>. The Wales Council for Voluntary Action maintains details of funding opportunities available. County Voluntary Councils provide guidance and information on funding streams while The Big Lottery Fund and the Prince's Trust also offer advice and assistance.

Andrew RT Davies (South Wales Central): How does the Minister plan to budget for dementia-related illnesses over the next financial year. (WAQ55595)

Answer issued on 12 February 2010

Budget planning for condition-specific services is a matter for local determination. I expect Local Health Boards to plan, commission and deliver health services such as those relating to dementia in line with national standards.

Andrew RT Davies (South Wales Central): What are the Minister's priorities with regard to dementia-related illnesses for 2010-11. (WAQ55596)

Answer issued on 09 February 2010

I refer to my answer to WAQ55590.

Andrew RT Davies (South Wales Central): How much is currently being spent on care for those with dementia-related illnesses. (WAQ55597)

Answer issued on 12 February 2010

Condition-specific data regarding spending on services is not routinely gathered centrally by the Welsh Assembly Government for all conditions.