

## Written Questions answered between 10 and 17 February 2005

[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 Minister for Culture, Welsh Language and Sport

#### Organisations in Mid and West Wales

**Lisa Francis:** Will the Minister make a statement on the arts outside Cardiff programme and how it has benefited organisations in mid and west Wales? (WAQ41436)

**The Minister for Culture, Welsh Language and Sport (Alun Pugh):** Organisations in mid and west Wales that have benefited from arts outside Cardiff funding during 2004-05 are Cwmni Mega, Diversions Dance Company, Wales Actors Company, Wales Theatre Company and Mid Wales Opera. They have all toured and performed in the area.

#### Spending on the Arts Outside Cardiff

**Lisa Francis:** Will the Minister make a statement on spending on the arts outside Cardiff each year since its implementation? (WAQ41437)

**Alun Pugh:** The year 2004-05 is the first year of the arts outside Cardiff programme. This year, £250,000 has been allocated to organisations throughout Wales. This will rise to £1 million in 2005-06 and £2 million in 2006-07. The funding will be distributed via the Arts Council of Wales.

### **Welsh Language Theatre in Mid and West Wales**

**Lisa Francis:** Will the Minister make a statement on Welsh language theatre in mid and west Wales? (WAQ41438)

**Alun Pugh:** Mid and west Wales is well served in the field of Welsh language theatre, as is the rest of Wales.

Cwmni Mega is based in the mid and west Wales area and Theatr Genedlaethol Cymru is based in Carmarthenshire. Theatr Genedlaethol Cymru has recently performed at the Torch Theatre, Taliesin Arts Centre, Aberystwyth Arts Centre and its present tour of *Plas Drycin* will perform at Aberystwyth Arts Centre and Theatr Elli. The three theatre in education companies based in mid and west Wales—Theatr Na Nog, Arad Goch and Theatr Powys—produce and tour productions in Welsh to the schools in the area.

There are many other companies not based in the area, such as Llwyfan Gogledd Cymru and Sgript Cymru, that regularly perform in mid and west Wales.

### **The Arts Outside Cardiff Programme**

**Lisa Francis:** Will the Minister make a statement on how much money from the arts outside Cardiff programme has been spent in mid and west Wales since it was implemented? (WAQ41439)

**Alun Pugh:** Cwmni Mega and Mid Wales Opera, which are based in mid and west Wales, have received £18,000 and £3,325 respectively during the current financial year.

A number of other organisations that have performed in the area during the year have also received funding. Those are Diversions Dance Company (£35,317), Wales Actors Company (£19,532) and Wales Theatre Company (£50,000).

### **Projects Helped by the Arts Outside Cardiff Programme**

**Lisa Francis:** Will the Minister make a statement on which projects the arts outside Cardiff programme has helped in mid and west Wales since it was implemented? (WAQ41440)

**Alun Pugh:** I refer you to my answer to WAQ41439.

## **Questions to the Minister for Economic Development and Transport**

### **Recent GVA Data for West Wales and the Valleys**

**Alun Cairns:** In keeping with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and guidance on Assembly questions, would the Minister publish all communications, copies of letters, records of telephone calls and memos relating to communication between his office and the Office of National Statistics in relation to recent gross value added data for west Wales and the Valleys? (WAQ41160)

*Substantive answer following holding reply issued on 31 January 2005.*

**The Minister for Economic Development and Transport (Andrew Davies):** I can inform you that neither I nor my private office have communicated with the ONS about recent GVA data for west Wales and the Valleys.

### **Wales International Centres**

**David Davies:** How many Wales international centres have been set up abroad? (WAQ41368)

**Andrew Davies:** The Wales international centre initiative involves the co-location of Welsh Development Agency and Welsh Assembly Government trade and investment functions overseas. Under this initiative, offices have been opened in New York, San Francisco and Tokyo. A co-location in Chicago and a trade presence in Singapore predate this initiative but now form part of it. In addition, a trade office has been opened in Dubai, located within the British Embassy.

### **Wales International Centres (Planned)**

**David Davies:** How many Wales international centres are planned to be set up? (WAQ41369)

**David Davies:** What is the capital cost of setting up the planned Wales international centres? (WAQ41370)

**Andrew Davies:** There are no firm proposals, at this time, to establish an Assembly Government presence overseas in addition to those already in place.

### **Wales International Centres (Annual Maintenance Cost)**

**David Davies:** What is the annual maintenance cost of the Wales international centres? (WAQ41371)

**Andrew Davies:** I have taken 'maintenance' to mean 'running costs'. The running costs to the Welsh Assembly Government for the offices in New York, Chicago, San Francisco, Tokyo, Dubai and Singapore is in the region of £770,000.

### **Grants Available to Promote Tourism**

**Kirsty Williams:** What grants, if any, are available to community/volunteer groups to promote tourism in their locality? (WAQ41409)

**Andrew Davies:** Depending on the type of project involved, funding may be available from the Wales Tourist Board, the Welsh European Funding Office or the Assembly's communities facilities and activities programme.

### **Tourist Information Centres**

**Kirsty Williams:** Will the Minister make a statement on the importance and contribution of tourist information centres to the tourism industry and visitor experience in Wales? (WAQ41410)

**Andrew Davies:** Tourist information centres are an important part of the tourism infrastructure in Wales and can help generate business for the local economy. In 2004, Wales's tourist information centres welcomed just over 3,000 visitors and dealt with 740,000 enquiries by phone, e-mail and letter, providing advice to help visitors plan and enjoy their visit.

Local authorities fund the vast majority of TICs with the Wales Tourist Board providing training and a general oversight of standards and corporate image for certain key 'networked' TICs.

### **The Development of Wave and Tidal Technology**

**Nick Bourne:** Does the £42 million package announced by the Minister responsible for energy at Westminster to assist in the development of wave and tidal technology help Wales, and if so, in what way? (WAQ41411)

**Andrew Davies:** The £42 million wave and tidal stream energy demonstration scheme announced by the UK Government on 31 January, is currently going through a consultation period, which ends on 25 February. I understand that it is proposed that the scheme, when finalised, will be open to application from any UK-registered business, including any potential Welsh developers. The precise location of any project is a matter for the developer, subject to securing the necessary permissions.

We will work closely with the UK Government on the allocation of the fund, which will help support the first steps towards commercialising a number of technologies as potential sources of renewable energy.

### **Energy Projects (Transfer of Powers)**

**Nick Bourne:** What discussions has the Minister had with regard to the transfer of powers over large energy projects from Westminster to Wales, and will he give details of those discussions and when the transfer is likely to be effective? (WAQ41412)

**Nick Bourne:** What meetings has the Minister had with Ministers at Westminster with regard to the transfer of powers in relation to large energy projects, and will he give details of those meetings? (WAQ41413)

**Nick Bourne:** Will the Minister provide an update on the transfer of power over large energy projects from Westminster to Wales? (WAQ41414)

**Andrew Davies:** The transfer of powers from the UK Government under sections 36 and 37 of the Electricity Act 1989 in relation to consenting projects over 50MW is being considered by a tri-partite working group of officials, chaired by the Office of the Secretary of State for Wales, and consisting of representatives of the Department of Trade and Industry and the Assembly Government.

The group has met on a number of occasions, and most recently on 2 February 2005. As I previously stated, there are a number of complex issues to consider that warrant careful examination. I envisage that the group will report to Ministers later this year. The final decision on transfer will be a matter for the UK Cabinet Committee on Devolution Policy.

### **Wave and Tidal Technology**

**Nick Bourne:** What discussions has the Minister had with the Minister responsible for energy at Westminster with regard to wave and tidal technology, and will he disclose details of any discussions? (WAQ41415)

**Andrew Davies:** Officials have been actively engaged with the Department of Trade and Industry on this issue. I have held no direct discussions on these specific technologies with UK Government Ministers. However, I am due to meet shortly with the new UK Minister responsible for energy to discuss a range of energy-related issues, including renewable energy technologies.

### **Rail Services in Wales**

**Owen John Thomas:** What steps has the Minister taken to increase the share of funding from Westminster for rail services in Wales? (WAQ41419)

**Andrew Davies:** Subject to the Railways Bill being enacted, I shall agree with the Secretary of State for Transport a transfer of funding to meet the cost of Welsh services under the Wales and borders franchise.

## Improvements and Extensions to Queen Street Station

**Owen John Thomas:** When are the proposed improvements and extensions to Queen Street station expected to be completed? (WAQ41423)

**Andrew Davies:** Arriva Trains Wales proposed standard pattern timetable for December 2005 delivers additional throughput through Queen Street by improved timetabling and service frequencies. I have agreed with the South East Wales Transport Alliance consortium of local authorities that its strategic rail programme can deliver additional capacity to the Cardiff Valleys network through infrastructure improvements to accommodate improved services and longer trains. Therefore, the major infrastructure investment agreed in principle with the former SWIFT consortium for Queen Street is not required in the short term to deliver additional capacity to the Valleys. I have, however, commissioned a further feasibility study at Queen Street to consider passenger facility/throughput improvements to accommodate the increased capacity on the network. This is due to be completed later this year.

## Economically Inactive People

**Lisa Francis:** Will the Minister make a statement on the number of economically inactive people in Wales for each year since 1999? (WAQ41448)

**Andrew Davies:** The information is given in the table. The full year's data are not yet available for 2004, so the table includes the latest quarterly information. The working age economic inactivity rate in Wales over September to November 2004 was 24.0 per cent, 1.6 percentage points below the average for 1999. Over the same period, the number of economically inactive working-age people in Wales fell by 14,000 to 426,000.

### Working age economic inactivity in Wales

	Thousands	Rate (percentage of working age population)
<b>1999(1)</b>	440	25.6
<b>2000</b>	451	26.1
<b>2001</b>	472	27.2
<b>2002</b>	448	25.7
<b>2003</b>	416	23.7

<b>Sept-Nov 2004</b>	426	24
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Source: Labour Force Survey

(1) All full years are four quarter averages running from March to February, for example 1999 = March 1999 to February 2000.

## Questions to the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning

### Private Schools

**John Griffiths:** How many primary schoolchildren in Wales receive their education at private schools and what percentage of primary schoolchildren in Wales as a whole do they constitute? (WAQ41418)

**John Griffiths:** How many secondary schoolchildren in Wales receive their education at private schools and what percentage of secondary schoolchildren in Wales as a whole do they constitute? (WAQ41430)

**John Griffiths:** How many private primary schools exist in Wales and what percentage of primary schools in Wales as a whole does this constitute? (WAQ41431)

**John Griffiths:** How many private secondary schools exist in Wales and what percentage of secondary schools in Wales as a whole does this constitute? (WAQ41432)

**The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning (Jane Davidson):** Many independent schools in Wales cater for pupils of both primary and secondary school age. The data in the table below have been compiled on the basis of the ages of pupils on roll.

### Pupils of primary and secondary school age, January 2004

	Independent schools	All schools (a)	Percentage accounted for by independent schools	
<b>Number of schools with pupils aged:(b)</b>				
	5-10	47	1,674	2.8
	11-18+	45	311	14.5
<b>Number of pupils on roll aged: (b)</b>				

	5-10	2,970	216,310	1.4
	11-18+	6,006	224,097	2.7

(a) All primary, secondary, special and independent schools.

### **The Facilities for Youth Clubs**

**Owen John Thomas:** What steps has the Minister taken to increase the facilities for youth clubs in Wales? (WAQ41420)

**Jane Davidson:** I have ensured that local authorities have received an increase in their revenue support grant from April 2001 to March 2005 in the amount of £15.25 million to strengthen the quality and reach of youth work in both statutory and voluntary youth service.

### **Welsh Language Speech Therapists**

**Owen John Thomas:** What is the timetable for increasing the provision of Welsh language speech therapists for pupils in Wales? (WAQ41421)

**Jane Davidson:** We currently commission 40 training places each year for speech and language therapists in Wales. The University of Wales Institute Cardiff runs this programme and there is an optional Welsh module included in it.

In order to increase the number of such places in Wales, we are examining the possibility of developing a similar programme in north Wales. It is intended that it will include provision for Welsh-medium places and hope that it will be possible for the course to commence by 2006.

Also, work is under way to develop a training programme for speech and language therapy assistants, which would enable them to undertake more complex work than at present and thus relieve the workload of the actual speech therapists. Again, this would allow for Welsh-medium training places.

### **Teaching Children with SEN through the Medium of Welsh**

**Owen John Thomas:** What is the timetable for increasing the provision of staff who can teach children with special educational needs through the medium of Welsh? (WAQ41422)

**Jane Davidson:** Local education authorities must have regard to meeting the linguistic needs of pupils with special educational needs in accordance with their parents' stated preference for Welsh-medium or English-medium educational and educational support provision. Parents who wish their children to receive their education through the medium of Welsh have the right to express that preference under the Education Act 1996.



We are working closely with the University of Wales Bangor and the Welsh Language Board to take forward the recommendations of the 'Acknowledging Need' report. A task and finish group is to meet shortly to develop an action plan for implementing its recommendations.

An accredited SEN bilingual e-learning course for teachers and learning support assistants is currently being developed in conjunction with all teacher training providers in Wales. This course should be fully operational by September 2006.

### **Private Primary and Secondary Schools**

**John Griffiths:** How many private primary schools in Wales engage in partnerships with the state sector and what do these arrangements cover? (WAQ41433)

**John Griffiths:** How many private secondary schools in Wales engage in partnerships with the state sector and what do these arrangements cover? (WAQ41434)

**John Griffiths:** What steps are being taken, and will be taken, to encourage private schools in Wales to engage in partnerships with the state sector? (WAQ41435)

**Jane Davidson:** The information requested in WAQ41433 and WAQ41434 is not held centrally. However, information gathered during an informal survey in 2000 and confirmed in meetings with the Wales Independent Schools Council as recently as October 2004 shows that there is a good deal of partnership working between the independent and maintained sectors. Activities include sharing games and sports facilities, joint workshops covering music and science, collaboration on Safe Routes to School, students from maintained schools attending language classes in independent schools and students from an independent school attending dance classes in a comprehensive school, as well as senior pupils assisting in a local special needs school.

At present, there are no specific initiatives or steps being taken to encourage further collaboration or partnership, although I know from my meeting last year with the WISC that both sectors are keen to build on and develop the links already established.

### **The Average Amount of Money Spent on School Meals**

**Lynne Neagle:** Will the Minister provide details of the average amount of money spent on school meals, per pupil, per meal, in each local authority area in Wales? (WAQ41449)

**Jane Davidson:** This information is not collected centrally. The provision of school meals is a statutory function of local education authorities or school governing bodies where the function has been delegated.

### **The Education Maintenance Allowance**

**Eleanor Burnham:** Can you explain the criteria that have to be met for pupils who stay on at school after GCSEs to receive weekly payments of around £30? (WAQ41476)

**Jane Davidson:** I announced details of the education maintenance allowance in a written statement on 27 April 2004. The EMA is being made available to 16-year-old students in 2004-05, those aged 16 and 17 in 2005-06, and those aged 16, 17 and 18 in 2006-07. To be eligible, students must undertake at least 12 hours a week of guided learning on further education courses in school sixth forms, sixth form colleges and further education colleges. Eligible courses include those up to, and including, level three. A £30 weekly entitlement is available to students in households with an income of up to £19,630, £20 to those in the £19,631 to £24,030 income band and £10 where the household income is between £24,031 and £30,000.

### **The Reconfiguration Agenda**

**Leighton Andrews:** Will the Minister make a statement on how the new Wales-only provisions of the Higher Education Act 1998 will drive the reconfiguration agenda? (WAQ41477) [R]

**Jane Davidson:** No decision has yet been made on how the Wales-only provisions of the Higher Education Act 1998 will be exercised. The Rees group is currently considering this issue as part of its determinations and its full report is expected to be published in May 2005, together with its recommendations. 'Reaching Higher' sets out the Assembly Government's policies for strengthening the competitiveness of the higher education sector in Wales and widening access to higher education. We will continue to support the advances being made across higher education institutions in pursuit of those policies, to which I remain firmly committed.

### **Driving the Reconfiguration Agenda**

**Leighton Andrews:** What discussions has the Minister had with the UK Secretary of State for Education on the need for new powers for the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales to adopt a stronger planning role to drive the reconfiguration agenda? (WAQ41478) [R]

**Jane Davidson:** Negotiations on the Higher Education Bill were conducted with Alan Johnson. I am content with the outcomes of those negotiations on contributing towards the 'Reaching Higher' agenda. I have had no specific discussions with the UK Secretary of State for Education or her predecessor on this issue.

### **University Courses of National Strategic Importance**

**Leighton Andrews:** Does the Minister consider any specific university courses to be of 'national strategic importance' and will she state whether she has had discussions with the UK Secretary of State on this issue? (WAQ41479) [R]

**Jane Davidson:** I have had no discussions with the UK Secretary of State on any specific university courses of 'national strategic importance'. I have asked the Higher Education Funding Council of Wales to look at this issue in its remit letter for 2005-06.

### **Pupils Attending Welsh-medium Primary and Secondary Schools**

**Leighton Andrews:** What assessment has the Minister made of the likely percentages of pupils who will be in Welsh-medium primary and secondary schools in the years 2010, 2015 and 2020 and the number of Welsh-medium teachers needed? (WAQ41480)

**Jane Davidson:** Forecasts on this basis are not prepared centrally.

The most recent statistics on participation in Welsh-medium education reveal that between 1998-99 and 2002-03, the percentage of primary schoolchildren receiving most of their instruction through the medium of Welsh increased from 17.7 per cent to 18.7 per cent. In terms of pupil numbers, that was an increase of 377 pupils. During the same period, the percentage of secondary school pupils being taught Welsh as a first language increased from 13.3 per cent to 14.4 per cent. This represented an increase of over 3,000 pupils of compulsory secondary school age. This reflects the fact that primary pupil numbers have declined rapidly over the period, while secondary numbers have risen but are expected to decline from 2005-06 onwards. Overall, pupil numbers at primary level are projected to decline from the 2002-03 base by about 10.2 per cent to 2011-12 and, over the same period, secondary pupils of compulsory school age are expected to decline by around 10.5 per cent.

Local education authorities have a duty to keep their supply of school places under review and where there is demand for particular types of provision, to bring forward proposals to meet that demand. School organisation plans are published by local education authorities that provide forecast pupil numbers to assist LEAs in assessing demand. Current plans only forecast until 2009, so could not provide a source for answering your question. Moreover, not all LEAs provide separate forecasts for Welsh-medium schools in their published plans, although most now do so. When revised guidance on school organisation plans is issued, I intend to ask LEAs to approach this issue more robustly and will suggest that surveys of parental preference should be carried out among families with very young children. This will give LEAs a sounder basis for projecting demand.

On the matter of supply of suitably qualified teachers, I recently published the terms of reference for the review of initial teacher training provision in Wales. The review will consider the quality and provision of ITT in Wales, and will focus primarily on how we might better deliver newly qualified teachers in suitable numbers appropriate to meet the needs of maintained schools in Wales. It will consider many issues, including the provision of Welsh-medium teaching and the teaching of Welsh as a second language. I also hope to publish shortly the independent review report and decisions about the future of the Welsh-medium incentive supplement scheme, which currently provides an incentive of £1,200 to eligible students undertaking qualifying secondary initial teacher training courses through the medium of

Welsh.

## **The Costings for Free School Breakfast Pilots**

**Janet Ryder:** Will the Minister publish full details of the costings for free school breakfast pilots, detailing all sources of funding? (WAQ41481)

**Jane Davidson:** The financial calculations undertaken to date can be accessed via the Assembly's website on

<http://www.information.wales.gov.uk/content/decisionreports/information/information-e.asp>. As the pilot is being progressed, we are gathering more information and evidence to enable us to move from broad estimates to more robust financial modelling. This will continue as we gather information from the pilot phase and consider evidence from the independent evaluation.

All the costings that we are currently using for the pilot are also available on the Assembly's website via <http://www.learning.wales.gov.uk/breakfast/guidance-e.htm>. These figures were developed in partnership with stakeholders between May and June 2004.

In terms of current funding levels, a sum of £1.5 million is available in 2004-05 to cover the anticipated costs of the pilot, £3.5 million for 2005-06, rising to £8.5 million in 2007-08. We will revisit these funding levels once we have considered the evidence from the pilot and the independent evaluation.

## **Questions to the Minister for Environment, Planning and Countryside**

### **Treasury Contribution for Match Funding**

**Mick Bates:** Does the £17.030 million held in modulated receipts at 31 December 2004 include any Treasury contribution for match funding and, if so, how much? (WAQ41452)

**The Minister for Environment, Planning and Countryside (Carwyn Jones):** No. The £17.030 million held at 31 December 2004 is solely composed of modulated receipts. Match funding is provided at the time at which the receipts are disbursed.

### **Biosecurity Measures**

**Nick Bourne:** What is the Minister doing to ensure that biosecurity measures, introduced following the foot and mouth disease outbreak in 2001, are being adhered to by livestock markets in Wales? (WAQ41453)

**Carwyn Jones:** Enforcement of biosecurity at livestock markets is a local authority responsibility. However, Assembly officials produced a guidance leaflet for local authorities to use as part of their biosecurity at markets. The publicity campaign was launched in October 2004.

I understand that local authorities in Wales carried out a survey into market biosecurity in November 2004, following the campaign, which is being compared with one they carried out in September 2004 to determine whether there has been any improvement in the level of biosecurity at markets. The outcome is being considered to determine what more can be done to improve the level of biosecurity at markets.

### **Commercial Pheasant Rearing**

**Nick Bourne:** Will the Minister make a statement on Welsh Assembly Government support for commercial pheasant rearing in Wales? (WAQ41454)

**Carwyn Jones:** Financial support has been made available to farmers via the Welsh Assembly Government's farm enterprise grant scheme.

### **Single Farm Payments**

**Helen Mary Jones:** Will the Minister confirm when the single farm payments will be sent out to farmers? (WAQ41463)

**Carwyn Jones:** The European Commission requires the single payment to be released between 1 December 2005 and 30 June 2006. Payments will be made as early as possible from the opening of the commission's payment window. We will be working closely with the other UK administrations to ensure that implications of delays elsewhere in the UK are minimised for Welsh farmers.

## **Questions to the Finance Minister**

### **The Local Government and Public Services Budget**

**David Lloyd:** What is the real terms percentage increase in the local government and public services budget for the following years: 2004-05 to 2005-06, 2005-06 to 2006-07 and 2006-07 to 2007-08? (WAQ39872)

*Substantive answer following holding reply issued on 23 November 2004.*

**The Finance Minister (Sue Essex):** The draft budget provides real terms percentage increases in the local government departmental expenditure limit of 2.7 per cent for 2004-05 to 2005-06, 0.7 per cent for

2005-06 to 2006-07, and 1 per cent for 2006-07 to 2007-08.

The revenue support grant increase for the period is above inflation and reflects careful consideration of the pressures of local government. The allocations provide for pay and price pressures, including provisions to address the shortfall in pension funds and the equal pay audits. The provisional local government settlement for 2005-06 contains an increase of 5 per cent over 2004-05.

The final level of the settlement for 2006-07 and 2007-08 will be determined after decisions on transfers between the RSG and other budgets have been agreed. These decisions will be made at the appropriate time and in line with the provisions of Standing Order No. 21.

### **PFI Projects**

**Leighton Andrews:** How many private finance initiative projects has the Assembly supported in (a) education, (b) health and (c) transport, since 1999? (WAQ40729)

*Substantive answer following holding reply issued on 21 December 2004.*

**Sue Essex:** The Welsh Assembly Government has supported, or will be supporting, the following projects which have reached contract signature since 1999. In many cases, it takes a number of years to reach contract signature, consequently most schemes were initiated by the former Welsh Office.

#### **Education**

Ceredigion County Council—Ysgol Penweddig

Pembrokeshire County Council—Pembroke Dock Primary School

Caerphilly County Borough Council—Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni and Lewis Boys School

Conwy County Borough Council—two-school scheme

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council—lifelong learning facilities, Church Village

#### **Health**

Cardiff and Vale NHS Trust—St David's Community Hospital

Bro Morgannwg NHS Trust—Neath Port Talbot Hospital

Conwy and Denbighshire NHS Trust—renal and diabetic unit

#### **Transport**

Welsh Development Agency—Lloyd George Avenue/Callaghan Square

Newport County Borough Council—southern distributor road

Caerphilly County Borough Council—Sirhowy Enterprise Way

## **The Standard Spending Assessments**

**Michael German:** Will the Minister publish, for each unitary authority in Wales, the demographic data used in calculating the standard spending assessments for 2005-06 and the change in these data lines from 2004-05? (WAQ41457)

**Sue Essex:** The demographic and other data used in calculating the standard spending assessments for 2004-05 were published in the publication 'Background Information for Standard Spending Assessments 2004-05' in March 2004, and it is available on the Assembly's website. The publication containing the data for 2005-06 will be published towards the end of this month.

## **The Contribution to Local Authority Budget Requirements**

**Michael German:** Will the Minister make a statement on the contribution made to local authority budget requirements of transfers from general reserves? (WAQ41458)

**Sue Essex:** Section 32 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 sets out how a billing authority should calculate its budget requirement. The definition of budget requirement is a local authority's funding requirement after taking account of amounts put to or drawn from reserves. Therefore transfers from reserves do not contribute to the funding of the budget requirement.

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

### **The Second Offer Scheme**

**Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Will the Minister detail the number of elective treatments made as part of the second offer scheme at a private facility, and will he list those facilities? (WAQ40938)

**The Minister for Health and Social Services (Brian Gibbons):** Current figures from the second offer commissioning team show that since April 2004 a total of 1,482 patients have been treated at alternative private providers, namely Cardiff BUPA (1,042), St Joseph's (192), Nuffield Hospital (146), Bristol BUPA (61), Wrexham BUPA (35), Werndale (4) and Worcester BUPA (2).

### **'NHS Waiting Times in Wales Vol 2—Tackling the Problem'**

**Nick Bourne:** Did the First Minister discuss the draft of the Auditor General's report 'NHS Waiting Times in Wales Vol 2—Tackling the Problem' with health officials or the Auditor General's department, or anybody else, and if so, will you give details of those discussions? (WAQ41116)

**Nick Bourne:** Did the First Minister comment on any draft of the Auditor General's report 'NHS Waiting Times in Wales Vol 2—Tackling the Problem'? (WAQ41117)

**Nick Bourne:** Did the First Minister receive a draft of the Auditor General's report 'NHS waiting Times Vol 2—Tackling the Problem'? (WAQ41118)

**Nick Bourne:** When did the First Minister receive details of the content of the Auditor General's report 'NHS Waiting Times in Wales Vol 2—Tackling the Problem'? (WAQ41119)

**Nick Bourne:** When did the First Minister receive a final copy of the Auditor General's report 'NHS Waiting Times in Wales Vol 2—Tackling the Problem'? (WAQ41120) *Transferred for answer by the First Minister.*

*Substantive answer following holding reply.*

**The First Minister (Rhodri Morgan):** As with all such reports, I was routinely advised by the Permanent Secretary last year that the National Audit Office had prepared a draft of its report on this matter. In accordance with normal convention, there was no ministerial involvement in the matter before the report's publication on 14 January. As is normal practice, my office received a copy of the final report two days before publication.

### **One Cycle of NHS-funded IVF**

**Kirsty Williams:** Will the Minister make a statement on when the policy of one cycle of NHS-funded IVF will be implemented? (WAQ41133)

*Substantive answer following holding reply.*

**Brian Gibbons:** The new IVF policy will be implemented in Wales from 1 April 2005. Health Commission Wales, which is responsible for the commissioning of this service, and the Welsh Assembly Government, recently set up a joint professional working group—the all-Wales assisted fertility working group—to discuss and recommend access criteria/policy and detailed commissioning issues. A consultation letter on the proposed access criteria for infertility treatment in Wales was issued on 13 January, and the consultation period expires on 14 March. All responses will be taken into consideration when reaching a decision.

### **The Protection of Persons with Severe Mental Impairment Living in Supported Housing Minority Report**

**Nick Bourne:** What discussions has the Minister had on the protection of persons with severe mental impairment living in supported housing minority report of the task and finish group? (WAQ41179)



*Substantive answer following holding reply.*

**Brian Gibbons:** I have seen the document referred to in the question. I will consider all of the documentation arising from the group's work, including the minority view, and announce how I intend to proceed in due course.

### **The National Institute for Clinical Excellence**

**Lynne Neagle:** Will the Minister make a statement on the changes in the relationship between the NHS in Wales and the National Institute for Clinical Excellence? (WAQ41238)

*Substantive answer following holding reply.*

**Brian Gibbons:** The change in relationship between Wales and NICE is driven by changes to NICE itself brought about by the recent Department of Health's arm's-length body review. The review will combine NICE with another England-only health body—the Health Development Agency—from 1 April 2005 and will radically change the balance of responsibilities within what was previously an England and Wales body. It is simply sensible for the Welsh Assembly Government to review its relationship with NICE in this context. The outcome of the review is that we will continue to have available to us, and continue to implement, all NICE recommendations, but we will do this on a paid-for service level agreement basis, rather than as full members of NICE itself. My senior officials met the chairman and chief executive of NICE on 21 January and detailed arrangements on the new relationship continue to be negotiated.

### **Community Health Councils**

**Nick Bourne:** What are the rules regarding the membership functions and operations of community health councils? (WAQ41327)

*Substantive answer following holding reply.*

**Brian Gibbons:** I refer you to the answer that the previous Minister gave to Laura Anne Jones WAQ27954 between 4 and 11 September 2003.

### **Dialysis Centre**

**Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Will the Minister make a statement on the current condition of the dialysis centre at West Wales General Hospital in Carmarthen? (WAQ41377)

**Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Will the Minister make a statement about a new dialysis centre for West Wales General Hospital in Carmarthen? (WAQ41378)

**Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Will the Minister make a statement about the possibility of opening a new dialysis unit at Withybush Hospital in Haverfordwest? (WAQ41379)

**Brian Gibbons:** The strategic plan of the managed clinical network and Health Commission Wales for the mid and west Wales area recognises the need to urgently replace the facilities at Carmarthen and Bronglais with modern purpose-built facilities. The medium-term strategy for the area includes provision of a new satellite dialysis unit in Pembrokeshire. This replacement and expansion programme continues to be one of the highest priorities in Health Commission Wales's commissioning plan for 2004-05 and 2005-06, together with additional capacity in Swansea. One of the issues highlighted in the plan is the need to improve the quality of physical environment of the existing units.

HCW is currently working with the renal network to take forward a tendering exercise that will see the replacement of the existing facilities in Carmarthen and Bronglais. A detailed service specification has been prepared involving the key stakeholders and it is planned to commence the tender process by the end of February 2005. It is the intention that the capacity of the new units will be in excess of the current capacity, therefore, enabling a greater number of patients to be treated.

It is hoped that the tendering process will be complete early this year, and that the replacement unit will be available by late spring or early summer 2006. HCW will be working with the service provider and local NHS trusts to explore the most effective options for minimising any disruption to patients during the replacement period and addressing as far as possible patients' concerns about the condition of facilities.

### **MRSA Rates in Nevill Hall hospital**

**Nick Bourne:** Will the Minister make a statement about MRSA rates in Nevill Hall hospital? (WAQ41416)

**Brian Gibbons:** All trusts in Wales are required to set a local target for reducing infection rates, based on the particular situation they are dealing with, and produce a local action plan for achieving that reduction. The deadline for submitting these plans to the Assembly is the end of March 2005. This will apply equally to Nevill Hall as part of the Gwent Healthcare NHS Trust.

The Nevill Hall hospital group participates in the staphylococcus aureus bacteraemia surveillance scheme established in 2001 and co-ordinated by the National Public Health Service for Wales, which collects data on bloodstream infections involving staphylococcus aureus, both the strains which respond to common antibiotics—methicillin-sensitive staphylococcus aureus or MSSA—and strains resistant to common antibiotics—methicillin-resistant staphylococcus aureus or MRSA.

Each hospital varies in its case mix and proportion of acute beds. These, and other factors, will affect the rates of infection in individual hospitals. The relevant NHS trust will, therefore, be best placed to make a statement on infection rates at Nevill Hall.

## **The MRSA Situation**

**Nick Bourne:** Will the Minister make a statement on the MRSA situation in Wales? (WAQ41417)

**Brian Gibbons:** Data collected by the National Public Health Service for Wales under the mandatory surveillance scheme of bacteraemias due to staphylococcus aureus for all trusts in Wales, established in 2001, show that MRSA causes only 4 per cent of all blood stream infections reported and that, in Wales, we have lower rates of MRSA bacteraemia than any region in England.

The Welsh Assembly Government is committed to tackling all healthcare-associated infections. In September we launched 'Healthcare Associated Infections—A Strategy for Hospitals in Wales', which gives a clear steer of what needs to be done by NHS trusts and focuses on reducing all infections, not just MRSA.

## **The Incidence of Mumps**

**Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Will the Minister make a statement on any changes in the incidence of mumps during the past 12 months, including any localised incidences? (WAQ41425)

**Brian Gibbons:** Surveillance by the National Public Health Service for Wales shows that in 2004 there were 1,887 notifications of mumps in Wales and a breakdown by local health board area is given in the table below.

South Wales has been the worst affected with significant outbreaks of mumps in schools, universities and colleges now common. The NPHS reports that:

- one in 10 primary school entrants are vulnerable to mumps infection (and measles and rubella infections), and
- about one in five young people aged between 13 and 24 years are not protected against mumps.

There is scientific consensus about the safety of the combined measles, mumps and rubella vaccine—MMR—and experts agree that a 95 per cent up-take is needed to fully protect us. However, while most parents are happy to have their children immunised, previous adverse publicity has affected the confidence of some parents. I would urge parents with unprotected children to give them the vaccine now.

**2004 - Reports by LHB of residence by month**

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total	Rate*
<b>LHB</b>														
<b>Isle of Anglesey</b>	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	10	17	30	44.29
<b>Gwynedd</b>	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	14	28	48	40.94
<b>Conwy</b>	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	4	3.62
<b>Denbighshire</b>	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	7	10	10.61
<b>Flintshire</b>	0	1	2	3	0	1	1	1	2	1	1	13	26	17.41
<b>Wrexham</b>	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	2	3	0	3	11	8.51
<b>Powys</b>	1	1	0	2	3	7	4	12	3	3	12	29	77	60.41
<b>Ceredigion</b>	2	0	1	24	1	1	4	1	3	1	2	9	49	63.63
<b>Pembrokeshire</b>	1	1	7	23	15	15	25	10	4	2	4	4	111	97.30
<b>Carmarthenshire</b>	0	4	9	16	9	9	14	6	9	9	49	70	204	116.19
<b>Swansea</b>	41	34	29	6	2	10	4	41	24	97	96	19	403	180.31
<b>Neath and Port Talbot</b>	6	21	8	5	1	6	2	5	6	14	10	5	89	66.13
<b>Bridgend</b>	0	5	3	0	1	2	2	8	2	2	1	0	26	20.19
<b>Vale of Glamorgan</b>	0	1	1	1	3	2	5	1	3	3	3	7	30	24.99
<b>Rhondda Cynon Taf</b>	2	0	2	5	28	66	16	4	1	1	7	12	144	62.34
<b>Merthyr Tydfil</b>	5	0	0	3	8	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	19	34.02
<b>Cardiff</b>	1	6	2	19	10	22	22	12	8	4	23	61	190	61.58
<b>Caerphilly</b>	20	6	9	11	7	5	4	1	4	2	5	11	85	49.94
<b>Blaenau Gwent</b>	5	1	0	0	1	0	3	1	1	5	0	3	20	28.86
<b>Torfaen</b>	89	22	27	3	3	1	0	0	2	2	2	4	155	170.58
<b>Monmouthshire</b>	12	3	16	10	6	4	7	0	2	3	2	9	74	87.22
<b>Newport</b>	18	11	11	7	6	3	10	3	4	1	2	6	82	59.07
<b>Total</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>245</b>	<b>319</b>	<b>1887</b>	<b>64.65</b>

Source of data: NPHS—co-survey district module (CDSC Wales)

\* Rate per 100,000 population

## **The Skipton Fund**

**Jenny Randerson:** Will the Minister publish how much money has been paid out in Wales in total from the Skipton fund, how much of this has been paid out in first payments of £20,000 each and how many people have received the second payment of £25,000 per person? (WAQ41442)

**Brian Gibbons:** The latest information on the Skipton fund grants paid as at 4 February 2005, as reported to the Welsh Assembly Government, indicates that in total over 2,856 stage 1 claims and 203 stage 2 claims have been paid throughout the UK.

In relation to Wales, over £3.725 million has already been paid—170 stage 1 claims equating to £3.4 million and 13 stage 2 claims equating to £325,000.

### **Sexually Transmitted Diseases (Reducing the Rate of Contraction)**

**Lisa Francis:** Will the Minister make a statement on what the Welsh Assembly Government is doing to reduce the number of people who contract sexually transmitted diseases in Wales? (WAQ41444)

**Lisa Francis:** Will the Minister make a statement on how the Welsh Assembly Government is educating the 16 to 25 age group to ensure they do not contract a sexually transmitted disease? (WAQ41445)

**Brian Gibbons:** The strategic framework for promoting sexual health in Wales was launched in 2000. It aims to improve the sexual health of the population by ensuring that people have access to sexual health information, advice and services. Specific national action to reduce the number of people who contract sexually transmitted infections include public awareness campaigns on sexually transmitted infections and HIV prevention, a grant scheme to support projects that make condoms and sexual health advice more accessible to young people, and an all-Wales sexual health network to provide a forum for the sharing of best practice in sexual health promotion. Numerous local projects have also been funded, which include the development of young people's clinics, community and schools-based sex and relationship projects, and outreach work to reach those most vulnerable to infection.

Additionally, a service and financial framework target has been set to ensure that people have access to STI testing within two working days by March 2006. This acknowledges that access to services is crucial if the spread of infection is to be halted.

### **Preventing the Spread of Sexually Transmitted Infections**

**Lisa Francis:** Will the Minister make a statement on how much money has been spent each year since 1999 on preventing the spread of sexually transmitted infections? (WAQ41446)

**Brian Gibbons:** The table below shows spending on sexual health since 1999. A national sexual health programme was put in place in 2001 to support implementation of the strategic framework for

promoting sexual health in Wales. Indicated in the table is the amount spent nationally and the amount allocated locally to support implementation of local sexual health strategies. The expenditure figures for sexual health promotion are based on budgets held by the health promotion division. Other divisions of the Assembly and local partners contribute to sexual health promotion, but it is difficult to isolate their expenditure.

### Sexual health spending summary

Financial year	National programme	Local allocation	Total
1999-2000	83,924	N/A	83,924
2000-01	124,736	N/A	124,736
2001-02	386,656	545,000	931,656
2002-03	543,539	578,000	1,121,539
2003-04	429,856	613,000	1,042,856
2004-05	393,000	644,000	1,037,000

### Sexually Transmitted Diseases (Number of People Infected Since 1999)

**Lisa Francis:** Will the Minister make a statement on the number of people, in each year since 1999, who have a sexually transmitted disease in Wales? (WAQ41447)

**Lisa Francis:** Will the Minister make a statement on the number of people, in each year since 1999, who have chlamydia in Wales? (WAQ41443)

**Brian Gibbons:** Data are not collated on the total number of all sexually transmitted infections occurring in Wales. Rather, data are presented for the key infections—gonorrhoea, chlamydia, genital warts, genital herpes and syphilis. The number of cases seen in genito-urinary medicine clinics and reported with each infection since 1999 is outlined in the tables below. Data are provided by the National Public Health Service for Wales's communicable disease surveillance centre.

**Table 1. NHS genito-urinary medicine clinics: cases seen—uncomplicated gonorrhoea**

Condition	Sex	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Uncomplicated	Males	204	316	300	300	404

Gonorrhoea	Females	103	157	131	136	189
Infection	Persons	307	473	431	436	593

**Table 2. NHS genito-urinary medicine clinics: cases seen—uncomplicated chlamydia**

Condition	Sex	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Uncomplicated	Males	738	988	1,124	1,179	1,359
Genital chlamydia	Females	1,247	1,402	1,640	1,716	1,768
Infection	Persons	1,985	2,390	2,764	2,895	3,127

**Table 3. NHS genito-urinary medicine clinics: cases seen—anogenital herpes simplex (first attack)**

Condition	Sex	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Anogenital herpes	Males	190	175	202	216	209
Simplex – first	Females	316	322	340	398	401
Attack	Persons	506	497	542	614	610

**Table 4. NHS genito-urinary medicine clinics: cases seen—anogenital warts (first attack)**

Condition	Sex	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Anogenital warts	Males	1,676	1,662	1,744	1,740	1,747
First attack	Females	1,516	1,587	1,594	1,513	1,633
	Persons	3,192	3,249	3,338	3,253	3,380

**Table 5. NHS genito-urinary medicine clinics: cases seen—primary and secondary infectious syphilis**

Condition	Sex	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Primary and secondary	Males	3	5	6	13	47
	Females	0	0	2	0	3
Infectious syphilis	Persons	3	5	8	13	50

**Owen John Thomas:** What will be the basic criteria for the administration of patients to the new facility at Llandough Hospital? (WAQ41456)

**Brian Gibbons:** The Cardiff and Vale NHS Trust intends to transfer patients to the Llandough unit from wards east 5A and east 1 at Whitchurch Hospital. The new unit will provide a service for patients who live in the central/eastern part of the Vale of Glamorgan and the Grangetown/Butetown areas of the city.

### **Reported Incidences of MRSA**

**Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Will the Minister detail in which hospitals the 481 reported incidences of MRSA occurred during 2003-04? (WAQ41462)

**Brian Gibbons:** This information is not held by the Assembly in relation to individual hospitals for 2003-04. Last week, we released, under freedom of information provisions, a copy of 2003-04 data in relation to NHS trusts in Wales that we had previously received from the National Public Health Service for Wales, which collects the data under the staphylococcus aureus bacteraemia surveillance scheme established in 2001. These data have now been placed on the Welsh Assembly Government's freedom of information website at [www.information.wales.gov.uk](http://www.information.wales.gov.uk).

### **Rates and Types of Hospital Infections**

**Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Will the Minister list, according to each hospital, rates of hospital infection, and detail the types of infections? (WAQ41464)

**Brian Gibbons:** This information is not available. Infection is a clinical diagnosis and collecting these data is labour intensive. The information was last collected in 1995. We are currently considering a proposal to conduct a UK exercise, under the auspices of the Hospital Infection Society.

### **The Role of Pharmacies within 'Informing Healthcare'**

**Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** How will the role of pharmacies be included within 'Informing Healthcare'? (WAQ41465)

**Brian Gibbons:** The information management and technology sub-group of the community pharmacy contract implementation board is currently developing integrated information management and technology support for community pharmacies. 'Informing Healthcare' is one of the key stakeholders represented on the group.

### **Reducing Hospital Infections Including MRSA**

**Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** What guidance will the Minister provide to trusts to reduce hospital infections



including MRSA? (WAQ41466)

**Brian Gibbons:** We launched the hospital strategy aimed at all healthcare-associated infections in September last year. This follows a series of initiatives over the previous two years and builds on the work undertaken by the Welsh healthcare-associated infection strategy sub-group.

All trusts are involved in action planning in response to the strategy. All trusts in Wales are required to set a local target for reducing infection rates, based on the particular situation they are dealing with, and produce a local action plan for achieving that reduction. The deadline for submitting these plans to the Assembly is the end of March 2005. In addition, we are conducting a consultation on the publication of data that we hope will assist patients in consultation with their clinicians to assess their individual risks.

### Clinical Networks for Neurology

**Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** How many managed clinical networks for neurology are there in Wales and which professions are involved in these networks? (WAQ41467)

**Brian Gibbons:** At present there are no managed clinical networks for neurology in Wales.

### Tertiary Neurosciences Services

**Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Where are the tertiary neurosciences services delivered from in Wales? (WAQ41468)

**Brian Gibbons:** Within Wales, there are two tertiary specialised neurosciences services. For south-east Wales, the service is based at the University Hospital of Wales; for south-west Wales, the service is based at Morriston Hospital. The Walton Centre in Liverpool provides specialised neurosciences services for the population of north Wales, while patients from Powys access services from the University Hospital Birmingham.

### Consultant Neurologists

**Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Which trusts in Wales have one or more consultant neurologists? (WAQ41469)

**Brian Gibbons:** The following trusts in Wales employ one or more consultant neurologists:

		WTE (whole-time equivalent)
Cardiff and Vale	5	3.64

Carmarthenshire	1	0.01
Ceredigion and Mid Wales	3	0.04
Gwent	2	1.64
Swansea	4	3.08

Information on the number of consultant neurologists within each NHS trust is accessible on the StatsWales website at <http://www.statswales.wales.gov.uk/TableViewer/tableView.aspx?ReportId=1279>.

### Whole-time Equivalent Consultant Neurologists

**Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** How many whole-time equivalent consultant neurologists are working in the NHS in Wales? (WAQ41470)

**Brian Gibbons:** There are 8.40 whole-time consultant neurologists working in the NHS in Wales. Information on the number of consultant neurologists within each NHS trust is accessible on the StatsWales website at <http://www.statswales.wales.gov.uk/TableViewer/tableView.aspx?ReportId=1279>

### Current Waiting Times for Individual Consultant Neurologists

**Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** What is the current waiting time to see each individual consultant neurologist responsible for patients in Wales, including the consultant neurologists based in the Walton Centre? (WAQ41471)

**Brian Gibbons:** Estimated quarterly waiting times information for selected specialties by consultant is published electronically by Health Solutions Wales for the Welsh Assembly Government and the estimated waiting times for consultants in neurology in Wales at 31 December 2004 is generally available at <http://www.hsw.wales.nhs.uk/ipd/400000.htm>. Information on waiting times to see consultants outside Wales is not centrally held by the Welsh Assembly Government.

### Neurological Services

**Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Which local health boards have made specific reference to the need for developing neurological services for their local population in their health, social care and wellbeing strategies? (WAQ41472)

**Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** When will the review of neurological services in Wales be published for consultation? (WAQ41473)

**Brian Gibbons:** In general, neurological services are commissioned by Health Commission Wales at an all-Wales level. Local health boards are represented on HCW's national commissioning board to ensure that their local issues are taken into account. Unsurprisingly the local health, social care and wellbeing strategies do not make reference to developing neurological services, as that would be a matter for HCW to consider.

At the present time, HCW is co-ordinating an option appraisal of potential service configurations as part of the strategic review of neurosciences services in Wales, which also involves the LHBs. The review will be published once that work has been completed.

### **NHS Dentist Register (Number of People Taken Off)**

**Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** How many people have had to be taken off a NHS dentist register in every year since 1999? (WAQ41474)

**Brian Gibbons:** Registration for NHS dental treatment is determined by the individual practice concerned. As a consequence, the number of people registered with an NHS dentist in Wales fluctuates as registers are opened and closed. The numbers of people registered will also change as continuing care and capitation arrangements lapse or are terminated by the dentist. The total number of people registered for NHS dental treatment since 1999 as a percentage of the population of Wales is as follows:

<b>Date</b>	<b>Total</b>
December 1999	50.6 per cent
December 2000	50.8 per cent
December 2001	50.6 per cent
December 2002	50.3 per cent
December 2003	50.4 per cent
December 2004	49.8 per cent

## **Questions to the Minister for Social Justice and Regeneration**

### **Revenue Funding for CCTV Schemes Operating in Powys**

**Lisa Francis:** Does the Welsh Assembly Government intend to provide revenue funding for CCTV schemes operating in Powys? (WAQ41380)

**The Minister for Social Justice and Regeneration (Edwina Hart):** No. However, it is open to community safety partnerships to use the Assembly's safer communities fund for CCTV schemes that address local priorities and when such a scheme satisfies the funding criteria.

### **Revenue Costs for CCTV in Powys**

**Lisa Francis:** Has anyone in the crime reduction unit of the Welsh Assembly Government done any research into revenue costs for CCTV in Powys and, if so, can this information be released? (WAQ41381)

**Edwina Hart:** No such research has been undertaken.

### **Funding for CCTV in Powys**

**Lisa Francis:** Is it the responsibility of the crime reduction unit of the Welsh Assembly Government to provide revenue funding for CCTV in Powys? (WAQ41382)

**Edwina Hart:** No. It is the responsibility of the responsible body which purchases a CCTV system to ensure that it is adequately maintained.

### **Free Central Heating for Older People**

**David Lloyd:** Has the Minister made any plans to follow the example of the Scottish Executive to provide free central heating for older people? (WAQ41426)

**Edwina Hart:** The home energy efficiency scheme gives priority to older people, lone parents and the disabled, who we believe are most vulnerable to fuel poverty. The scheme offers heating, insulation and security measures to householders who are 60 and who are on a qualifying benefit. A recent interim review of the scheme recommends that targeting should be improved to reach a greater proportion of fuel-poor households. I do not currently have any plans to extend provision of central heating to older people not within the existing priority group identified in 'Fuel Poverty Commitment for Wales'.

### **The Means-tested Element of the Home Energy Efficiency Scheme**

**David Lloyd:** Has the Minister made any plans to remove the means-tested element of the home energy efficiency scheme, and will she clarify why means-testing is required for this benefit? (WAQ41428)

**Edwina Hart:** The 'Fuel Poverty Commitment for Wales' sets out the Assembly Government's

commitment to end fuel poverty in vulnerable households by 2010. The home energy efficiency scheme gives priority to people on low incomes, who we believe are most vulnerable to fuel poverty. A recent interim review of the scheme recommends that targeting should be improved to reach a greater proportion of fuel-poor households. Detailed information on the scheme can be accessed at [www.housing.wales.gov.uk](http://www.housing.wales.gov.uk).

### **Housing-related Benefit**

**David Lloyd:** Will the Minister detail the amount paid in each year since 1997 in each housing-related benefit? (WAQ41429)

**Edwina Hart:** Housing-related benefits are not devolved and remain the responsibility of the Department for Work and Pensions.

### **Additional Help for First-time Buyers**

**David Lloyd:** What discussions has the Minister held with colleagues in Westminster to provide additional help for first-time buyers in Wales? (WAQ41475)

**Edwina Hart:** Housing in Wales is a devolved matter and I have not held any specific discussions with the UK Government over the issue of first-time buyers in Wales.