

Written Questions answered between 10 and 17 June 2004

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

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

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Questions to the First Minister

Wales's Post-devolution International Profile

John Griffiths: Will the First Minister make a statement on Wales's international profile post devolution? (WAQ36143)

John Griffiths: Will the First Minister make a statement on Wales's international profile post devolution? (WAQ36214)

The First Minister (Rhodri Morgan): The increasing number of diplomats and government representatives visiting Wales, our participation in European and global networks, and Welsh Assembly Government representation overseas, are testament to Wales's increased international profile. Bilateral relationships, including the memorandum of understanding signed with Latvia in Tredegar House, Newport on 13 May—which was our first with a full European member state—and the reaffirmation of the memorandum of understanding with Silesia on 4 June are further evidence of our increased stature in Europe.

Official Engagements for Sunday 6 June

John Marek: Will the Minister list his official engagements for Sunday 6 June? (WAQ36159)

The First Minister: Between 12 p.m. and 4 p.m. I met Sir Terry Matthews, owner of the Celtic Manor Resort, Ken Schofield, director of the European tour, John Jermine, chairman of Ryder Cup Wales Ltd and Rob Holt, chief executive of Ryder Cup Wales Ltd to review developments on our Ryder Cup strategy. This was followed by informal discussions concerning Sir Terry's many other business interests with him and fellow directors and by other informal discussions regarding investment projects in Wales with other companies. I then visited the site of the new course section to be laid for the Ryder Cup, following which, I watched the last two players play the last two holes and the play-off holes of the Wales Open and awarded the trophy to the winner at the end.

Questions to the Minister for Economic Development and Transport

Objective 1 Proposals (WDA and other ASPBs)

Mark Isherwood: How many Objective 1 proposals by the Welsh Development Agency and other Assembly sponsored public bodies have been accepted and how many have been turned down? (WAQ35974)

The Minister for Economic Development and Transport (Andrew Davies): One hundred Objective 1 project applications from ASPBs have been approved by Welsh European Funding Office; two applications were ineligible.

Objective 1 Proposals (Private Sector)

Mark Isherwood: How many Objective 1 proposals from the private sector have been accepted and how many turned down? (WAQ35975)

Andrew Davies: Around 179 Objective 1 applications from the private sector have been approved by WEFO. Six applications failed the minimum quality standard (European structural funds only), nine applications were invalid, 28 applications were ineligible, two applications were not selected and two applications were rejected.

The Review of the Creative Industries

Jenny Randerson: When is the Minister intending to announce the outcome of the review of the creative industries? (WAQ35977)

Andrew Davies: The Welsh Development Agency is currently completing its work on the review of the creative industries. This will be discussed with Cabinet colleagues, and I will announce the outcome of the review in the autumn.

Questions to the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning

The 'Alternative Curriculum' Scheme

Val Lloyd: Will the Minister make a statement on the 'alternative curriculum' scheme in Swansea? (WAQ36150)

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning (Jane Davidson): I am not sure which particular alternative curriculum scheme is referred to, as there are a number of schemes that are currently being undertaken in Swansea. I am encouraged to see the range of projects currently in place and that these cover the complete age range of schoolchildren.

There are approximately 500 14 to 16-year-olds receiving some form of alternative curriculum in the City and County of Swansea. The learning house initiative offers support to young people aged eight to 16, who are presenting signs of disengagement. The youth access initiative for 14 to 16-year-olds helps young people to overcome barriers and get back into education, training and employment. It does this through providing basic skills training, drop-in centres, outreach and detached youth work, outdoor activities, work tasters and vocational training.

Schools and youth access are also able to work with the fire service Dynamo project and the army on short-term projects, which can be used for personal development and to develop wider key skills and self-esteem. The outdoor education initiative provides a range of outdoor education opportunities for personal development, key skills opportunities, and genuine qualifications in a variety of outdoor education qualifications, for example, sports leaders awards, basic orienteering, surfing and beach safety.

Early Years Education

John Griffiths: Will the Minister make a statement on progress with the Assembly Government's strategy for early years education in Wales? (WAQ36151)

Jane Davidson: There are currently around 33,500 three-year-olds in Wales and it is expected that every one of these children whose parents wish them to, will have a free part-time early years place through a mixed economy of provision by September 2004. To assist with the achievement of this objective, I have made available some £40 million of additional resources to local education authorities over the period from 2002-03. Throughout this time, officials have maintained a close working relationship with individual local education authorities and their early years and childcare partnerships.

Indeed, the latest such meeting, with Newport, was on 14 May 2004.

To complement this expansion of early years places, I propose to introduce on a pilot basis, also from September, a new and innovative curriculum known as the foundation phase for three to seven-year-olds. Among the first phase of 41 pilot projects across Wales are two in Newport, one at Duffryn infants and the other in the non-maintained sector at the Tiny Tots playgroup, which is associated with the University of Wales. The remaining schools and settings will, subject to detailed monitoring and evaluation, be introduced incrementally over the period to September 2008, when all pupils between these ages will be covered. As an integral part of the introduction of this new foundation phase, the Qualifications Curriculum and Assessment Authority for Wales has recently produced a draft learning framework and this too will be piloted in these particular schools and settings.

Darpariaeth Addysg Gymraeg i Ddisgyblion Ôl-16

Owen John Thomas: Pa gynnydd y mae Dysgu ac Addysgu Cymru a'r Cyngor Addysg Cenedlaethol wedi'i wneud i ddatblygu strategaeth tymor hir ar gyfer darpariaeth addysg Gymraeg i ddisgyblion ôl-16? (WAQ36152) [W]

Jane Davidson: Mae ELWa wedi llunio strategaeth gynhwysfawr ar gyfer dysgu dwyieithog yn y sector addysg ôl-16 oed, sy'n cwmpasu pob agwedd ar ei ddarpariaeth ar gyfer oedolion sy'n dysgu Cymraeg a'r rhai sy'n dysgu trwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg.

Mae'r strategaeth hon ar gyfer y cyfnod hyd at 2010, ac mae tair rhan i'r dull gweithredu a ddisgrifiwyd ynddi, sef cynllunio'r ddarpariaeth yn well, buddsoddi mewn adnoddau dysgu, a hyfforddi ymarferwyr. Mae hefyd yn cymryd i ystyriaeth rôl ELWa wrth weithredu 'Iaith Pawb'.

Mae ELWa wedi sefydlu uned dysgu dwyieithog i lunio cynllun ar gyfer gweithredu'r strategaeth a goruchwylio'r broses weithredu. Hyd yn hyn, mae'r uned wedi:

- comisiynu ymchwil i gostau dysgu dwyieithog mewn ysgolion a cholegau,
- llunio strategaeth i gynyddu'r cyfleoedd dysgu cyfrwng Cymraeg a galwedigaethol,
- sefydlu cylch comisiynu ar gyfer datblygu adnoddau a chomisiynu adnoddau,
- ariannu ymchwil i amrywiaeth o fethodolegau dysgu dwyieithog sy'n cael eu defnyddio mewn ysgolion a cholegau, a
- lansio tri phrosiect o dan y gronfa her dysgu (sy'n werth bron i £2 filiwn gyda'i gilydd) sy'n uniongyrchol gysylltiedig â'r strategaeth dysgu dwyieithog.

Mae pwyllgor dwyieithrwydd y cyngor, sy'n cynnwys arbenigwyr a chynrychiolwyr o gyrff allanol fel Bwrdd yr Iaith Gymraeg, yn mynd ati deirgwaith y flwyddyn i adolygu hynt y gwaith o gyflawni'r amcanion.

Welsh Language Education Provision for Post-16 Pupils

Owen John Thomas: What progress has Education and Learning Wales and the National Education Council made to develop a long-term strategy for Welsh language education provision for post-16 pupils? (WAQ36152) [W]

Jane Davidson: ELWa has developed a comprehensive strategy for bilingual learning in the post-16 sector, which covers the full range of its operations for both adults learning Welsh and learning through the medium of Welsh.

The strategy is for the period to 2010 and comprises a three-pronged approach to improve provision by planning provision better, investing in learning resources and training practitioners. The strategy also takes into account ELWa's role in delivering 'Iaith Pawb'. ELWa has established a bilingual learning unit to develop and oversee delivery of the strategy. So far, the unit has:

- commissioned research into the costs of bilingual learning in schools and colleges,
- developed a strategy for increasing Welsh-medium and vocational opportunities,
- established a commissioning cycle for resource development and commissioned resources,
- funded research into various bilingual teaching methodologies which have been used in schools and colleges; and
- launched three learning challenge fund projects, jointly valued at nearly £2 million, directly related to the bilingual learning strategy.

The council's bilingualism committee reviews progress towards goals three times a year and includes language experts and representatives from external bodies, such as the Welsh Language Board.

Addysg Gymraeg i Oedolion

Owen John Thomas: Pa gynnydd y mae Llywodraeth y Cynulliad wedi'i wneud er mwyn creu cyrsiau a deunydd safonol ar gyfer addysg Gymraeg i oedolion? (WAQ36153) [W]

Jane Davidson: Yn fy llythyr cylch gwaith eleni, nodais y dylai ELWa wneud cynnydd da i ddarparu ei strategaeth dysgu dwyieithog, a rhestrais y meysydd penodol yr wyf yn disgwyl i ELWa fynd i'r afael â hwy.

Fel rhan o'i strategaeth dysgu dwyieithog, mae ELWa wedi ariannu gwaith i ddatblygu fframwaith o bum lefel iaith ar gyfer arholiadau Cymraeg i oedolion gyda Chyd-Bwyllgor Addysg Cymru. Cyrsiau sy'n addas ar gyfer y pum lefel iaith fydd y sail ar gyfer y ddarpariaeth yn y dyfodol.

Mae ELWa hefyd yn ariannu gwaith i ddatblygu cyfres o werslyfrau Cymraeg, gan gynnwys sgriptiau ar gyfer adnoddau clywedol a chanllawiau i diwtoriaid. Mae'r gwerslyfrau, y sgriptiau a'r canllawiau wedi'u hysgrifennu yn ôl fframwaith yr arholiadau Cymraeg i oedolion. Bydd ELWa'n datblygu'r deunyddiau hyn yn llawn gyda'r bwriad o'u rhoi i diwtoriaid yn ystod cyfnod y prosiect. Disgwylir

cwblhau'r prosiect erbyn Mawrth 2006.

Welsh Language Education for Adults

Owen John Thomas: What progress has the Assembly Government made in order to create standard courses and materials for Welsh language education for adults? (WAQ36153) [W]

Jane Davidson: In my remit letter this year, I have indicated that ELWa should make significant progress towards delivering its bilingual learning strategy and have set out specific areas of business that I expect ELWa to address.

As part of its bilingual learning strategy, ELWa has funded the development of a framework of five language levels for Welsh-for-adults examinations with the Welsh Joint Education Committee. Courses appropriate to the five language levels will form the basis of future provision.

ELWa is also funding the development of a series of Welsh language course books, including scripts for audio resources and guidebooks for tutors. The course books, scripts and guidebooks have been written in accordance with the Welsh-for-adults examinations framework. ELWa will be fully developing these materials and intends to make them available to tutors during the course of the project, which is scheduled for completion by March 2006.

Funding Further Education

Peter Black: Will the Minister make a statement on the funding of further education? (WAQ36154)

Jane Davidson: ELWa makes operational decisions on the allocation of funding across the range of its learning provider network, in line with its strategic planning and funding role, and in accordance with its corporate and operational plans.

ELWa's operational plan for 2004-05 sets a budget of £241.918 million for FE institutions, a 4.76 per cent increase on the previous year. Funding for the 25 FE institutions in Wales is distributed in line with ELWa's recurrent funding methodology. The budget for 2004-05 also includes moneys allocated to fund phase II of the FE pay initiative.

Full and Part-time Courses in Further Education

Peter Black: How many full and part-time courses in further education in Wales have been cancelled in the current academic year? (WAQ36155)

Jane Davidson: Neither the Welsh Assembly Government nor ELWa collects information of this nature. The information collected by ELWa relates only to courses that are delivered, not those that are initially offered and then withdrawn or cancelled.

The Merger of Osbaston Junior and Infant Schools

Michael German: When is the decision on the proposed merger of Osbaston junior and infant schools in Monmouth likely to be made? (WAQ36350)

Jane Davidson: I expect to be able to announce a decision on this proposal within the next month.

Assembly Learning Grants

Lisa Francis: In respect of your answer to WAQ36161, what other criteria will a student need to qualify for an Assembly learning grant? (WAQ36351)

Jane Davidson: There are a number of qualifying conditions attached to the Assembly learning grant scheme. As I stated in my response to your earlier question, WAQ36163, tabled 7 June, for the current academic year the criteria are set out in the ALG 2003/04 'Guidance Circular NAFCW 31/2003'. Several of these criteria also have regard to the Education (Student Support) (No. 2) Regulations 2002.

Questions to the Finance Minister

Support for the New Assembly Building

Nick Bourne: How many letters has the Welsh Assembly Government received from the public in support of the new Assembly building in Cardiff bay? (WAQ36140)

The Finance Minister (Sue Essex): From July 1999, the Welsh Assembly Government has received 30 letters from the public in support of the new building.

Opposition to the New Assembly Building

Nick Bourne: How many letters has the Welsh Assembly Government received from the public voicing opposition to the new Assembly building in Cardiff bay? (WAQ36141)

Sue Essex: From July 1999, the Welsh Assembly Government has received 127 letters from the public in opposition of the new building.

Questions to the Minister for Health and Social Services

Deaf and Hard of Hearing People (Access to Health Services)

Peter Black: Will the Minister make a statement on access to health services by deaf and hard of hearing people? (WAQ36146)

The Minister for Health and Social Services (Jane Hutt): The Welsh Assembly Government is firmly committed to ensuring that the differing needs of people are taken into account in the planning and delivery of healthcare.

I recently met with colleagues of the Royal National Institute for Deaf People to discuss its recent report entitled, 'A Simple Cure'. The Welsh Assembly Government welcomes the report, which clearly illustrates many of the issues for people who are deaf or hard of hearing in accessing healthcare. The Welsh Assembly is working closely with the NHS Wales Equality Unit, which is addressing many of the issues raised within the Royal National Institute for Deaf People report.

The Fairer Charging Guidelines

Janice Gregory: How is the Minister monitoring the implementation of the fairer charging guidelines for homecare services? (WAQ36147)

Jane Hutt: Local authorities were required, through statutory guidance, to implement fairer charging policies by 1 April 2004. I have indicated in correspondence that some work is being commissioned to help to build up a more accurate picture of how the fairer charging guidance has been implemented in practice across Wales.

The Review of Neonatal Services

Janice Gregory: Will the Minister give a progress update on the review of neonatal services in Wales? (WAQ36148)

Jane Hutt: The review was commissioned to address some of the difficulties facing the service, including increasing demand, the need to recruit more suitably trained staff and the current dispersal of neonatal units. The review is being undertaken by Health Commission Wales and is intended to:

- consider if urgent changes are needed to stabilise neonatal services for Wales;
- make recommendations to local health boards on the commissioning of neonatal services for which they are responsible; and
- inform the children and young people specialised services project led by the chief medical officer, in its work on developing standards and managed clinical network for neonatal services.

Following the work done last year by the expert neonatal group, the review is assessing the current

service issues and pressures across Wales. The review is taking account of UK-wide standards for perinatal medicine, which will be the basis of the standards for the managed clinical network for neonatal care in Wales. The review's chair is Professor Andrew Wilkinson, Professor of Paediatrics at Oxford University.

Health Commission Wales is working closely with the chief medical officer to ensure that the review and the children and young people specialised services project work collaboratively, and that both pieces of work in relation to neonatal services can be completed by October 2004.

Modernising the Health Service

Nick Bourne: Will the Minister outline her plans to modernise the health service? (WAQ36149)

Jane Hutt: The strategic long-term plan for the NHS was set out in 'Improving Health in Wales' and 'Wales: A Better Country'. 'The Review of Health and Social Care in Wales', advised by Derek Wanless, reinforced this strategic direction and plans are in place to implement the recommendations.

Four themes underpin the way forward: prevention, involving people and performance, accountability and optimising service delivery. Local health boards, working with partners, have submitted 22 Wanless local action plans, which set out the service redesign called for by the review. Evaluation of these plans is underway and a report will be provided in June. A sum of £30 million has been allocated to local health boards to assist in service redesign.

The Second Offer Scheme

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: Will the Minister make a progress report on the number of patients that have been treated under the second offer scheme since it was launched? (WAQ36157)

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: How many patients have been offered treatment at an alternative hospital as part of the second offer scheme, and how many of those patients did not accept? (WAQ36158)

Jane Hutt: Three-hundred and sixty-four patients will have been treated at alternative hospitals by the end of June. At the end of April, 315 patients had declined a second offer of treatment.

The National Minimum Standards for Care Homes

Lisa Francis: Further to the answer to WAQ35842, will the Minister consider reviewing the national minimum standards to make them less prescriptive? (WAQ36160)

Jane Hutt: I have already set out my approach on the national minimum standards for care homes for younger adults and have nothing to add to the answers given in WAQ34773, WAQ34744, WAQ35109 and specifically, on the issue of review, WAQ35842.

Care Homes for Adults

Lisa Francis: Further to the answer to WAQ35844, in relation to the ‘expert reference group’, would the Minister list the names of the representatives and their positions and would she define the word ‘stakeholders’? (WAQ36162)

Jane Hutt: Members of the expert reference group were invited on the basis of their own expertise and/or their professional or organisational background and to represent their organisation or professional body. The members of the group are set out in annex 1. In my answer to WAQ35844 I referred to ‘stakeholders’ in the context of the consultation that was undertaken. For the purposes of answering your latest question, I have defined stakeholders by reference to the consultee and/or respondent list at annex 2.

Annex 1

Expert reference group membership

Craig Crowley—Royal National Institute for Deaf People
Colin Beacock—Royal College of Nursing
Neil Betteridge—Royal Association for Disability and Rehabilitation
Ann Ivis-Shaw—Royal Association for Disability and Rehabilitation
Norma Brier—Norwood Ravenswood
James Churchill—Association for Residential Care
Dee Colam—NHIR representative
Madeline Drake—Richmond Fellowship
David Edwards—Turning Point
Carole Lee—People First
Tim Gunning—People First
Kathy Hotham—Mental After Care Association
Alan Jefferson —National Association of Inspection and Registration Officers
Malcolm Matthews—SENSE
Carol Andrews—The NHS Confederation
Jack R Mead—national service framework registered homes
Jack Piachaud—Royal College of Psychiatry
Susan Doohan—Independent Healthcare Association
Anne MacKay—Independent Healthcare Association
Duncan Tree—Local Government Association
Jim Kennedy—Local Government Association
Richard Wood—British Council of Disabled People
Don Brand—National Institute for Social Work
Frances Hasler—National Centre for Independent Living

Edna James—National Centre for Independent Living
Mary Robertson—Director of Social Services, Oxfordshire County Council
Richard Mills—National Autistic Society
Sian Lockwood—National Association of Adult Placement Services
Mike Syms—Portland College
Richard West—CHANGE
Annette Dale-Perrera—Drugscope
Sue Baker—Alcohol Concern
John Knight—Voluntary Organisations Disability Group
Muriel Charles—Leonard Cheshire
Fiona Street—Leonard Cheshire
Colin Vyvyan—National Assembly for Wales
Trish Davies—Department of Health
Derek Brown—Department of Health
David Ellis—Department of Health
Rosemary Jenkins—Department of Health
Pat Kelly—Department of Health
Barrie Fiedler—independent consultant
Maggie Pinder—independent consultant

Annex 2

Stakeholder consultees/respondents—national minimum standard care homes for younger adults, Wales

Access Groups
Action on Elder Abuse
Age Concern Cymru
Alzheimers Society
All-Wales community pharmacy services
All-Wales Forum of Parents and Carers and People with a Learning Disability
Arthritis Care in Wales
Ashcroft House, Cardiff
Association for Residential Care
Association of Crossroads Care
All-Wales Forum of Parents and Carers
British Deaf Association
British Association of Social Workers
Care Council for Wales
Carers National Association/Cymdeithas Genedlaethol y Cynhalwyr
Care Forum Wales
Cartrefi Cymru
Catholic Children and Family Care Society
Central Council for Education and Training in Social Work/Cyngor Canolog Addysg a Hyfforddiant

mewn Gwaith Cymdeithasol
Children's Commissioner for Wales
Children in Wales/Plant yng Nghumru
Commission for Racial Equality
Community practitioners and health visitors
Crossroads
Community Service Volunteers National Network
Daybreak
Depression Alliance
Disability Wales/Anabled Cymru
Diabetes UK
Director of care, Midlands
Down's Syndrome Association
Equality Groups
European Association for the Treatment of Addiction, Waterbridge House
Family Housing Association
Fair Home Care Group
First Choice Housing Association
General Medical Association
General Practitioners Committee (Wales)
Health Visitors Association (Welsh Committee)
L'Arche, Keighley West Yorkshire
Leonard Cheshire Home, Newport
Marine Court, Psychiatric Unit Ltd
Maestilo/Glyncoed Care Homes Ltd
M & J Power, Brecon
MDF Wales
Mencap Cymru
MIND Cymru
Minffordd Residential Psychiatric Home, Denbigh
National Autistic Society/Cymdeithas Genedlaethol Awtistiaeth
National Care Homes Association
National Association of Inspection and Registration Officers
National Federation of Women Institute
NW Nursing and Residential Homes Association
North East Wales Institute of Higher Education (Nursing Division)
North Wales College of Nursing and Midwifery
NSF Wales
National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children
Nurse Home Registration Offices
Opportunity Housing Trust
People First Wales
Pembrokeshire Care Homes Association

Physically Disabled and Able Bodied Cymru
Pontypridd and Rhondda NHS Trust
Professional Nursing Committee
Rescare
Registered Nursing Homes Association
RE-SOLV, Society for the Prevention of Solvent Abuse
Royal College of Nursing, chair of nursing studies
Royal National Institute of the Blind
Royal National Institute for Deaf People Cymru
Royal College of Nursing
School of Nursing and Midwifery
Standing Conference of Voluntary Organisations
SENSE Cymru
South East Wales College of Nursing and Midwifery
South Glamorgan Council on Alcohol, Dyfrig House
Standing Nursing and Midwifery Advisory Committee
St Davids Care in the Community Ltd
The Churches Counselling Service in Wales
University of Wales (Nursing, Midwifery and Health Care)
University of Wales College of Medicine, Nursing Studies
United Welsh Housing Association
United Kingdom Home Care Association
US Network
Voices from Care Cymru
Wales Council for the Blind
Wales Council for the Deaf
Wales Council for Voluntary Action/Cyngor Gweithredu Gwirfoddol Cymru
Wales Pensioners
Welsh Residential Substance Misuse Services Forum
Welsh local authorities and health authorities
Welsh Language Board
West Glamorgan Forum
Welsh Local Government Association
Welsh National Board for Nursing, Midwifery and Health Visiting
Welsh Nursing and Midwifery Advisory Committee
Youthlink Wales

Treatment for Substance Misuse in Care Homes

Lisa Francis: Further to WAQ35109, does the Minister intend to consult on relaxations to the equivalent standards for younger adults receiving treatment for substance misuse? (WAQ36209)

Jane Hutt: The national minimum standards for care homes for younger adults apply to all care homes,

irrespective of size, providing accommodation and nursing or personal care for adults aged 18 to 65 who have a range of disabilities and needs, including alcohol or substance misuse problems. In WAQ35109, I said that I would be consulting on relaxations to the national minimum standards for younger adults as they apply to small care homes, for example, those with three residents or fewer. This is in recognition of the particular issues faced by small homes in relation to the minimum standards. I have no plans to consult on relaxing the standards more generally.

Questions to the Minister for Social Justice and Regeneration

The Fire and Rescue Service in Wales

William Graham: Will the Minister make a statement concerning the fire and rescue service in Wales? (WAQ36354)

The Minister for Social Justice and Regeneration (Edwina Hart): Discussions continue between Assembly officials and our counterparts in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister over the ongoing devolution of the service to the Assembly, while the Fire and Rescue Services Bill continues its progress through Parliament.

Tackling Disadvantage

John Griffiths: Will the Minister make a statement on progress in tackling disadvantage in Wales? (WAQ36359)

Edwina Hart: Our third annual report on social inclusion in Wales sets out our strategy and outlines the progress that we are making across the Assembly Government in terms of tackling poverty and social disadvantage.