

Written Questions answered from 7 to 14 June 2001

[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 Deputy First Minister and Minister for Economic Development

Manufacturing Jobs Lost in Wales

Ron Davies: What is the Minister's estimate of the number of manufacturing jobs lost in Wales over the last 12 months? (WAQ11709)

The Deputy First Minister and Minister for Economic Development (Michael German): The latest complete annual data from the Welsh register of manufacturing employment, for the year to the end of 2000, shows that there was a net decrease in recorded manufacturing employment in Wales of just over 4,600. That net change comprises of 17,700 gross manufacturing job losses due to plant closures and contractions, and around 13,100 gross manufacturing jobs created due to new plant openings and the expansion of existing plants during this period.

Service Jobs Created in Wales

Ron Davies: What is the Minister's estimate of the number of service jobs created in Wales over the last 12 months? (WAQ11710)

Michael German: Between May 2000 and April 2001, officials have been made aware of some 8,600 new job announcements within the service sector. It should, however, be noted that these are only a proportion of the likely total number of gains. The figures have been obtained from information gleaned from the Welsh Development Agency, the training and enterprise councils, Education and Learning Wales and from media reports.

Meeting Tourism Operators in Beddgelert

Nick Bourne: Will the Minister visit Beddgelert to meet with tourism operators to discuss financial assistance to help them through the foot and mouth disease crisis? (WAQ11745)

Michael German: I will meet the secretary of the Beddgelert Tourism Association on 5 June 2001 to discuss the effects of foot and mouth disease on the area.

Official Engagements

Ron Davies: Further to my question of 15 May, will the Minister state his official engagements for 25 and 27 April 2001, the precise start and finish times, indicate at which engagements he was accompanied by civil servants and what use he made of his ministerial car? (WAQ11752)

Michael German: I undertook a number of official engagements on 25 and 27 April. Details of these are contained in the following tables:

Wednesday, 25 April

| Engagement | Start | Finish | Accompanied by Civil Servant | Ministerial Car |
|---|-------|--------|------------------------------|--|
| Mini summit on British tourism, Scottish Executive, Glasgow | 10.00 | 13.30 | Yes—special adviser | Yes—to and from Cardiff International Airport and in Glasgow |

Friday, 27 April

| Engagement | Start | Finish | Accompanied by Civil Servant | Ministerial Car |
|--|--------------|---------------|--|------------------------|
| Visit to Theatr Mwldan, Cardigan | 10.00 | 10.30 | Yes | Yes |
| View technology park and airfield development proposals, Blaenannerch airfield | 10.30 | 10.40 | Yes | Yes |
| Meeting at the Defence Evaluation and Research Agency, Aberporth | 11.00 | 12.00 | Yes | Yes |
| Visit to Gwersyll yr Urdd, Llangrannog | 12.20 | 12.50 | Yes | Yes |
| Working lunch at Ceredigion County Council offices | 13.15 | 14.20 | No (accompanied by Welsh Development Agency officer) | Yes |
| Series of visits to Lampeter Industrial Estate, followed by visit to the University of Wales, Lampeter | 15.00 | 16.00 | No (accompanied by WDA Officer) | Yes |
| Public meeting on foot and mouth disease, Elephant and Castle Hotel, Newtown | 17.00 | 19.00 | No | Yes |

Questions to the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning

Differential Gradings at Key Stage 2 Standard Assessment Tests

Alun Cairns: What consideration has the Minister given to introduce differential gradings at key stage 2 standard assessment tests? (WAQ11730)

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning (Jane Davidson): At the end of key stage 1, the vast majority of pupils achieve level 2 on the national curriculum scale of attainment. The finer grading of A to C in the tests was implemented to provide a clearer picture of pupils' abilities solely within that level.

However, at key stage 2, pupil achievement covers a broader range of levels (2 to 5) and a finer differentiation in any one level is unnecessary. The mode of testing at this key stage, that is, externally marked scripts that are returned to teachers, already provides a ready means of identifying the strengths and weaknesses of individual pupils and provides sufficient information for future learning to be appropriately targeted.

Comprehensive Schools' Use of Standard Assessment Tests

Alun Cairns: What policies are in place to ensure that comprehensive schools make use of standard assessment tests conducted in year 6 of primary school? (WAQ11731)

Jane Davidson: All maintained schools are required to provide a transfer report to receiving schools, which must contain, among other things, the pupil's statutory assessment results—both teacher

assessment and tests/tasks—at all previous key stages. These requirements are set out in the Education (Individual Pupils' Achievements) (Information) (Wales) Regulations 1997, as amended.

The statutory assessment and reporting arrangements booklets produced for schools by the Qualifications, Curriculum and Assessment Authority for Wales, suggests that continuity across the key stages is likely to be assisted through liaison between year 6 and 7 teachers, although this is not a statutory requirement.

ACCAC's guidance document, 'Making Effective Use of Assessment Information', includes examples of good practice for schools. Although not a statutory requirement, this includes example transfer forms for key stages 2 and 3, which may be used by year 7 teachers to devise appropriate work for arriving pupils.

Education Spend per Pupil

Alun Cairns: Would the Minister please list the education spend per pupil by each local education authority area? (WAQ11732)

Jane Davidson: The latest available information relates to education budgets per pupil for 2000-01 and is given in the table below. A more detailed analysis of education budgets set by local education authorities for 2000-01, including comparative information for England, is available in a paper that was presented to the Education and Lifelong Learning Committee on 9 May 2001. A copy of the paper (reference ELL 08-01 (p. 2)) is placed in the Library.

Local Authority Budgets for School Services in Wales 2000-01

| | Budget per Pupil |
|--------------------|------------------|
| Isle of Anglesey | £2,970 |
| Gwynedd | £3,060 |
| Conwy | £2,750 |
| Denbighshire | £2,630 |
| Flintshire | £2,660 |
| Wrexham | £2,730 |
| Powys | £3,180 |
| Ceredigion | £3,500 |
| Pembrokeshire | £3,080 |
| Carmarthenshire | £3,150 |
| Swansea | £2,840 |
| Neath Port Talbot | £3,080 |
| Bridgend | £2,790 |
| Vale of Glamorgan | £2,560 |
| Cardiff | £2,710 |
| Rhondda Cynon Taff | £2,810 |
| Merthyr Tydfil | £2,900 |
| Caerphilly | £2,760 |
| Blaenau Gwent | £2,920 |
| Torfaen | £2,640 |
| Monmouthshire | £2,800 |
| Newport | £2,770 |
| | |
| Wales | £2,850 |

Notes

- Source of expenditure data: 2000-01 section 52 budget returns.
- Source of pupil data: January 2000 schools census.
- Expenditure is taken as all spending allocated by the LEA to schools functions. That includes delegated services and those retained for schools by the LEA.
- Expenditure is net of income from fees, sales and charges, excludes funds raised by individual schools and also excludes funds drawn from individual school reserves.

Policies to Support Gifted and Talented Children

Alun Cairns: Would the Minister please make a statement on policies being developed to support gifted and talented children? (WAQ11733)

Jane Davidson: The education White Paper, 'Building Excellent Schools Together', published in July 1997, recognised the need for schools to stretch particularly gifted pupils to reach their full potential. With that in mind, the Government established a gifted and talented advisory group to contribute to the development of a strategy for effective provision for gifted and talented school children, including fast-tracking and accelerated learning schemes.

The Qualifications, Curriculum and Assessment Authority for Wales, which participated in the advisory group, is engaged in a survey of provision for gifted and talented pupils in Wales. An information-gathering questionnaire was issued to all local education authorities and higher education institutions in Wales and to relevant voluntary organisations. The information derived from the survey will provide examples of good practice relating to provision for these pupils and help inform the need for further guidance to encourage and develop good practice.

In addition, work is underway to develop advanced extension awards. These awards will be available from September 2002, following trials over the last two years. They will offer a challenge to the most able advanced level students. They will require a greater depth of understanding than A levels and will require students to think critically at a higher level. Advanced extension awards will be available in biology, chemistry, critical thinking, economics, English, French, geography, German, history, Irish, Latin, mathematics, physics, religious studies, Spanish, Welsh and Welsh second language.

The needs of gifted pupils have also been taken into account in the recent review of the national curriculum in Wales. A revised curriculum framework was introduced in September 2000. The curriculum gives flexibility to select material from later key stages where that is necessary to enable individual pupils to progress and demonstrate achievement.

Diagnosing Disabilities and Learning Difficulties

Alun Cairns: What support or training is provided for qualified teachers to diagnose disabilities in school pupils? (WAQ11734)

Alun Cairns: What policies are in place to support parents in aiding their child who has been diagnosed as suffering from a learning difficulty? (WAQ11736)

Jane Davidson: Under existing special educational needs legislation, parents of children with statements of SEN are entitled to access to an independent named person for advice, support and advocacy services. The code of practice on the identification and assessment of special educational needs also advocates strong parental involvement and choice in the arrangements to be made in schools and by local education authorities in meeting their child's identified needs.

The Assembly's published SEN action programme for Wales, 'Shaping the Future for Special Education', sets out important measures designed to improve further the provision made for children with SEN and their parents. A copy of the SEN action programme can be found in the Assembly Library. More recently, the Government's Special Educational Needs and Disability Bill received Royal Assent on 11 May. The new Act underpins a number of the important commitments given in the Assembly's SEN action programme, including a new duty on LEAs to make available independent advice and support services to all parents of children with SEN. Further, LEAs will be under a new duty to put in place a local conciliation service involving independent persons for the purposes of avoiding or resolving any disputes between parents, schools and the LEA over the provision to be made for their child. While parents' right of appeal to the independent SEN tribunal will remain as an important safeguard, it is hoped that many more disputes can be resolved more quickly at the local level without recourse to the more formal appeal procedure.

The Assembly's SEN action programme also recognises the importance of improved and increased SEN training opportunities, including through the Welsh medium, for teachers, specialists, governors, learning support assistants and administrators. Grant support for SEN training is provided to LEAs by the Assembly under the grants for education support and training programme. Since 1999, the Assembly has increased significantly the level of GEST funding for SEN initiatives from £1.3 million to £3.5 million to support the priorities identified in the SEN action programme. That includes support for SEN training for teachers, learning support assistants and key SEN specialists as a specific priority area under the GEST programme.

Schools can call on SEN support services provided centrally by an LEA in helping to assess the needs of a child with SEN. Schools and parents can also request an LEA to carry out a formal multi-disciplinary assessment of a child's SEN where they continue to have concerns over a child's progress. If an LEA decides, on the basis of the evidence, not to carry out a formal assessment, parents have a right of appeal to the independent SEN tribunal if they disagree with that decision.

Educational Psychologists

Alun Cairns: Would the Minister please list the number of educational psychologists in each local education authority area? (WAQ11735)

Jane Davidson: As at January 2000, the number of educational psychologists in each local authority area in Wales was as follows:

| <i>Educational Psychologists Employed by LEAs in Wales</i> | | | |
|--|--|------------------|-----------|
| LEA | Total (Full-time equivalent) | Headcount | |
| | | Full time | Part time |
| Isle of Anglesey | 2 | 2 | 0 |
| Gwynedd | 4.6 | 4 | 1 |
| Conwy | 3.5 | 3 | 1 |
| Denbighshire | 3.81 | 3 | 1 |
| Flintshire | 12.5 | 6 | 1 |
| Wrexham | 6 | 6 | 0 |
| Powys | 5 | 5 | 0 |
| Ceredigion | 2.6 | 2 | 1 |
| Pembrokeshire | 4 | 4 | 0 |
| Carmarthenshire | 8 | 8 | 0 |
| Swansea | 10.5 | 7 | 5 |
| Neath Port Talbot | 5 | 5 | 0 |

| | | | |
|--------------------|---------------|------------|-----------|
| Bridgend | 4.6 | 4 | 1 |
| Vale of Glamorgan | 3 | 3 | 0 |
| Rhondda Cynon Taff | 12.4 | 10 | 4 |
| Merthyr Tydfil | 3 | 3 | 0 |
| Caerphilly | 10.5 | 10 | 1 |
| Blaenau Gwent | 10.2 | 4 | 6 |
| Torfaen | 5 | 4 | 2 |
| Monmouthshire | 3.4 | 3 | 1 |
| Newport | 6.5 | 6 | 1 |
| Cardiff | 14.6 | 14 | 1 |
| | | | |
| Wales | 140.71 | 116 | 27 |

Students Educated at Universities in Wales

David Davies: What proportion of the overall number of UK university students are educated at universities in Wales? (WAQ11840)

Jane Davidson: Provisional figures for 2000-01 from the Higher Education Statistics Agency show some 103,000 student enrolments on higher education courses at higher education institutions (universities) in Wales. That represented 5 per cent of the UK total, excluding students enrolled with the Open University.

Visits by School Children from North Wales to the Assembly

Peter Rogers: What moneys have been made available to facilitate visits by school children from north Wales to the Assembly? (WAQ11966)

Jane Davidson: Funding for schools is provided to local authorities in the local government revenue settlement. It is for each school to decide how to spend its available resources from its delegated budget.

Questions to the Minister for Environment

Wales Waste Strategy (Guidance to County Councils)

Janet Ryder: What guidance, if any, has been sent to county councils prior to the publication of the final Wales waste strategy? (WAQ11725)

The Minister for Environment (Sue Essex): The Assembly will issue a consultation paper in the near future with proposals for a Wales waste strategy. It is also establishing a working group with the Welsh Local Government Association to draw up guidance on the preparation of waste management strategies by local authorities. The aim is to have the guidance in place before publication of the final Wales waste strategy, currently scheduled for the end of this financial year.

Wrexham County Borough Council's Waste Disposal System

Janet Ryder: What kind of financial assistance has been given to Wrexham County Borough Council to enable it to develop its waste disposal system? (WAQ11726)

Sue Essex: In 1997, the then Secretary of State for Wales announced that Wrexham County Borough Council's proposed waste management scheme was one of the six private finance initiative pathfinder projects in Wales chosen by the Welsh Office for support. The council has been issued with a supplementary credit approval of £75,000 towards the costs of external fees for the preparation and procurement of its project.

Moratorium on the Development of Incinerators

Janet Ryder: Has any moratorium of any kind been placed on the development of incinerators prior to the publication of the Wales waste strategy? (WAQ11727)

Sue Essex: No moratorium has been put in place.

Alternatives to Naturally Occurring Fine Aggregates

David Davies: What steps is the Minister taking to identify alternatives to naturally occurring fine aggregates for use in the construction industry? (WAQ11841)

Sue Essex: Research published in September 2000 appraising land-based sand and gravel resources in south-east Wales considered a number of alternative supply options to ensure that the needs of the region can continue to be met for future generations. A summary is available on the Assembly's intranet. A follow-up contract will be let this month to carry out a comparative impact assessment of the supply options. That will not only examine marine and land-won resources, but will carefully assess alternatives, including importation by sea, dredging of ports, demolition and construction waste, and the use of secondary material such as fly-ash and slag.

Purchasing New Technology Road Repair Equipment

David Davies: Does the Minister have any plans to award local authorities one-off funding to assist them in purchasing new technology road repair equipment, such as the Rhinopatch, to combat the backlog of road repairs in Wales? (WAQ11844)

Sue Essex: I have no plans to award local authorities one-off funding for this purpose. Maintenance of the local road network is the responsibility of the relevant local highway authority. Local authorities receive annual revenue settlements and it is for local authorities to determine how those unhypothecated resources are allocated to and between particular services, in accordance with their perception of local needs and priorities.

I also understand that Rhinopatch is a proprietary patching system for small repairs and will do nothing to address any maintenance backlog.

Sanctioning of Sand Dredging Licences

Alun Cairns: Would the Minister make a statement on the sanctioning of sand dredging licences during the period of consultation on her 'Marine Aggregate Dredging Policy'? (WAQ11967)

Sue Essex: Draft 'Marine Aggregate Dredging Policy' is out to consultation until 27 July 2001. I have allowed dredging to continue on Nash Bank as a short-term measure while the policy is being consulted on and finalised, to ensure continuation of supply and to allow us the opportunity to put in place the longer-term policies mooted in the draft document. I am not anticipating any new applications for dredging in the Bristol Channel during the consultation period.

Increased Standards in the Design of Public Buildings

Alun Cairns: Does the design working group of the land use planning forum have plans to implement increased standards in the design of public buildings in Wales? (WAQ11968)

Sue Essex: The land use planning forum, with its working groups, was established to contribute to the revision of planning policy in Wales. They reported to me in July 2000 on the issues that they considered needed to be tackled in the review of planning policy. The land use planning forum's design working

group suggested additional and strengthened wording on design, and that was used to draft the section on design for the new 'Planning Policy Wales'. Draft 'Planning Policy Wales' was issued for consultation earlier this year. Responses to the consultation are currently being assessed.

To take forward the Assembly's commitment to raising design standards, I launched a design initiative in summer 2000. A steering group of representatives of about 50 organisations was established to assist in giving direction to the initiative, and to ensure that it gains wide support. That steering group has met on a number of occasions to discuss progress to date.

In addition to consulting on strengthened planning policy on design, a revised technical advice note has been drafted following extensive discussion with interested bodies. That draft contains references to improving the design of public buildings and public spaces as well as a wide range of other design issues, including the role of local authorities, sustainability, access for all and security. The draft technical advice note is also well illustrated and will be issued for consultation shortly.

A further element of the design initiative is the commitment to establish a design commission for Wales to parallel arrangements in other parts of the United Kingdom. Funding of £100,000 to establish this new body has been included in the Assembly budget for this year and two subsequent years. The design steering group and others were recently consulted on detailed options to set up the commission and I propose to develop a detailed scheme for submission to the Assembly later this year.

Questions to the Minister for Finance, Local Government and Communities

Regenerating Poor Quality Housing in Wales

Nick Bourne: Are there any new initiatives underway to regenerate poor quality housing in Wales? (WAQ11824)

The Minister for Finance, Local Government and Communities (Edwina Hart): We have increased the capital provision for housing by £40 million over the three years of this budget and given local authorities more flexibility in how these resources can be used. Those measures will help them develop initiatives and strategies to improve the quality of housing and address their local priorities. In addition, supplementary credit approvals of almost £50 million have recently been allocated to support such strategic housing schemes. A further £9.2 million is also available this year to improve the energy efficiency of homes in Wales. I am currently consulting on proposed reforms to private sector renewal arrangements and a new housing health and safety rating system, which will give local authorities even more scope to regenerate poor housing. This issue will be a pivotal feature of the emerging national housing strategy.

Promoting Social Inclusion in Mid and West Wales

Nick Bourne: How are the Minister's policies promoting social inclusion in mid and west Wales? (WAQ11825)

Edwina Hart: The National Assembly's annual report on social inclusion details all our policies and programmes aimed at promoting social inclusion in communities throughout Wales.

Communities First, the Assembly's groundbreaking programme for regenerating communities and addressing social inclusion, will have a significant impact on the most deprived communities in mid and west Wales.

Resources for Business Rate Relief

Kirsty Williams: What basis did the Minister use to allocate resources for business rate relief following the foot and mouth disease outbreak in Wales? (WAQ11850)

Kirsty Williams: What criteria were used to establish the resources for business rate relief for each individual county in Wales? (WAQ11851)

Edwina Hart: The resources allocated reflected our best estimates of the types, numbers and size of businesses that were most likely to be affected, based on data provided by the Valuation Office Agency. We targeted the greatest share of the grant on the areas that were hardest hit by foot and mouth disease.

Llangollen Placed in Denbighshire

Nick Bourne: Can the Minister explain why Llangollen has been placed in Denbighshire and not in Wrexham? (WAQ12013)

Edwina Hart: The review of the boundary between Denbighshire and Wrexham is still in the hands of the Local Government Boundary Commission for Wales. It would be inappropriate for me to comment on this matter before the review has been completed and the final report is published.

PFI Projects Sponsored by the National Assembly and the Welsh Office

Alun Cairns: Would the Minister please list all private finance initiative projects sponsored by the National Assembly, since its existence, and the Welsh Office, before that time? (WAQ12014)

Edwina Hart: The Assembly (and previously the Welsh Office) has sponsored two PFI schemes, namely the dualling of the A55 road across the Isle of Anglesey and the office system infrastructure review and implementation strategy information technology project for its staff and Members. PFI schemes have also been undertaken by bodies funded by the Assembly, including the NHS and Assembly sponsored public bodies. In addition, the Assembly is supporting with funding a number of projects undertaken by local authorities.

Areas of Policy where PFI is seen as a Viable Option

Alun Cairns: Would the Minister make a statement on areas of policy where the private finance initiative is seen as a viable option? (WAQ12015)

Edwina Hart: Policy relating to the development of schemes under the private finance initiative in Wales is the subject of an ongoing consultation. I have given my commitment to deliver the result of that consultation to the Assembly in the autumn.

Questions to the Minister for Health and Social Services

Expanding the Number of Consultant Neurologists' Posts

Kirsty Williams: Does the Minister have plans to expand the number of consultant neurologists' posts in Wales? (WAQ11832)

The Minister for Health and Social Services (Jane Hutt): A review of the workforce planning process for NHS Wales is underway. This year, workforce-planning data is being collected for all staff groups in the NHS in Wales, including consultants.

The data this year will be used not only to inform the education and training commissioning process, but to set staffing targets for the NHS in Wales, based on the service's identification of its staffing requirements. The data being collected for consultants is broken down by speciality, including neurologists.

The information received to date has yet to be validated.

All-Wales Ambulance Service (Benefits)

Alun Cairns: What benefits does the Minister consider that the all-Wales ambulance service provides to the people of Wales? (WAQ11833)

Jane Hutt: The Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust was established in April 1998 to provide emergency and patient transport services throughout Wales. Since then, staff and management have worked hard to provide an effective and efficient service across Wales, unimpeded by artificial boundaries between organisations.

Air Ambulance Services

Alun Cairns: What investigations has the Minister made into air ambulance services elsewhere in the United Kingdom in comparison to the service and funding of the service in Wales? (WAQ11836)

Jane Hutt: The air ambulance service in Wales has been designed to meet Welsh requirements, but my officials have checked that the proposed combination of sponsorship and charitable funding is working successfully in a number of English ambulance services.

Support Provided to the All-Wales Air Ambulance Service

Alun Cairns: Would the Minister make a statement on the support that she provides to the all-Wales air ambulance service? (WAQ11837)

Jane Hutt: I am delighted that the Automobile Association is sponsoring the air ambulance service in Wales and wish the associated charitable fund and the service itself every success. The Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust has advised that it will not approach health authorities or the National Assembly for financial assistance in the running of the service.

Financing Paramedics (All-Wales Ambulance Services)

Alun Cairns: What consideration has the Minister given to financing paramedics that are used by the all-Wales ambulance services? (WAQ11838)

Jane Hutt: In general, paramedics are financed through funding allocated by health authorities to the Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust. The air ambulance charitable fund is used to meet the costs of paramedics for the time that they spend staffing the air ambulance.

Access to Homeopathic Medicine on the NHS

Kirsty Williams: Will the Minister take steps to attempt to ensure that patients in Wales have access to homeopathic medicine on the NHS? (WAQ11839)

Jane Hutt: At present, the provision of any treatment is the responsibility of the health authorities and a matter for the clinical judgement of health professionals in consultation with their patients. All treatment, including homeopathy, must also be clinically effective and safe. That is in line with the

recommendations made in the recent House of Lords Science and Technology Committee report on complementary and alternative medicine.

The National Assembly recently issued a letter to health authorities and local health groups to draw their attention to an information pack on complementary and alternative medicine. Although the pack was not intended as expert or clinical guidance, it provides a basic source of reference on the most widely used complementary and alternative therapies and their regulating bodies, including homeopathy. A notice on the information packs will be included in the Chief Medical Officer's update in the near future.

Possible Links between Leukaemia and the Oldbury Nuclear Power Station

David Davies: Has the Assembly carried out any research into the possible links between childhood and adult leukaemia in south Monmouthshire and proximity to the Oldbury nuclear power station? (WAQ11842)

Jane Hutt: The Committee on Medical Aspects of Radiation in the Environment assesses and advises the UK Government and the devolved administrations on the health effects of natural and man-made radiation in the environment, and assess the adequacy of the available data and the need for further research.

COMARE has carried out a series of investigations into alleged increases in cancer around nuclear installations in Great Britain and is awaiting the results of a national study of childhood cancer in Great Britain, including all cases from the 1960s onwards. The study will include data on 33,000 cases of childhood cancer. COMARE has been asked to advise on which, if any, nuclear installations in Great Britain have incidences of childhood cancer and leukaemia in their vicinity that are significantly outside the distribution seen nationally. COMARE is, therefore, considering the geographical distribution of cancer to see how the pattern of cases around nuclear installations compares with the national pattern. It is envisaged that that will be the subject of COMARE's ninth report, which should be published in 2002.

The Chief Medical Officer for Wales has asked the Welsh Cancer Intelligence and Surveillance Unit for advice on Dr Busby's study into child leukaemia and cancer in Chepstow.

Alleviating the Effects of Alzheimer's Disease

Alun Cairns: Is the Minister aware of any comparisons drawn between treatment available through the NHS and treatment available privately in Wales, in relation to alleviating the effects of Alzheimer's disease? (WAQ11846)

Jane Hutt: We have no information on the extent or effectiveness of treatment that is provided outside the national health service.

Drugs Available for Treating Alzheimer's Disease

Alun Cairns: Would the Minister make a statement on the drugs available for treating Alzheimer's disease under the NHS? (WAQ11847)

Jane Hutt: The drugs donepezil, rivastigmine and galantamine can be supplied under the national health service and I expect health authorities in Wales to be taking active steps to provide these drugs in accordance with guidance issued on 19 January 2001 by the National Institute for Clinical Excellence.

We are working closely with the Department of Health and NICE to ensure that the impact of NICE guidance is measured quantitatively and qualitatively.

Monitoring in Wales will take place under the performance management framework to establish whether health authorities and trusts are taking full and proper account of the guidance. The Commission for Health Improvement will then incorporate successive NICE appraisals into its routine clinical governance.

Rural Health Forum

Kirsty Williams: Will the National Assembly for Wales fund or participate in the rural health forum? (WAQ11852)

Jane Hutt: The rural health forum is an English initiative. In Wales, we are working with all relevant parties to establish the extent of particular health problems affecting rural communities. The first tangible outcome of that has been the establishment, with Assembly funding, of a freephone rural stress helpline, which now covers all of Wales.

Prohibitions on the Import of Animal Feedstuffs into Wales

David Davies: Is the Minister aware of any prohibitions that have been placed on the import of animal feedstuffs into Wales from countries that have had recent outbreaks of foot and mouth disease? (WAQ11875) *Transferred for answer by the Minister for Rural Affairs.*

The Minister for Rural Affairs (Carwyn Jones): I am not aware of any such prohibitions of feed being imported directly into Wales. However, any feed would have to be treated appropriately and in accordance with the European requirements for the production of animal feedstuffs.

Provision of Aricept for the Treatment of Alzheimer's Disease

Alun Cairns: Will the Minister make a statement on the provision of the drug Aricept, for the treatment of Alzheimer's disease, under the NHS in Wales? (WAQ11969)

Jane Hutt: I refer to the answer that I gave to your question WAQ11847. Aricept is the trade name for donepezil.

Questions to the Minister for Rural Affairs

Action on E-mails

Peter Rogers: Will the Minister detail any actions he has taken on all e-mails received from me between 20 February and 15 May 2001 concerning the operational efficiency of his department's office in Caernarfon? (WAQ11713) [R]

Peter Rogers: Will the Minister detail any actions he has taken on all e-mails received from me between 20 February and 15 May 2001 concerning the operation of the livestock welfare disposal scheme in north Wales? (WAQ11714) [R]

Peter Rogers: Will the Minister detail any actions he has taken on all e-mails received from me between 20 February and 15 May 2001 concerning the issuing of movement licenses for farmers in north Wales? (WAQ11717) [R]

The Minister for Rural Affairs (Carwyn Jones): Numerous and varied matters have been raised. Staff in the divisional offices of the National Assembly and those of the State Veterinary Service are making strenuous efforts to help the farming community at this difficult time, working within the constraints that arise as a consequence to the livestock movement regimes. Where the Member has raised individual cases, either directly with me or with my officials, these matters have been pursued. This remains the

position and applies also to the livestock welfare disposal scheme, although operational responsibility lies with the Intervention Board.

Removing Straw from Farms (Foot and Mouth Disease)

Peter Rogers: What guidance has the Minister issued that regulates the conditions under which straw can be removed from a farm under a foot and mouth disease Form A restriction notice? (WAQ11721)

Peter Rogers: Under what conditions can straw be removed from a farm under a foot and mouth disease Form A restriction notice? (WAQ11722)

Carwyn Jones: None. Every Form A restriction is under strict veterinary supervision and no movements on or off the premises can take place except under licence by the divisional veterinary manager. Where it is deemed necessary to remove straw, the case will be considered by the divisional veterinary manager.

Legal Steps Against Smallholders in Anglesey (Foot and Mouth Disease)

Peter Rogers: Further to his reply to WAQ11724, will the Minister make a statement on whether he directed his officials to liaise with the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food on legal steps to be taken against Anglesey smallholders who were refusing to have their animals culled? (WAQ11744) [R]

Carwyn Jones: I have not issued any directions on the Anglesey cull issue.

Keeping Wales GM-free

Richard Edwards: How have the provisions of the 1993 Directive 90/220/EEC formed part of the Assembly's agricultural policies since its resolution last year to keep Wales free from genetic modification? (WAQ11835)

Carwyn Jones: The Assembly's desire is to operate the most restrictive policy possible within the context of existing European Union legislation.

Council Directive 90/220/EEC regulates deliberate releases of genetically modified organisms into the environment and requires environmental evaluation and step-by-step approval for their dissemination. The directive was transposed into UK law by the Genetically Modified Organisms (Deliberate Release) Regulations 1992 and part VI of the Environmental Protection Act 1990.

I issued a prohibition notice in respect to T25 maize, which has a part C consent under Directive 90/220/EEC, on 15 May. This gives regulatory force to the establishment of separation distances between genetically modified and non-GM crops.

The issue of this prohibition notice under section 110 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 triggers a notification to Europe under article 16 of Directive 90/220/EEC, bringing the concerns of the Assembly over possible contamination of organic and conventional crops to the heart of European decision making.

Slaughtering Animals (Foot and Mouth Disease)

David Davies: How many farms in Wales, having had animals slaughtered as a result of policies to prevent the spread of foot and mouth disease, have later proven to be free of the disease? (WAQ11843)

Carwyn Jones: None. While negative laboratory results have been returned for some farms where slaughter has taken place, this does not prove that the farm was free from the disease.

Livestock Welfare Disposal Scheme

Peter Rogers: Further to the Minister's statement to Plenary on 8 May, what actions have been taken as a result of the representations that he made to the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food on the operation of the livestock welfare disposal scheme? (WAQ11855)

Carwyn Jones: The livestock welfare disposal scheme is the responsibility of the Intervention Board. At 30 May, 457,805 animals from Wales had been registered under the scheme, of which 307,486 have been culled and 26,484 withdrawn. On average, 5,000 animals are culled each day.

A total of 123,835 animals remain registered. I understand that this figure masks a large proportion of applications that have not yet been endorsed, as required, by a private vet or which are apparently ineligible and on which more information is being sought. I have been promised a detailed analysis of this information. The Intervention Board is of the opinion that only around one half will actually end up being taken into the scheme.

For the past month, the board has also been operating with a dedicated team for on-farm slaughter in Wales. Some 21,500 animals have been dealt with by the team.

The Assembly and MAFF (Foot and Mouth Disease)

Peter Rogers: Will the Minister detail the division of responsibilities between the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food and the Assembly for the handling of the foot and mouth disease crisis in Wales? (WAQ11856) [R]

Peter Rogers: Will the Minister elaborate on his statement to Plenary on 8 May that the Assembly is running the contiguous cull as an agent of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food? (WAQ11857) [R]

Carwyn Jones: Statutory responsibility for control and eradication of foot and mouth disease rests with MAFF. Under section 41 of the Government of Wales Act 1998, officials within the National Assembly's Agriculture Department are exercising certain executive and administrative functions on behalf of MAFF. These functions include logistical arrangements associated with the cull and disposal of animals susceptible to foot and mouth disease, cleansing and disinfecting premises and the issue of movement licences.

Visits to Caernarfon Divisional Office

Peter Rogers: Will the Minister detail his transport arrangements for his visits to the Caernarfon divisional office during March 2001? (WAQ11972)

Carwyn Jones: On 24 March, I attended the Caernarfon divisional office to meet with farming representatives from Anglesey to discuss the foot and mouth disease cull on the island. The meeting was arranged at short notice and, in order to both attend the meeting and meet the timescale to fulfil my other official commitments that day, I travelled to Caernarfon by air. I visited the divisional office again on 30 March and travelled by official car.

Cull of Animals in the Black Mountains Area

Peter Rogers: Has the Minister had any discussions with the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food concerning a cull of animals in the Black Mountains area? (WAQ11974) [R]

Peter Rogers: Have the Minister's officials had any discussions with the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food concerning a cull of animals in the Black Mountains area? (WAQ11975) [R]

Peter Rogers: Is the Minister aware whether arrangements have been made for the use of equipment for a cull of animals in the Black Mountains area? (WAQ11978) [R]

Peter Rogers: Is the Minister aware whether contractors have been approached for the use of services involving a cull of animals in the Black Mountains area? (WAQ11979) [R]

Peter Rogers: Has the Minister received any representations from the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food on the need for a cull of animals in the Black Mountains area? (WAQ11983) [R]

Carwyn Jones: No.

Further Cull of Animals in the Black Mountains Area

Peter Rogers: Is the Minister aware whether the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food intends to conduct a further cull of animals in the Black Mountains area after 7 June 2001? (WAQ11976) [R]

Peter Rogers: Is the Minister aware of any arrangements that have been made by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food for a cull of animals in the Black Mountains area to commence after 7 June 2001? (WAQ11977) [R]

Carwyn Jones: I refute any suggestion that there are plans for a cull. Such rumours are nonsense.

Existence of Foot and Mouth Disease Prior to 1 January 2001

Peter Rogers: Has the Minister had any discussions with the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food as to the existence of foot and mouth disease in England and Wales prior to 1 January 2001? (WAQ11980) [R]

Carwyn Jones: No, as the first case in the current outbreak of the disease was confirmed at an abattoir in England on 20 February 2001.

Suspected Cases of Foot and Mouth Disease Prior to 20 February 2001

Peter Rogers: Is the Minister aware of any suspected case of foot and mouth disease in England and Wales prior to 20 February 2001? (WAQ11981) [R]

Carwyn Jones: Prior to the date in question, the disease was confirmed in 1981 and 1968.

The Movement of Stock for Monsieur Nozin

Peter Rogers: Will the Minister report on the actions taken as a consequence of his reply to WAQ10728, regarding the movement of stock for a Monsieur Nozin by the exporter Mr Hughes Inizan? (WAQ11982) [R]

Carwyn Jones: I will write to the Member and place a copy of the letter in the Library.

Representation on the Intervention Board

Peter Rogers: Will the Minister make a statement on how Wales has benefited from its representation on the Intervention Board? (WAQ11984)

Carwyn Jones: The Intervention Board is an executive agency and is the UK Government department responsible for receiving and accounting for the European Union's common agriculture policy guarantee funds. It is also a paying agency accredited to implement a range of CAP guarantee schemes. Operational

management of the board's functions is delegated to the Intervention Board executive agency, which has its own management structure in which the Assembly is not represented.