

Answers to the Written Assembly Questions for answer on 30 October 2009

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

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

Contents

- 2 Questions to the Minister for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills
- 2 Questions to the Minister for Health and Social Services

To ask the Minister for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills

Dai Lloyd (South Wales West): Will the Minister make a statement on keeping student finance within local authority control. (WAQ55034)

Answer issued on 28 October 2009

Student finance is a Welsh Assembly Government function that is delivered through Student Finance Wales, a partnership between the Welsh Assembly Government, Welsh Local Authorities and the Student Loans Company—a publicly owned UK-wide service. Some aspects of the application process are currently delegated to the twenty two local authorities across Wales, while other elements of the Student Finance system are administered by the Student Loans Company. The Welsh Assembly Government is currently working with the Welsh Local Government Association and Local Authorities to review potential delivery reform options. It is important to ensure that all public services are as efficient and effective as they could be, particularly when budgetary pressures on local and national government are as acute as they are now.

Dai Lloyd (South Wales West): Will the Minister make a statement on English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) provision in Wales. (WAQ55935) ***Transferred for answer by the Deputy Minister for Skills***

Answer issued on 19 January 2010

The Deputy Minister for Skills (John Griffiths): A key principle of our National Basic Skills Strategy for Wales, Words Talk Numbers Count, has been to ensure that “no-one is prevented from playing a full part in society by a lack of basic English or Welsh language skills”.

We have been working with Local Authorities and ESOL providers in Wales to provide support for ESOL learners through:

- the delivery of early years and family programmes for parents and carers whose first language is neither English nor Welsh;
- catch-up support programmes in schools for children falling behind in their reading and maths, including support for those children where English is an additional language;
- learning programmes for young people entering the post 16 sector;
- teacher training to deliver the new ESOL curriculum for adults based on the national literacy standards and support through continuous professional development.

But we are going further. In July, Estyn published their report:” How effective is provision for learners aged 16 to 19 years with English language acquisition needs?” In response I have asked Basic Skills Cymru to consider the findings prior to publishing a dedicated ESOL Strategy next year, so that we can better meet the needs of refugees and others who need to acquire English language skills. We will be consulting with key stakeholders soon.

Dai Lloyd (South Wales West): Will the Minister make a statement on core-funding for informal life-long learning. (WAQ55036)

Answer issued on 04 November 2009

The Deputy Minister for Skills (John Griffiths): Informal learning is learning which is not structured in terms of learning outcomes, support or time. It can take place in a range of post-16 settings, including further education institutions, school sixth forms, work based learning and community learning settings.

There is no separate core funding budget for informal learning; rather it is funded under the same budget which funds all post-16 learning provision (excluding HE). For 2010-11, we have broadly maintained the budget for post-16 provision at the level of the budget for 2009-10.

Informal learning is a key feature of Adult Community Learning. Over the past few years we have protected the allocations for local authority adult community learning provision and, in 2009-10, funding for local authorities was increased by 3.4 per cent. For 2010-11, we will continue to protect the allocations for adult community learning provision.

To ask the Minister for Health and Social Services

Dai Lloyd (South Wales West): Will the Minister make a statement on non-cancer palliative care in Swansea. (WAQ55033)

Answer issued on 28 October 2009

I expect palliative care to be provided to those who are assessed as needing it.