

Answers to the Written Assembly Questions for answer on 7 February 2011

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

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

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To ask the First Minister

Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales): Will the First Minister provide details of the total number of lawyers employed by the Welsh Assembly Government in each of the last three years. (WAQ57053)
Transferred for answer by the Permanent Secretary

Answer issued on 14 February 2011

The Permanent Secretary (Dame Gill Morgan): Please find details below:

In 2008-09 (figures as of 30 June), 86.6 lawyers (full-time equivalent) and 3 trainee solicitors were employed.

In 2009-10 (figures as of 30 June), 89.7 layers (full time equivalent) and 7 trainee solicitors were employed.

In 2010-11 (figures as of 30 June), 93.9 lawyers (full-time equivalent) and 6 trainee solicitors were employed.

The increase in the number of lawyers during the last three years were due to a number of factors- to cover maternity leave or to undertake a specific project to which a business need was justified. Some of these posts were time limited in nature and were generally undertaken by casuals or secondees.

To ask the Minister for Business and Budget

Andrew RT Davies (South Wales Central): How much money has the Welsh Assembly Government spent on Welsh language lessons for Welsh civil service staff, giving an annual figure for each of the last four years. (WAQ57050)

Answer issued on 10 February 2011

The table below sets out expenditure on Welsh language training for Welsh Assembly Government civil servants funded from the central Welsh language training budget. Departments may incur expenditure on welsh language training for their staff from their own training budgets but this information is not collected and held centrally.

Year	Expenditure (Inclusive of VAT)
2006-07	£106,494
2007-08	£151,813
2008-09	£169,143
2009-10	£153,072

Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales): How much has the Welsh Assembly Government spent on external legal advice in each of the last three years. (WAQ57052)

Answer issued on 15 April 2010

I apologise it has taken a while for me to respond. Officials have been considering what information can be provided to meet your request.

Whilst the Welsh Assembly Government does maintain records of expenditure on legal costs, this heading includes the costs of: legal advice, disbursements (for example land registry charges) and payments to client accounts (for example, an account where funds are held pending completion of a contract). The Assembly Government does not disaggregate these costs to specifically identify any one constituent element. Also in some cases, legal fees and disbursements might be rightly charged directly to a project or activity that external lawyers are supporting. As such we are unable to provide you with the costs of legal advice on its own without a good deal of manual analysis which could only be performed at disproportionate cost.

However, officials have been able to quantify how much has been spent with the external legal bodies who normally provide the Government with legal advice. Whilst some of these costs do not relate to legal advice, the figures do provide an indication of how much is being spent in this area.

In 2008-09, the Welsh Assembly Government spent some £1.0m with the external legal bodies from whom legal advice is commissioned, and in 2009-10 £1.4m was incurred. The equivalent figure for 2010-11 will be available once the annual accounts have been audited.

I will publish a copy of this letter on the Welsh Assembly Government's internet site.

Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales): How much has the Welsh Assembly Government spent on maintenance and repairs at its offices in Cathays Park, Cardiff in each of the last three years and what was the single highest item of expenditure. (WAQ57054)

Answer issued on 10 February 2011

Maintenance costs have been interpreted as those relating to the regular servicing and maintenance of plant and equipment to retain the asset in good working order. Repair costs have been interpreted as those relating to unforeseen repairs required as a result of general wear and tear.

Maintenance and repair costs for the last three full financial years are provided in the table below.

Description	Financial Year		
	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
Maintenance	£527,214.67	£561,907.69	£636,008.34
Repairs	£555,584.33	£271,951.31	£424,147.66
TOTAL	£1,082,799.00	£833,859.00	£1,060,156.00

Maintenance services are programmed on an annual basis and the cost is split into equal monthly amounts and it is therefore not possible to identify the single highest item of expenditure.

Repair services are generally high volume, low value activities and as such costs are routinely invoiced on an aggregated basis. Therefore, identification of the single highest item of expenditure could only be gathered at disproportionate cost.

To ask the Minister for Children, Education and Lifelong Learning

Brian Gibbons (Aberavon): How many Tier 1 and Tier 2 Welsh contractors have been involved in the 21st Century Schools programme. (WAQ57048)

Answer issued on 10 February 2011

The 21st Century Schools programme launched in March 2010 will ensure a strategic approach to capital funding for school investment. All local authorities were requested to submit their Strategic Outline

Programmes (SOPs) detailing their plans for long-term investment to the Assembly by 10 December 2010. DCELLS officials are currently evaluating the Strategic Outline Programmes and an announcement regarding which projects have been approved for funding will be made in summer 2011.

Until an announcement is made regarding successful projects for the first wave of funding within the 21st Century schools programme then local authorities are not in a position to begin issuing contracts to potential Welsh construction companies.

The 21st Century Schools programme will encourage local authorities to secure community benefits such as training and apprenticeship opportunities, through the adoption of a 'Community Benefits' approach to procurement which includes equality of opportunity, local supply chain opportunities especially for smaller organisations and positive environmental impacts. Authorities have been asked to indicate their procurement routes within their SOPs. I am aware that a number of local authorities are in the process of establishing collaborative procurement arrangements primarily at this stage to deliver capital projects approved in the third and final tranche of transitional grant. The Assembly Government and Local Authorities will of course seek to ensure that opportunities for improvement in this phase are identified and applied for future 21st Century Schools Programme Projects.

The Welsh Assembly Government recognises the contribution made by the construction sector to the Welsh economy and my colleague the Minister for Business and Budgets announced in October last year the establishment of a public and private sector steering group to oversee the ongoing development of the construction procurement strategy in Wales.

To ask the Minister for the Economy and Transport

Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales): What is the projected Union Modernisation Fund spend in this budget year. (WAQ57055)

Answer issued on 05 April 2011

The Wales Development Fund for Unions (WDFU) delivers upon an important One Wales commitment to establish a union modernisation fund in Wales. The WDFU is of course distinct from the UK wide Union Modernisation Fund that was formerly administered by the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform.

The total Assembly Government budget for the WDFU in the 2010/11 financial year is £63,000. Total spend to date this financial year has been almost £35,000. We will be contacting the relevant trade unions over the coming weeks to ensure that we receive final invoices before the close of this financial year.

To ask the Minister for Health and Social Services

Brian Gibbons (Aberavon): How many Tier 1 and Tier 2 Welsh contractors have been involved in major NHS contracts in Wales. (WAQ57049)

Answer issued on 14 April 2011

I can confirm that the data collated by Welsh Health Estates on the value of construction sub-contract works show that these Welsh-based companies are winning on average 60.85% of the value of the work packages let to date.

To ask the Minister for Social Justice and Local Government

Kirsty Williams (Brecon and Radnorshire): When will the Minister publish the results of his consideration of Tax Increment Financing, as announced in plenary on 29 September 2010. (WAQ57051)

Answer issued on 07 April 2011

The Welsh Assembly Government has received a few enquires from local authorities as the U.K. Government proposes to introduce Tax Increment Funding (TIF) - This followed the Deputy Prime Minister's statement that "Local Authorities in England will be granted new borrowing powers aimed at driving local investment and economic growth and that TIF will operate within a carefully designed framework of rules which the Government will work closely with Local Authorities to design.

The Local Growth White Paper confirmed that the Government in Westminster will introduce Tax Increment Financing (TIF) powers, allowing councils to fund key projects by borrowing against future increases in business rates. The UK Government are aiming to take this forward through the Local Government Resource Review which was to begin in January 2011. The Review will also look at how the distributional impacts of any new arrangements will be managed.

Welsh Ministers will study the findings of the review when published and any potential increase in Local Government's capacity for prudent long-term capital investment is to be welcomed and subject to the detail.

It is very likely that the Welsh Assembly Government will want comparable powers for Wales and if so, we will consult and work closely with local authorities and other stakeholders to develop the most fair and effective scheme for Wales and I will of course publish the results of the consultation responses.