

## **Answers to the Written Assembly Questions for answer on 5 November 2010**

[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 Health and Social Services
- 2 Questions to the Representative of the Assembly Commission

***To ask the Minister for Health and Social Services***

**Angela Burns (Carmarthen West and South Pembrokeshire):** What did the Minister take into consideration when choosing areas for the pilot of the two models of dental care referred to in her Ministerial Written Statement made on 20 October 2010. (WAQ56703)

**Angela Burns (Carmarthen West and South Pembrokeshire):** What consideration was given to Pembrokeshire to pilot the two models of dental care, given the waiting list times in the county. (WAQ56704)

***Answer issued on 04 November 2010***

Expressions of interest were sought from every dental provider and Local Health Board (LHB) in Wales with a view to selecting a maximum of 10 sites for the two pilot schemes. A total of 37 applications were received including 4 from Hywel Dda LHB, of which 1 practice was located in the former Pembrokeshire LHB area.

A panel comprising members of the dental pilot working group considered the applications against set criteria, taking into account factors such as deprivation, access, geographical spread and that there should be no risk of material financial loss to either the provider or LHB. Additional criteria included the size and type of contract; the quality of contract monitoring; clinical governance; demography; availability of LHB manpower resources to support practices; the practice's opinion regarding participation; and any specific concerns LHBs may have. Practices also had to be able to transmit data electronically for monitoring and evaluation purposes.

Following the selection process 9 practices were successful in meeting the criteria and have been chosen to participate in the pilot programme.

***To ask the Representative of the Assembly Commission***

**Angela Burns (Carmarthen West and South Pembrokeshire):** Will the Assembly Commission outline its plans for utilising empty space in the Pierhead building. (WAQ56705)

***Answer issued on 05 November 2010***

**Assembly Commissioner for the Sustainable Assembly, Lorraine Barrett AM:**

The refurbishment of the Pierhead, which was completed in the spring of 2010, focused upon the ambition to use this grade 1 listed building in a way which would inform, involve and inspire and secure the building as a centre for public engagement and debate. The resources committed to the refurbishment enabled the Assembly to act as a good custodian of this important and historic building. The work focused upon improving the openness of the building's public spaces so that they could be available for public access and events. The success of the building in this context is demonstrated by high visitor numbers (84,273 between March and October 2010), and significant demand as a venue for suitable events.

The Pierhead's office space represents a small proportion of the building as a whole and was not refurbished as part of this work. In the past, it was used by external communication staff who have now moved into Tŷ Hywel. A small amount of office space has been provided for the Auditor General for Wales and the Commissioner for Standards and it was used as office accommodation for Welsh Government staff supporting the All Wales Convention. A number of hot desks are provided for Commission staff when working in the building. There is some vacant space which provides options for future flexibility for the Assembly Commission as the remainder of the estate is fully occupied.

In terms of future use of the Pierhead's office space, the Commission holds the Pierhead as part of its functions of providing the Assembly with the property, staff and services required for the Assembly's purposes, and of promoting public awareness of the current or any pending system of devolved government. The Commission "may do anything which appears to it necessary or appropriate for the purposes of or in connection with the discharge of (those) functions".

In accordance with these requirements, the Assembly Commission, at its meeting on 19 May 2010, supported in principle a proposal for a joint Initiative between the Commission and the Wales Governance Centre of Cardiff University under which the Centre would help to develop the Pierhead as a forum for informed public debate on issues of key relevance to the work of the Assembly and for independent research, involving, also, the participation of other Welsh universities. In order to enable this Initiative to be delivered, the Centre would be allowed to make use, on a non-contractual basis, of vacant office space in the Pierhead, without extra cost to the Commission. The proposal would involve an agreed programme of activities and the defining of detailed mutual expectations.

Commission staff are continuing to consider and discuss the detail of this proposal. They are also seeking further advice on rental valuation, and on the likely market for the unoccupied space, although, this does not imply, given the legal framework within which the Commission must operate when dealing with assets such as the Pierhead, that the Commission would be free to enter into purely commercial arrangements with potential occupiers. This is a matter on which further advice, including specific legal advice, would need to be sought if any arrangement of that kind were to become a practical possibility.