

## Written Questions answered between 1 and 8 April 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

### The Government of Wales Act 1998

**Leighton Andrews:** Will the Minister list the Henry VIII powers he holds under the Government of Wales Act 1998? (WAQ34084)

**The First Minister (Rhodri Morgan):** I hold none. A Henry VIII power is a power to modify primary legislation by means of subordinate legislation. I do not have sole authority to approve any subordinate legislation: in normal circumstances, that is a function of the Assembly as a whole.

However, the Assembly has very many powers—probably in excess of 200—to modify primary legislation in this way. Several of these are on the face of the Government of Wales Act, for instance those in sections 27(9) and 28(7), which relate to the reform of the NHS and other public bodies. The others have been transferred to us by Order or conferred by subsequent Acts of Parliament. Details of all of these could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

### Asylum Seekers

**Nick Bourne:** Has the First Minister made any representations to the Home Office regarding the recent Home Office report on asylum seekers entering Britain without checks? (WAQ34106)

**The First Minister:** No.

### Prospective Civil Service Job Losses

**Nick Bourne:** Further to the Chancellor of the Exchequer's budget statement on prospective civil service job losses, will the First Minister make a statement on the impact that this will have on employment at the National Assembly for Wales? (WAQ34114)

**The First Minister:** No specific target was set by the Chancellor of the Exchequer for the National Assembly for Wales. Future staffing requirements of the Assembly are considered as part of budgetary considerations. Central support divisions will continue to look at ways of increasing efficiency so as to release resources for front-line services.

### Tax-Raising Powers

**Nick Bourne:** Has the First Minister received any communications regarding the impact of introducing tax-raising powers for the National Assembly for Wales, and, if so, will he publish those representations? (WAQ34130)

**The First Minister:** I have received no such representations. The Richard commission will be publishing the evidence it received in due course.

### Primary Legislative Powers

**Nick Bourne:** Has the First Minister received any representations regarding the impact of introducing primary legislative powers for the National Assembly for Wales, and, if he has, will he publish those representations? (WAQ34131)

**The First Minister:** I have received no such representations. The Richard commission will be publishing the evidence it received in due course.

## **The Richard Commission**

**Nick Bourne:** Is the First Minister proposing to discuss with the Welsh Local Government Association the impact of the proposals of the Richard commission? (WAQ34132)

**Nick Bourne:** Will the First Minister publish details of any discussions that he has had with the Welsh Local Government Association regarding the impact in Wales of the recommendations of the Richard commission? (WAQ34133)

**Nick Bourne:** Has the First Minister had any discussions with Westminster Ministers regarding the possible reduction of the number of MPs in Wales consequent upon introducing legislative and/or tax-raising powers into Wales, and, if so, will he publish details of those discussions? (WAQ34134)

**Nick Bourne:** Is the First Minister proposing to have discussions with representatives of other devolved institutions in the UK regarding the recommendations of the Richard commission, and, if so, will he undertake to publish details of those discussions? (WAQ34136)

**Nick Bourne:** Is the First Minister proposing to discuss the proposals of the Richard commission with the Prime Minister, and, if so, will he give an undertaking to give details of those discussions to the National Assembly for Wales? (WAQ34137)

**Nick Bourne:** When is the First Minister proposing to discuss with the Secretary of State for Wales the proposals of the Richard commission, and will he give feedback once these discussions have taken place? (WAQ34138)

**Nick Bourne:** Has the First Minister had any discussions on the possibility of a referendum in Wales concerning the Richard commission's proposals for legislative and/or tax-raising powers, and, if so, will he give details of those discussions? (WAQ34139)

**The First Minister:** I have had several brief discussions so far with the Secretary of State for Wales in the short period since the Richard commission's report was published. I will be discussing the report with a wide range of interested parties in due course. That will inform our further consideration of the report and its implications, both in Plenary on 28 April and subsequently. Details of my discussions, and those of my colleagues, with UK and devolved Ministers, and with others, may in many cases be confidential under the terms of the Assembly's Code of Practice on Public Access to Information.

## **Referendum on Legislative and/or Tax-raising Powers**

**Nick Bourne:** Will the First Minister set out the cost of any possible referendum on legislative and/or tax-raising powers for the Assembly? (WAQ34140)

**The First Minister:** The cost of the 1997 referendum was in the order of £3 million at 1997 prices. However, I have no intention of providing an estimate of the cost of a hypothetical referendum to be held on an unknown date.

## **The Richard Commission Report**

**Nick Bourne:** Will the First Minister give an early report to the National Assembly for Wales when he has had discussions with the Secretary of State for Wales and Westminster Ministers about the Richard commission report? (WAQ34141)

**The First Minister:** I have had several brief discussions so far with the Secretary of State for Wales in the short period since the Richard commission's report was published. I will be discussing the report with a wide range of interested parties in due course. That will inform our further consideration of the report and its implications, both in Plenary on 28 April and subsequently. Details of my discussions, and those

of my colleagues, with UK and devolved Ministers, and with others, may in many cases be confidential under the terms of the Assembly's Code of Practice on Public Access to Information.

### **The Number of MPs in Wales**

**Nick Bourne:** Has the First Minister had any discussions with Labour MPs at Westminster regarding the possible reduction of the number of MPs in Wales, and if he has had such discussions, will he publish details of them? (WAQ34153)

**The First Minister:** I am not accountable to the Assembly for discussions I have in my capacity as leader of the Labour Party in Wales.

### **The 1997 White Paper, 'A Voice for Wales'**

**Leighton Andrews:** Will the First Minister list the responsibilities and powers of the National Assembly that were not set out in the 1997 White Paper, 'A Voice for Wales'? (WAQ34176)

**The First Minister:** The White Paper did not set out the Assembly's initial powers in any detail: that was left to the first transfer Order in March 1999.

Since 1999, we have acquired responsibility for the European social fund and will acquire responsibility for animal health, the fire service, the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service and student support in the reasonably near future. This is in addition to the new powers that we have received directly in several dozen Acts of Parliament.

## **Questions to the Minister for Culture, Welsh Language and Sport**

### **Pigeon Racing**

**Jocelyn Davies:** Would the Minister make a statement on the recognition of pigeon racing as a sport by the Welsh Assembly Government and will he compare this to the recognition given to this sport in England? (WAQ34050)

**The Minister for Culture, Welsh Language and Sport (Alun Pugh):** I will be meeting the Welsh North Road Federation shortly to discuss this. However, pigeon racing is not officially recognised as a sport in any of the home countries, including Wales, and I am not aware of any plans for it to be registered as such.

### **The Brecon Jazz Festival**

**Nick Bourne:** Does the Welsh Assembly Government provide any assistance to the Brecon Jazz Festival, and, if so, can details be given? (WAQ34055)

**Alun Pugh:** The Welsh Assembly Government will provide, via the Arts Council of Wales, a grant of £90,000 in 2004-05 to the Brecon Jazz Festival. This is the second year of a three-year funding programme of support to the festival, totalling £270,000.

### **The Sherman Theatre**

**Nick Bourne:** What assistance does the Welsh Assembly Government give to the Sherman Theatre? (WAQ34057)

**Alun Pugh:** The Arts Council of Wales will provide grant-in-aid funding of £491,213 to the Sherman Theatre in 2004-05.

### Olympic Facilities

**Nick Bourne:** Has the Minister made representations to his Westminster colleagues regarding potential use of lottery funds for Olympic facilities for a London-based Olympic games, and (a) if so, will he give details of these representations, and (b) if not, does he intend to make representations and what form will those representations take? (WAQ34064)

**Alun Pugh:** I have had several exchanges with Ministers from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport about a number of issues relating to the national lottery, including the proposal that lottery funds contribute towards the costs of hosting the 2012 Olympic games.

### The Tax on the Sale of Lottery Tickets

**Nick Bourne:** Has the Minister made any representations to the Westminster Government regarding scrapping the tax on the sale of lottery tickets, and, if not, will he make such representations? (WAQ34065)

**Alun Pugh:** I have not made any specific representations about this issue, nor have I received any representations on this matter. I am in regular contact with colleagues in Westminster on a wide range of issues surrounding the national lottery and its operation in Wales.

## Questions to the Minister for Economic Development and Transport

### Marketing Welsh Produce

**Brynle Williams:** Will the Minister provide details on what grants are available for marketing Welsh produce, including the nature of the grants and the amount of funds available for the years 2003-04 and 2004-05? (WAQ33245) *Transferred for answer by the Minister for Environment, Planning and Countryside*

*Substantive answer following holding reply issued on 24 March 2004.*

**The Minister for Environment, Planning and Countryside (Carwyn Jones):** The budget for the marketing development scheme for 2003-04 and 2004-05 is £350,000 per year. The processing and marketing grant, although primarily a capital grant scheme, is also able to support a small element of marketing provided that it forms an intrinsic part of a capital project. The budgets for 2003-04 and 2004-05 are as follows:

#### PMG Objective 1

2003-04	2004-05
£3.456 million (Welsh Assembly Government)	£3.456 million (WAG)
£3.456 million (Welsh European Funding Office)	£3.456 million (WEFO)

#### PMG Non Objective 1

£2.048 million	£1.8 million
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## Marketing Grants

**Brynle Williams:** Will the Minister provide details on whether there will be any cuts in the marketing grants available to promote Welsh produce for this financial year or the next financial year? (WAQ33246)  
*Transferred for answer by the Minister for Environment, Planning and Countryside*

*Substantive answer following holding reply issued on 24 March 2004.*

**Carwyn Jones:** There will be no cuts in marketing grants for this or the next financial year.

## The Welsh Development Agency's Interest in Property, Premises or Land Listed

**Alun Cairns:** Further to WAQ32598, what is the estimated market value of the WDA's interest in property, premises or land listed? (WAQ33903)

**The Minister for Economic Development and Transport (Andrew Davies):** The total valuation of the assets listed in the agency's financial report and accounts for 2002-03 is £219,587,000.

## The Community Toolkit Scheme

**Kirsty Williams:** Will the Minister make a statement on the future funding of the community toolkit scheme run by the WDA? (WAQ33923)

**Andrew Davies:** The Welsh Development Agency's community regeneration toolkit provides revenue and capital support, in partnership with local authorities and others, to help build community capacity to enable communities to deliver regeneration action plans. Funding for the scheme is provided from core grant-in-aid and European funding, under Objectives 1, 2 and 3.

## The Red Dragon Project

**Carl Sargeant:** What Assembly support, if any, has been given to the Red Dragon project at RAF Sealand, Flintshire? (WAQ34039)

**Andrew Davies:** Project Red Dragon was established to look specifically at issues concerning the Defence Aviation Repair Agency's outdated facilities and site infrastructure at St Athan in the Vale of Glamorgan. The agency's facilities at RAF Sealand are not included in project Red Dragon.

## Forest Enterprise (Promoting Enterprise)

**Nick Bourne:** Will the Minister make a statement regarding the promotion of enterprise by Forest Enterprise in Wales? (WAQ34089)

**Andrew Davies:** As of 1 April 2004, Forest Enterprise and its functions have been reintegrated into Forestry Commission Wales, and it therefore no longer exists as a separate body. Forestry Commission Wales is involved in many activities that promote enterprise in Wales, from tourism and environmental management projects to sustaining the timber processing industry, and it makes a significant contribution to the economy of many rural areas. As the largest single woodland manager in Wales, the Forestry Commission manages over 40 per cent of the woodland of Wales, and many of its most productive forests, and plays a crucial role in ensuring the continued supply of timber to the wood-processing industry.

Considerable work has been undertaken in recent years to stabilise, strengthen and develop the forest industry in Wales. The industry is estimated to generate a gross output of approximately £730 million and employs around 11,000 full-time equivalents, representing around 1 per cent of total Welsh output and employment. This activity, however, supported further output and employment in other sectors of the

economy through multiplier effects. In total, the wood-processing sector supported an estimated £980 million of gross output and around 15,780 full-time equivalent jobs. A recent example of a wood-based enterprise that has been established by the Forestry Commission through funding made available by the Welsh Assembly Government is the wood energy business scheme. This is a £13 million project to establish a network of energy plants in areas of rural Wales that will use wood as the fuel to provide a renewable source of energy for small-scale institutional use.

### **Forest Enterprise (Promoting Tourism)**

**Nick Bourne:** Has any assessment been made of the benefits to Wales of the promotion of tourism by Forest Enterprise? (WAQ34090)

**Andrew Davies:** As of 1 April 2004, the Forest Enterprise agency has been reintegrated into the Forestry Commission in Wales. The Forestry Commission has undertaken a number of studies to look at the economic impact of woodlands on tourism, as well as work to estimate the total number of visits to Forestry Commission sites, and visitors' perceptions of the quality of experience of a woodland visit. In particular:

- 'Forests' Role in Tourism' found that forest-related tourism day-visit expenditure was around £51 million per year in Wales, which is around 2 per cent of all tourism expenditure.
- The Forestry Commission is a partner in the UK day visits survey, a consortium that identifies the number of day visits to locations, including woodland, and the value of such visits. Results of the day visits survey 2002 will be published on 19 May 2004.
- An all forests Wales survey is currently being undertaken to obtain an even more accurate estimate of the number and type of visits to Forestry Commission woodlands and the economic impact of these visits. The results will be available before March 2005.

### **The Wave Dragon Project**

**Lisa Francis:** How many jobs will the Wave Dragon project create? (WAQ34099)

**Andrew Davies:** Wales has significant potential for wave and tidal technologies and it is thought that the Wave Dragon project will create approximately 15 direct jobs during its demonstration phase. It is likely to require substantial support from the fabrication and construction industry in which further jobs may be created. If the project is fully commercialised, and with WDA assistance, it is possible that a considerable number of high-value jobs could be created in the supply-chain industries such as turbine manufacturing fabrication and related services.

### **Events in Wales**

**Lisa Francis:** How much money will the Welsh Assembly Government spend on consultants who are to produce a report on the development of a strategy that will ensure that Wales gets the most out of events in Wales? (WAQ34101)

**Andrew Davies:** I refer you to the written answer, WAQ33006, that Alun Pugh gave to Jenny Randerson on 10 March.

### **Tolls on the Severn Bridge**

**Nick Bourne:** Will the Minister make representations to his counterpart in Westminster regarding the tolls on the Severn bridge? (WAQ34143)

**Andrew Davies:** Toll levels are stipulated in the Severn Bridges Act 1992 and adjusted by the retail price index published in September. The National Assembly has no power to change these tolling provisions and must abide by the terms of the concession agreement made between Severn River Crossing Plc and the Department for Transport.

Both I and transport directorate officials maintain close links with colleagues in the Department for Transport. They are aware of concerns in Wales regarding tolling provisions.

## **Questions to the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning**

### **The Cost of Arson of School Buildings**

**Nick Bourne:** Will the Minister make a statement on arson of school buildings in Wales, and what the cost of arson is to the education budget in the current year, and in every year since 1999? (WAQ34048)

**The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning (Jane Davidson):** The incidence of arson of school buildings is of great concern. School buildings are insured and the cost of rebuilding is borne by insurers, apart from any excess carried by the local education authority or the governing body or the cost of enhancing facilities as part of the rebuilding. Information on the annual cost of arson to education budgets is not held centrally.

### **Free School Breakfasts for Primary Schools**

**Nick Bourne:** Will the Minister make a statement on the costs of providing free school breakfasts for primary schools throughout Wales in each year from 2004-05 through to the end of this Assembly? (WAQ34063)

**Jane Davidson:** A sum of £1.5 million has been allocated for the financial year 2004-05 and a pilot programme will commence in September. An external evaluation contract is being let. This will provide evidence on future take up and costs, and ensure effective targeting of resources.

Funding of £3.5 million for 2005-06 was announced on 16 March in the supplementary budget statement. Detailed costings are being developed for the entire programme and these will feed into the spending review.

## **Questions to the Minister for Environment, Planning and Countryside**

### **GM Crops**

**Nick Bourne:** What contact has there been with other devolved administrations and with the Westminster Government regarding GM crops, and will the Minister publish details of any discussions that have been held? (WAQ34001)

**The Minister for Environment, Planning and Countryside (Carwyn Jones):** My officials and I have regular discussions about GM crops with colleagues in Whitehall and the devolved administrations. It would be improper of me to publish details of these discussions with colleagues that are held in confidence.

### **Farming Incomes**

**Nick Bourne:** What assessment has been made of farming incomes in Wales since 1999, and will the Minister publish any figures that are available to him? (WAQ34002)

**Carwyn Jones:** Information on net farm incomes in Wales from 1999 is shown in the table below.

Table 1.1—Net farm income by farm type (£/farm)



	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02 (a)	2002-03 (a)	2003-04 (f)
<b>Nominal terms</b>					
Dairy	14,200	12,300	29,600	18,600	19,600
Cattle and sheep (less favoured area)	3,100	3,700	1,700	12,500	16,700
Cattle and sheep (lowland)	600	700	2,200	9,100	8,300
All types	5,700	5,600	9,100	13,600	16,400

Notes: (a) excluding farms subjected to compulsory foot and mouth disease cull.

### Jobs Directly Dependent on Agriculture

**Nick Bourne:** How many jobs in Wales are directly dependent on agriculture, and how many were dependant on agriculture in each year since 1999? (WAQ34003)

**Carwyn Jones:** The information available is set out in the table below.

Labour on farms in Wales, 1999-2003

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
<b>Headcount</b>					
<b>All farm labour</b>	<b>59,500</b>	<b>55,700</b>	<b>56,400</b>	<b>56,300</b>	<b>55,600</b>
Full-time principal farmers	24,500	22,600	22,800	22,500	21,900
Part-time principal farmers	19,700	20,800	22,100	22,600	21,900
Full-time regular workers	4,700	3,800	3,700	3,300	3,700
Part-time regular workers	4,200	3,400	2,800	2,800	3,100
Casuals	6,500	5,200	4,900	5,200	5,000
<b>Change from 1999</b>					
<b>All farm labour</b>	<b>0 per cent</b>	<b>-6 per cent</b>	<b>-5 per cent</b>	<b>-5 per cent</b>	<b>-7 per cent</b>
Full-time principal farmers	0 per cent	-8 per cent	-7 per cent	-8 per cent	-10 per cent
Part-time principal farmers	0 per cent	6 per cent	12 per cent	15 per cent	11 per cent
Full-time regular workers	0 per cent	-19 per cent	-22 per cent	-29 per cent	-20 per cent
Part-time regular workers	0 per cent	-17 per cent	-32 per cent	-33 per cent	-26 per cent
Casuals	0 per cent	-21 per cent	-25 per cent	-21 per cent	-24 per cent

Source: The Welsh agricultural census, at June each year. Provides an estimate of the total headcount of workers on farms in Wales and includes persons who have other jobs off the farm. Data are not available for jobs that are related to agriculture but are not on farms. Alternative sources look at the 'primary industry of employment'. These sources do not, however, distinguish between a mechanic servicing farm machinery and one who has no agricultural connection, for example. Principal farmers include the landowner or tenant together with their spouse and any business partners. Regular workers include salaried managers.

### Chardon LL Trials

**Helen Mary Jones:** Will the Minister confirm whether the management regimes mentioned in the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs letter of 9 March to the French competent authority are replications of the regime used in the farm-scale evaluation Chardon LL trials? (WAQ34022)

**Carwyn Jones:** Herbicide management regime B outlined in the letter of 9 March 2004 to the French competent authority is an exact replication of the FSE draft label requirements for the use of glufosinate ammonium on T25 maize. Regime A outlined in the letter allows the use of other herbicides authorised under the plant protection products directive 91/414, but not in conjunction with, or after the use of, glufosinate ammonium.

## **Environmental Impacts Arising from Chardon LL Management Regimes**

**Helen Mary Jones:** What studies have been undertaken regarding the possible adverse environmental impacts arising from the two Chardon LL management regimes mentioned in the DEFRA letter of 9 March to the French competent authority? (WAQ34032)

**Carwyn Jones:** Based on the FSE data, the Advisory Committee on Releases to the Environment concluded that future cultivation of T25 maize under a management regime as in the FSE trials, such as regime B would not result in adverse environmental impact. Any other products used under herbicide regime A mentioned in the 9 March 2004 letter must have prior Government approval for safety and efficacy under the Plant Protection Products directive 91/414.

### **Chardon LL Fodder Maize**

**Helen Mary Jones:** Will the Minister make an assurance that he will take no steps to facilitate the commercialisation of Chardon LL fodder maize in the UK until he has conducted and published a review of all the studies available to him? (WAQ34034)

**Carwyn Jones:** I understand that Bayer CropScience has announced that it is withdrawing its national listing application for Chardon LL. The company is therefore not seeking to commercialise this GM crop.

### **Unitary Development Plans**

**Mark Isherwood:** What is the Welsh Assembly guidance/planning policy for social housing in unitary development plans that county councils are required to follow? (WAQ34036)

**Carwyn Jones:** The Assembly Government's land use planning policies are set out in 'Planning Policy Wales', March 2002. Chapter 9 (Housing) sets out policy on the provision of affordable housing, including social housing, specifically stating that local planning authorities must quantify their housing requirement in their unitary development plan, and include policies for affordable housing in areas where need has been identified, including any rural areas where exception sites will be considered. Detailed technical advice is contained in Technical Advice Note 2, 'Planning and Affordable Housing'.

### **Recycling Radioactive Substances**

**Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** When will the regulatory assessment for the innovative process for recycling radioactive substances be started? (WAQ34040)

**Carwyn Jones:** The regulatory process for the assessment of the innovative process for recycling radioactive substances at Amersham, Cardiff is ongoing and is specifically included in the revised authorisation issued by the Environment Agency in March 2004. The Health and Safety Executive's nuclear installations inspectorate regulates the safety of all processes on site and has issued a licence instrument to permit the project to proceed to the next stage of implementation.

### **The Amersham Development**

**Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Does the Minister intend to use for the regulatory assessment the draft 'Proposals for the Justification of Practices Involving Ionised Radiation' regulations 2004 issued in January, and if not, what alternative procedure would he propose to use for the Amersham development to comply with Article 6 of the Euratom Directive? (WAQ34041)

**Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** As the Radioactive Substances Act 1993 is devolved, legislation and parallel decision making powers have not been implemented, does the Minister intend to disregard that point of the draft regulations in respect of the urgent Amersham justification assessment? (WAQ34042)

**Carwyn Jones:** I am satisfied that justification of the practices at Amersham was considered in 1995 and the conclusion was reached that the practices were justified. Accordingly there is no need for a justification exercise to be undertaken. This is, however, without prejudice to any new and important evidence that may warrant a review of that justification decision.

#### **Policy on Vaccination (Foot and Mouth Disease)**

**Glyn Davies:** In the event of an outbreak of foot and mouth disease, what would be the Minister's policy on vaccination? (WAQ34044)

**Carwyn Jones:** In the event of an outbreak of foot and mouth disease, consideration would be given to the use of vaccination as a disease control measure. A decision on vaccination would be informed by advice from the GB State Veterinary Service, which would take account of the particular strain, the epidemiology, the developing disease characteristics and the location of the outbreak. However, the issue is currently the responsibility of the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. Nevertheless, the Assembly Government is in the process of negotiating the transfer of residual animal health powers that would give me such responsibility.

#### **Organic Agricultural Land in Wales**

**Glyn Davies:** Further to WAQ29398 has the percentage of agricultural land in Wales that has managed organically increased and if so, by how much? (WAQ34045)

**Carwyn Jones:** Since 1 April 2003, 34 farmers have joined the Organic Farming Scheme bringing an additional 2727ha of land into organic conversion.

#### **Commercialisation and Planting of Genetically Modified Crops in the UK**

**Mick Bates:** What is the timetable for the commercialisation and planting of genetically modified crops in the UK? (WAQ34058)

**Carwyn Jones:** I understand that Bayer CropScience has withdrawn its application to add Chardon LL to the national list. Consequently, no GM crop commercialisation in the UK is likely to occur in 2005. The timeframe for commercialisation post-2005 will be dependent on subsequent applications for the national listing of other GM crops. Regardless of any such applications, the Assembly will not support GM crop commercialisation until robust coexistence measures are in place.

#### **Meetings with UK Ministers on Genetically Modified Crops**

**Mick Bates:** How many times has the Minister met with other UK Ministers to discuss genetically modified crops, and are agendas, minutes and records of these meetings available? (WAQ34059)

**Carwyn Jones:** I have had several discussions about GM crops with my colleagues in Whitehall and the devolved administrations. It would be improper for me to make details of these confidential discussions available.

#### **Tir Gofal**

**Nick Bourne:** Will the Minister set out for each year since 1999 the number of applicants for Tir Gofal, the number of successful applicants, and the number of unsuccessful applicants? (WAQ34072)

**Carwyn Jones:** The information is as follows:

Year	Number of applications	Number of agreements	Unsuccessful applications	Under negotiation/ waiting for visit by Countryside Council for Wales.
1999	1449	525	924	
2000	881	470	411	
2001	1254	826	382	46
2003	1915	208	26	1681
Total	5499	2029	1743	1727

Note: There was no application round in 2002.

### **The Listing of Chardon LL**

**Mick Bates:** What discussions has the Minister had with other UK Ministers regarding the listing of Chardon LL? (WAQ34075)

**Carwyn Jones:** I have held many discussions with my colleagues in Westminster and the other devolved administrations regarding the listing of Chardon LL. However, I understand that Bayer CropScience has now withdrawn its application to add Chardon LL to the national list.

### **The All-Party GM Strategy Group**

**Mick Bates:** What plans does the Minister have to reform the all-party GM strategy group? (WAQ34076)

**Carwyn Jones:** I have no plans to reform the all-party GM strategy group given the consensual approach to GM policy within the Assembly.

### **GM Crops and the Listing of Chardon LL**

**Mick Bates:** What plans does the Minister have to publish current scientific and legal advice to the Welsh Assembly Government in regard of GM crops and in particular the listing of Chardon LL? (WAQ34077)

**Carwyn Jones:** I understand that Bayer CropScience has withdrawn its application to add Chardon LL to the national list. I have no plans to make available any scientific or legal advice that is not already published.

### **GM Crops**

**Mick Bates:** When will consultations on GM crop co-existence measures, voluntary GM crop free zones and compensation in regard of GM crop contamination begin? (WAQ34078)

**Carwyn Jones:** Official level discussions are on-going with the UK Government and the other devolved administrations with a view to going out to consultation in the next few months.

### **The Listing of Chardon LL**

**Mick Bates:** Will the Minister confirm that Assembly Members in Plenary will have a vote on the listing of Chardon LL and that the outcome will be binding on ministerial actions? (WAQ34079)

**Carwyn Jones:** I understand Bayer CropScience has withdrawn its application to add Chardon LL to the national list. Consequently, the issue of a vote in Plenary is irrelevant.

## Unsuccessful Applicants for Tir Gofal

**Nick Bourne:** Will the Minister detail the number of unsuccessful applicants for Tir Gofal who have failed to meet the appropriate criteria for qualification in each year from 1999 to the present date? (WAQ34088)

**Carwyn Jones:** The number of unsuccessful Tir Gofal applications in each year since 1999 is as follows:

Application unsuccessful	
<u>Round</u>	<u>Applications</u>
1999	1,265
2000	441
2001	382
2003	26

## The Brecon Beacons National Park

**Lisa Francis:** Would the Minister make a statement on the use of a website announcement by the Brecon Beacons National Park authority to notify the public of new legislation? (WAQ34110)

**Lisa Francis:** Would the Minister make a statement on the Brecon Beacons National Park authority's public consultations prior to formally adopting secondary legislation/planning protocol directly affecting the public? (WAQ34111)

**Lisa Francis:** Would the Minister make a statement on the media forms, or combinations of types of media, used in consultations for secondary legislation by the Brecon Beacons National Park authority? (WAQ34112)

**Carwyn Jones:** The planning protocol, approved by the national park authority, is not secondary legislation. It is separate from the authority's code of conduct, and I understand that the authority decided to prepare it to provide detailed guidance for Members dealing with planning. Matters related to the preparation, approval, and dissemination of the protocol are for the national park authority.

## Questions to the Finance Minister

### Local Government Services

**John Griffiths:** Will the Minister make a statement on progress in improving local government services in Wales? (WAQ33185)

**The Finance Minister (Sue Essex):** The Wales programme for improvement is proving an effective framework to start driving forward improvements in local government services, as has been verified by the report of the Audit Commission on the first full year of its operation. Much work remains and we will continue in the drive to improve services, but local authorities in Wales have embraced the Wales programme for improvement as an effective framework for improved service delivery and the benefits of this are already being seen.

*Substantive answer following holding reply issued on 24 March 2004.*

## **Staff From Ethnic Minority Backgrounds**

**Nick Bourne:** What proportion of staff working for Assembly sponsored public bodies are from ethnic minority backgrounds, and will the Minister set out the number for each ethnic minority background area and for each of the years since 1999? (WAQ34017)

**Sue Essex:** That information is not held centrally. However, ASPBs have been informed of their general duties under the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000 with which they all comply. All executive ASPBs undertake monitoring of their staff as required under the Act and either have produced (or are in the process of producing) race equality schemes of their own or ensured that their functions are exercised with due regard to the Welsh Assembly Government's own scheme.

## **Additional Funding to Primary Schools**

**Brynle Williams:** Will the Minister state what increases will be given to the education portfolio, following the announcement by her Westminster counterpart that an additional £55,000 will be given to each primary school? (WAQ34019)

**Brynle Williams:** Will the Minister make a statement on the budget increase that will be given to the education portfolio, given the announcement by the Chancellor in his budget that an additional £55,000 will go to every primary school? (WAQ34020)

**Sue Essex:** The Chancellor provided an extra £99 million in 2006-07 and an additional £219 million in 2007-08 for the Assembly. Decisions as to how funding is allocated within Wales are for the Assembly Government. These will be set out in the draft budget in the autumn.

## **Questions to the Minister for Health and Social Services**

### **The NHS Healthcare Guidance**

**Sandy Mewies:** Further to WAQ32004, could the Minister make a statement on the revision of the NHS healthcare guidance? (WAQ33905)

**The Minister for Health and Social Services (Jane Hutt):** Work is proceeding on the production of new guidance on the provision of continuing NHS health care. A draft is currently subject to external consultation, the closing date for responses being 28 May. The final version should be published by late summer 2004.

Building on this, the Welsh Assembly Government is leading an all-Wales project group, with representatives from health and social care sectors, to develop a framework to support the operation of policies and procedures for continuing NHS health care across Wales. While the responsibility for ensuring the legal and fair provision of continuing NHS health care lies with local health boards, the aim of the framework will be to develop a much more consistent and equitable approach across Wales. It is intended that the framework will be subject to consultation in the summer of 2004, and finalised by the end of the year. Local health boards will then address its implementation on a local basis.

### **The Cancer Information Set Pilots**

**Lynne Neagle:** Will the Minister issue a written statement on the cancer information set (CanIS) pilots? (WAQ33944)

**Lynne Neagle:** Will the Minister state when the cancer information set (CanIS) pilot is due to conclude? (WAQ33945)

**Jane Hutt:** I will answer these questions together. I know that significant progress has been made with the Cancer Network Information System Cymru (CaNISC) project. The major milestones reached since the beginning of the year include:

- a phased roll-out of the full implementation of the first three data sets for lung, breast and colorectal cancers is well advanced and is due for completion by April;
- all the lung cancer multi-disciplinary teams (MDTs) in the north Wales cancer network have been collecting the lung data set on new cases of lung cancer presented since the beginning of January. At two out of the three trusts data is being collected prospectively into CaNISC; and
- successful continued use of CaNISC in the lung MDT at Morriston Hospital is leading to other MDTs across Wales requesting similar access to the system. This is being taken forward with trusts.

In addition, funding has been provided by the new opportunities fund with support for project management and trainers from the Assembly Government. Because of the nature of this NOF funding, the CaNISC project has had to take a phased approach. The first phase, which is funded until March 2005, has been geared to support clinical and process information for the cancer teams in support of the cancer standards and local, all-Wales and UK-wide clinical audit. The CaNISC project board is recommending that CaNISC be used to provide the waiting times information now required to meet their service and financial framework targets in relation to cancer services. The cancer services co-ordinating group is presently having discussions about future additional funding. Should this be secured, the first phase would be consolidated and extended to Phase 2, which would address the interface between cancer teams and primary care.

### **The Referral of Suspected Cancer Services**

**Lynne Neagle:** Will the Minister outline what steps the Assembly Government has taken to measure the quality of information being provided by GPs to consultants in the referral of suspected cancer services? (WAQ33947)

**Jane Hutt:** The new general medical services contract came into force on 1 April. This brings with it substantial new investment to improve the quality of general medical services right across the board. Services to cancer patients are included in the new quality and outcomes framework. The organisational domain of the framework will focus on improving information and records and better communication with patients. The progress of each practice is measured against indicators and a system of quality points.

### **The Referral Process for Suspected Cancer Patients**

**Lynne Neagle:** Will the Minister make a statement on the action being taken by the Assembly Government to improve the referral process for suspected cancer patients in Wales? (WAQ33948)

**Jane Hutt:** In north Wales, we are piloting a self-administered patient information questionnaire, which seeks to ensure that the hospital consultant gets more information on which to make decisions. The initial feedback on this is extremely positive and I hope that the system may have wider application.

### **The Working Time Directive (Effect on Cancer Services in Wales)**

**Lynne Neagle:** What discussions has the Minister had with UK colleagues on the effect the working time directive will have on cancer services in Wales? (WAQ33949)

**Jane Hutt:** The European Joint Ministerial Committee includes Ministers from all four UK countries and has been meeting over recent months to discuss the implementation of the European working time directive.

There is an exchange between Whitehall Ministers and Ministers of the devolved administrations on the implications of the European working time directive for public services in the UK, including health.

Type of staff	Sept 1997 whole time equivalent	Sept 2002 whole time equivalent	Per cent increase
Medical and clinical consultant staff	14.9	21.3	43
Medical staff clinical oncology	30.7	42.07	39
Medical staff medical oncology	1.2	1.94	61
Medical staff palliative medicine	17.0	25.62	51
Medical staff radiology	117.6	139.2	18
Diagnostic radiographers	725.8	849.7	17
Therapeutic radiographers	59.2	91.9	55

In addition, since April 2001, a total of 72 extra specialist registrar posts have been approved, including three in clinical oncology, four in medical oncology, seven in histopathology and four in palliative medicine. The all-Wales figures for nursing staff are not broken down to identify staff dealing with cancer patients. However, the number of nurses employed at Velindre hospital, the major centre for cancer treatment in Wales, were 105.8 whole time equivalent in September 1997 and 138.9 whole time equivalent in September 2002, which represents an increase of 31 per cent.

While innovations in care does not have a specific programme targeting cancer services, these are nevertheless an integral part of several innovation schemes. The outpatient, theatre, day surgery and endoscopy programmes, and the implementing of the guide to good practice programme, all have direct impact on the effective provision of cancer services and their capacity. Innovations in care also undertook work last year that involved an assessment of service provision for the Southeast Wales cancer network. In addition, staff involved in the provision of cancer services have attended a number of innovations in care learning events.

The three cancer networks are also presently working to develop their plans of action for the delivery of updated cancer standards. These updated standards will be issued to the NHS shortly following a consultation exercise, which is presently taking place and take account of NICE and improving outcomes service guidance, including surgical aspects or urological, upper gastrointestinal and gynaecological cancer services. The networks' plans for action are to be developed following mapping, capacity and demand exercises. These plans need to contain clear measurable milestones that address reporting mechanisms to enable monitoring of the patient wait from referral to start of treatment. In addition, these plans need to feed into the work being undertaken by the local health boards in relation to the development of health and social care well being strategies and need to take account of funding available.

To link in with this change of emphasis, I have set two services and financial framework targets for the NHS next year in this area. Firstly, by the end of September, I expect NHS trusts in Wales to have a system in place to report quarterly on how long newly diagnosed cancer patients wait, from receipt of referral at the hospital to start of definitive treatment, that have been referred as urgent suspected cancer and confirmed as urgent by the specialist. Secondly, I have set a target that from September, I also expect NHS trusts to have a system in place to record the time from diagnosis to start of definitive treatment for newly diagnosed cancer patients who are not referred as urgent suspected cancer cases. The NHS regional offices will be closely monitoring the trusts' performance against these targets that I have set.

### **Addressing Capacity Shortages in Cancer Services in Wales**

**Lynne Neagle:** Will the Minister make a statement on the action being taken by the Assembly Government to address capacity shortages in cancer services in Wales. (WAQ33950)

**Lynne Neagle:** Will the Minister issue a written statement on the action being taken by the three cancer networks to address service capacity shortages in Wales. (WAQ33951)



**Jane Hutt:** I will answer these questions together. The Assembly Government has been working to increase capacity in cancer services on a number of fronts. These include workforce, our innovations in care programme and action by the three cancer networks. The latest published all-Wales figures for staffing show that, as at September 2002, there had been increases in terms of workforce provision of whole time equivalents for cancer diagnostic and treatment services from September 1997:

Type of staff	Sept 1997 whole time equivalent	Sept 2002 whole time equivalent	Per cent increase
Medical and clinical consultant staff	14.9	21.3	43
Medical staff clinical oncology	30.7	42.07	39
Medical staff medical oncology	1.2	1.94	61
Medical staff palliative medicine	17.0	25.62	51
Medical staff radiology	117.6	139.2	18
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### **Waiting Times for Cancer Services**

**Lynne Neagle:** Will the Minister issue a written statement on waiting times for cancer services. (WAQ33952)

**Jane Hutt:** Under the existing cancer standard, where patients are referred urgently by their GP, it is for cancer clinicians who receive the referral to determine the urgency and whether the patient should be seen within 10 working days. All trusts are monitoring their compliance against this timescale and are working to improve their performance. Work is currently in hand to update the cancer standards and, in the future, more emphasis will be placed on waiting times from referral to start of treatment.

To link in with this change of emphasis, I have set two service and financial framework targets for the NHS next year in this area. Firstly, by the end of September, I expect NHS Trusts in Wales to have a system in place to report quarterly on how long newly diagnosed cancer patients wait from receipt of referral at the hospital to start of definitive treatment that have been referred as urgent suspected cancer and confirmed as urgent by the specialist. Secondly, I have set a target that from September, I also expect NHS trusts to have a system in place to record the time from diagnosis to start of definitive treatment for newly diagnosed cancer patients who are not referred as urgent suspected cancer cases. The NHS regional offices will be closely monitoring the trusts' performance against these targets that I have set.

### **The Cost of Blocked Beds to NHS Wales**

**Jonathan Morgan:** How much does a blocked bed cost NHS Wales on a daily and monthly basis? (WAQ33953)

**Jane Hutt:** The average cost of an adult acute NHS bed is £298 per day, at 2003-04 costs, which equates to £9,000 per month. This reflects the average daily and monthly cost of patient care that could be delivered if a bed, occupied because of a delayed transfer of care, was available for treatments.

### **British Sign Language**

**Nick Bourne:** What is the Minister doing to provide and promote training for staff in the NHS in the use of British sign language to aid communication with patients? (WAQ33993)

**Jane Hutt:** I recently met with colleagues of the Royal National Institute for Deaf People to discuss its recent report 'A Simple Cure'. I welcome this report, which clearly illustrates many of the issues for people who are deaf or hard of hearing in accessing healthcare. 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 health care.

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 specifically recognises the particular needs of people with sensory impairment, and, in Wales, the provision of healthcare services for people who are deaf or hard of hearing is actively supported by local health boards through local arrangements including the provision of interpreter facilities.

Local health boards and NHS trusts will also be responsible for arranging the training of front line NHS staff. NHS staff are made aware of issues of equality on a generic basis.

### **Waiting Times for Hip Operations in Wales**

**Nick Bourne:** Will the Minister make a statement on waits for hip operations in Wales? (WAQ33994)

**Jane Hutt:** Significant investment has been made to reduce the maximum waiting time for a hip operation in Wales to 18 months. All trusts in Wales have indicated that this will be achieved by the end of March 2004.

### **Cuts in Nurse Training**

**Nick Bourne:** Will the Minister make a statement on cuts in nurse training, and any discussions about cuts in nurse training in Wales? (WAQ33995)

**Jane Hutt:** The central education and training budget for non-medical staff in 2004-05 has been increased by 7.6 per cent over the 2003-04 budget.

Since 1999, the annual central investment in education and training for all staff groups has risen by 73 per cent. That figure includes the annual inflationary uplifts.

Since 1999, the intake to nurse training has been increased by 39 per cent. Detailed decisions on investment for 2004-05 will reflect my commitment to the target of increasing the numbers of nurses in the service by 6,000 by 2010. This is on target and is being achieved via continued increases in pre-registration training, return to practice courses and other recruitment and retention initiatives.

### The Number of Smokers Under the Age of 16

**Nick Bourne:** What information does the Minister have on the number of smokers under the age of 16 in each local health board area, and will he publish the number of smokers over the last five years under this age? (WAQ33997)

**Jane Hutt:** The most reliable source of data on youth smoking behaviour in Wales is the World Health Organisation collaborative health behaviour in school-aged children study, conducted every two years in Wales since 1986. The school-based study provides information on smoking prevalence for young people aged 11 to 16 years old. The latest international report is due to be published in June 2004, although previous reports suggest that overall smoking rates in Wales have declined for boys and stabilised for girls in recent years (see table). Each participating country follows an international research protocol, including sampling, which requires nationally representative samples of approximately 1500 young people in each age group. This provides reasonably robust estimates at national level but the sample size does not allow information to be broken down to local health board level.

Percentage smoking weekly in Wales, 11-16 year olds, 1986-2000									
		1986	1988	1990	1992	1994	1996	1998	2000
11-12	Boys	2	2	3	2	1	2	2	1
	Girls	2	2	2	2	1	4	3	2
13-14	Boys	7	9	8	10	8	11	8	6
	Girls	12	11	11	15	13	16	19	17
15-16	Boys	16	12	14	18	18	23	21	20
	Girls	20	19	22	25	26	29	29	29

### The Number of Smokers in Each Local Health Board Area

**Nick Bourne:** What information does the Minister have on the number of smokers in each local health board area, in each of the last five years, and will he publish this information? (WAQ33998)

**Jane Hutt:** Data from the 1998 Welsh health survey, published in 1999, are available at local health board level (see table). Fieldwork on the new Welsh health survey started in October 2003 and will continue over a two year period in the first instance. It is anticipated that findings will be published for local health board areas in spring 2006. In addition, the Welsh adult substance use survey, which is currently being undertaken, includes questions on tobacco use. Data will be available in autumn 2004, although the sample size for this study will not allow a breakdown by local health board area. Percentage of adults aged 18+ smoking daily or occasionally, Wales, 1998

Anglesey	30
Gwynedd	27
Conwy	26
Denbighshire	28
Flintshire	26
Wrexham	25
Powys	22
Ceredigion	24
Pembrokeshire	26
Carmarthenshire	26

Swansea	27
Neath and Port Talbot	26
Bridgend	26
Vale of Glamorgan	26
Cardiff	29
Rhondda Cynon Taff	29
Merthyr Tydfil	31
Caerphilly	27
Blaenau Gwent	30
Torfaen	27
Monmouthshire	24
Newport	27
<b>WALES</b>	<b>27</b>

**Source:** National Assembly for Wales (1999) Welsh health survey 1998. Results of the second Welsh health survey. National Assembly for Wales, Cardiff.

### **Standards of Training in the Delivery of Care Services**

**Nick Bourne:** How does the Minister monitor standards of training in the delivery of care services? (WAQ33999)

**Jane Hutt:** The Care Council for Wales is the regulator of social work training and monitors the quality of such training through its approval and quality assurance systems. Other training relevant to the care sector, for example National Vocational Qualifications, is quality assured by the relevant awarding bodies and by the training provider.

### **The Transition of Care Packages**

**Nick Bourne:** What arrangements are in place to ensure a smooth transition of care packages when service users relocate to a new local authority area? (WAQ34000)

**Jane Hutt:** As part of their responsibilities under the NHS and Community Care Act 1990, local authorities should ensure a smooth transition for users' care packages in transferring care management arrangements when users and their carers move to a new local authority area. It is established practice for assessed needs to be reported by the exporting local authority and it is expected that the importing local authority would consult in the normal way on options available to service users transferring in.

### **Guidance from NICE on the Treatment of Arthritis**

**Glyn Davies:** What guidance has the Minister received from the National Institute for Clinical Excellence in respect of the treatment of arthritis? (WAQ34005)

**Jane Hutt:** The National Institute for Clinical Excellence has issued the following technology appraisal guidance in connection with arthritis to the NHS in England and Wales:

- cox-II inhibitors for the treatment of osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis, issued in July 2001—technology appraisal guidance number 27;
- etanercept for the treatment of juvenile idiopathic arthritis, issued in March 2002—technology appraisal guidance number 35;
- etanercept and infliximab for rheumatoid arthritis, issued in March 2002—technology appraisal guidance number 36;
- anakinra for rheumatoid arthritis, issued in November 2003—technology appraisal guidance number 72.

The Institute is currently reviewing its guidance on cox-II inhibitors for the treatment of osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis—technology appraisal guidance number 27—with new guidance expected in May 2005.

NICE is also currently preparing guidance on the following topics in connection with arthritis:

- etanercept for psoriatic arthritis, for which the expected date of issue is October 2005;
- etanercept and infliximab for ankylosing spondylitis, for which the expected date of issue is February 2006.

### **The Number of Rheumatologists in Wales**

**Glyn Davies:** How many rheumatologists are there in Wales and how many does the British Society of Rheumatology recommend there should be? (WAQ34006)

**Jane Hutt:** As at September 2002, there were 35.4 whole time equivalent medical staff in rheumatology in Wales, 15.0 of which were consultants. The level recommended by the British Society of Rheumatology is one consultant per 85,000 head of population. As at 31 September 2002, there were 0.43 consultants per head of population in Wales. There are currently 12 specialist registrar posts in rheumatology in Wales.

### **Proposals for a New Ambulance Station in Llandrindod Wells**

**Nick Bourne:** Are there any proposals for a new ambulance station in Llandrindod Wells? (WAQ34015)

**Jane Hutt:** The Welsh Ambulance Trust has advised that the Llandrindod Wells ambulance station, which is situated on the community hospital site, is considered to be inadequate due to its size and current layout. Powys Healthcare NHS Trust is unable to provide any additional accommodation on site, therefore, the ambulance trust is reviewing options for the future of the station. The trust has commissioned surveys on all of its estate and these will be completed by 31 March 2004. Following this, the trust will produce a costed action plan to address required improvements. The trust expects to be in a position to provide guidance on the future arrangements for the station in the summer.

### **Incontinence Services**

**David Lloyd:** Will the Minister make a statement on the funding, co-ordination and awareness-raising measures for incontinence services? (WAQ34033)

**Jane Hutt:** Moneys have been identified from the budget supporting the strategy for older people for the Office of the Chief Nursing Officer to complete two projects related to incontinence and continence management. A sum of £25,000 has been identified from this budget for the financial year 2004-05 to develop an all-Wales integrated care pathway for continence management. This pathway will identify structures for achieving best practice in continence management and will be developed with the assistance of a multi-disciplinary/multi-agency reference group. An additional £100,000 has been approved for the financial year 2005-06 to complete a project aimed at improving access to and awareness of public toilet facilities for older people. Both of these projects will impact on the co-ordination and awareness of incontinence services.

Additionally, the national service framework for older people is currently being developed as part of which minimum standards for service provision, including continence management services will be developed and widely publicised. Any other additional funding would come from the local health boards, which may identify incontinence services within service requirement allocations in their respective area.

## Care Home Closures and Bed Losses

**Mark Isherwood:** What are the figures for care home closures and care home bed losses across Wales and for the 22 local authorities? (WAQ34037)

**Jane Hutt:** Changes in the legal definition of care homes by the Care Standards Act 2000, service developments such as deregistrations brought about by supported housing developments and changes in the way small homes are counted make information of this nature unreliable. When a home is sold, it is also closed in law, but may not stop providing the same service under new ownership. With these significant caveats in mind the following figures are provided for your information.

During the period 1 April 2002 to 31 March 2003, 104 adult care homes closed. These homes were registered for 784 places. This figure is not available by local authority area, but can be provided by Care Standards Inspectorate for Wales regions as follows:

Region	Local authority areas covered	Homes closed between 1 April 2002 and 31 March 2003	Places in these homes
North-west Wales	Gwynedd, Conwy, Anglesey	31	181
North-east Wales	Denbighshire, Flintshire, Wrexham	18	218
Mid-Wales	Powys	7	25
South-east Wales	Monmouthshire, Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Torfaen, Newport	5	47
Cardiff	Cardiff	12	109
The Vale of Glamorgan and the Valleys	The Vale of Glamorgan, Rhondda Cynon Taff and Merthyr Tydfil	14	112
South-west Wales	Swansea, Neath/Port Talbot and Bridgend	4	16
West Wales	Ceredigion, Pembrokeshire and Carmarthen	13	76

### Suspensions of Consultancy Staff

**Nick Bourne:** What is the cost of suspensions of consultancy staff in the health service on the NHS budget in this current year, and in every year since 1999? (WAQ34046)

**Jane Hutt:** This information is not held centrally.

### Current Suspensions of Consultancy Staff

**Nick Bourne:** How many suspensions are there currently of consultancy staff in the NHS, and how many suspensions have there been in each of the years since 1999? (WAQ34047)

**Jane Hutt:** Trusts are only required to submit details of doctors who have been suspended for six months on the grounds of professional misconduct. They are not required to inform the Assembly if the suspension is on the grounds of personal misconduct. There are currently two reported cases in Wales.

### Substance Misuse

**Brynle Williams:** What action is the Minister taking to increase the number of residential beds in north Wales to treat patients of substance misuse? (WAQ34062) *Transferred for answer by the Minister for Social Justice and Regeneration.*

**The Minister for Social Justice and Regeneration (Edwina Hart):** Responsibility for delivering the Welsh strategy to tackle substance misuse at a local level rests with the 22 community safety partnerships across Wales.

### Implementing the Working Time Directive (Impact on the NHS)

**Nick Bourne:** Has the Minister had discussions with Westminster colleagues about the impact of the implementation of the working time directive on the running of the health service in Wales, and will she give details of these discussions. (WAQ34067)

**Nick Bourne:** What discussions has the Minister had with regard to the impact on the health service in Wales of the implementation of the working time directive? (WAQ34068)

**Nick Bourne:** What representations has the Minister received regarding the implementation of the working time directive in Wales, and will she publish these representations? (WAQ34069)

**Jane Hutt** Assembly Ministers have been involved in discussions with their Westminster counterparts on a regular basis about the impact of the working time directive and in particular the two European Court of Justice rulings—SiMAP and Jaeger—which affected the definition of working time. I have received representations from a number of Assembly Members who have tabled questions and the responses to these can be found in the official record.

### **The Working Time Directive (Impact on Doctors' Working Hours)**

**Nick Bourne:** Will the Minister give an update on discussions at European Union level on the working time directive and the likely impact of this on doctors' working hours, particularly in community hospitals in rural Wales? (WAQ34070)

**Jane Hutt:** As a result of the Government's representations to the European Commission and that of other member states, the commission has signalled its intention to bring forward legislative proposals on the working time directive before the summer, which will deal with some of the problems of compliance, particularly in community hospitals. In the meantime, the NHS needs to explore the contributions of different hospitals and primary and social care providers within a whole system approach.

### **Free Prescriptions (Presentation of Doctors' Petitions)**

**Nick Bourne:** Will the Minister make a statement about presentation of petitions from doctors' practices in England and Wales, in relation to free prescriptions? (WAQ34071)

**Jane Hutt:** I have not received any petitions from doctors' practices in either England or Wales in relation to free prescriptions.

### **Car Parking Charges at Ysbyty Gwynedd**

**Lisa Francis:** What will be the charges for car parking, which Ysbyty Gwynedd will introduce in May? (WAQ34095)

**Jane Hutt:** Whether or not to charge for car parking is a local issue for the North West Wales NHS Trust to deal with. I am not aware of what these charges will be.

### **NHS Dental Patients**

**Lisa Francis:** What plans does the Welsh Assembly Government have to prevent dentists taking large grants for NHS patients and then going private? (WAQ34097)

**Jane Hutt:** A dental practitioner is awarded a basic grant from the Welsh dental initiative to establish a new, or expand an existing, dental practice in areas, which are identified as having an unmet need for dental services. Under the terms and conditions of the scheme, the practitioner is required to register a given number of patients for NHS treatment and retain the provision for a set period, which is usually for five years. The grant payment relates to NHS commitment and this is monitored by the LHB. For the dentist to continue to receive the grant payment, he or she needs to continue their NHS commitment. If the conditions of the grant are not complied with, the payment is recovered.



## **The Nurse Training Budget**

**Lisa Francis:** Will the Minister make a statement on whether NHS Wales plans to make cuts to the nurse training budget from April 2005? (WAQ34100)

**Jane Hutt:** The central education and training budget for non-medical staff in 2004-05 has been increased by 7.6 per cent over the 2003-04 budget. Since 1999, the annual central investment in education and training for all staff groups has risen by 73 per cent (this figure includes the annual inflationary uplifts). The annual workforce planning round for 2004-05 has been commissioned from the NHS in Wales. The demand for nurses indicated through these plans will inform the education and training investment decisions for 2005. The Welsh Assembly Government is committed to delivering 6,000 more nurses by 2010. This will be achieved through continued investment in education and training, which includes such initiatives as widening access and return to practice schemes.

## **The Fluoridation of Water**

**Val Lloyd:** What is the current position of the National Assembly in relation to the fluoridation of water? (WAQ34113)

**Jane Hutt:** I refer you to my answer to WAQ33680.

## **Block Tendering for Domiciliary Care Services in Cardiff**

**Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Will the Minister make a statement on the timetable to approve the block tendering for domiciliary care services in Cardiff? (WAQ34123)

**Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** How will current service providers under spot contracts be able to continue their service provision when the proposed new block contracts for domiciliary care services in Cardiff are implemented? (WAQ34124)

**Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** What were the criteria considered in assessing applications for the block tendering for domiciliary care services in Cardiff and, in particular, what emphasis was placed upon standards and accreditation? (WAQ34125)

**Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Will the Minister list the successful applications for the proposed new block contracts for domiciliary care services in Cardiff, and which of these successful applications are based in Wales? (WAQ34126)

**Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** How will client choice be maintained and enhanced under the proposed new block contract scheme for domiciliary care services in Cardiff? (WAQ34127)

**Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** How many service providers are currently used under spot contracts for domiciliary care services in Cardiff and how many of these will continue to be used with the implementation of the new block contracts? (WAQ34128)

**Jane Hutt** The legal responsibility for commissioning care services rests with local authorities and, therefore, the arrangements for contracting domiciliary care services in Cardiff are operational matters for the local authority. The Assembly Government has issued statutory guidance, entitled 'Promoting Partnership in Care—Commissioning across Health and Social Care', which defines important principles for those commissioning care services. In particular, the guidance makes it clear that the Assembly Government's view is that dependency on short-term spot contracts should be reduced to help to bring greater confidence to the market.

## MRSA

**Alun Cairns:** Will the Minister make a statement on MRSA? (WAQ34144)

**Jane Hutt:** There are a range of measures in place to limit infections in hospital settings. MRSA-related infection is addressed in Wales as part of a response to all healthcare associated infections. MRSA is the infection that has the most media interest. Each trust has an infection control team, with board level accountability and responsibility for development and oversight of infection control policies and procedures. The arrangements are subject to annual review by the Welsh risk pool audit process. All trusts undertake surveillance of healthcare associated infection to inform the effectiveness of their policies and procedures.

In addition, Welsh health circular 2003/43 has provided guidance on new initiatives that roll out across Wales during 2003. These include a new mandatory surgical site infection surveillance, hospital outbreak reporting and infection reduction targets. Trusts were required to put this system in place by September 2003.

A newly completed strategy to support the achievement of a reduction in healthcare associated infections within hospital trusts will be published at the end of May. The strategy will place additional requirements on trusts for infection control and places strong emphasis on the need for all healthcare workers to understand and discharge their roles and responsibilities in relation to infection control within a clinical governance and risk management approach.

### MRSA Cases in Welsh Hospitals

**Alun Cairns:** How many cases of MRSA have been identified within each hospital in Wales for each of the last five years? (WAQ34145)

**Jane Hutt:** Since 2001, a mandatory staphylococcus aureus bacteraemia reporting scheme has been in place in Welsh acute hospitals, co-ordinated by the National Public Health Service. This covers methicillin sensitive as well as methicillin resistant staphylococcus aureus (MSSA and MRSA).

The latest published report, which is available on the NPHS website [www.wales.nhs.uk/sites/page.cfm?OrgID=368&PID=3041](http://www.wales.nhs.uk/sites/page.cfm?OrgID=368&PID=3041) covers the period from April 2002 to March 2003.

### Research into MRSA

**Alun Cairns:** What research is the Minister conducting into MRSA? (WAQ34146)

**Jane Hutt:** Since 2001, a mandatory staphylococcus aureus bacteraemia reporting scheme has been in place in Welsh acute hospitals, co-ordinated by the National Public Health Service. This covers methicillin sensitive as well as methicillin resistant staphylococcus aureus (MSSA and MRSA). The latest published report, which is available on the NPHS website, covers the period from April 2002 to March 2003.

The Welsh health circular issued in April 2003 required trusts to put in place a continuous surveillance system for surgical site infections in relation to certain orthopaedic procedures. Trusts were required to put this system in place by September 2003. The circular also introduced a mandatory requirement for surveillance and reporting of hospital outbreaks of healthcare associated infections, which includes outbreaks of diarrhoea and vomiting. Such reporting had previously been voluntary. The circular further required trusts annually to set local targets for measurable reductions in infection, using nationally agreed surveillance methodologies such as the bacteraemia data already collected, and to notify the National Public Health Service of these targets.

As I am sure you will appreciate, it is too early, at this stage, for meaningful comparable information to be available on changes in HAI rates since the circular was issued. A sufficient period of time would be required in order to establish whether a change in rates constitutes a statistically significant trend.

### **The Spread of MRSA**

**Alun Cairns:** What specific policies has the Minister introduced to combat the spread of MRSA? (WAQ34147)

**Jane Hutt:** The Welsh Assembly Government takes healthcare associated infections very seriously. The Welsh healthcare associated infection sub-group has finalised its strategy to support the achievement of a reduction in healthcare associated infections within hospital trusts. The major focus of the recommendations is the development of an infection control infrastructure that places strong emphasis on the need for all healthcare workers to understand and discharge their roles and responsibilities in relation to infection control within a clinical governance and risk management approach. The consultation on the draft strategy finished on 15 January 2003. The document will be published at the end of May 2004.

The plan for the control and management of healthcare associated infections in hospitals, outlines four principal areas:

- the organisation and infrastructure of infection control,
- training requirements and their delivery,
- the adoption and implementation of surveillance systems, and
- interventions that demonstrably reduce infection.

The strategy is linked across to the work being undertaken within the Assembly to develop Wales wide quality standards linked to a process of performance management, and the National Patient Safety Agency programmes, as well as the independent assessments by community health councils. That, together with the surveillance systems proposed within the strategy, will provide the information needed to monitor change and improvement.

### **The Cost of MRSA to the NHS in Wales**

**Alun Cairns:** What is the cost of MRSA to the NHS in Wales? (WAQ34148)

**Jane Hutt:** It is not possible to make any specific cost calculations because MRSA is only one of a number of serious healthcare associated infections. Our approach to infection has been, therefore, to emphasise all aspects of healthcare associated infection, rather than focus on a single organism. The costs of hospital acquired infection, including extended length of stay, are difficult to measure, but have been calculated at £3,154 per patient (Plowman R, Craves N, Griffin M, Roberts J, Swan A, Cookson B, Taylor L, 'The socio-economic burden of hospital acquired infection'—London: Public Health Laboratory Service, 2000). However, it is also uncertain how many of these infections are preventable in the context of current medical practice and available technology and how many are MRSA.

### **The Dangers of Obesity**

**Val Lloyd:** What is the Assembly doing to promote awareness of the dangers of obesity? (WAQ34171)

**Jane Hutt:** To tackle obesity in Wales, the issues of increasing the uptake of a healthier diet and encouraging physical activity are high on the Assembly's agenda. Through 'Food and Well Being', the national nutrition strategy for Wales, we are implementing a number of programmes to improve the diet of people in Wales. This action plan was developed by the Food Standards Agency in partnership with the Welsh Assembly Government. It has the prevention and management of overweight and obesity as one of its nine recommendations. In addition, the Welsh Assembly Government's healthy and active lifestyle action plan and 'Climbing Higher', the consultation strategy for sport and active recreation, aim to increase opportunities for everyone in Wales to be physically active.

We are currently working with BBC Wales on a social action campaign to raise awareness of the risks associated with overweight and obesity. It began at the end of March with a series of innovative programmes. A series of roadshows across Wales are taking place during the first two weeks of April. It is aimed at encouraging the whole family to eat more healthily and increase their physical activity.

The inequalities in health fund is supporting a project called tackling obesity in Blaenau Gwent. The project offers a 10-week programme to encourage clients to take up, and sustain, a regular exercise routine. The weekly classes are supported by cookery demonstrations and smoking cessation advice where appropriate. Over 230 people have now benefited from this programme. The project has also enabled a weekly specialist obesity clinic to be established at Ebbw Vale hospital and to date, 32 patients have attended. The average weight loss of the eight people regularly attending the follow-on support group is 8 kgs. Between them, they have lost 64 kgs—the equivalent of another person.

Earlier this year, I made available over £500,000 through the food and fitness health promotion grant scheme to provide financial support for community projects that encourage more active lifestyles and/or healthier eating. Projects funded include:

- a grant to fund the piloting of a family based programme of physical activity, dietary education and behaviour modification to manage overweight and obese children in Caerphilly, and
- the provision of an educational programme, including supervised exercise classes and healthy eating advice, for 11 to 16-year-olds who are identified as overweight in Knighton.

### **Disability Access (Deaf and Hard of Hearing)**

**Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** What action is the Minister taking to ensure that all hospitals in Wales undertake and act upon audits looking at disability access including the access needs of deaf and hard of hearing people? (WAQ34021)

**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.

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 specifically recognises the particular needs of people with sensory impairment, and, in Wales, the provision of healthcare services for people who are deaf or hard of hearing is actively supported by local health boards through local arrangements, including the provision of interpreter facilities.

Local health boards are responsible for the provision of local health services and through working with partners, including NHS trusts, local authorities, and the voluntary sector, they are able to develop services based upon locally identified needs. In addition, my officials are holding strategic estate reviews with each NHS Trust which includes the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 as a standing item on the agenda and trusts report on the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 surveys that have been asked to carry out and their subsequent prioritisation exercise.

## **Questions to the Minister for Social Justice and Regeneration**

### **Volunteering and the Voluntary Sector (Flintshire County Council)**

**Sandy Mewies:** How much Welsh Assembly Government funding does Flintshire County Council receive to support and promote volunteering and the voluntary sector? (WAQ34038)

**The Minister for Social Justice and Regeneration (Edwina Hart):** The settlement for local government is unhypothecated.

## **Addysg Cyfrwng Cymraeg**

**Owen John Thomas:** Yn dilyn yr ateb i WAQ33825, pa drafodaethau y mae'r Gweinidog wedi eu cael gydag awdurdodau addysg lleol er mwyn sicrhau bod pob un ohonynt yn defnyddio'r egwyddor cyfle cyfartal wrth wneud darpariaeth ar gyfer addysg cyfrwng Cymraeg? (WAQ34049) [W] *Trosglwyddwyd i'w ateb gan y Gweinidog dros Addysg a Dysgu Gydol Oes.*

**Y Gweinidog dros Addysg a Dysgu Gydol Oes (Jane Davidson):** Nid wyf wedi cynnal trafodaethau penodol ag awdurdodau addysg lleol ynghylch cyfle cyfartal mewn perthynas ag addysg cyfrwng Cymraeg. Yn fy nghyfarfod diwethaf ag aelodau awdurdodau lleol a chyfarwyddwyr addysg ym mis Medi 2003, gwnes eu hatgoffa ynghylch yr ymrwymadau yn 'Iaith Pawb' a phwysleisiais yr angen i'r awdurdodau gynllunio llefydd mewn ysgolion cyfrwng Cymraeg yn sgîl y gofyn disgwylidig realistig. Pwysleisiais bwysigrwydd pennu'r gofyn sydd wedi'i asesu yn eu cynlluniau trefniadaeth ysgolion ac atgoffais yr awdurdodau y dylai'r cynlluniau fod yn gysylltiedig â'u cynlluniau addysg Gymraeg. Bydd canllawiau newydd ynghylch yr agwedd hon ar gynlluniau trefniadaeth ysgolion yn cael eu dosbarthu at ddiben ymgynghori yn fuan yn unol â'r ymrwymiad yn 'Iaith Pawb'.

## **Welsh-Medium Education**

**Owen John Thomas:** Further to WAQ33825, what discussions has the Minister had with local education authorities to ensure that each of them adhere to the equal opportunities principle in providing for Welsh-medium education? (WAQ34049) [W] *Transferred for answer by the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning.*

**The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning (Jane Davidson):** I have not had specific discussions with local education authorities about equal opportunities in relation to Welsh-medium education. At my last meeting with lead local authority members and directors of education in September 2003, I reminded them of the commitments in 'Iaith Pawb' and underlined the need for local education authorities to plan Welsh-medium school places in light of realistic expected demand. I stressed the importance of identifying assessed demand in their school organisation plans and reminded authorities that the plans should be linked with their Welsh education schemes. New guidance on this aspect of school organisation plans will be issued for consultation shortly in line with the commitment in Iaith Pawb.

## **The Future of Rural and Urban Post Offices**

**Nick Bourne:** What assessment has been made in Wales of the impact of automated credit transfer on the future of rural and urban post offices in Wales (WAQ34051).

**Edwina Hart:** Post office policy is not a devolved concern. This is a Royal Mail matter and one that I shall raise at my meeting with Mr Gareth Davies, director of Welsh affairs for the Royal Mail Group plc, at the end of the month.

## **Safeguarding the Network of Rural and Urban Post Offices**

**Nick Bourne:** How much is the National Assembly spending to seek to safeguard the network of rural and urban post offices in Wales, and how much is it proposing to spend in each of the remaining years of this National Assembly term (WAQ34052).

**Edwina Hart:** Post Office policy is not a devolved concern, but I am determined to do all I can to preserve a viable and sustainable network of offices throughout Wales. With this in mind, I have, to date, allocated over £1 million to 28 post offices. I have announced my intention to proceed with rounds 3 and 4, and increase this investment, providing that suitable guarantees can be gained from Post Office Ltd over the future of those offices that have benefited, and those that I hope will be able to benefit, from support under the post office development fund.

### **Registered Heroin Addicts in Wales**

**Nick Bourne:** How many registered heroin addicts are there in Wales in the current year, and how many have there been in each of the previous years since the Assembly was established? (WAQ34053)

**Edwina Hart:** Figures for the number of heroin addicts are not available.

### **The Urban Re-invention Programme**

**Leanne Wood:** Will the Minister make a statement with regards to the discussions she has held with the Royal Mail Group plc over the urban re-invention programme? (WAQ34060).

**Edwina Hart:** In addition to the discussions that have been held at the Social Justice and Regeneration Committee with the Royal Mail Group plc, I am due to meet Mr Gareth Davies, director of Welsh affairs for the Royal Mail Group plc, at the end of this month.

### **The All-Wales School Drug and Substance Abuse Education Programme**

**Leighton Andrews:** How many hours per school will police officers devote in undertaking the all-Wales school drug and substance abuse education programme? (WAQ34080)

**Edwina Hart:** It is not possible to answer this question on a school-by-school basis since the programme requires different levels of input at key stages 1,2,3 and 4, for example key stage 2—primary school—has a higher input level than key stage 1—infant school. However, as an indication, police officers are expected to spend 80 per cent of their time delivering the programme.

### **Training given to Police Officers**

**Leighton Andrews:** How much training will be given to police officers participating in the all-Wales school drug and substance abuse education programme? (WAQ34081)

**Edwina Hart:** All officers delivering the core schools programme will receive extensive training, however, this will vary in the first 12 months between the four Welsh forces. Gwent police has undertaken extensive training over the last two years with its police officers, based upon presentational skills, individual tuition, training in relation to individual lessons, specialist training in relation to child protection, domestic abuse and so on. Now that the programme has been adopted on an all-Wales basis, the four forces are combining to explore the possibility of professional accreditation through the University of Wales.

### **The Gwent Drug Awareness Education Programme**

**Leighton Andrews:** How many schools have taken the Gwent drug awareness education programme? (WAQ34082)

**Edwina Hart:** Accurate information is only currently available for Gwent police, since the three remaining forces are at various stages of development. However, the other three forces are planning to be fully operational from September 2004, which is the start of the next school year. In the Gwent police area, 100 per cent of schools are receiving the programme, which covers wider issues.

### **The Gwent Drug Awareness Education Scheme (ESTYN)**

**Leighton Andrews:** Will the Minister make a statement on whether ESTYN has evaluated the Gwent drug awareness education scheme? (WAQ34083)

**Edwina Hart:** ESTYN has not evaluated the all-Wales school programme. As a condition of funding for the programme, independent external evaluators must be employed or engaged to evaluate progress under the programme. Arrangements are currently in hand to enable this process.

#### **Drug-Taking on the Bon-y-Maen Estate, Swansea**

**Lisa Francis:** What action is the Welsh Assembly Government taking to combat the problem of drug-taking on the Bon-y-Maen estate, Swansea? (WAQ34094)

**Edwina Hart:** Responsibility for implementing the Welsh Assembly Government's substance misuse strategy at a local level rests with the 22 community safety partnerships in Wales. They are in the best position to assess the needs of their own communities. The Swansea CSP, in the same way as all the other partnerships, has drawn up an action plan for 2004–05, which addresses the needs and priorities in their area.

#### **The National Audit Office Report**

**Nick Bourne:** Will the Minister make a statement in relation to the National Audit Office report that only 37 per cent of drug treatment in testing orders were completed? (WAQ34107)

**Edwina Hart:** Responsibility for drug treatment and testing orders has not been devolved to the Welsh Assembly Government and remains the responsibility of the Home Office.

#### **The Impact of the Working Time Directive on the Retained Fire Services**

**Nick Bourne:** Has the Minister made any representations to Westminster colleagues or to the European Commission regarding the impact of the working time directive on the retained fire services? (WAQ34108)

**Edwina Hart:** No.