

Answers to the Written Assembly Questions for answer on 1 September 2010

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

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

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To ask the First Minister

Andrew RT Davies (South Wales Central): How many diary secretaries and assistant diary secretaries are employed by the Welsh Assembly Government to deal with ministerial diary commitments are how many are allocated to each minister. (WAQ56439)

Answer issued on 27 September 2010

Each Minister has a Diary Secretary. No Assistant Diary Secretary posts exist. Where necessary, additional support on diary related matters is provided as part of the general administrative support arrangements in private offices.

To ask the Minister for Business and Budget

Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales): What estimates have been made as to the reduction of Wales' Capital DEL in real terms in 2011-12, 2012-13, 2013-14 and 2014-15 as a) an amount (in £), and b) a percentage. (WAQ56422)

Answer issued on 15 September 2010

The UK Government's Comprehensive Spending Review, due to be completed in October, will set the Wales Capital DEL beyond 2010-11. Until that announcement, we do not know our actual budget settlement beyond the current year. In the absence of firm figures, we have been undertaking our planning on the basis of planning assumptions. For capital, we have been working on the assumption that we will face 10% year on year reductions. It is our normal practice to publish spending plans for a three year period which will take us up to 2013-14 and we are not currently planning our expenditure beyond that year. Data is therefore provided below for the period between 2011-12 and 2013-14.

Planning Assumptions for Wales' Capital DEL

	Total WAG DEL in Cash Terms (£bn)	Annual Change in Cash Terms		Total WAG DEL in 2010-11 Prices (£bn)	Annual Change in 2010-11 Prices
2010-11	1.67			1.67	
2011-12	1.51	-10%		1.48	-11.8%
2012-13	1.36	-10%		1.30	-12%
2013-14	1.22	-10%		1.14	-12.2%

*Source: HMT GDP deflator as at June 2010 Budget
2010-11 budget figures are taken from Supplementary Budget June 2010
Figures are rounded*

Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales): For how many years is the Welsh total DEL budget expected to contract. (WAQ56423)

Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales): When is it expected that the Welsh Assembly Government's total budget will return to its 2009-10 level in real terms. (WAQ56424)

Answer issued on 15 September 2010

Until the outcome of the Comprehensive Spending Review is announced in October, we do not have details of the Welsh budget beyond 2010-11. The June Budget included the UK Government's projections of total Government expenditure until 2014-15. However, we have only made assumptions about the level of the Welsh DEL until 2013-14, as detailed in WAQs 56382 to 56386 and 56422. Any longer term estimates at this stage about the level of the Wales DEL would be subject to a very high level of uncertainty and inaccuracy.

Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales): Does the Welsh Assembly Government intend to protect spending on Health and Social Services in real terms in 2011-12, 2012-13, 2013-14, and 2014-15, compared with 2010-11. (WAQ56443)

Answer issued on 15 September 2010

We have been clear about our continuing commitment to frontline services, both in terms of our handling of the budget reductions imposed by the UK Government this year and preparing for a series of difficult budget settlements for future years. Our commitment to health and social services spending has shaped successive Assembly Government spending plans and continues to be at the forefront as we prepare our plans for future years. This spending is now more than twice what it was at the inception of the Assembly and this has helped drive the great improvements we have seen in the health service since 1999.

Until we know the outcome of the Comprehensive Spending Review, we will not know our budget settlement beyond the current financial year. However we are undertaking planning on the basis of assumptions about our settlement. Our budget planning process includes considering our spending priorities and our commitment to frontline services, as well as considering scope to deliver services more efficiently. I do not intend to make commitments before the Cabinet has considered the full range of evidence and reflected on that in the light of our actual CSR settlement, which will be known on 20 October.

To ask the Minister for Children, Education and Lifelong Learning

Paul Davies (Preseli Pembrokeshire): Will the Minister provide an update on what steps the Welsh Assembly Government is taking to tackle bullying in secondary schools. (WAQ56426)

Answer issued on 27 September 2010

The Welsh Assembly Government issued its anti-bullying guidance 'Respecting Others' to all schools and local authorities in 2003. The guidance sets out the different strategies that schools can implement in preventing and reacting to bullying. Officials are currently developing new, more detailed, guidance on specific forms of bullying, which is expected to issue later this year.

In 2008, the Assembly Government introduced an anti-bullying toolkit to help schools develop their anti-bullying policies and strategies, and integrate them fully into the ethos of the school.

In 2009, we commissioned a national survey of bullying in Welsh schools. Over 7,400 pupils responded to the survey, the results of which have provided us with a baseline against which to measure future progress, as well as a source of information to inform future approaches. Officials will this year begin a series of meetings with local authorities to discuss the key findings of this research and what can be done to address them at a local level.

As part of our preparations for Anti-Bullying Week 2010, we are working with a number of other organisations from the Welsh Anti-Bullying Network to deliver a national conference in November to help equip teachers and professionals with the skills and knowledge to deal with a number of different types of bullying.

Paul Davies (Preseli Pembrokeshire): Will the Minister provide an update on the implementation of the recommendations of the Auditor General's report into school buildings, published last month. (WAQ56427)

Answer issued on 27 September 2010

The Auditors General's report on 'Capital Investment in Schools' was commissioned a number of years ago (originally commissioned in 2006), and published in July 2010. Since then the Welsh Assembly Government's policy direction and system of implementation and delivery of schools capital investment has changed and moved forward substantially during the intervening period.

The report outlines 5 recommendations for the Welsh Assembly Government and one for local authorities. Officials are currently reviewing these, however, the recommendations in the report are confirmatory of actions already in hand, and largely superseded by work currently being undertaken under the 21st Century Schools Capital Programme, Schools Effectiveness Framework and the Transformation Agenda.

Paul Davies (Preseli Pembrokeshire): Will the Minister give an assessment of the Take Five, Read for Ten campaign. (WAQ56478)

Answer issued on 27 September 2010

The 'Take Five. Read for Ten' parent/carer engagement campaign was launched by the Minister at the National Eisteddfod in Ebbw Vale. It forms a key strand of the Department for Children, Education and Lifelong Learning's strategy to raise adults' awareness of the importance of spending time with children and young people to listen to them reading.

Research undertaken, most recently by The National Literacy Trust in England illustrates the clear link between parental support for literacy and a child's reading ability. Well-developed reading skills are essential to open the door to learning; by encouraging children to read for pleasure, families can help them to do well at school and to enhance their life opportunities.

We are determined to improve literacy skills throughout Wales. The 'Take Five. Read for Ten' parental engagement campaign seeks to bring about behavioural change which, if successful, will make a major contribution towards achieving a step change in the literacy levels of children and young people in Wales. The campaign will be fully evaluated so that lessons learnt from this campaign will inform future developments.

Paul Davies (Preseli Pembrokeshire): What is the Welsh Assembly Government doing to protect funding for school youth facilities and playgrounds in Wales. (WAQ56429)

Answer issued on 27 September 2010

The Welsh Assembly Government is committed to implementing the National Youth Service Strategy and the One Wales Youth Service Fund to ensure a comprehensive network of fit-for-purpose services and facilities for young people. The Children & Families (Wales) Measure will place a duty on Local Authorities to secure sufficient play opportunities for children in their areas.

During 2010 and 2011 the Welsh Assembly Government will be consulting with all stakeholders on the development of the Standards and Guidance to Local Authorities to enable them to fulfil this duty. These

will contain requirements for the provision and maintenance of open spaces and play areas, and consultation with children, young people and the wider community relating to this provision. Local authorities are responsible for the provision and maintenance of open space and play opportunities. Planning Policy Wales contains updated policies providing for the protection of recreational open space. Funding for school youth facilities and the protection of playgrounds in Wales will however need to be contained within overall budgets going forward.

Kirsty Williams (Brecon and Radnorshire): Will the Minister make a statement on what steps have been taken to establish the teacher training intake targets for 2011/12. (WAQ56431)

Answer issued on 27 September 2010

Intake targets for recruitment to initial teacher training (ITT) courses in Wales are based on forecast demand for newly qualified teachers. A Teacher Planning and Supply Model (TPSM) is used to inform the overall teacher number planning process. The TPSM models the stock of teachers required (by applying a pupil-teacher ratio to projections for pupil numbers) and the flows of teachers (the number of teachers in service and projections for movements in and out of this population). It then considers how many new entrants to the teaching profession are required to meet the desired stock of teachers and the intake to ITT courses needed to produce this.

This modelling process is taking place at the moment. We expect to be able to notify the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales of the ITT intake targets for 2011/12 during the autumn.

Kirsty Williams (Brecon and Radnorshire): Will the Minister make a statement on the money spent training new teachers contrasted with the money spent on CPD (Continuing Professional Development) for existing teachers. (WAQ56432)

Answer issued on 27 September 2010

Resources are needed on a regular basis for replacements for teachers who retire or otherwise leave service. Initial teacher training provision supports the recruitment and training of high quality committed students to train as teachers in Wales to provide schools with staff who have the professional standards we want to see teaching our children.

Our review of professional development for school support staff, teachers and headteachers recommended that the focus on individual activities and one-off training courses should be reduced. Instead, a more efficient approach will be developed through professional learning communities, with resources concentrated on the core priorities of literacy, numeracy and reducing the impact of poverty on educational attainment. The aim is for the focus not to be on the amount of development-related work, but on the quality of the experience undertaken and its impact on improving the standards of teaching and improving learner outcomes.

Kirsty Williams (Brecon and Radnorshire): Will the Minister make a statement on the cost effectiveness of the bursaries awarded to PGCE students recruited each year. (WAQ56437)

Answer issued on 27 September 2010

The Welsh Assembly Government offers initial teacher training incentives in specific areas in order to help attract the best quality, highly committed students to train in Wales, particularly onto courses where there is or may be difficulty recruiting. The incentives aim to enable students deciding where to train as teachers to make that choice knowing that if they study in Wales they will have the same incentives as those in England, and to enable initial teacher training providers in Wales to compete effectively for the most talented applicants.

Jenny Randerson (Cardiff Central): What assessment has the Minister made of the growing gap in performance between Welsh and English students at the GCSE and A-Level stages. (WAQ56442)

Answer issued on 27 September 2010

The provisional results for Welsh students at GCSE and A level are broadly comparable with those for the UK as a whole.

The overall pass rate for GCSE in Wales is the same as for the UK as a whole – 98.7% of entries resulted in a pass (grade A*-G). Results show positive progress for overall and higher grade passes (A*-C) compared to 2009. .

2010 GCSE results	Wales		UK	
	2010	%age point change since 2009	2010	%age point change since 2009
Total Entries	295934	-1.7	5374490	-1.7
% Overall pass rate – grades A*-G	98.7	+0.2	98.7	+0.1
% Grades A*-C	66.4	+0.9	69.1	+2.0

At A level, despite a small drop in performance compared to 2009, the overall pass rate (grade A*-E) remains very high at 97.1% of entry.

2010 GCE results	JCQ - Welsh Centres		JCQ UK	
	2010	%age point change since 2009	2010	%age point change since 2009
<i>Number entered</i>	37315	-2.9	853933	+0.8
Overall Pass Rate (Grade A* – E)	97.1	-0.5	97.6	+0.1

There is a small difference in the performance of students in Wales and England at some grades. It is important to remember that our policies are increasingly different in Wales compared to the rest of the UK. For example the Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification gives students in Wales valuable additional skills to take to continuing education or employment.

The use of such data to support robust self evaluation is a core element of the School Effectiveness Framework. To support this we have introduced an All Wales Core Data Set which allows schools to better consider their results in context and in comparison to others working in similar contexts.

To ask the Minister for the Economy and Transport

Mark Isherwood (North Wales): When can Llangollen Railway expect to receive a decision regarding the Llangollen Railway Transport and Works Order. (WAQ56421)

Answer issued on 27 September 2010

The decision letter confirming the Order was received by the Railway Trust on 19 August 2010. The Order has now been granted and takes effect from 27 August 2010.

Jenny Randerson (Cardiff Central): Will the Minister please outline how he is maximising the spending power of the budgets he has in relation to roads. (WAQ56425)

Answer issued on 15 September 2010

The Welsh Assembly Government is responsible for the motorway and trunk roads in Wales. Local authorities are responsible for local roads.

Expenditure on motorway and trunk road safety and maintenance is comprised of management and works cost.

I am currently considering the results of a review of the management model to ensure it continues to deliver the most cost effective service.

Alun Cairns (South Wales West): Will the Minister make a statement on how much has been spent developing the Aerospace Park in St Athan. (WAQ56430)

Answer issued on 14 April 2011

From August 2003 until 30 June this year, £5.5 million has been spent in furtherance of the St Athan Development Scheme.

Costs include legal and professional fees in connection with master-planning and related costs, and promoting the scheme. The expenditure is attributable to the aerospace proposals but there is a proportion of the costs, for example land and ecological surveys and some compulsory purchase costs, which cover the wider St Athan Development Scheme. It is not possible to disaggregate this information.

Jenny Randerson (Cardiff Central): Will the Minister please outline what funds are available to him to meet unexpected in year costs. (WAQ56433)

Answer issued on 14 April 2011

The Economy and Transport budgets are fully allocated to programmes each financial year to help deliver the Welsh Assembly Government's priorities and communities. Close in-year budget monitoring and scrutiny determines the basis on which funds can be reallocated to meet any unexpected in year costs.

Kirsty Williams (Brecon and Radnorshire): Will the Minister outline the timetable for the replacement of the Single Investment Fund. (WAQ56436)

Answer issued on 14 April 2011

The Single Investment Fund (SIF) closed to new applications on the launch of *Economic Renewal: a new direction* on 5 July. Applicants in advanced discussions had until 31 August to submit for assessment under the old SIF rules.

The main provisions of the new scheme, called 'DE&T Business Finance', are being communicated to front-line staff today to ensure continuity of service and to allow new applications to be considered on a case-by-case basis. A further announcement on the full operational details of the new scheme will be made in the coming weeks.

Kirsty Williams (Brecon and Radnorshire): Has the Minister made an assessment of the potential for savings to be made in his department. (WAQ56438)

Answer issued on 21 September 2010

You asked whether I had made an assessment of the potential for savings to be made in my department.

These are matters which will be considered in the budget round.

To ask the Minister for Health and Social Services

Paul Davies (Preseli Pembrokeshire): Within the Hywel Dda Local Health Board, how many non-medical employees earn in excess of £100,000, per annum and what roles do they fulfil. (WAQ56420)

Answer issued on 27 September 2010

The Assembly Government does not hold this information.

Andrew RT Davies (South Wales Central): Are all Local Health Boards on schedule to deliver their plans for improved cancer care in September. (WAQ56434)

Answer issued on 27 September 2010

Local Health Boards are continuing to implement their action plans in order to achieve full compliance with the National Cancer Standards by the end of September.

Andrew RT Davies (South Wales Central): Can the Health Minister please give an update on the Service Development Directive for Epilepsy, detailing whether the timetable for implementation is currently on target to be met. (WAQ56435)

Answer issued on 27 September 2010

I wrote to LHBs in January requiring them to achieve full compliance with the Directive by the end of this year and LHBs are due to report back upon progress by the end of September.

Andrew RT Davies (South Wales Central): Given the inconsistencies across the NHS in Wales in the length of time patients spend waiting in A & E before hospital admission, what action is the Welsh Assembly Government taking alongside LHB's to address the issue. (WAQ56441)

Answer issued on 27 September 2010

It is appropriate for some patients to spend longer than others within A&E departments so that they can be properly assessed and treated before they are admitted or discharged. However, we continue to work with the NHS in Wales to achieve the target of 95% of A&E patients being admitted, transferred or discharged within 4 hours.