

Answers to the Written Assembly Questions for answer on 10 December 2009

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

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

Contents

2	Questions to the Minister for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills
2	Questions to the Deputy First Minister and Minister for the Economy and Transport
4	Questions to the Minister for Environment, Sustainability and Housing
5	Questions to the Minister for Health and Social Services
6	Questions to the Minister for Heritage
6	Questions to the Minister for Rural Affairs

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

Nick Bourne (Mid & West Wales): How many schools have closed in a) Pembrokeshire, b) Ceredigion, c) Gwynedd, d) Powys and e) Carmarthenshire in each year since 2006. (WAQ55248)

Answer issued on 09 December 2009

The number of school closures between 2006 and 2009 inclusive in each of the named local authority areas is included in the table below. These figures do not include closures resulting from the amalgamation of separate infant and junior schools. Of the total number of closures listed (26), 12 attracted objections and therefore received ministerial determination.

	2006	2007	2008	2009
Pembrokeshire	1	2	-	1
Ceredigion	2	4	-	1
Gwynedd	-	-	-	3
Powys	1	-	2	3*
Carmarthenshire	1	3	-	2
Total	5	9	2	10

(*includes one school due to close on 31 December 2009)

To ask the Minister for the Economy and Transport

Nick Bourne (Mid & West Wales): Will the Minister make a statement on the road safety statistics for trunk roads in a) Pembrokeshire, b) Ceredigion, c) Gwynedd, d) Powys and e) Carmarthenshire in the last year for which they are available. (WAQ55246)

Answer issued on 15 December 2009

In each of the Local Authority areas the 2008 statistics were lower than the respective annual average.

The table below shows 2008 statistics for each of the Local Authorities requested, together with the annual averages over the five year period 2004-08.

Local Authority	Collisions			Casualties		
	2008	Av 2004-08	% reduction	2008	Av 2004-08	% reduction
Pembrokeshire	94	96.8	2.9%	143	153.4	6.8%
Ceredigion	96	103.8	7.5%	134	160.2	16.4%
Gwynedd	86	106.2	19.0%	141	175.6	19.7%
Powys	204	252.8	19.3%	333	404.2	17.6%
Carmarthen	109	130.2	16.3%	155	196.4	21.1%

Total	589	689.8	14.6%	906	1089.8	16.9%
-------	-----	-------	-------	-----	--------	-------

Nick Bourne (Mid & West Wales): What is the Minister doing to address unemployment in a) Pembrokeshire, b) Ceredigion, c) Gwynedd, d) Powys and e) Carmarthenshire. (WAQ55247)

Answer issued on 15 December 2009

My Department is responsible for creating a strong framework for business creation and growth in Wales, as well as for supporting specific business projects which protect or increase employment.

To ensure that the framework is as effective as possible, I recently announced the Economic Renewal Programme. In anticipation of the economic recovery, this will identify those measures which best encourage a stronger, more sustainable economy, help businesses meet the challenge of climate change, and increase the long term well being of the people of Wales.

Individual business projects are supported by the Assembly's Single Investment Fund via the Flexible Support for Business network. To date in 2009/10 my Department has supported 215 projects in these five Unitary Authorities, which are expected to lead to 1,209 jobs created or safeguarded, with private sector investment of £27.5 million.

Business is also being supported by the innovative £150m JEREMIE fund, which will support the expansion of more than 800 small businesses, encouraging regional economic growth and creating up to 15,000 jobs across Wales.

My Department also helps in the delivery of DCELLS programmes aimed at job safeguarding and up skilling such as the Workforce Development Programme, ProAct and ReAct.

Nick Bourne (Mid & West Wales): Will the Minister detail the number of a) fatalities, b) serious injuries and c) minor injuries on trunk roads in each County in Mid & West Wales. (WAQ55251)

Answer issued on 15 December 2009

The tables below show fatal, serious and slight casualty figures for each of the counties in Mid and West Wales for a 5 year period from 1 January 2004 to 31 December 2008, the latest data available.

Powys County Council Casualties

	FATAL	SERIOUS	SLIGHT	TOTAL
2004	11	69	338	418
2005	17	81	289	387
2006	17	59	369	445
2007	20	71	347	438
2008	5	55	273	333
Total	70	335	1,616	2,021

Pembrokeshire County Council Casualties

	FATAL	SERIOUS	SLIGHT	TOTAL
2004	1	20	126	147
2005	2	14	126	142
2006	3	24	137	164

2007	2	25	144	171
2008	2	27	114	143
Total	10	110	647	767

Ceredigion County Council Casualties

	FATAL	SERIOUS	SLIGHT	TOTAL
2004	2	21	138	161
2005	1	16	156	173
2006	2	21	128	151
2007	3	24	155	182
2008	3	20	111	134
Total	11	102	688	801

Carmarthenshire County Council Casualties

	FATAL	SERIOUS	SLIGHT	TOTAL
2004	8	33	164	205
2005	5	13	175	193
2006	4	20	198	222
2007	5	19	183	207
2008	2	15	138	155
Total	24	100	858	982

Nick Bourne (Mid & West Wales): What guidelines have been issued to Local Authorities in Wales in relation to checking the roadworthiness of bridges, and will the Minister outline any such guidelines. (WAQ55250)

Answer issued on 15 December 2009

All trunk road and motorway structures in Wales are inspected in accordance with the Standard BD63/07, "Inspection of Highways Structures". This is a mandatory procedure on all trunk roads and Motorways. Structures on Local Authority (LA) roads are the responsibility of the respective LA. During the recent adverse weather conditions Officials did share the actions being taken on trunk road structures with all LAs. In turn they were asked to confirm their position. From the responses received all LAs are managing their highway structures in accordance with their procedures.

To ask the Minister for Environment, Sustainability and Housing

Leanne Wood (South Wales Central): In relation to her cross-cutting responsibility for sustainable development, will the Minister a) detail how many meetings she has convened (or held if you'd prefer) since 2007 to discuss the role of the Welsh Language as part of the sustainability agenda, and b) give details of these meetings. (WAQ55259) [W]

Answer issued on 22 December 2009

As part of the development of the One Wales: One Planet, The Sustainable Development Scheme of the Welsh Assembly Government a series of Cabinet discussions took place in respect of the document. Prior

to these meetings each department was afforded the opportunity to comment against the scheme, including the Department for Heritage (responsible for Welsh language policy).

As part of the formal consultation process a series of events were convened in Swansea, Llandudno and Aberystwyth between 19 November 2008 and 4 February 2009. The events provided an opportunity to feedback against the draft consultation document. Though there was not a specific Welsh language element to the discussions a number of attendees raised this issue at these events.

Comments received by some respondents argued that the importance of the Welsh language had been under-emphasised, and that reference to Iaith Pawb was required. Officials responded to this by amending the document to strengthen the role and significance of the language and include appropriate reference to Iaith Pawb.

Leanne Wood (South Wales Central): In relation to her cross-cutting responsibility for sustainable development, will the Minister make a statement on the importance of the Welsh language within the Welsh Assembly Government's Sustainable Development Scheme for Wales - One Wales:One Planet. (WAQ55260) [W]

Answer issued on 22 December 2009

The Sustainable Development Scheme for Wales, One Wales: One Planet features within its vision for the wellbeing of Wales the ambition that we achieve “a fair, just and bilingual Wales, in which citizens of all ages and backgrounds are empowered to determine their own lives, shape their own communities and achieve their full potential”. A key outcome from this is that “Wales’ rich culture, values and traditions are celebrated, particularly through encouraging diversity, distinctiveness and promoting the Welsh language...”.

The basis for this approach will be around Iaith Pawb: A National Action Plan for a bilingual Wales that sets out the goal of revitalising the Welsh language and creating a bilingual Wales. The Minister for Heritage is leading much of this work and the enhanced legislative competence will allow the Welsh Assembly Government would propose a Measure which would include provision to protect the freedom of individuals to speak Welsh with each other. This would fulfil its 'One Wales' commitments, which are:

- To confirm Welsh and English as official languages;
- To establish rights in the provision of services; and
- To establish the post of Language Commissioner.

To ask the Minister for Health and Social Services

Kirsty Williams (Brecon and Radnorshire): What guidance does the Welsh Assembly Government offer to Local Health Boards with regard to the provision of Speech and Language Therapy for stroke patients, particularly regarding waiting times for such therapy after a stroke, and if not guide is offered, will the Minister detail whether she has plans to make this available. (WAQ55252)

Answer issued on 09 December 2009

No formal guidance has been issued by the Assembly Government on the provision of speech and language therapy and there are no formal therapy waiting times in place following a stroke. LHB action plans must ensure that all stroke patients have an assessment of their acute and long term rehabilitation needs, including speech and language therapy requirements, to ensure care plans are tailored to meet individual patient needs. Any speech and language therapy should then begin in line with the care plan requirements.

Brynle Williams (North Wales): Will the Minister make a statement on the impact of the European Working Time Directive on the training of junior doctors in Wales. (WAQ55253)

Answer issued on 09 December 2009

The organisation of training of junior doctors has been modified by the professional bodies to meet the requirements of the European Working Time Directive.

Health Boards have to ensure that all junior doctors have the required training and they are subject to regular monitoring by the Postgraduate Medical Education and Training Board. If there is felt to be a shortfall in the training provided the Postgraduate Deanery works with the respective Health Board to address this matter and take the necessary action to rectify the situation.

Mick Bates (Montgomeryshire): What information is collected about distances to maternity units in Wales. (WAQ55256)

Answer issued on 09 December 2009

The Welsh Assembly Government uses 'MapInfo Drivetime' software, a Geographic Information System, to calculate the distances along the road network to maternity units. A map to illustrate this will be included in the next Maternity Statistics statistical release to be published in February 2010.

Kirsty Williams (Brecon and Radnorshire): Will the Minister make a statement on the development of stroke services in South Powys. (WAQ55257)

Answer issued on 08 December 2009

Stroke services in South Powys are a matter for Powys teaching LHB. All LHBs are required to have robust action plans in place to map the journey to full compliance with national standards. I have made a total of £2.275m available to the NHS in Wales to support improvements to stroke services. In Powys, this funding is being used to improve specialist long term rehabilitation services.

Peter Black (South Wales West): What progress has the Minister made on the establishment of a Rural Innovation Fund as set out in the Rural Health Planning consultation. (WAQ55258)

Answer issued on 15 December 2009

In my statement on 9 December 2009, which set out my spending priorities, I confirmed that £1 million has been allocated for the Rural Health Innovation Fund. One of the first tasks of the Rural Health Implementation Group, which will be set up in the New Year, to determine criteria and guidance for the Fund.

To ask the Minister for Heritage

Nick Bourne (Mid & West Wales): How many tourists in Wales have visited in Wales in each year since 2006 and what assessment has been made of their experiences. (WAQ55249)

Answer issued on 08 December 2009

The number of visitors to Wales in each year since 2006 is shown below.

	2006	2007	2008
UK	9.61m	8.85m	8.49m
Overseas	1.14m	0.99m	1.07m
TOTAL	10.75m	9.84m	9.56m

Sources: United Kingdom Tourism Survey and International Passenger Survey. Figures refer to staying visitors and do not include day visitors.

Visitors' experiences are assessed every three years when a Visitor Survey is undertaken which asks visitors to rate various aspects of their stay in Wales on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the most positive. The results from the last survey conducted in 2006 are shown below. The 2009 Visitor Survey is currently at the analysis stage and the results will be published in January.

Wales Visitor Survey 2006

Quality of accommodation	4.1
Friendliness of the people	4.3
Visitor attractions	4.1
Overall satisfaction	4.2

To ask the Minister for Rural Affairs

Brynle Williams (North Wales): What assessment has the Minister made of the impact of future budget savings, by Local Authorities, on the Welsh Assembly Government's 'One Wales' commitments to increase the local procurement of food. (WAQ55254)

Answer issued on 09 December 2009

The local government revenue settlement for 2010-11 announced by the Minister for Social Justice and Local Government on 8 December provides local government with an above inflation increase of 2.1 per cent. This is a fair and reasonable settlement in the current financial climate and clearly demonstrates the Assembly Government's determination to support local government services in difficult circumstances. In addition, the recently launched Local Sourcing Action Plan outlines a number of initiatives which will support an increase in the amount of local food procured by local authorities and the wider public sector in Wales. My officials within Food Fish Market Development Division are delivering the plan in conjunction with Value Wales and other bodies to ensure maximum opportunity is provided for the procurement of local food within public sector organisations.

Brynle Williams (North Wales): What consideration has the Welsh Assembly Government given to the postponement of the introduction of the Glastir agri-environmental scheme. (WAQ55255)

Answer issued on 09 December 2009

We remain committed to introducing Glastir by January 2012.