

Answers issued to Members on 18 July 2007

[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 Minister for the Economy and Transport

Kirsty Williams (Brecon and Radnorshire): Will the Minister make a statement on access to broadband internet services in Wales? (WAQ50231)

The Minister for the Economy and Transport (Brian Gibbons): First Generation (512kbps-2mbps downstream, 256kbps-512kbps upstream) broadband is delivered across Wales by several telecommunications companies. The main infrastructure providers in Wales are BT and Virgin Media Group (operating throughout Bridgend, Cardiff and Newport). Through a range of technologies 99%* of the Welsh population has access to broadband internet services.

All 439 Welsh telephone exchanges are broadband enabled, of which 35 were upgraded by the Welsh Assembly Government's *Regional Innovative Broadband Support* (RIBS) project, allowing a further 7,500 Welsh households and businesses to access broadband services. The Welsh Assembly Government's broadband survey 2007 showed that 42% of the Welsh population are connected to a broadband service, broadly in line with the UK average.

Although all Welsh telephone exchanges now supply broadband there still remain areas which cannot receive a broadband service due to technical reasons, these areas are known as broadband not-spots. The RIBS project is now focusing on work to address and determine appropriate solutions to supply broadband to identified not-spot areas. I would urge you to encourage any of your constituents located within a broadband not-spot to register their broadband demand with the broadband brokerage facility. This can be done in two ways: for those who can access the internet details can be placed on the not-spot registration website www.bnrv.org.uk (Welsh www.cadbec.org.uk); my officials also offer a service where details can be taken over the phone, the number is 01443 846700.

*This figure is based on BT's estimates of current broadband coverage in Wales.

Questions to the Minister for Education, Culture and the Welsh Language

Irene James (Islwyn): Can the Minister confirm how many schools have signed up to the Welsh Baccalaureate in the south Wales valleys? (WAQ50236)

The Minister for Education, Culture and the Welsh Language (Carwyn Jones): I am delighted that the Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification will be available in centres in every Local Education Authority area in Wales from September 2007. The table below list the schools and FE colleges where the Welsh Baccalaureate Qualification will be available in the South Wales valleys.

	Advanced & Intermediate post-16 Welsh Baccalaureate Centre	Foundation & Intermediate 14-19 Pilot Welsh Baccalaureate Centre	Local Education Authority Area
1	Coleg Gwent- Ebbw Vale Campus		Blaenau Gwent
2	Bridgend College		Bridgend
3	Bryntirion Comprehensive	Bryntirion Comprehensive	Bridgend
4	Pencoed Comprehensive School		Bridgend
5	Archbishop McGrath Catholic Comprehensive School		Bridgend

6		Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni	Caerphilly
7		Blackwood Comprehensive School	Caerphilly
8	Coleg Gwent – Crosskeys Campus		Caerphilly
9	Lewis School Pengam		Caerphilly
10	Lewis Girls' Comprehensive School		Caerphilly
11	St Cenydd Community Comprehensive School		Caerphilly
12	The College Ystrad Mynach	The College Ystrad Mynach	Caerphilly
13	Cyfarthfa High School*		Merthyr Tydfil
14	Merthyr Tydfil College		Merthyr Tydfil
15	Pen-y-Dre High School		Merthyr Tydfil
16	Neath Port Talbot College	Neath Port Talbot College	Neath Port Talbot
17	Coedylan Comprehensive School (Pontypridd C'sortium)	Coedylan Comprehensive School	RCT
18	Hawthorn High (Pontypridd Consortium)		RCT
19	Cardinal Newman Roman Catholic School (Pontypridd Consortium)	Cardinal Newman Roman Catholic School	RCT
20	Coleg Morgannwg - Pontypridd		RCT
21	Tonypandy Community College*		RCT
22	Treorchy Comp School		RCT
23	Porth County Community School	Porth County Community School	RCT
24	Coleg Gwent- Pontypool Campus		Torfaen
25	Fairwater High School		Torfaen
26	St Alban's RC High School		Torfaen

* to join roll-out in 2008-09

Irene James (Islwyn): Can the Minister provide an update on the Job Match and Want to work schemes for the Heads of the Valleys area and provide any future plans for the extension of these schemes? (WAQ50237) *Transferred for answer by the Minister for Economy and Transport.*

Brian Gibbons: In relation to the *Want2Work* initiative, which to date has helped over 420 people in the Merthyr Tydfil area into employment, officials are currently exploring with Jobcentre Plus proposals for the possible extension of this project within the Heads of the Valleys area, beyond March 2008. It is proposed that it will provide added value to *JobMatch*, and to the overarching *City Strategy* pathfinder project.

The *Jobmatch* programme was successful last year in gaining pathfinder status through the DWP programme *City Strategy*. Through the *City Strategy Pathfinder*, the Heads of the Valleys Programme is already expanding *JobMatch* across the Head of the Valleys area alongside programmes such as *Want2Work*. To date, *JobMatch* has helped over 1,300 people back to work in Blaenau Gwent. The programme aims to provide a flexible means for workless people to access the skills they require to gain sustainable employment.

Joyce Watson (Mid and West Wales): Will the Minister make a statement on what steps the government is doing to enable learners to have suitable skills for life outside of education? (WAQ50241)

Carwyn Jones: It is of course vital that learners of all ages acquire the skills they need for employment and for other things they need to achieve in life. We are doing that through a wide range of programmes and initiatives. 14-19 Learning Pathways is extending choice and flexibility, securing tailored learning pathways that meet the needs of the individual learner and providing richer opportunities and experiences which help young people develop the skills they need for life and work. The 14-19 Learning Core includes for all learners the important Key Skills, where achievement in Wales is significantly higher than in England. For ages 3-14 we have consulted on proposals for a revised curriculum that would place a greater emphasis on skills such as communication, number, ICT and developing thinking. For adults, we have ensured that a very wide range of learning programmes is supported in further education and community learning. Our work-based learning programmes such as Modern Apprenticeships include all relevant key skills as well as vocational qualifications. Finally, our all-age basic skills strategy, *Words Talk, Numbers Count* includes initiatives for improving literacy and numeracy for all groups, including parents, those in employment, offenders and groups at risk of social exclusion.

Joyce Watson (Mid and West Wales): Will the Minister make a statement on the progress of assessments for provisions for the new national curriculum for 3-14 year olds. (WAQ50242)

Carwyn Jones: Following a national consultation held between 31 October 2006 and 12 January 2007 the following assessment arrangements for Key Stages 2 and 3 are being developed with schools and LEAs.

Key Stage 2

Teacher assessment will be strengthened by school-based and cluster group moderation arrangements. This will be supported by centrally-produced guidance on best practice, based on evidence from LEA case studies, to ensure that teacher assessments are robust and consistent.

New optional skills-based assessments will be developed and introduced to support teacher assessment from Year 5, through Year 6, and transition to secondary school. The focus will be on skills relating to Developing Communication, Developing Number and Developing Thinking. The information derived from these optional assessments should help teachers to identify individual strengths and areas for development, which can be addressed in the final year of primary school and which will provide valuable information for secondary schools.

A skills profile will be designed and introduced to support teacher assessment of pupils' progress, and the transfer of this information across year groups and to pupils and their parents.

Key Stage 3

Transition links with Key Stage 2 schools will be supported and strengthened by a requirement for cluster group moderation arrangements.

Assessment at the end of Key Stage 3 will be strengthened by external moderation of sample evidence of teachers' understanding and application of the National Curriculum level descriptions and verification of school-based systems and procedures.

These arrangements to support and secure teacher assessment should lead to enhanced recognition of the quality of teacher assessment by awarding schools 'accredited centre' status.

Centrally produced guidance will be developed to support implementation of revised arrangements.

Foundation Phase

The assessment model for the Foundation Phase was included in the *Foundation Phase Framework for Children's Learning* which formed part of the curriculum consultation undertaken between January and March 2007.

Following this consultation and the analysis of responses, officials will shortly be submitting recommendations regarding the Foundation Phase. I would anticipate making a statement in the autumn.

Joyce Watson (Mid and West Wales): Will the Minister make a statement on the progress of the national curriculum review for 3-14 year olds? (WAQ50243)

Carwyn Jones: Between 8 January and 30 March 2007, a consultation on proposals for a revised school curriculum was undertaken. Consultation packs containing the proposals of the Minister of Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills for revised national curriculum subject orders were sent out to schools and interested organisations. Parallel consultations were also held on:

- a revised framework for Personal and Social Education
- a framework for Careers and the World of Work
- a non-statutory skills framework
- a national exemplar framework for Religious Education
- the Foundation Phase framework for Children's Learning.

These proposals aimed to ensure that the new school curriculum, assessment and qualifications arrangements should promote an approach that is more learner-centred and skills-focused and that builds on the Foundation Phase and links effectively with the 14–19 Learning Pathways programme.

A total of 4,692 completed questionnaires were received and analysed. Following this consultation and the analysis of responses, officials will shortly be submitting recommendations regarding the revised orders and frameworks.

I would anticipate making an announcement in the autumn regarding the revised orders and frameworks that will comprise a distinctive curriculum for Wales.

Questions to the Minister for Health and Social Services

Andrew R.T. Davies (South Wales Central): What proportion of physiotherapy graduates are not currently employed in the physiotherapy sector and will the Minister provide a breakdown for students who graduated in each year from 2002 to 2006? (WAQ50210)

The Minister for Health and Social Services (Edwina Hart): The number of Physiotherapy students graduating in Wales annually since 2002 is as follows:

2002 - 61
2003 - 80
2004 - 112
2005 - 99
2006 - 108
2007 - 108

Of these, 87 students have graduated from the most recently completed 3 year degree programme, 17 of whom are known to have obtained full-time NHS Physiotherapy posts. A number of the remaining students are awaiting results of interviews.

26 students have graduated in 2007 from the 2-year Accelerated Physiotherapy programme. These students completed their training in February. A total of 24 Accelerated Physiotherapy students are known to have obtained full-time NHS posts to date.

Questions to the Minister for Sustainability and Rural Development

Mark Isherwood (North Wales): Will the Minister confirm who directed WAG officials to analyse and present the consultation on TAN 8 responses in the particular format used? (WAQ50222)

The Minister for Sustainability and Rural Development (Jane Davidson): Officials analysed the responses and prepared the consultation report in line with established practice.