

Answers issued to Members on 8 May 2009

[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 Deputy First Minister and Minister for the Economy and Transport

Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales): What financial support is the Welsh Assembly government providing for the forthcoming Ashes Test Match? (WAQ54024)

The Deputy First Minister and Minister for the Economy and Transport (Ieuan Wyn Jones): The Welsh Assembly Government is providing financial support amounting to £1.2 million to support the cost of staging the first Ashes Test match in Cardiff in 2009. This includes £150,000 per year over the three years leading up to the Ashes test supporting development and community involvement. We are also providing £250,000 per year over three years supporting commercial benefits, branding and match opportunities.

Questions to the Minister for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills

Nerys Evans (Mid and West Wales): Will Welsh based graduates be able to access the Department of Innovation Universities and Skills Graduate Talent Pool? (WAQ54067)

The Minister for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (Jane Hutt): The Department of Innovation, Universities and Skills' Graduate Talent Pool is an England-only scheme. It is open to all graduates resident in England including graduates from Welsh, Scottish or Northern Irish HE institutions.

However, Wales-based graduates can access the well-established and successful GO Wales scheme.

GO Wales was established in April 2003 with ESF funding. Since April 2003 it has organised 3046 placements across Wales. Overall, a total of 25,000 students and graduates have benefited from GO Wales services, receiving e-mail alerts about job opportunities, careers advice and guidance and work placements with employers.

The GO Wales work placement programme provides students and graduates with excellent opportunities to gain essential work experience, particularly valuable during this period of economic downturn.

The host business can also acquire match funding to help the student or graduate train for a professional qualification, such as ILM level 4 in Management.

The placement scheme has proven to be very successful. Around two thirds of students find work after their placements either with their host employer or with another employer.

There are other features of the GO Wales scheme that can help with preparing graduates for the job market and also help with starting a business.

Nerys Evans (Mid and West Wales): What discussions has the Minister had with the Secretary of State for the Department of Innovation, Universities and Skills in relation to its Graduate Talent Pool? (WAQ54068)

Jane Hutt: I have had several discussions with John Denham, Secretary of State for DIUS over the last two years regarding various HE matters but as the Graduate Talent Pool has only very recently been launched, (29th April 2009), there has not been an opportunity to speak to him about this yet. I understand that he will be writing to colleagues shortly.

My officials have been in contact with staff from DIUS during the development of the Graduate Talent Pool and will continue to monitor it.

Nerys Evans (Mid and West Wales): Will the Minister state which, if any, Welsh based businesses have partnered with the Department of Innovation, Universities and Skills Graduate Talent Pool Scheme? (WAQ54069)

Jane Hutt: To our knowledge there are no Wales-based businesses signed-up to this scheme as yet. This is a scheme in England that was launched just over a week ago, registration of businesses has only begun recently. We would expect that the majority of Wales-based employers would wish to be involved in our GO Wales scheme.

GO Wales is aiming for 2,127 placements in SMEs, including 42 designed specifically to link with shorter Knowledge Transfer Partnerships and 200 with larger companies over the next 3 years of the programme.

The scheme has been invaluable to the Welsh businesses involved and has provided a huge boost for SMEs, in accessing higher level skills and some have been given match funding for graduate training and development for the mutual benefit of the graduate and host business.

This scheme has been especially useful for businesses in the convergence area and my officials are reviewing the possibility of involving additional large companies in the scheme and more businesses in non-convergence areas to take account of the economic downturn. The GO Wales scheme will be particularly valuable to Welsh businesses at this time economic difficulty.

Questions to the Minister for Health and Social Services

David Melding (South Wales Central): Has the Welsh Assembly Government made any assessment of the effect of services for Looked After Children and other vulnerable children of a reform in the fee structure for junior barristers in Family Law cases? (WAQ54054)

The Minister for Health and Social Services (Edwina Hart): Responsibility for fee structure for legal advice in Family Law cases is not a devolved matter. This is the responsibility of the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) and the Legal Services Commission (LSC). I understand that the proposal will have no impact on services for looked after children, or services to children and families and they will continue to receive legal assistance through the legal aid scheme as they do now.

The operation of CAF/CASS CYMRU is unaffected by the proposals and there should be no effect on service for Looked after Children.