

# **Answers to the Written Assembly Questions for answer on 15 February 2011**

[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***

**Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales):** Will the First Minister make a statement on Welsh Assembly Government relations with private, public, voluntary and governmental organisations and bodies in London. (WAQ57140)

***Answer issued on 11 February 2011***

All Welsh Ministers have regular discussions and meetings with UK Government. In addition there is regular engagement, through a variety of means with a wide range of private, public and voluntary bodies.

**Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales):** Will the First Minister make a statement on Welsh Assembly Government relations with Whitehall. (WAQ57141)

***Answer issued on 17 February 2011***

The Welsh Assembly Government is committed to seeking the best outcomes for the people of Wales and to do so, will continue to work closely and constructively with the UK Government.

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

**Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales):** Will the Minister provide an update as to when he intends to publish the report into the funding and delivery of music education in Wales. (WAQ57138)

***Answer issued on 17 February 2011***

The report on the Review of Music Education for 3-19 years olds in Wales commissioned by the then Minister for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills was published, with my Written Statement, on 9 December 2010. The report can, therefore, be accessed on the Welsh Assembly Government's website, along with the response to the recommendations directed to the Welsh Assembly Government.

**Paul Davies (Preseli Pembrokeshire):** Will the Minister outline what the Welsh Assembly Government is doing to support supply teachers, especially those employed by agencies. (WAQ57142)

***Answer issued on 16 February 2011***

Supply teachers have an important role to play within the school workforce, providing flexibility for both the school and the individual. There are a range of Assembly Government funded programmes available to all teachers, including those working on a supply basis, to support their learning and development throughout their career.

The pay and terms and conditions of all teachers, including supply teachers, employed by a local authority or a maintained school are governed by the statutory School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document. These have not been devolved and remain the responsibility of the Department for Education. I recognise the situation facing supply teachers employed by agencies but agencies are commercial enterprises and competition laws dictate that rates of pay cannot be imposed on the commercial sector (apart from the minimum wage). Ultimately, it is for individuals to decide if they register for employment with a private company.

***To ask the Minister for the Economy and Transport***

**Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales):** Will the Minister advise if he has any plans to reopen the West Wales rail link from Carmarthen to Aberystwyth. (WAQ57132)

***Answer issued on 11 February 2011***

Currently I have no such plans.

**Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales):** What plans does the Minister have to support improvements in the Traws Cambria bus network in Wales. (WAQ57133)

***Answer issued on 17 February 2011***

We are working closely with a number of local authorities to identify cost effective improvements to the Traws Cambria network of long distance bus services.

As part of this work, we are looking at making improvements to the X40 service between Aberystwyth and Carmarthen. We are also looking at making improvements to the 704 service between Newtown and Brecon, and we are exploring the option of extending this service to Merthyr and Cardiff.

When this work is completed, we will then look at making improvements to the other services in the Traws Cambria network.

**Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales):** What is the Minister doing to promote air travel from airports in Wales. (WAQ57134)

***Answer issued on 17 February 2011***

I recognise the important role of our airports in supporting the Welsh economy and we are seeking to provide Cardiff Airport with support to improve the terminal infrastructure, subject to European Commission approval.

I was extremely pleased to recently award the contract for the Intra Wales Air Service for a further four years. The service continues to be popular with over 45,000 passengers having flown since commencement of operations, further boosting the links between North and South Wales.

A new air service between Cardiff and Zurich will start on 30 March 2011, operating 4 return flights a week. We are capitalising on this announcement by promoting Wales as a business and holiday destination and have offered financial assistance to help promote the service in both Wales and Switzerland.

**Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales):** Will the Minister provide an update on plans to improve rail services on the Cambrian Line. (WAQ57135)

***Answer issued on 11 February 2011***

These are set out in the National Transport Plan for Wales.

**Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales):** Will the Minister provide an update on plans to improve rail services on the Heart of Wales line. (WAQ57136)

***Answer issued on 11 February 2011***

These are set out in the National Transport Plan for Wales.

**Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales):** Will the Minister make a statement on Welsh Assembly Government relations with businesses in London. (WAQ57139)

*Answer issued on 17 February 2011*

I fully recognise the influential and important position of London to our economy and the value of continuing and increasing our ability to exploit the range of robust and important business relationships and investment opportunities that it provides. In delivering Economic Renewal, I am strengthening our London presence and developing our sector teams so that we can build on existing business relationships, exploit fresh opportunities and better promote Wales in the City and across greater London. Next month I will also be hosting a Welsh Assembly Government business reception in London to highlight and strengthen our relationships with senior business influencers and intermediaries.

**Angela Burns (Carmarthen West and South Pembrokeshire):** What assessment has the Minister made of the number of properties within Carmarthen West and South Pembrokeshire constituency that consistently get a broadband speed of less than 512Kbps. (WAQ57143)

*Answer issued on 17 February 2011*

Given the scale of the exercise required to identify notspots (download speed of less than 512kbps) on a pan-Wales basis, our assessment of the extent of the problem relies on residents and businesses letting us know if they are affected, primarily through the self-registration database we have established. Figures are not readily available by Assembly Constituency, but are recorded by Local Authority. Of the 1,826 registrations we have received in total, 654 are from Carmarthenshire and 199 are from Pembrokeshire.

**Mick Bates (Montgomeryshire):** Will the Minister give an update on the timetable and the preparation being undertaken for the development of the Newtown bypass. (WAQ57144)

*Answer issued on 17 February 2011*

We will be inviting tenders later this year for the appointment of a Contractor to take forward the design of the scheme. Work is scheduled to commence in accordance with the timetable set out in the National Transport Plan, subject to the successful completion of the statutory consent procedures and the availability of finance.

### ***To ask the Minister for Environment, Sustainability and Housing***

**Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales):** Does the Minister have any plans to reintroduce the 'Homebuy' scheme in Wales. (WAQ57131) *Transferred for answer by the Deputy Minister for Housing and Regeneration*

*Answer issued on 11 February 2011*

**The Deputy Minister for Housing and Regeneration (Jocelyn Davies):** The Homebuy scheme has been in place since it was re-introduced in May 2009. This was following comprehensive consultation with the housing sector where respondents were keen to see it re-introduced as one of a number of solutions to affordable housing delivery in Wales.

Since its re-introduction it has been up to local authorities to allocate funding for Homebuy from their Social Housing Grant programmes. The scheme is operated by housing associations but is only available where the local authority decides that it is a priority for the use of Social Housing Grant.

The Welsh Government has provided additional funding for the scheme via the Strategic Capital Investment Fund and over £7.4m of this funding has been allocated by the Welsh Government to Homebuy schemes in Wales in 2010-2011.

**Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales):** Will the Minister provide an update on how the Welsh Assembly Government is ensuring local government plays an active role in helping it to meet its fuel poverty targets. (WAQ57137)

*Answer issued on 11 February 2011*

Local authorities and social housing providers have a critical role to play in tackling fuel poverty. Their frontline, locally based staff are ideally placed to identify and refer people in fuel poverty for the various support programmes. It will be crucial that local authorities have a good understanding of how they can work with the central co-ordination point of the new Fuel Poverty Scheme. They are also key delivery partners for the arbed Programme.

*To ask the Minister for Health and Social Services*

**Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales):** Will the Minister make a statement on the provision of NHS dentistry in Wales. (WAQ57127)

*Answer issued on 11 February 2011*

Local Health Boards (LHBs) hold and control their own dental budgets and are responsible for the provision of NHS dental services to meet the local need and the wider oral health agenda. This gives LHBs the ability to develop services to reflect local needs and priorities. This must be achieved through a finite general dental budget allocation although funding for NHS dentistry in Wales has increased by over 60% between 2004-05 and 2009-10.

Hywel Dda LHB has seen significant growth in access to NHS dental services since 2006 with over 40,000 additional NHS patients regularly receiving NHS care. This includes over 17,000 residents in the former Ceredigion LHB area. Powys LHB has seen a rise of almost 10,000 additional NHS patients during the same period.

In some LHB areas there are areas where access to NHS dentistry is difficult. We want to see further progress toward reaching a position where everyone in Wales who wants access to NHS dental care will be able to get it.

*To ask the Minister for Heritage*

**Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales):** What is the Minister doing to promote tourism in Mid & West Wales. (WAQ57128)

*Answer issued on 16 February 2011*

We have allocated £710,000 to South West Wales Tourism Partnership and £540,000 to Tourism Partnership Mid Wales this year for the promotion and development of their regional tourism priorities which are aligned to our national priorities.

These priorities include helping tourism businesses build the skills and knowledge to engage in the on line and e marketing opportunities that are being delivered through national programmes. In Mid and West Wales many small and micro businesses do not have the appropriate ICT and new media knowledge and we are encouraging the Regional Tourism Partnerships to engage with businesses to address this.

For example, in Mid Wales the Partnership is running a number of training courses and workshops over the coming months with subjects including Information Technology use, Get Fit For Business aimed at activity providers, and Digital Photography.

We also continue to support the Marketing Area Partnerships of Cardigan Bay, Pembrokeshire, Carmarthenshire, Swansea Bay, Mid Wales & the Brecon Beacons and the Wye Valley & Vale of Usk.

**Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales):** What is the Minister doing to preserve historic churches in Wales. (WAQ57129)

*Answer issued on 16 February 2011*

More than 3000 listed religious buildings of National importance in Wales are protected through listing as buildings of special architectural or historic interest. My historic environment division, Cadw, has offered grant for repairs to places of worship of outstanding interest, as well as a maintenance grant to encourage congregations to carry out routine works to prevent the need for more costly repairs. It is also partly supporting a Heritage Officer for the Church in Wales. Grants for places of worship are also available from other parts of the Assembly Government, for example the Communities Division, as well as from organisations such as the Heritage Lottery Fund and the National Churches Trust.

**Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales):** What is the Minister doing to promote community radio projects in Wales. (WAQ57130)

*Answer issued on 17 February 2011*

The Welsh Assembly Government's Community Radio Fund was established to recognise and support the contribution community radio stations make to their communities. The Fund has been created to help community radio stations which have been granted a five-year broadcast licence by Ofcom. Three rounds of funding have been allocated so far. An announcement on the funding allocation for 2011-12 will be made before the end of the current financial year.

### ***To ask the Minister for Social Justice and Local Government***

**Nerys Evans (Mid and West Wales):** When will the Minister publish the 'on-line guidance for practitioners in dealing with issues related to violence against women and domestic abuse as part of Personal and Social Education for 7-19 year olds' as set out in the Violence Against Women and Domestic Abuse Implementation Plan 2010-13. (WAQ57145)

*Answer issued on 05 April 2011*

I can confirm that the on-line guidance to support school practitioners teaching about issues related to violence against women and domestic abuse, as part of PSE, has been developed by the Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills. It will be published on the Welsh Assembly Government's PSE guidance website in March 2011.