

Written Questions answered between 25 March and 1 April 2004

[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 First Minister

Retrospective Pension Payments for the Former Workers of ASW

Owen John Thomas: Has the First Minister received a response from Andrew Smith MP regarding retrospective pension payments for the former workers of Allied Steel and Wire? (WAQ33326)

The First Minister (Rhodri Morgan): Andrew Smith MP has not yet responded to the letter regarding retrospective legislation in respect of pension payments for the former workers of Allied Steel and Wire.

Framework Contracts

Alun Cairns: Would the First Minister list the individual tenders that have been signed under framework contracts? (WAQ33540)

The First Minister: It is impractical to list the individual tenders that have been signed under framework arrangements due to the volume of tenders involved.

Number of Ministerial Vehicles used by the Welsh Assembly Government

Jonathan Morgan: How many ministerial vehicles are used by the Welsh Assembly Government? (WAQ33564)

The First Minister: I refer you to the answer given to WAQ30398.

Ministerial Vehicles Used by the Welsh Assembly Government

Jonathan Morgan: How much money has been spent on the provision and running of ministerial vehicles by the Welsh Assembly Government in a) 1999, b) 2000, c) 2001, d) 2002 and e) 2003? (WAQ33565)

The First Minister: I refer you to the answer given to WAQ30399. Expenditure for 2003-04 to date is £55,500.

Appointment of the Counsel General for Wales

Nick Bourne: Will an independent inquiry be set up into the handling of the appointment of the Counsel General for Wales? (WAQ33566)

The First Minister: There are no such plans.

The Allied Steel and Wire Pensions

Nick Bourne: Will the First Minister give an update on any discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues at Westminster regarding the Allied Steel and Wire pension position? (WAQ33581)

The First Minister: I continue to make representations to the Department for Work and Pensions on behalf of ASW pension scheme members. On 22 March, I received a response from the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, Andrew Smith MP, to my latest request to include a provision in the Pensions Bill for members of pension schemes that, like ASW's, are in the process of wind-up.

In his letter, the Secretary of State advised me that he remains fully aware of the difficult plight of the former ASW workers, and that his department continues to consider seriously whether assistance should be made available in this situation. There are still a number of difficult issues to consider around the

issues of retrospection and precedent, but I will continue to press for all avenues to be pursued to find ways to compensate those members of pension schemes in wind-up.

The National Assembly's Salary Bill

Nick Bourne: What is the salary bill for the National Assembly for Wales in the current year including national insurance costs, and what were the costs in each of the years since 1999? (WAQ33595)

The First Minister: The salaries of Assembly Members and their support staff, including national insurance, are a matter for the Presiding Office.

The Salary Costs of ASPBs

Nick Bourne: What are the salary costs of the Assembly sponsored public bodies, including national insurance for the current year, and what were the salary costs in each of the previous years since 1999? (WAQ33596)

The First Minister: The information requested is not collated centrally, but the figures for each ASPB are available in their published annual reports and accounts, copies of which are in the Library.

Effect of the Chancellor's Budget on Wales

Lynne Neagle: Will the First Minister make a statement on the effect that the Chancellor of the Exchequer's 2004 budget will have on Wales? (WAQ33653)

The First Minister: The Chancellor's budget is good news for Wales. It supports the policy direction of the Assembly Government in providing measures to increase employment opportunity, improve the balance of quality employment opportunities across the UK, build a fairer society, deliver better public services and protect the environment.

The Implications of a Terrorist Attack on Wales

William Graham: Will the First Minister make a statement concerning the implications for Wales in the event of a terrorist attack on the UK? (WAQ33656)

The First Minister: A terrorist attack anywhere in, or on the UK, will have implications for Wales regardless of where it took place, and would require all public authorities to work together to respond. The UK Government is strengthening its national capability to plan and prepare for, deal with and recover from terrorist attacks at national, regional and local levels. The Welsh Assembly Government is playing an active role in this process and is working closely with the UK Government to develop national resilience. The emergency services and other agencies in Wales are working in partnership to further develop their ability and capacity to deal with terrorist incidents. The new Civil Contingencies Bill provides legislation that can be used promptly and effectively to deliver the emergency measures required to deal with terrorist attacks and emergencies of all kinds.

The Local Government and European Elections

Jenny Randerson: Does the Welsh Assembly Government intend to observe a period of purdah, avoiding major policy announcements in the weeks prior to the local government and European elections? (WAQ33862)

The First Minister: Yes. To avoid any sense that we are seeking to influence the outcome of the local elections, we will make no announcements or decisions on matters affecting local authorities between 17 May and 10 June, except in emergencies or similar situations. Nor will we provide substantive answers to Assembly Questions or correspondence on such matters during that period, as the Business Minister

informed the Business Committee this week. I have also reinforced the standing advice to colleagues concerning the need to keep ministerial and party duties separate, and to avoid any possibility of official resources being used for the latter purpose.

There will be no such moratorium on European matters, because Assembly responsibilities here are too remote from the role of the European Parliament to give rise to any credible perception of Assembly decisions seeking to influence the outcome of the election.

Cost of Advertising Assembly and ASPB Jobs

Leighton Andrews: How much money was spent on advertising jobs in *The Western Mail* by the Assembly and ASPBs in the financial year 2002-03? (WAQ33887)

The First Minister: Around £575,000 was spent by the National Assembly for Wales in the financial year 2002-03 on advertising jobs. The information regarding ASPBs is not held centrally.

The Effectiveness of Recruitment Advertising by the Assembly and ASPBs

Leighton Andrews: What evaluation has been made of the effectiveness of recruitment advertising by the Assembly and ASPBs in *The Western Mail*? (WAQ33888)

The First Minister: Information is recorded about the media source by which applicants have identified a recruitment opportunity, each time a job is advertised in the press. This is collated annually. For the period 2002-03, 45 per cent of our responses resulted from adverts in *The Western Mail*. The recruitment advertising policy will be reviewed later this year and this information will form a specific element of the evaluation.

The information regarding ASPBs is not held centrally. However, ASPBs are required to conduct their business with due regard to the economic, efficient and effective use of resources. In addition, they are required to review their services and activities on a regular basis—five years is the suggested timescale—and through their corporate plans should be able to demonstrate to the Assembly clear evidence of their programme for action to generate continuous efficiency improvements.

Magazines Published by Agencies Funded by the Assembly Government

Glyn Davies: What magazines are published on a regular basis by agencies partly, or wholly funded by the Assembly or by the Assembly Government itself and what is the annual cost of each publication? (WAQ33890)

The First Minister: Magazines and newsletters with annual costs:

- NHS newsletter—£20,000
- Children and Families newsletter—£7,000
- Care Standards Inspectorate for Wales newsletter—£6,000
- Children's First newsletter—£2,000
- Wales Trade International magazine—£60,000
- Links—internal Assembly staff newsletter—£49,000
- Crime Reduction newsletter—£5,000
- *Gwlad*—monthly farming magazine—£106,000
- *Smokebugs* magazine—£6,000
- Chief Medical Officer's update newsletter—£6,000
- SHARP—sustainable health action research programme newsletter—£2,000
- InterSexion newsletter—£5,000
- The Standard workplace health newsletter—£6,000

- Cadw: Heritage in Wales—£35,000. This is part of the ‘Heritage in Wales’ membership package, which earned Cadw £282,000 in 2002-03.

Information from the ASPBs cannot be obtained without disproportionate time and/or cost. Costs are rounded to the nearest thousand.

Salary Bill for Civil Servants Employed by the National Assembly for Wales

Nick Bourne: What is the salary bill for civil servants employed by the National Assembly for Wales in the current year, including national insurance costs, and what were the costs in each of the years since 1999? (WAQ34004)

The First Minister: The anticipated salary bill for civil servants employed by the National Assembly for Wales, but excluding the Presiding Office, in the current year, including national insurance costs, and what the actual costs in each of the years since 1999 are as follows. The salary bill for civil servants in the Presiding Office are a matter for the House Committee.

1999-2000	£58,549,000	(seven staff from Teacher Training Agency transferred in during the year)
2000-01	£67,202,000	(197 staff transferred in from the Welsh Health Common Services Authority, Health Promotion Wales, Wales Office of Research and Development, the Welsh European Programme Executive and WalesTrade International)
2001-02	£78,031,000	(116 staff transferred in from the Clinical Effectiveness Support Unit, Welsh Drug and Alcohol Unit, and the Farming and Rural Conservation Agency)
2002-03	£90,062,000	(254 staff transferred in from Care Standards Inspectorate Wales, Welsh Nursing and Midwifery Board and the Wales Export Association)
2003-04	£105,171,000	(73 staff transferred in from Health Commission Wales, Rent Officer Service and the Drug and Alcohol Team)

Silesia (European Issues)

Nick Bourne: Will the First Minister give an update on co-operation with Silesia on European issues? (WAQ34011)

The First Minister: Since the signing of the memorandum of understanding between Wales and Silesia in October 2002, a number of joint working projects have been identified in the areas of arts and culture, structural funds, economic development and support for small and medium-sized enterprises, education, sustainable development and regeneration/land reclamation. Assembly officials and partner organisations in Wales are taking these issues forward bilaterally with their counterparts in the Silesian Government.

Co-operation is going well on a number of levels. Last week a group of Polish envoys from Gliwicki in Silesia visited north Wales under Denbighshire County Council’s initiative to encourage business opportunities and bring Poland and Britain closer together. As part of the Assembly’s enlargement celebrations in May the Welsh European Funding Office is arranging a conference on ‘Best Practice’ and an official from the Silesian Government will be one of the guest speakers.

It has recently been confirmed that Mr Michal Czarski, Marshal of Silesia, will be visiting Wales on 3 June to 5 June.

Latvia (European issues)

Nick Bourne: Will the First Minister give an update on co-operation with Latvia on European issues? (WAQ34012)

The First Minister: Since my visit to Latvia in September 2003 there has been mutual agreement to expand and further develop co-operation between Wales and Latvia. Discussions regarding a proposed memorandum of understanding are at an advanced stage. To underpin the memorandum, a number of areas for collaboration, including European issues, are being considered by officials, following the recent visit of His Excellency Janis Dripe, the Latvian Ambassador.

Proportion of Staff Working for the Welsh Assembly Government from an Ethnic Minority Background

Nick Bourne: What proportion of staff working for the Welsh Assembly Government are from an ethnic minority background by ethnic minority background area, and will the First Minister set out the figures for each of the years from 1999? (WAQ34018)

The First Minister: The figures for 2002, 2003 and 2004 are broken down as follows

	2002	2003	2004
Asian—Bangladeshi	1	0	1
Asian—Indian	6	10	9
Asian—Pakistani	9	10	11
Other Asian background	2	5	4
Black—African	0	4	1
Black—Caribbean	4	6	5
Other Black background	2	2	4
Chinese	2	4	2
Mixed Asian and White	13	13	10
Mixed Black African and White	2	3	2
Mixed Black Caribbean and White	6	5	1
Other Mixed Ethnic background	7	7	7
Other Ethnic background	12	16	14
Total	66	85	71

The most accurate figures currently held for ethnic monitoring of staff are based on the most recent all staff survey which took place in April 2002 as part of a wider Cabinet Office initiative. At that time there were 66 staff working for the Welsh Assembly Government who considered themselves to be from an ethnic minority background, which represented 1.9 per cent of staff in post; around 50 per cent of staff returned responses to the questionnaire at that time. Staff are under no obligation to tell us their ethnic background.

We have collected information from a smaller survey group for July 2003 and February 2004. In July 2003 there were 85 staff working for the Welsh Assembly who declared themselves from an ethnic minority background, which represented a proportion of 2.2 per cent of staff in post and, in February 2004, there were 71, which represented a proportion of 1.75 per cent staff in post.

We do not hold information for previous years back to 1999 but we are currently rolling out a self-service module of the human resources information technology system which will allow staff to input their own data on ethnic origin and nationality. This will enable us to monitor statistics for this area more closely and will ensure more reliable statistics for the future. The planned date for final implementation of the self-service module is the end of April.

Questions to the Minister for Culture, Welsh Language and Sport

Maesydderwen Comprehensive School

Kirsty Williams: Will the Minister make a statement on the provision of a full size astroturf pitch at Maesydderwen Comprehensive School, Ystradgynlais? (WAQ33541)

The Minister for Culture, Welsh Language and Sport (Alun Pugh): Powys County Council has submitted an application to the new opportunities fund to provide a full size artificial turf pitch at Ysgol Maesydderwen. I understand that the application is currently being assessed and a decision on whether the application goes forward to the NOF Wales panel is expected soon.

Lottery Funding for Sports Projects

Nick Bourne: Will the Minister make a statement about lottery funding for sports projects in Wales? (WAQ33586)

Alun Pugh: Lottery funding relating to sports projects in Wales has been administered by the Sports Council for Wales since 1995. This has resulted in awards totalling more than £105 million being allocated to more than 700 projects throughout Wales. This has undoubtedly brought considerable benefits not only in terms of establishing a range of national sports facilities, but also played an instrumental part in supporting sports development from grass roots to elite level.

Support for Orchestras

Nick Bourne: What support is given to orchestras throughout Wales by the Government of Wales? (WAQ33587)

Alun Pugh: In 2003-04, the Assembly Government, by way of the Arts Council of Wales, gave a grant of £781,738 to the BBC National Orchestra of Wales. Welsh National Opera received a revenue grant of £3.8 million in 2003-04 from the arts council. That grant funds the company's orchestra, among other costs. In addition, a total of £200,000 was distributed in 2003-04 to six chamber orchestras in the first year of a three-year scheme to support the development of chamber orchestras.

There are 13 amateur orchestras that are currently affiliated to and serviced by the Welsh Amateur Music Federation. The federation received a grant of £240,993 from the arts council in 2003-04.

Orchestras and Bands

Nick Bourne: Will the Minister set out by local authority area what assistance is given to orchestras and bands throughout Wales? (WAQ33588)

Alun Pugh: Most of the orchestras and bands supported by the Assembly Government and the Arts Council of Wales are not affiliated to a single local authority area. They draw their players from a wider area and, under the terms of their funding from us, are required to stage concerts and hold workshops for schools and colleges on a regional or national rather than local authority level. Information on local authority assistance should be sought from the relevant authority.

Welsh Lottery Money Being Redirected for London's Olympic Bid

Nick Bourne: Has the Minister received any representations about lottery money being redirected for London's Olympic bid away from Wales? (WAQ33604)

Alun Pugh: Yes—but the costs of bidding for the Olympics is not being met by lottery funding or the National Assembly for Wales. All costs of putting together the bid are met by the UK Exchequer. A decision on whether the bid is successful will be made next summer.

The Advertisement of Jobs for Welsh Speakers

Lisa Francis: What guidance does the Welsh Assembly Government give on the advertisement of jobs where it is necessary to have a Welsh speaker? (WAQ33824)

Alun Pugh: The Welsh Language Board's publication, 'Welsh Language Schemes: Their preparation and approval in accordance with the Welsh Language Act 1993', provides guidance on recruitment advertisements for organisations with Welsh language schemes. These cover the format, size, quality, legibility and prominence of advertisements including for posts being advertised for which the ability to speak Welsh is deemed essential.

The above mentioned document also contains guidance regarding the measures required to be put in place by organisations with Welsh language schemes to seek access to an appropriate number of skilled Welsh speakers. Welsh language schemes are also required to include a description of the steps to be taken to publicise the fact that Welsh speakers are welcome to join the workforce.

The Welsh Language Board is also currently encouraging organisations to draw up linguistic skills strategies as part of their human resource planning. Such strategies will enable organisations to maintain an overview of its linguistic skill needs and resources, and co-ordinate training and recruitment activities to facilitate the objectives of Welsh language schemes.

Promoting and Supporting Theatres

Val Lloyd: What action has the Minister taken to promote and support theatres across Wales? (WAQ33846)

Alun Pugh: In 2003-04 the Arts Council of Wales awarded grants totalling £2.9 million to theatres across Wales for capital works and to assist with production and presentation of drama. Between 2002 and 2003 we almost doubled the funding for the theatre in education initiative from £900,000 to £1.7 million. The arts outside Cardiff initiative is targeted at the development and production of drama at mid-scale venues across Wales and improving access to quality work in disadvantaged areas. A sum of £250,000 is available in 2004-05 rising to the full £2 million in 2006-07. Theatr Genedlaethol Cymru opens with its first ever production on 23 April at Theatr Mold, and the steering group set up by the arts council is making good headway in drawing up proposals for the development of English language theatre.

Funding Allocated to Flintshire

Sandy Mewies: How much Assembly funding, specific to the Minister's portfolio, has been allocated to Flintshire since May 2003? (WAQ33879)

Alun Pugh: The Welsh Assembly Government has allocated funding to Flintshire since May 2003 via the culture, Welsh language and sport portfolio as follows:

- The Sports Council for Wales has made capital awards to 27 projects in Flintshire, totalling £4.2 million. The Welsh Assembly Government also provided direct funding of £124,807 to Flintshire County Council to fund the local free swimming pilot for children and young people.
- The Arts Council of Wales has provided £1.9 million to Flintshire.
- The Council of Museums in Wales has given three grants to Flintshire museums, totalling £5,226.
- The Welsh Books Council has provided a total of £5,340 in grants. In addition, Flintshire schools and libraries receive the whole range of WBC services provided to all Welsh authorities, such as the regular distribution of information about books and visits from schools' officials who display books and educational materials.

- The Welsh Language Board has provided a total of £170,500 to Flintshire through the following schemes: Menter Iaith Sir y Fflint, athrawon bro, Welsh language residential courses at Glan-llyn, and *Papur Fama* (the local community newspaper). Further funding is also distributed throughout Wales by other organisations such as Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin, Urdd Gobaith Cymru and Merched y Wawr.
- Cadw has made a total of £44,652 available in Flintshire, including £10,600 to Flint castle and £33,400 in grants.

The Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama (Future Developments)

Nick Bourne: Has the Minister had any discussions with Russell Goodway and/or Cardiff County Council regarding assistance for the future developments of the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama? (WAQ33881)

Alun Pugh: No.

The Development Plans of the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama

Nick Bourne: Will the Minister make a statement with regard to any benefits to Cardiff and Wales in general of the development plans of the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama? (WAQ33882)

Nick Bourne: Has the Minister discussed with the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama the possibilities of increased cultural life and social benefits of the development plans of the Royal College of Welsh Music and Drama, and, if so, can he give details of those discussions? (WAQ33886)

Alun Pugh: I made a site visit to the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama to discuss its development plans on 25 September last year. I was impressed by the plans, and in particular its proposals for a new music pavilion. I wish it every success.

The Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama (Assistance given by the Welsh Assembly Government)

Nick Bourne: What assistance has the Welsh Assembly Government given to the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama in relation to its development plans? (WAQ33889)

Alun Pugh: The Welsh Assembly Government is supporting the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama's development plan via the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales. Since the start of the college's development plan in 2000-01, HEFCW has provided over £18.5 million in grant allocations, which included a special funding package to support the development plan. The package provides the college with a level of funding for students in performance training that exceeds that of the equivalent institutions in England and Scotland.

The Monitoring of Mentrau Iaith

Owen John Thomas: Could the Minister tell me how the Welsh Language Board monitors mentrau iaith, how much money has been earmarked for the monitoring of mentrau iaith and how many of the Board's staff monitor mentrau iaith? (WAQ33891)

Alun Pugh: The Welsh Language Board monitors the mentrau iaith in the following ways:

- by measuring progress against targets. Grant payment is conditional on sufficient progress being achieved in the work of the mentrau iaith.
- by monitoring and appraising the work of the mentrau iaith. This involves visiting each menter at least once a year to meet staff and monitor activities against agreed targets. The board also meets mentrau staff centrally on a regular basis to discuss various issues, including collaborating on common projects. An annual conference is also organised by the board for the mentrau.

- by external monitoring. In 2000 a review of the mentrau iaith was undertaken by Iaith Cyf. This review praised the mentrau's work as well as offering a number of recommendations for future development.

Apart from the external review by Iaith Cyf, the cost of monitoring the mentrau is drawn from the board's core staffing budget.

Three members of the board's staff are directly involved in monitoring the mentrau iaith as part of their responsibilities within the board's language planning team.

It must be remembered that the mentrau receive funding from other sources such as local authorities, lottery funds, Children in Need, and Europe, and all of these have monitoring mechanisms in place.

The National Youth Orchestra of Wales

Michael German: What support does the National Assembly provide directly or indirectly for the National Youth Orchestra of Wales? (WAQ33897)

Alun Pugh: The Welsh Assembly Government does not provide direct support to the National Youth Orchestra of Wales. The National Youth Orchestra of Wales is funded by a service level agreement with Wales's local authorities.

The orchestra receives advice and practical support from National Youth Arts Wales, which in 2003-04 received £162,200 from the Arts Council of Wales to cover support activities for this and other organisations in the youth arts sector.

The Ofcom Wales National Advisory Committee

Leighton Andrews: Has Ofcom consulted with the Minister on appointments to the Office of Communications Wales national advisory committee? (WAQ33901)

Alun Pugh: Ofcom has kept the Welsh Assembly Government informed of progress at key stages in the appointment of members to the national advisory committee for Wales. The establishment of an agreement between the Welsh Assembly Government and Ofcom with regard to consultation on matters affecting Wales will form part of our discussions with Ofcom in the near future.

The New Opportunities Schools Fund

Laura Anne Jones: How much of the new opportunities schools fund allocated to Wales has been spent to date. (WAQ33939)

Alun Pugh: The national lottery is not a devolved matter. The new opportunities fund's physical education and sport in schools programme aims to distribute a net total of £46.3 million for the provision of sporting facilities for young people and communities in Wales. Local authorities have until 29 March 2004 to submit detailed individual applications.

As at 24 March 2004, NOF had committed £8,901,004. The physical education and sport in schools programme committee met on 29 March to consider applications and NOF aims to commit all funding available under the physical education and sport in schools programme by the end of December 2004.

Funding Allocated by Cadw

Lynne Neagle: Will the Minister give a breakdown of funding allocated by Cadw specifically for interpretation at each of its sites, in the last three years? (WAQ33940)

Alun Pugh: There are 127 monuments in state care. Over the three years 2001-02 to 2003-04, funding was allocated for new or revised interpretation at 17 of the 30 staffed sites as follows:

Site	2001-02 (£)	2002-03 (£)	2003-04 (£)
Blaenavon ironworks	41,749	-	3,412
Caerleon	180	2,806	17,255
Caernarfon Castle	8,981	6,739	65,701
Caerphilly Castle	10,531	16,222	18,541
Carreg Cennen Castle	-	1,907	1,612
Castell Coch	14,969	13,635	11,844
Chepstow Castle	4,824	24,501	366
Conwy Castle	18,312	34,831	563
Criccieth Castle	2,108	42,773	4,922
Dolwyddelan Castle	-	1,872	4,193
Harlech Castle	-	20,073	19,975
Kidwelly Castle	10,716	36,870	13,536
Plas Mawr	1,198	3,913	1,492
Raglan Castle	-	-	26,575
Strata Florida Abbey	-	1,907	-
Tintern Abbey	10,716	56,997	13,536
Tretower	6,153	7,050	5,982

Funding was also allocated to interpretation at some of the 97 unstaffed sites, to the value of £21,110, £34,360 and £30,812 in the three years.

Breakdown of Funding Allocated by Cadw

Lynne Neagle: Will the Minister give a breakdown of funding allocated by Cadw for each of its sites for the last three years? (WAQ33941)

Alun Pugh: Over the three years 2001-02 to 2003-04 Cadw allocated funds to the 30 staffed sites in state care as follows, I am sure you will be pleased at the level of public investment in Blaenavon ironworks:

Site	2001-02 (£)	2002-03 (£)	2003-04 (£)
Beaumaris Castle	57,220	117,257	58,140
Blaenavon Ironworks	400,688	313,354	596,456
Caerleon Fortress Baths	65,551	80,889	105,973
Caernarfon Castle	205,432	131,738	215,563
Caerphilly Castle	600,073	1,094,671	304,257
Carreg Cennen Castle	628	2,601	2,272
Castell Coch	486,417	246,380	154,246
Chepstow Castle	194,528	177,942	337,920
Cilgerran Castle	628	649	330
Conwy Castle	311,509	294,005	399,896
Criccieth Castle	18,741	59,552	23,714
Cymmer Abbey	5,816	3,173	3,173
Dolwyddelan Castle	1,448	3,344	5,689
Harlech Castle	46,044	73,427	112,325
Kidwelly Castle	110,959	108,456	140,985
Laugharne Castle	202,349	26,239	106,216
Oxwich Castle	61,608	57,313	32,313
Plas Mawr	37,322	65,701	53,057
Raglan Castle	107,848	60,556	110,952
Rhuddlan Castle	174,324	245,319	22,303

Rug Chapel	12,681	13,692	15,352
St David's Bishops Palace	306,835	320,890	363,191
Segontium Roman Fort and Museum	53,562	-	-
Strata Florida Abbey	13,413	17,128	37,624
Talley Abbey	-	-	590

Site	2001-02 (£)	2002-03 (£)	2003-04 (£)
Tintern Abbey	302,920	234,141	250,179
Tretower Court and Castle	94,195	195,877	62,530
Valle Crucis Abbey	14,363	15,385	16,123
Weobley Castle	639	324	330
White Castle	13,412	14,433	16,506

Additional sums were allocated to the 97 unstaffed sites in state care, totalling £735,774, £711,382 and £576,401 in the three years.

Broadcasting Issues

Leighton Andrews: On how many occasions has the Minister and his predecessor met Department for Culture, Media and Sport Ministers to discuss broadcasting issues in Wales since September 2000? (WAQ33942)

Alun Pugh: My predecessor and I have met DCMS Ministers on a number of occasions since September 2000 to discuss broadcasting issues in Wales, including two occasions when this was the sole matter of discussion.

Prosiectau Isadeiledd Pêl-Droed

Eleanor Burnham: A wnaiff y Gweinidog ddatganiad ynglŷn â gwariant a chefnogaeth Llywodraeth y Cynulliad ar gyfer prosiectau isadeiledd pêl-droed yng Nghymru? (WAQ33982) [W]

Alun Pugh: Yn dilyn yr argymhellion a wnaed gan y fforwm pêl-droed, cyhoeddodd Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru ym mis Hydref 2002 y byddai dros £1.3 miliwn yn cael ei fuddsoddi dros gyfnod o dair blynedd i gefnogi'r broses o ddatblygu pêl-droed yng Nghymru ar gyfer pobl ifanc.

Yn ogystal â hyn, mae Cyngor Chwaraeon Cymru yn adrodd bod bron £700,000 o arian loteri wedi'i ddyrannu dros y flwyddyn ddiwethaf i amrediad o brosiectau sy'n gysylltiedig â phêl-droed. Ymhlith y rhain y mae dyfarniadau cyfalaf a grantiau eraill llai ar gyfer dillad ac offer er mwyn cefnogi pêl-droed yng Nghymru.

Football Infrastructure Projects

Eleanor Burnham: Will the Minister make a statement on the Assembly Government's expenditure on, and support for, football infrastructure projects in Wales? (WAQ33982) [W]

Alun Pugh: Following the recommendations made by the football forum, the Welsh Assembly Government announced in October 2002 that over £1.3 million would be invested over a three-year period to support the development of football in Wales for young people.

In addition, the Sports Council for Wales reports that during the last year nearly £700,000 in lottery funds has been allocated to a range of football-related projects. These include capital awards and other smaller grants to provide kit and equipment, all of which aim at supporting the game of football in Wales.

Uwch-Gynghrair Pêl-droed Cymru

Eleanor Burnham: A wnaiff y Gweinidog ddatganiad ynglŷn ag unrhyw drafodaethau y mae ef wedi eu cael gyda chynrychiolwyr Uwch-Gynghrair Pêl-droed Cymru? (WAQ33984) [W]

Alun Pugh: Nid wyf wedi cael unrhyw drafodaethau â chynrychiolwyr Uwch-Gynghrair Pêl-droed Cymru. Fodd bynnag, yr wyf wedi trefnu i gwrdd â hwy yn y dyfodol agos i drafod amrediad o faterion.

The Welsh Football Premier League

Eleanor Burnham: Will the Minister make a statement on any discussions he has had with representatives of the Welsh football premier league? (WAQ33984) [W]

Alun Pugh: I have not had any discussions with representatives from the Welsh football premier league. However, I have arranged to meet with them in the near future to discuss a range of issues.

Questions to the Minister for Economic Development and Transport

Knowledge Bank for Entrepreneurs

Lorraine Barrett: Will the Minister provide a progress report on the development of a knowledge bank for Entrepreneurs? (WAQ33273)

The Minister for Economic Development and Transport (Andrew Davies): An invitation to tender to advise on an appropriate model for the knowledge bank will be issued shortly. Implementation will be from April 2005 onwards.

The Wales Tourist Board Staff

Jenny Randerson: Will the Minister provide details of the way in which Wales Tourist Board staff work in co-operation with VisitBritain? (WAQ33317)

Andrew Davies: The Wales Tourist Board works in partnership with VisitBritain and the national tourist boards in England, Northern Ireland and Scotland to promote Britain overseas as a tourist destination and generate additional tourism revenue throughout Britain.

As part of VisitBritain's remit is to promote all of Britain overseas, including Wales, the WTB work closely with them to ensure that Wales is fairly represented at all levels. The WTB is currently working towards making sure that VisitBritain has deliverable and quantifiable targets for their overseas work for Wales, and that this work can be monitored and evaluated.

Communities First Agendas

Leighton Andrews: What instructions does the Minister give in remit letters to Assembly sponsored public bodies within his portfolio area regarding engaging with Communities First agendas? (WAQ33322)

Andrew Davies: ASPBs are expected to conduct their business in line with the Assembly's values, principles and standards and to contribute, as appropriate, to its strategic agenda for Wales. This includes delivering against the key priorities and values set out in 'Wales: A Better Country'. To ensure that this happens the Assembly Government has been developing a new business planning process which emphasise the importance of partnership working in delivering the Government's agenda. In relation to the Communities First agendas, the remit letters being issued to each executive ASPB require them to identify how they will engage with Communities First partnerships: assist in and support the formulation

and delivery of community action plans: and participate in the development of local authority community strategies. ASPBs will be required to demonstrate in their corporate plans how they will achieve this.

Late Trains from London Paddington to South Wales

Nick Bourne: Has the Minister had representations about the late trains from London Paddington to south Wales? (WAQ33568)

Andrew Davies: Yes. I discussed that with First Great Western's senior management on 11 December 2003. FGW are reviewing the timing of the last train from Paddington, to determine whether a favourable solution can be found from December 2004.

Revenue for Wales

Lisa Francis: What forms of evidence gathering does the Wales Tourist Board employ to calculate potential revenue for Wales? (WAQ33573)

Lisa Francis: What evidence is there to corroborate the £100 million figure that the Wales Tourist Board say will result in economic revenue for Wales should compulsory registration for accommodation providers be adopted? (WAQ33575)

Lisa Francis: In respect of the £100 million revenue for Wales, is this a per annum figure? (WAQ33577)

Andrew Davies: I have asked the WTB chairman for a detailed response to the issues raised in these questions. I will forward a copy of his response to you when I have received it. I will also make that information available to member of the Economic Development and Transport Committee, as some of the issues were raised during Committee on 17 March.

Age Concern

Lisa Francis: Will the Minister give details of grants which may be processed from Cymru Ar-lein (Wales Online), which could be made available to provide training for organisations such as Age Concern who want to run computer lessons for senior citizens? (WAQ33576)

Andrew Davies: A list of grant aid schemes for voluntary organisations may be viewed on the Assembly website at <http://www.wales.gov.uk/themesvoluntarysector/grantsguide-e.htm>. Cymru Ar-lein has no such schemes.

Cymru Ar-lein provides free basic ICT training sessions for all citizens. The meet the mouse/llywio'r llygoden campaign was launched in November 2003. To date, it has visited 15 towns in north, mid and south Wales. Using a local venue, the two-hour sessions teach basic skills such as using a mouse and keyboard, searching the internet and using e-mail.

The sessions are available in Welsh or English and all attendees receive a bilingual information pack and are encouraged to build on their new skills by using the people's network at their local library or registering for a course at a local college. Further details and the current itinerary can be seen at <http://www.cymruarlein.wales.gov.uk/skillict/seminar.htm>.

The course organisers contacted Age Concern's director in November to inform him of this campaign. They have since been contacting Age Concern's regional co-ordinators when there is a meet the mouse session in their area. They are invited to send participants and also use the session as an opportunity to promote the ICT courses which Age Concern arranges.

The Closure of Mostyn Docks

Nick Bourne: Will the Minister give details of any discussions he has had in relation to the closure of Mostyn docks, and consequent problems for British Aerospace, Broughton? (WAQ33582)

Andrew Davies: I and my ministerial colleagues have taken a close personal interest in the developments at Mostyn docks and also in the possible implications of restricted access to the port for Airbus at Broughton. In addition, I asked senior officials within my department to maintain frequent and very close contact with both companies and to keep me fully briefed and up to date on the issues and concerns.

The Brecon Inner Relief Road

Nick Bourne: Will the Minister make a statement on progress on the Brecon inner relief road? (WAQ33597)

Andrew Davies: The construction of a link road in Brecon is funded by Powys County Council and dovetails with their multi modal transport infrastructure scheme, which is receiving transport grant support from the Welsh Assembly Government. I understand that construction of the link road is scheduled for completion in early 2005.

Assembly Investment Grants

Christine Chapman: How many businesses were awarded Assembly investment grants in the Cynon Valley in 2003? (WAQ33645)

Christine Chapman: How many businesses have been awarded Assembly Investment Grants in the Cynon Valley in total? (WAQ33646)

Andrew Davies: In 2003, 11 offers of Assembly investment grant worth £306,500 were made to firms in the Cynon Valley constituency. These offers involve private investment of £776,594, the maintaining of 153 jobs and creation of 10 jobs. Since the start of the scheme in April 2002, 23 offers worth £759,750 have been made to firms in the constituency, to aid private investment of £1,887,497 which should maintain 227 and create 30 new jobs.

Regional Selective Assistance Grants

Christine Chapman: How many businesses were awarded regional selective assistance grants in the Cynon Valley in 2003? (WAQ33647)

Christine Chapman: How many businesses have been awarded regional selective assistance grants in the Cynon Valley in total? (WAQ33648)

Andrew Davies: In 2003 five offers of regional selective assistance worth £1,948,000 were made to firms in the Cynon Valley constituency. These offers should lever private investment of £5,105,000, create 99 jobs and safeguard 145. Since July 1999, when the National Assembly for Wales began to make RSA offers, 26 offers worth £17,074,600 have been made to firms in the constituency, to aid private investment of £52,342,325 which was forecast to create 841 and safeguard 752 jobs.

Job Creation

Nick Bourne: Further to question WAQ32956, and your answer, could you please provide answers to the specific question asked? (WAQ33652)

Andrew Davies: The Assembly Government and its Team Wales partners are committed to creating jobs throughout Wales, including the areas of Powys you are concerned with.

Regional selective assistance that is available in the areas around Machynlleth and Ystradgynlais and the whole of Powys is eligible for Assembly investment grant. Since the Assembly Government's inception, 11 projects have been offered RSA and AIG grant assistance worth nearly £550,000. These projects have associated investment totalling almost £2.8 million and will create and safeguard in excess of 300 jobs.

The average employment level in mid and west Wales over the four quarters to November 2003 was 13,000 higher than in 1999, an increase of 6.5 per cent.

At a ward level, the only official statistics providing a time series relate to claimants of unemployment related benefit. The following table shows changes in claimant count statistics in the areas you refer to, since the Assembly's inception.

Claimants of unemployment related benefits, UK, Wales, Powys, Powys wards			
	Feb-04	Feb-99	Change Feb-04 over Feb-99
Levels:			
UK	716,545	1,056,441	-32 per cent
Wales	35,195	56,452	-38 per cent
Powys	936	1,524	-39 per cent
St. David ward	14	18	-22 per cent
St. John ward	29	49	-41 per cent
St. Mary Ward	21	34	-38 per cent
Brecon wards	64	101	-37 per cent
Ystradgynlais ward	32	73	-56 per cent
Knighton ward	21	37	-43 per cent
Llandrindod East ward	19	15	27 per cent
Llandrindod North ward	20	29	-31 per cent
Llandrindod South 1 ward	18	13	38 per cent
Llandrindod South 2 ward	19	28	-32 per cent
Llandrindod West ward	14	31	-55 per cent
Llandrindod Wells wards	90	116	-22 per cent
Rhayader Town ward	23	27	-15 per cent
<i>Rates (claimants per head of working age population):</i>			
UK	3.8	5.7	-1.9
Wales	3.9	6.3	-2.4
Powys	2.4	3.9	-1.5

Source: NOMIS (23 Mar 2004), ward data based on frozen 1991 boundaries

Economic Development in South-east Wales

John Griffiths: Will the Minister make a statement on the Assembly Government's policy for economic development in south-east Wales? (WAQ33654)

Andrew Davies: Our economic development policies are set out in 'A Winning Wales' and in 'Wales: A Better Country'. The latter emphasises creating more jobs and higher quality jobs. The level of employment over the four quarters to November 2003 was 59,000 higher in south-east Wales in 1999, an increase of 9.7 per cent. High quality jobs have been created by many firms including Cogent, General Dynamics and International Rectifier.

Congestion Charging

Nick Bourne: Does the Government of Wales have a policy in relation to congestion charging in Cardiff and elsewhere in Wales and, if so, will the Minister publish the policy? (WAQ33679)

Andrew Davies: Under the Transport Act 2000, the Welsh Assembly Government would have to confirm any road user-charging scheme for introduction in Cardiff or elsewhere in Wales. Before the introduction of such a scheme, the Welsh Assembly Government would expect to see significant improvements in public transport, such as the introduction of park and ride schemes, dedicated bus lanes and quality bus partnerships.

The Strategic Rail Authority

Nick Bourne: What representations has the Minister made to Westminster colleagues or to the Strategic Rail Authority regarding the upkeep and improvement of railway lines and railway services in Wales? (WAQ33682)

Andrew Davies: I met members of the Welsh Affairs Committee on 17 November 2003, when I highlighted, the Welsh Assembly Government's aspirations to them in respect of railways in Wales. I also met Richard Bowker, chairman and chief executive of the Strategic Rail Authority on 18 February 2004, when we discussed a number of rail-related issues.

I have also had numerous discussions with Dr Kim Howells MP, Minister of State for Transport at the Department for Transport, most recently following the statement by the Secretary of State for Transport that he would be undertaking a review of the structure of the rail industry.

The Study of Cultural Tourism

Owen John Thomas: Will the Minister make a statement on the economic benefits of creating a faculty in Barry to further the study of cultural tourism? (WAQ33840)

Andrew Davies: I am aware of a proposal for a Wales international centre for hospitality, tourism and leisure management as part of a possible new campus for University of Wales Institute Cardiff on a site at Barry Island. New courses might include cultural tourism.

The promoters claim that the overall project would generate a variety of benefits including some to the economy.

Priorities in the South Wales Valleys

Lynne Neagle: What discussions has the Minister had with the Welsh Development Agency regarding the delivery of the Assembly Government's priorities in the south Wales Valleys? (WAQ33841)

Andrew Davies: The remit letter to the Welsh Development Agency sets out its role in relation to the Welsh Assembly Government's strategic agenda for the whole of Wales, as well as our strategy on economic development set out in 'A Winning Wales'. The letter also sets out the priorities and key tasks which I expect the agency to take forward in the next financial year. It makes clear that maximising the economic benefits from the structural funds is my top priority for the Agency in 2004-05, confirming the importance I attach to developments which will benefit the south Wales Valleys.

I have discussed these with the WDA board, the chair and the chief executive in our regular meetings.

The Assembly Investment Grant

Lynne Neagle: Will the Minister make a statement on how the Assembly investment grant has benefited business in Torfaen? (WAQ33842)

Andrew Davies: The Assembly investment grant has been a great success since its launch in April 2002. In Torfaen, a grant of over £1 million has been offered to 34 companies. These projects are expected to

lever in over £2.4 million company investment, and are expected to create 124 new jobs and maintain 233.

The Wales Tourist Board

Brynle Williams: Will the Minister provide details on the financial settlement given to the Wales Tourist Board for investment support grants for the financial years 2003-04 and 2004-05? (WAQ33843)

Andrew Davies: The Wales Tourist Board's budget for investment support grants for 2003-04 was £3.55 million and will be maintained at this level for 2004-05. Additional actual and likely provision from other sources is identified in its remit letter, a copy of which is in the Library.

Increasing Job Opportunities in the South-East

John Griffiths: Will the Minister make a statement on further increasing job opportunities in south-east Wales? (WAQ33844)

Andrew Davies: The Assembly and its partners in Team Wales continue to work on attracting investment into the whole of Wales. Since the inception of the Assembly, investment into south-east Wales has resulted in a projected capital expenditure of over £558 million, creating over 9,500 new jobs and safeguarding 5,333.

Economic Development in South Wales Valleys

Janice Gregory: What action is the Assembly Government taking to encourage economic development in south Wales Valleys communities outside of Communities First areas? (WAQ33845)

Andrew Davies: The Assembly Government wants to see strong and safe communities throughout Wales. South Wales Valleys communities are in Objective 1 and tier 1 assisted areas and a broad range of tailored support including business advice, property, financial assistance and training are available to encourage economic development.

Policies Promoting Job Creation

Nick Bourne: How are the Minister's policies promoting job creation in Wales? (WAQ33847)

Andrew Davies: Very well. The recent Royal Bank of Scotland's purchasing managers' index suggests the Welsh employment index is rising at a faster rate than that for the UK. Claimant count unemployment is at low levels not seen since the mid 1970s. The employment level in Wales for the three months to January 2004 was 24,000 higher than in the corresponding period a year ago, 84,000 higher than in the same period two years ago.

Transport Infrastructure

Nick Bourne: Will the Minister make a statement on his plans to improve our transport infrastructure? (WAQ33848)

Andrew Davies: In 2004-05 the Welsh Assembly Government will be investing over £130 million to maintain and improve the trunk road network in Wales. In addition, we are making £85 million available to support investment in local transport infrastructure, including funding for road and rail schemes, integrated transport, walking and cycling and Safe Routes to Schools.

The Sirhowy Enterprise Way

Laura Anne Jones: Will the Minister make a statement on the predicted number of jobs to be created in Oakdale as a result of the Sirhowy enterprise way? (WAQ33849)

Andrew Davies: It is estimated that the sirhowy enterprise way, which will provide access to the Oakdale Business Park, will unlock the potential to realise up to 5,000 jobs at Oakdale.

The Valley Lines Service

Owen John Thomas: What discussions has the Minister had with Arriva and other interested parties with a view to boosting economic development by improving the Valley Lines service? (WAQ33850)

Andrew Davies: I met Mr Bob Davies, the chief executive of Arriva Trains, on 11 November 2003 and we discussed improvements to rail services in Wales. A key commitment contained within the Wales and borders rail franchise is the need to improve train services across the Valley Lines network. Arriva's standard pattern timetable, which it will introduce in December 2005, will significantly improve the frequency of train services for the Valleys. Arriva has issued a consultation document on its SPT and a copy of this has been sent to all Assembly Members.

The A380 Wings under Manufacture at Broughton

Ann Jones: Will the Minister make a statement on the potential impact on the Welsh economy if the A380 wings under manufacture at Broughton cannot be shipped via Mostyn? (WAQ33851)

Andrew Davies: I have every confidence that Airbus will continue to produce wings at Broughton for onward transmission to Toulouse with significant benefits for the Welsh economy.

The Levels of Economic Activity in Swansea East

Val Lloyd: Will the Minister make a statement on the levels of economic activity in Swansea East? (WAQ33866)

Andrew Davies: According to the Labour Force Survey, 71.8 per cent of the working age population in Swansea East was economically active in 2001, compared to 73.1 per cent in Wales as a whole. More recent figures for economic activity at constituency level are not yet available. The number of jobseekers allowance claimants in Swansea East fell by 30 per cent between February 1999 and February 2004, (compared to a 36 per cent fall for Wales as a whole).

The Levels of Youth Unemployment in Swansea East

Val Lloyd: Can the Minister provide figures on the levels of youth unemployment in Swansea East from 1999 to 2003? (WAQ33867)

Andrew Davies: The available information is given in the table. On average, the number of 16 to 24-year-olds claiming jobseeker's allowance in Swansea East in 2003 was 6 per cent lower than in 1999.

Jobseeker's allowance claimants in Swansea East, 16 to 24-year-olds

	Average number of claimants
1999	551
2000	583
2001	545
2002	501
2003	520

Source: Jobcentre Plus administrative system.

Rail Passenger Safety

Sandy Mewies: What action has the Minister undertaken to improve rail passenger safety in north Wales? (WAQ33877)

Andrew Davies: I met Mr Bob Davies, the chief executive of Arriva Trains, on 11 November 2003, and we discussed improvements to rail services in north Wales, including station enhancements and improved passenger safety.

Arriva has since met local authority representatives and rail user groups in north Wales to discuss their aspirations, and is now developing a phased programme of works. The Assembly Government will be funding these station improvements and we have set aside £750,000 in 2004-05.

Assembly Funding Allocated to Flintshire

Sandy Mewies: How much Assembly funding, specific to the Minister's portfolio, has been allocated to Flintshire since May 2003? (WAQ33878)

Andrew Davies: The information is not available in the form requested. Several funds in the economic development and transport budgets respond to applications for support and the progress of projects including private sector investment. As such there are no predetermined allocations to individual local authorities. However, I can confirm that Flintshire unitary authority was allocated a transport grant of over £5.5 million in 2003-04. Additionally, Flintshire's 2003-04 revenue allocation for their demand responsive transport scheme and road safety grant were £260,000 and £412,000 respectively.

The Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama (Increased Tourism Benefits)

Nick Bourne: Has the Minister discussed with the Wales Tourist Board the possibilities of increased tourism benefits of the development plans of the Royal College of Welsh Music and Drama, and, if so, can he give details of those discussions? (WAQ33885)

Andrew Davies: No.

The Numbers of Accidents at Certain Locations

Alun Cairns: Further to WAQ30636, would the Minister please list the numbers of accidents at each location? (WAQ33927)

Andrew Davies: Further to WAQ30636, please find attached accident statistics for each location. This data covers a three-year period from January 2000 and includes sites within a 100 mile section which have (A) the greatest number of accidents and (B) the greatest number of fatal accidents.

In no specific order, the details are:

(A) Greatest number of accidents

Road		Accident Count	Casualty Count	Fatal Count	Serious Count	Slight Count
A4042	New Inn Roundabout, Pontypool	15	24	0	1	23
A465	A465 Junction with M4 Junction 43	15	25	0	0	25
A470	A470/A55 Black Cat Roundabout *	15	25	0	1	24
A470	A470 Coryton Interchange	26	48	0	1	47
A48	A48 Baglan to Briton Ferry	16	22	0	1	21
A48	A48/M4 Junction Pont Abraham	20	27	0	8	19

M4	M4 Junction 30 Cardiff Gate	15	23	0	1	22
M4	M4 Junction 32 Coryton	18	32	2	4	26
M4	M4 Junction Capel Llanilltern	17	26	0	0	26
M4	M4 Junction 43 Llandarcy	16	29	0	0	29
M4	M4 Junction 45 Ynysforgan	16	23	0	0	23
M4	M4 Junction 47 Penllergaer	16	25	0	5	20

* A470/A55 Black Cat Roundabout, omitted from previous answer

(B) Fatal

Road		Accident Count	Casualty Count	Fatal Count	Serious Count	Slight Count
A40	Arnold's Hill	3	8	2	4	2
A4042	Little Mill	2	4	2	2	0
A4042	South of Hardwick Roundabout	2	6	2	1	3
A470	Taff's Well	5	13	2	6	5
A470	Dolhelfra	2	6	2	2	2
A470	Near Betws-y-coed	4	8	2	2	4
A470	Near Plas Maenan	2	3	2	0	1
A477	Red Roses	5	12	2	4	6
A483	South of Ruabon	3	8	3	0	5
A494	Near Llanuwchllyn	2	4	2	0	2
A5	Padog Bends	4	5	2	1	2
M4	Near Highcross M4 Junction 27	3	12	2	2	8
M4	Junction 32 Coryton	18	32	2	4	26
M4	Junction 42 Pentyla	4	7	2	0	5

Timber-Processing Industry

Leighton Andrews: What economic assessments have been made of timber-processing industry opportunities in Wales? (WAQ33943)

Andrew Davies: The WDA and the Forestry Commission have just funded a piece of research, which will form the basis of future support for the timber industry in Wales. The research is being carried out by Jaakko Pöyry Consulting, who are world-renowned experts in the timber industry. This research consists of an exercise mapping the existing forest industry in Wales, and a benchmarking study, examining the strategic options available given the current resource and industry. A draft report was presented to working group 3 (representing Wales as a world-class location for forest industries) of the Woodland Forum on 24 March 2004, and the final report will be available before the end of April 2004.

Tourism Operators

Lisa Francis: How many tourism operators will not be able to trade beyond Easter and into the summer season as a result of the cut in grant aid? (WAQ33963)

Andrew Davies: There is no cut in grant in aid to the Wales Tourist Board. It is currently at record level and this will be increased slightly from 2004-05. Investment support grants are provided for capital projects and not as subsidies for running costs for businesses that cannot otherwise compete in the market. The WTB's programmes are further boosted by financial support from European structural funds and many development projects have been awarded grants through funding made available from these. The first phase of its approved capital European structural funds programme has come to an end and an application for further funds for a second phase is being prepared. A decision on that application is

expected in the autumn. In the meantime the WTB is prioritising its investment support which has meant that some projects have been put on hold pending the outcome of its application for further EU funding.

The Wales Tourist Board

Lisa Francis: How many tourism operators have received letters from the Wales Tourist Board in respect of projects that they were working on? (WAQ33964)

Lisa Francis: How many tourism operators in north Wales have received letters this year from the Wales Tourist Board informing them of cuts in grant aid from the tourist board in respect of projects that they were working on? (WAQ33965)

Andrew Davies: There is no cut in WTB's grant in aid from the Assembly Government. It remains at a record level. WTB receives additional grant from European structural funds. The Wales Tourist Board advises me that, to date, it has sent 35 letters to grant applicants in response to applications received for investment support grants. The letters explain to applicants that the first phase of the WTB's capital European structural funds programme has come to an end and that their grant application has been put on hold pending the outcome of an application for further EU structural funds. The number of such letters issued to businesses in north Wales is 15.

Grants for Tourism Projects Sanctioned by WEFO in 2004

Lisa Francis: How many grants for tourism projects has the Welsh European Funding Office sanctioned this year? (WAQ33967)

Andrew Davies: WEFO has not approved any projects directly related to tourism yet in 2004, as WEFO works on calendar years to be in line with the European Commission, although a number of projects are currently being appraised.

Grants for Tourism Projects Sanctioned by WEFO in 2003

Lisa Francis: How many grants for tourism projects did WEFO sanction last year? (WAQ33968)

Andrew Davies: WEFO approved 13 projects directly supporting tourism during 2003, with project sponsors including the Wales Tourist Board and Tourism Training Forum for Wales. It should also be noted that other projects receiving support from the structural fund programmes in Wales include an element of support for local tourism, although they would not be classed as a 'tourism project', such as the Great Orme tramway, Aberglasney mansion, the Museum of the Welsh Woollen Industry, the National Waterfront Museum and Theatr Mwldan.

Grant Aid for Tourism Projects

Lisa Francis: Has WEFO been told to place a moratorium on all grant aid for tourism projects? (WAQ33969)

Andrew Davies: No.

The North Wales Tourism Partnership

Lisa Francis: How much money will the north Wales regional tourist partnership allocate towards funding tourist information centres this year? (WAQ33970)

Lisa Francis: How much money was allocated by north Wales's tourism partnership last year towards funding tourist information centres? (WAQ33979)

Andrew Davies: The north Wales tourism partnership allocated £46,000 in 2002-03, and £30,000 in 2003-04, to tourism information centres.

Tourist Information Company

Lisa Francis: What is the purpose of the tourist information company? (WAQ33971)

Lisa Francis: What relationship does the tourist information company have with ‘visitwales.com’? (WAQ33972)

Lisa Francis: Is the purpose of the tourist information company to act as a visitor referral system and, if so, how will this be done? (WAQ33973)

Andrew Davies: I am not aware of a company by that name, and neither is the Wales Tourist Board.

Wales Tourist Board (Marketing Costs)

Lisa Francis: How much money did the Wales Tourist Board spend last year on marketing? (WAQ33974)

Andrew Davies: The Wales Tourist Board spent £13.582 million on its UK and overseas marketing activity in 2002-03.

Visitor Numbers

Lisa Francis: How much responsibility does the Wales Tourist Board take for visitor numbers? (WAQ33976)

Andrew Davies: The Wales Tourist Board has a statutory function to encourage people to visit Wales. Its marketing campaigns, such as ‘The Big Country’, have a key role in influencing people to visit Wales, and the board has specific targets for returns on such campaigns—largely linked to visitor spending. However, there are many factors outside the board’s control and influence that can, and often do, impact on visitor numbers.

Regional Tourism Partnerships

Lisa Francis: How much money has been allocated to regional tourism partnerships in Wales? (WAQ33977)

Lisa Francis: How much money does each regional tourist partnership in Wales receive? (WAQ33978)

Andrew Davies: Collectively, the regional tourism partnerships will receive £3.5 million in 2004-05. The regional breakdown is as follows:

North Wales tourism partnership	£1,155,000
Mid Wales tourism partnership	£665,000
Capital region tourism	£805,000
South-west Wales tourism	£875,000

Travel Concessions to Persons over the Age of 60 and 65

Glyn Davies: What free travel concessions are available to persons over the age of 60 and those over the age of 65 in Wales? (WAQ34007)

Glyn Davies: What reduced cost travel concessions are available to persons over the age of 60 and those over the age of 65 in Wales? (WAQ34008)

Andrew Davies: From 1 April 2002, we required local authorities to guarantee free travel on local bus services for women aged 60 and over, for men aged 65 and over, and for disabled people. Since 1 April 2003, this has been extended to men aged 60 and over. In addition, local authorities currently have discretion to offer travel concessions to classes of persons as specified in the Transport Act 1985. Rail passengers aged 60 or over are automatically eligible for a senior railcard, which enables them to travel all over the UK rail network at one third of most first class and standard fares. The railcard costs £18 and is valid for one year.

Questions to the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning

Communities First (Assembly Sponsored Public Bodies)

Leighton Andrews: What instructions does the Minister give in remit letters to Assembly sponsored public bodies within her portfolio area regarding engaging with Communities First agendas? (WAQ33318)

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning (Jane Davidson): ASPBs are expected to conduct their business in line with the Assembly's values, principles and standards and to contribute, as appropriate, to its strategic agenda for Wales. This includes delivering against the key priorities and values set out in 'Wales: A Better Country'. To ensure that this happens, the Assembly Government has been developing a new business planning process that emphasises the importance of partnership working in delivering the Government's agenda. In relation to the Communities First agendas, the remit letters being issued to each executive ASPB require them to identify how they will engage with Communities First partnerships, assist in and support the formulation and delivery of community action plans, and participate in the development of local authority community strategies. ASPBs will be required to demonstrate in their corporate plans how they will achieve this.

Education Attainment in Deprived Communities

John Griffiths: Will the Minister make a statement on progress in education attainment in schools serving the most deprived communities in Wales? (WAQ33506)

Jane Davidson: Our policies are intended to improve attainment in schools in all our communities. Pupils and schools can be successful, wherever they are located. We have developed a wide range of policies that will have a beneficial impact on attainment—reduced junior class sizes, the foundation phase, better transition between primary and secondary school, the aiming for excellence programme targeted at pupils in key stage 3, the Welsh baccalaureate and learning pathways 14-19. I am also committed to narrowing the gap between our best and least-well performing schools. The 'Narrowing the Gap in the Performance of Schools' report on secondary schools published in 2002 demonstrated that, although there is a strong link between deprivation and low performance, schools can break that link. The report described the key features of schools operating successfully in difficult circumstances. A similar study is being carried out in relation to primary schools and will be completed this year.

Over the past three years, the Assembly Government has provided £170 million through the grants for education support and training programme and the better schools fund to local authorities in Wales. Allocation is by reference to a formula, which includes a factor for deprivation. Special grant of £3 million has also been provided this financial year and will be provided again in 2004-05 to enable local authorities to support low-performing schools.

School Sports Facilities

Laura Anne Jones: Will the Minister make a statement on school sports facilities across Wales? (WAQ33510)

Jane Davidson: The sports facilities in our schools are vitally important for curriculum delivery in the same way that all school accommodation is. As such, they fall within our target that, by 2010, all schools in Wales should be in good physical shape for delivery of the curriculum and properly maintained.

Works to develop sports facilities fall within the criteria for school buildings improvement grant. Local education authorities are free to decide which schools should benefit and the nature of projects undertaken in light of competing local needs and priorities.

The £48 million new opportunities fund programme in Wales for physical education and school sport will, over the next four years, support projects designed to refurbish existing, and build new, indoor and outdoor sports facilities for school and wider community use. The programme promotes PE and sport both within the school curriculum and through extra curricular activities and is tailored to ensure that it meets the needs of Wales. The new opportunities fund is working in close partnership with Welsh Assembly Government, local authorities, the Sports Council for Wales and Estyn to ensure delivery of the programme through projects that complement and enhance local plans and the PE and school sport action plan for Wales. Local authorities are in the lead in determining local priorities for new opportunities funding. The wider opportunities and improved standards of facilities that will result will make an important contribution to improving the quality and breadth of sporting opportunities for all young people in Wales.

The Rees Commission

Lynne Neagle: Will the Minister make a statement following the publication of the terms of reference for the Rees commission? (WAQ33512)

Jane Davidson: Professor Rees will start her review when the Higher Education Bill receives Royal Assent. It is hoped that that may be in July. Membership of the review group will comprise members of the student hardship review group plus some additional members to reflect the wider remit. I would hope to confirm membership shortly. I have asked Professor Rees to report on the key question of variable fees policy by February 2005 and to provide a final report by May 2005.

University Courses Taught Solely in Welsh

William Graham: Will the Minister make a statement on the number of courses in universities in Wales that are taught solely in Welsh? (WAQ33514) [R]

Jane Davidson: The Higher Education Statistics Agency's data for 2002-03 records around 120 courses that students took totally through the medium of Welsh at higher education institutions in Wales. This includes single and joint or combined honours programmes, including Welsh language and literature, full and part-time, as well as postgraduate level qualifications. Each combination of subjects is recorded as a separate course, and around 100 of the courses are for subjects other than Welsh itself or include another subject with Welsh.

Around 350 courses were recorded on which students took some element of the course through the medium of Welsh. The percentage, however, could vary from a substantial amount of the course being through the medium of Welsh to comparatively small elements.

In terms of the data provided, HESA data is collected on an individual student basis. Analysis of this field gives an indication of the provision taken up rather than a definitive account of the number of courses

taught through the medium of Welsh. It does not capture courses that are offered in Welsh that are not taken up.

The Closure of Rural Schools

Nick Bourne: Will the Minister make a statement on the closure of rural schools? (WAQ33517)

Jane Davidson: Local education authorities are responsible for school organisation in their local areas. They are responsible for ensuring effective delivery of local education services. If a closure proposal attracts objections, and the decision is referred to me, I need to be convinced that the local education authority has taken into account all the relevant issues. In particular, I need to be assured that any school closure proposal reflects the need to maintain and improve standards, caters for parental preference, and provides access to reasonably local schools. I would not normally be prepared to approve the closure of a popular and effective school unless there was evidence that the alternative school would offer at least equivalent quality and diversity of education at lower overall cost.

Where closure proposals involve rural schools, there are additional considerations that need to be taken into account. These include the educational challenges faced by small schools, the home-to-school transport implications and increased journey times, the overall effect on the community and the extent to which the school is serving the whole community as a learning resource.

This does not mean that rural schools should always remain open, but the case for closure has to be robust and the proposals must be in the best interests of educational provision in the area.

The Draft School Transport Bill

David Davies: What discussions has the Minister had with her Westminster colleagues about the draft School Transport Bill? (WAQ33518)

Jane Davidson: I have been kept up to date with developments on the School Transport Bill by means of briefings rather than by discussions with Westminster colleagues. My officials and the Office of the Counsel General have been fully involved in the preparation of the draft Bill, which was issued for consultation on 8 March.

School Meals

Lorraine Barrett: Will the Minister make a statement on the provision of school meals? (WAQ33520)

Jane Davidson: Responsibility for school meals rests with local education authorities, or school governing bodies where the function has been delegated. Local education authorities and governing bodies must provide school lunches to pupils with a free entitlement and can make provision for other pupils. School lunches must comply with the minimum nutritional standards set out in the Education (Nutritional Standards for School Lunches) (Wales) Regulations 2001. Guidance issued in March 2003 advises local education authorities and school caterers on meeting or exceeding the standards set in the regulations. The guidance also gives advice on healthy diets, the provision of healthy food that young people enjoy, together with ways of improving the schools meals service and encouraging pupils to use it.

Improving School Buildings

Carl Sargeant: Will the Minister make a statement on action she is taking on improving school buildings? (WAQ33522)

Jane Davidson: Responsibility for school buildings rests largely with local government. Local authorities in Wales receive Assembly support for investment in school buildings in two main ways. General capital funding is made available through the capital settlement and contains £54.939 million for education at the

all-Wales level. However, this funding is unhypothecated, and authorities are free to use it for any capital purpose.

Local authorities in Wales also receive funding that can only be used for education capital purposes through the school buildings improvement grant programme. This is set to rise to £139 million in 2005-06. The grant provides annual allocation to all authorities by formula and, in the period 2005-10, every authority in Wales will, in addition, receive a lump sum of £9 million for larger projects.

Decisions about which individual schools should benefit and when are for the local authority to take in light of local needs and priorities.

The Assembly also provides 85 per cent grant support for eligible capital expenditure incurred by the governing bodies of voluntary aided schools. The annual budget for this is set to continue at £9.5 million.

Estyn's Proposals for Schools to Open All Year

Peter Black: Will the Minister make a statement on Estyn's proposals for schools to open all year round? (WAQ33523)

Jane Davidson: I am aware that, in the 2002-03 annual report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training for Wales, published on 9 February 2004, she does suggest a review of the current arrangements for the school year to ensure that it meets the demands of the twenty-first century. Such matters are, however, the responsibility of local education authorities.

My officials have, nevertheless, written to the Association of Directors of Education in Wales seeking a meeting to discuss what changes, if any, they may be considering introducing.

Post-16 Education in North Wales

Carl Sargeant: Will the Minister make a statement on post-16 education in north Wales? (WAQ33525)

Jane Davidson: The overall position in north Wales is very positive. Participation in learning programmes continues to rise, A level results continue to improve, and achievement in other academic and vocational training is also impressive. It is worthy of note that, in 2003, Deeside College won a Queen's anniversary prize for higher education and further education and Coleg Llandrillo won a Beacon award for the teaching of information technology.

In the higher education sector, University of Wales Bangor and the North East Wales Institute of Higher Education have seen increased enrolments year on year. Bangor has been ranked in the top 500 universities worldwide in a new survey, and NEWI saw 98 per cent of its business graduates find employment within six months of graduation.

Addysg Uwch Cyfrwng Cymraeg

Janet Ryder: Faint o arian sydd wedi'i glustnodi i sicrhau continiwm ieithyddol er mwyn sicrhau cyfleoedd cyfartal i'r sawl sydd eisiau mynd ymlaen i addysg uwch drwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg? (WAQ33543) [W]

Jane Davidson: Mae Cyngor Cyllido Addysg Uwch Cymru ar hyn o bryd yn rhoi £1.6 miliwn ar gyfer y costau ychwanegol sy'n gysylltiedig â darparu addysg Gymraeg. Rhoddir hwn yn ychwanegol at y gost sylfaenol o addysgu myfyrwyr. Mae CCAUC hefyd yn ariannu dwy gymrodoriaeth ddysgu cyfrwng Cymraeg am gost o £25,000.

Ond nid dyma'r darlun llawn. Mae CCAUC yn helpu i ariannu'r grŵp llywio cenedlaethol, a fydd yn datblygu ac yn goruchwylio'r gwaith o weithredu'r strategaeth genedlaethol ar gyfer addysg cyfrwng

Cymraeg yn y sector, a hynny o fewn y ddarpariaeth sylfaenol. Yn ogystal, bydd pob sefydliad addysg uwch yng Nghymru yn helpu i ariannu Bwrdd y Brifysgol ar gyfer dysgu drwy Gyfrwng y Gymraeg.

Yr wyf hefyd wedi annog sefydliadau i gyflwyno prosiectau cydweithredol ar gyfer datblygu addysg Gymraeg y gallai'r gronfa 'Ymgeisio yn Uwch' eu hariannu.

Welsh-medium Higher Education

Janet Ryder: How much money has been earmarked to ensure a linguistic continuum in order to ensure equal opportunities for those who wish to progress to Welsh-medium higher education? (WAQ33543) [W]

Jane Davidson: The Higher Education Funding Council for Wales is currently allocating £1.6 million in recognition of the extra costs associated with delivering provision through the medium of Welsh. This is in addition to the base costs of teaching students. HEFCW is also supporting two Welsh-medium teaching fellowships at a cost of £25,000.

However, this is not the total picture. HEFCW is supporting the costs of the national steering group, which will develop and oversee the implementation of a national strategy of Welsh-medium provision in the sector, within its baseline provision. In addition, each higher education institution in Wales contributes towards the cost of the University Board for Welsh Medium Teaching.

I have also encouraged institutions to come forward with collaborative projects for developing Welsh-medium provision that could be funded under the 'Reaching Higher' fund.

Continiwm Ieithyddol Addysg Gymraeg

Janet Ryder: Pa strwythurau sydd mewn lle i sicrhau continiwm ieithyddol o addysg bellach drwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg i addysg uwch? (WAQ33544) [W]

Jane Davidson: Mae Dysgu ac Addysgu Cymru wedi datblygu strategaeth dysgu dwyieithog hirdymor ac wedi sefydlu uned benodol i fynd i'r afael â hi. Mae is-bwyllgor dwyieithrwydd y cyngor, sy'n cynnwys aelodau o sawl sector, gan gynnwys rhai â gwybodaeth a phrofiad ym maes addysg uwch, yn arsylwi ar brosesau gweithredu'r strategaeth. Mae swyddog o Gyngor Cyllido Addysg Uwch Cymru hefyd yn mynychu'r cyfarfodydd fel arsyllydd.

Prif nodau strategaeth ELWa yw sicrhau bod y ddarpariaeth yn cael ei threfnu'n effeithiol, gan ddarparu cyrsiau sy'n bodloni gofynion dysgwyr ar bob lefel ar draws y wlad. Mae ELWa hefyd yn anelu at ddileu'r rhwystrau i ddysgu er mwyn galluogi dysgwyr i symud yn rhwydd drwy'r lefelau dysgu fel bod cynifer â phosibl ohonynt yn dod yn rhugl.

Ym maes addysg uwch, mae'r uned addysgu cyfrwng Gymraeg, a sefydlwyd gan Brifysgol Cymru yn 2000, yn gweithio ar ran y sector cyfan er mwyn cynyddu nifer y myfyrwyr sy'n astudio drwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg ac er mwyn ehangu'r ddarpariaeth.

Mae CCAUC hefyd wedi sefydlu grŵp llywio cenedlaethol er mwyn paratoi strategaeth genedlaethol ac arsylwi ar brosesau ei gweithredu. Mae'r grŵp llywio wedi cytuno i ganolbwyntio'n gyntaf ar farchnata blaenweithgar ac ysgogi gofyn, datblygu a recriwtio staff, a datblygu darpariaeth newydd a dulliau arloesol o weithredu o fewn fframweithiau cydweithrediadol. Yn ogystal, mae CCAUC yn dyrannu £1.6 miliwn ar hyn o bryd fel cydnabyddiaeth o'r costau ychwanegol sydd ynghlwm â darparu addysg uwch drwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg. Mae'r arian hwn yn ychwanegol at yr hyn a ddyrennir ar gyfer addysgu myfyrwyr.

Linguistic Continuum in Welsh-medium Education

Janet Ryder: What structures are in place to ensure a linguistic continuum from Welsh-medium further education into higher education? (WAQ33544) [W]

Jane Davidson: Education and Learning Wales has developed a long-term bilingual learning strategy and has set up a dedicated unit to take it forward. Delivery of the strategy is overseen by the council's bilingualism sub-committee, which has a cross-sectoral membership, including members with HE knowledge and experience. In addition, an officer from HEFCW usually attends as an observer.

Under the strategy, ELWa's aims are to ensure that provision is arranged effectively to ensure that it delivers courses that cater for all levels of learners throughout the country. ELWa also aims to eliminate barriers to learning to enable learners to progress easily through levels of learning so that as many learners reach an effective level of fluency as possible.

In higher education, the Welsh-medium teaching unit, established by the University of Wales in 2000, is working on behalf of the whole sector specifically to increase the number of students studying through Welsh and extending the range of provision.

HEFCW has also established a national steering group to prepare and oversee the implementation of a national strategy. In the first instance, the steering group has agreed to focus on proactive marketing and stimulating demand, staff development and recruitment, and the development of new provision and innovative approaches to delivery within the context of collaborative frameworks. In addition, HEFCW currently allocates £1.6 million in recognition of the additional costs of delivering higher education through the medium of Welsh: this is in addition to the base cost of teaching students.

Learning Foreign Languages in Wales

Nick Bourne: What is the Government of Wales doing to promote the learning of foreign languages in Wales? (WAQ33590)

Nick Bourne: Will the Minister make a statement on the number of students taking modern foreign languages in Wales? (WAQ33605)

Jane Davidson: The national languages strategy for Wales is contained within our 'Languages Count' publication issued in April 2002 and which we are implementing. At primary level, our principal partner, the Centre for Information on Language Training and Research Cymru, is overseeing the piloting of teaching modern foreign languages at key stage 2, which commenced in September 2003 and will continue until July 2005. There are 21 clusters across Wales covering 96 primary schools and 22 secondary schools. These key stage 2 pilots include a range of types of school, over half of which are Welsh-medium. The year groups involved range from year 4 to year 6, and the languages being taught are French, German, Spanish and Italian. Clusters are using a range of delivery models, including secondary teachers visiting the primaries, primary teachers doing the teaching, using a peripatetic teacher, or using a foreign language assistant.

We are providing funding of up to £2,000 per annum per primary school, which is match-funded by the school or the LEA.

At secondary level, CILT Cymru has established compacts with 47 secondary schools. These receive a programme of modern foreign language support and in-service training to improve their language department and promote languages to pupils. CILT Cymru organises events for both teachers and students and has also produced videos to raise awareness of modern foreign languages and how language skills can be used within the job market.

Additionally, the importance of learning a foreign language has been recognised within the components of the Welsh baccalaureate qualification, which is currently being piloted at 18 centres across Wales in a mixture of schools and colleges. It has a 20-hour language module included within its core, which is compulsory for all students, whether studying arts, sciences or vocational subjects.

Estyn has issued new guidance to schools illustrating best practice in teaching languages entitled ‘Aiming for Excellence in Modern Foreign Languages’. The Qualifications, Curriculum and Assessment Authority for Wales has also published new guidance for schools on the approach to teaching and learning languages across English, Welsh and modern foreign languages entitled ‘Making the Link Language Learning 5-14’.

As regards numbers, at key stage 3—ages 11 to 14—modern foreign languages are part of the curriculum for all registered pupils in school. At key stage 4 data is collected for the number of GCSE entries by 15-year-olds. This figure, which is taken from the statistical bulletin issued by the statistical directorate in August 2003, stands at 14,125 in 2002. This covers 18 languages in total.

According to the September post-16 school census the take up of modern foreign languages within sixth form institutions in Wales as of September 2003 was 3,305 enrolments in French, German, Spanish or Italian. Some 1,300 of these are enrolled at A-level, 1,970 at AS level and 35 at GCSE level.

In respect of further education institutions, the ELWa individualised student record shows 9,805 enrolments in 2002-03 in the same four languages, 25 of which were at higher education level. A further 3,090 were enrolled on other languages, including Greek, Dutch, Arabic, Urdu and Japanese.

Data from the higher education statistical agency for Welsh higher education institutions showed that in 2002-03 there were 3,430 undergraduate enrolments in modern foreign languages and 220 at postgraduate level.

(Note: figures rounded to the nearest five enrolments.)

Private Sponsorship of State Educational Services

Nick Bourne: Could the Minister give details of any private sponsorship that is utilised in the provision of state educational services in Wales? (WAQ33591)

Jane Davidson: Aimhigher Wales is sponsored by the Royal Bank of Scotland group. The Aimhigher roadshow visits schools and presents an inspirational experience to year 9 pupils, encouraging them to consider higher education as an option.

Litigation

Nick Bourne: Will the Minister please set out in each of the years since 1999 the amount of the budget for litigation, and the actual amount spent on litigation in each of those years? (WAQ33601)

Jane Davidson: There is no separate budget for litigation within education and lifelong learning. The Office of the Counsel General undertakes litigation on our behalf, and this work is funded from the Assembly’s central legal services budget and OCG’s own legal budget.

Litigation work undertaken prior to 2001-02 cannot be differentiated from advisory work. The expenditure shown below is therefore from 2001-02 onwards. It relates to the recent Clwyd Hall case, an appeal to the European Court of Human Rights, plus pre-litigation work on two other matters. The sums comprise Treasury solicitors’ costs, counsel’s fees, disbursements and VAT.

	£
2001-02	4,067.86

2002-03	11,423.19
2003-04 to date	10,104.58
Total	25,595.63

Playing Area for Llwynu School

Michael German: Will the Minister make a statement on the size of the planned playing area for the new Llwynu school in Abergavenny? (WAQ33657)

Jane Davidson: Monmouthshire LEA has been consulting parents and other key stakeholders on the best configuration of play areas on the site of the new school at Llwynu and adapting its plans accordingly. I understand that there are playing fields to the west which, when taken together with play facilities to be provided on the school site itself, will ensure sufficient play area for the projected number of pupils.

Money for the Teachers' Workload Agreement

Jonathan Morgan: What guidance has been issued to local education authorities to ensure that money arising out of the teachers' workload agreement is provided as additional to a school's core budget? (WAQ33813)

Jane Davidson: None. The £30 million additional funding provided in the local government revenue settlement (together with the £3 million transferred from programme expenditure to the revenue settlement) reflects our assessment of the cost of the agreement. This funding was clearly identified for that purpose in Sue Essex's budget statement and I expect local authorities to reflect the Assembly Government's additional commitment in their education budgets.

Pen-y-fai School

Peter Black: What discussions have her officials had with Bridgend County Borough Council regarding the need to replace Pen-y-fai School? (WAQ33817)

Jane Davidson: My officials have discussed the needs of this school with Bridgend County Borough Council on a number of occasions. The authority views a replacement building for Pen-y-fai primary as a key priority. Such works fall within the criteria set in the Education (Capital Grants) (Wales) Regulations 2002 and, as such, the authority can use its Assembly school building improvement grant to fund the work.

I have already announced an allocation of lump sums of £9 million grant to each local authority over the period 2005-10.

Authorities have provided broad detail of how they wish to use their £9 million shares and have been asked to confirm or add to the information provided. A project to replace the building for this school is included in the broadbrush plans that the authority has submitted. Decisions will be taken on timings in consultation with the WLGA. In deciding the order of allocations a key consideration will be the timing for the scheme or schemes that an authority puts forward. I expect to announce allocations in June or July.

Money for New Schools

Peter Black: What additional money is available for Bridgend County Borough Council to build new schools in the next three years and when is it envisaged that it will receive it? (WAQ33818)

Jane Davidson: All authorities in Wales will continue to receive annual formula allocations of the school buildings improvement grant. Bridgend County Borough Council's allocation for 2004-05 is £1,376,933 and it will receive similar amounts in 2005-06 and 2006-07.

In addition, Bridgend will have a lump sum of £9 million in the period 2005-10 to allow larger schemes to be undertaken. The allocations are likely to be made available to each authority over more than one financial year but decisions have yet to be taken as to when individual authorities will receive their allocations.

Deadlines for Replying to Correspondence

Peter Black: What deadlines has the Minister set for replying to correspondence and how many times have these been breached? (WAQ33852)

Jane Davidson: While no deadlines have been set for replies to correspondence, the normal practice is for officials to process correspondence within 17 working days. Eighty-nine per cent of my ministerial correspondence has been replied to within 17 working days.

Average Time Taken to Reply to Letters

Peter Black: What is the average length of time that the Minister has taken to reply to letters from Assembly Members? (WAQ33853)

Jane Davidson: Twelve working days.

Longest Time Taken to Reply to a Letter

Peter Black: What is the longest length of time the Minister has taken to reply to a letter? (WAQ33854)

Jane Davidson: Ninety working days. While this is significantly longer than the average time taken to reply to letters (11 working days), some correspondence does require additional time for a comprehensive response to be formulated. Generally, such additional time is required when UK Government departments or outside organisations have to be consulted.

Capital Funding

Alun Cairns: Which local authorities and/or schools will be in the first tranche for capital funding? (WAQ33868)

Alun Cairns: How does the Minister prioritise capital funding schemes for new school buildings? (WAQ33869)

Jane Davidson: Local authorities will be provided with an additional sum of £9 million on a one-off basis for capital spend between 2005 and 2010. These one-off amounts are additional to the formula shares of school buildings improvement grant that authorities continue to receive each year and annual funding provided through general capital allocations.

Authorities have already provided broad detail of how they wish to use their £9 million shares and have been asked to confirm or add to the information provided. Decisions will be taken on timings in consultation with the WLGA. In deciding the order of allocations a key consideration will be the timing for the scheme or schemes that an authority puts forward. I expect to announce allocations in June or July.

Funding for a New School at Pen-y-fai

Alun Cairns: What funding commitment, if any, has the Minister given to Bridgend County Borough Council to finance a new school at Pen-y-fai? (WAQ33870)

Jane Davidson: No firm commitment has been given to Bridgend County Borough Council at this point. Authorities have each provided a broad outline of their planned use for the £9 million lump sum of school

building improvement grant available to each LEA in the period 2005-10. Bridgend has indicated that it wishes to utilise an element of this funding for a replacement building for Pen-y-fai school. Such use of this funding is entirely appropriate and I expect to give approval once decisions are made regarding the ordering of allocations for individual authorities.

Funding Allocated to Flintshire

Sandy Mewies: How much Assembly funding, specific to the Minister’s portfolio, has been allocated to Flintshire since May 2003? (WAQ33876)

Jane Davidson: Funding allocated to Flintshire County Council from the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning’s portfolio in the financial year 2003-04:

Purpose	Amount (£)
Education of travellers and displaced persons grant	101,144
Grants for education support and training	2,562,046
School building improvement grant	1,576,793
Special grant – school improvement measures	1,689,343
Special grant – innovation small / rural schools	183,713
Special grant – admin support in schools	138,000
Expansion of three-year-old provision	710,500
Assembly learning grants	1,107,581
Voluntary sector participation in young peoples’ partnerships	20,000
ELWa – post-16 schools	5,322,383
ELWa – community learning	3,000
Basic skills strategy	342,934
Total	13,757,437

Other funding allocated to organisations in Flintshire that I have been able to identify in the time available is, £15,568 to Deeside College for delivery of the Welsh baccalaureate.

With reference to ELWa funding for further education, Deeside College received some £12 million and the Welsh College of Horticulture received some £3.5 million. These figures include funding through the recurrent funding mechanism, cost of capital and allocations for the delivery of work-based learning.

Careers Wales North East provides services for Wrexham, Flintshire and part of Denbighshire. While services are uniformly distributed across these areas, the company does not disaggregate costs by county area.

The National Youth Orchestra of Wales

Michael German: What are the criteria for applications for places in the National Youth Orchestra of Wales? (WAQ33898)

Michael German: What is the role of individual local education authorities in endorsing all applications to the National Youth Orchestra of Wales? (WAQ33899)

Michael German: Can the Minister make a statement on the ability of the Welsh Joint Education Committee to block applications to the National Youth Orchestra of Wales that do not carry the endorsement of an individual local education authority? (WAQ33900)

Jane Davidson: The National Youth of Orchestra of Wales is funded by the local authorities in Wales. No funding is provided either directly or indirectly by the Welsh Assembly Government. These matters are for the Welsh Joint Education Committee and the local education authorities.

The Teachers' Workload Agreement

Carl Sargeant: Could the Minister make a statement on the likely impact of the teachers' workload agreement upon Flintshire? (WAQ33908)

Carl Sargeant: What support is being provided to Flintshire County Council to enable it to implement the teachers' workload agreement? (WAQ33910)

Jane Davidson: In Flintshire, as elsewhere in Wales, the agreement will achieve real reductions in teachers' workload and, by allowing teachers more time to focus on their professional duties and to plan and prepare, raise standards of pupil achievement.

We have provided £33 million in the local government revenue settlement to meet the anticipated costs of implementing the agreement next year. Flintshire's share of the funding is £1.682 million. Every authority and school will have started from different positions and therefore authorities will need to work closely with their schools to develop strategies and solutions to implement the agreement that reflect their local circumstances. It is for the authority to determine how to use its share of this funding in accordance with its local needs and priorities, but a proportion may be retained by the authority to increase its capacity to support and advise schools.

Assembly officials are working closely with local education authorities and schools across Wales to provide advice and guidance. This includes practical case studies and a change management programme to help schools to identify and adopt their working practices to reduce teachers' workload and meet the requirements of the agreement—for example, through better organisation, reducing internal bureaucratic burdens and making better and increased use of support staff.

Moneys Available to Schools

Kirsty Williams: Will the Minister make the same moneys available to Welsh schools as that recently announced by Gordon Brown? (WAQ33921)

Kirsty Williams: Will the Minister make a statement on funding for schools following the English Chancellor's announcement of additional revenue? (WAQ33922)

Jane Davidson: Gordon Brown announced additional money for schools in 2006, which is two years away. Decisions as to how funding is allocated within Wales are for the Assembly Government. We will consider how this consequential will be used as part of our spending review, also taking account of the UK 2004 spending review settlement for the Assembly in the summer.

Modern Apprenticeships

Nick Bourne: What is the Minister doing to promote modern apprenticeships? (WAQ33991)

Jane Davidson: I am determined to strengthen vocational options in schools as a means of opening up the whole range of learning opportunities available in Wales. This work is being taken forward through the Welsh baccalaureate and broader revisions to the national curriculum being undertaken as part of the reform of 14 to 19 learning. Additionally, ELWa will continue to work with employers and sector skills councils to actively promote modern apprenticeship programmes, and Careers Wales will ensure that high-quality advice and guidance on learning opportunities is available to people of all ages. We have also continued to improve modern apprenticeship programmes through the introduction of a range of flexibilities, including the widening of access to employed and non-employed people by removing the 25 years of age limit for support.

Proportion of the Minister's Budget Allocated to Children with Special Needs

Nick Bourne: What proportion of the Minister's budget is allocated to children with any form of special needs, and what proportion was allocated in each of the years from 1999? (WAQ34009)

Jane Davidson: The amount of resources spent on children with special educational needs is set out in the national statistics bulletin 63/2003.

Additionally, over £16 million has been made available to schools and LEAs for SEN through the grants for education support and training—now, the better schools fund—in the period 1999-2000 to 2003-04.

Budgets for the Teachers' Workload Agreement

Brynle Williams: Will the Minister provide the budgets for the teachers' workload agreement over the past five years, including 2004-05? (WAQ34024)

Jane Davidson: The agreement was signed in January 2003. The first phase of the changes to teachers' conditions of service that follow from the agreement took effect in September 2003. The Assembly Government provided special grant funding of £3 million to LEAs in 2003-04 to help schools deal with that. LEAs were also able to use the £3.5 million grant for small and rural schools for this purpose.

The second phase takes effect in September 2004. We have put £33 million into the local government revenue settlement to meet the anticipated costs of the agreement in 2004-05 and to provide additional capacity in local authorities to support schools in implementing the agreement. This amount has been clearly identified for this purpose and I expect local authorities to reflect that in their education budgets.

The education and lifelong learning main expenditure group provides for the central support of work to meet the commitment to reducing teachers' workload. This includes £150,000 in 2003-04 and £240,000 in 2004-05 for a change management programme to help schools identify and adopt working practices that reduce teachers' workload and help meet the requirements of the national agreement. In 2004-05 the budget includes a further £400,000 for the provision of training for school support staff in Wales and £60,000 to support the work of the school workload advisory panel that will advise on ways of reducing bureaucratic burdens on schools.

Grants for Education Support and Training Budgets

Brynle Williams: Will the Minister provide the budgets for GEST funding over the past five years, including 2004-05? (WAQ34026)

Jane Davidson: GEST provision in the last five years has been:

- 2000-01 - £50,600,352
- 2001-02 - £57,832,000
- 2002-03 - £59,236,186
- 2003-04 - £56,320,004 and
- 2004-05 - £35,750,000 allocation through the better schools fund, the new name for GEST. The 2004-05 allocation excludes the ethnic minority achievement grant figure of £3,580,000.

The revenue settlement each year includes funds that allow local education authorities to match GEST funding—typically at 40 per cent of the total spend. The figures above include this element, projected for 2004-05.

The new better schools fund is intended to be more clearly focused and to concentrate funding at pump-priming new initiatives and better ways of realising Assembly national priorities in schools, rather than supporting recurrent revenue commitments and statutory obligations, which are the responsibility of local authorities to maintain.

Science and Technology Skills

Brynle Williams: What is the National Assembly for Wales doing to actively encourage teachers to develop their science and technology skills? (WAQ34027)

Jane Davidson: The Welsh Assembly Government is encouraging teachers to improve their science and technology skills across a range of initiatives.

Through the National Grid for Learning Cymru, we are supporting the provision of online resources to support science teaching and learning in schools, including the material that was developed for Wales science year. Science teaching was identified as one of the priority national curriculum subjects for support in the grant for education support and training programme in 2003-04 and special priority was also given to science teachers in the recent whiteboards initiative and subsequent training associated with that scheme. We are also providing continuing support for the hands-on science centre, Techniquest, which is now extended to north Wales. In-service training by Techniquest has been provided for over 2,000 teachers.

Since 2000, at least one teacher in every secondary school has received bespoke training on high-quality, industry-standard CAD/CAM software, understanding its uses in industry as well as in education. As this initiative was so successful I have agreed to make funding available to enable those teachers trained in the first phase to receive further training to support the release of upgraded CAD/CAM software.

The level of ICT resources is a key factor influencing the quality of work in design and technology and has the potential to enhance teaching and learning right across the curriculum. The Assembly has provided over £70 million to improve ICT in schools since 1998-99, including funding to help teachers become confident in the use of information technology in the classroom. We will be providing a further £7.6 million for ICT through the better schools fund in 2004-05.

Science and Technology Teachers

Brynle Williams: What is the National Assembly for Wales doing to attract people to train as science and technology teachers? (WAQ34028)

Jane Davidson: We recognise the need to attract more people to train as teachers in certain subjects and are offering considerable incentives as part of our efforts to make these posts more attractive. All eligible students on postgraduate initial teacher training courses in priority subjects, including science and technology, can get a £6,000 training grant, and, if they go on to teach in that subject, could additionally be eligible for a £4,000 teaching grant.

Budget Provision for the National Workload Agreement

Mark Isherwood: What is the breakdown of the budget provision for the national workload agreement across the 22 local authorities for 2005? (WAQ34035)

Jane Davidson: The breakdown of the £33 million identified in the local government revenue settlement for 2004-05 to provide for the costs of the national agreement on teachers' workload is as follows:

Local Authority	Amount £000s
Isle of Anglesey	789
Gwynedd	1,349
Conwy	1,154
Denbighshire	1,053
Flintshire	1,682
Wrexham	1,328

Powys	1,480
Ceredigion	744
Pembrokeshire	1,383
Carmarthenshire	1,998
Swansea	2,365
Neath Port Talbot	1,537
Bridgend	1,478
The Vale of Glamorgan	1,383
Rhondda Cynon Taf	2,740
Merthyr Tydfil	689
Caerphilly	2,093
Blaenau Gwent	820
Torfaen	1,081
Monmouthshire	915
Newport	1,645
Cardiff	3,210
All Wales	32,917

This information is available on the National Assembly's website at <http://www.wales.gov.uk/subilocalgov/content/reports/final-tbls04-05-e.htm>.

Questions to the Minister for Environment, Planning and Countryside

Communities First Agendas

Leighton Andrews: What instructions does the Minister give in remit letters to Assembly sponsored public bodies within his portfolio area regarding engaging with Communities First agendas? (WAQ33323)

The Minister for Environment, Planning and Countryside (Carwyn Jones): Assembly sponsored public bodies are expected to conduct their business in line with the Assembly's values, principles and standards and to contribute, as appropriate, to its strategic agenda for Wales. This includes delivering against the key priorities and values set out in 'Wales: A Better Country'. To ensure that this happens the Assembly Government has been developing a new business planning process that emphasises the importance of partnership working in delivering the Government's agenda. In relation to the Communities First agendas, the remit letters being issued to each executive ASPB require them to identify how they will engage with Communities First partnerships, assist in and support the formulation and delivery of community action plans, and participate in the development of local authority community strategies. ASPBs will be required to demonstrate in their corporate plans how they will achieve this.

GM Crops Involved in Farm Scale Evaluations

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: Is the Minister aware of when the Government hanged its policy that no harvested material from genetically modified crops involved in the farm scale evaluations programme would be fed to animals or otherwise enter the food chain? (WAQ33527)

Carwyn Jones: The GM maize used in the farm scale evaluations has Europe-wide marketing consent for use in animal feed. The agreement made with the supply chain initiative on modified agricultural crops in November 1999 required that none of the produce from GM crop plantings in the UK should be used in a way that would be of direct commercial benefit to the consent holders during the farm scale evaluations period. The policy on the use of harvested material outlined by SCIMAC has not changed.

Liberty/Atrazine Mix

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: Is the Minister aware of reports that find that Liberty on its own has proved ineffective as a herbicide used with genetically modified herbicide-tolerant fodder maize crops in the United States, and that to overcome this problem a Liberty/Atrazine mix has been used since the spring of 2001? (WAQ33528)

Carwyn Jones: Yes.

Chardon LL (Ruminant Feeding Studies)

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: In the absence of ruminant feeding studies, how does Chardon LL have real value for cultivation and use in Wales? (WAQ33529)

Carwyn Jones: I am advised that ruminant feeding trials do not form any part of the assessment for value for cultivation and use under the Seeds (National Lists of Varieties) Regulations 2001.

Transgenic Insert in Chardon LL

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: When did the Minister become aware that the transgenic insert used in Chardon LL is unstable, and that the variety would be incapable of passing the distinctness, uniformity and stability test under directive 2001/18/EC? (WAQ33530)

Carwyn Jones: There is no distinctness, uniformity and stability test requirement in the deliberate release directive 2001/18/EC.

Chardon LL (Genetically Modified Maize)

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: When did the Minister become aware that the dry matter content for the variety of genetically modified maize called Chardon LL averages only 27.3 per cent, and when did he become aware of the recommendation of Professor David Beever that no new maize variety should be placed upon the national seeds register unless it achieves a whole-plant target of 32 per cent? (WAQ33531)

Carwyn Jones: Dry matter content is one of a number of characteristics used to determine the value for cultivation and use of fodder maize. A low dry matter content for Chardon LL was noted in 2003 following publication of the Alesbury report of the evidence presented to the hearing into the national listing of Chardon LL. I am advised that the low dry matter content for Chardon LL was taken into account, but the overall conclusion on value for cultivation and use also took other important characteristics into consideration including early vigour and resistance to lodging. I note that Professor Beever has recently been quoted in *Farmers Weekly* as supporting the feeding of GM maize to dairy cattle.

Chardon LL (Fodder Maize)

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: Is the Minister satisfied that Chardon LL fodder maize has a greater value for cultivation and use than the conventional varieties from which it was bred? (WAQ33532)

Carwyn Jones: I am advised that the value for cultivation and use of Chardon LL fodder maize has not been compared with that of its parental lines or the equivalent non-GM variety.

Chardon LL Cattle Feeding Studies

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: What results has the Minister obtained from the Chardon LL cattle feeding studies which were completed at the University of Reading Centre for Dairy Research in 2002? (WAQ33533)

Carwyn Jones: I refer you to my answer to Tamsin Dunwoody-Kneafsey AM (WAQ33248).

Chardon LL Feeding Studies

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: Will the Minister give an assurance that no milk or meat from the cattle involved in the Chardon LL feeding studies at the University of Reading has entered the food chain in Wales? (WAQ33534)

Carwyn Jones: I refer you to my answer to Tamsin Dunwoody-Kneafsey AM (WAQ33247).

1998-99 National List Trials for Chardon LL

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: Is the Minister satisfied that the 1998-99 national list trials for Chardon LL were independent and impartial, and that they provide adequate and robust support for the placing of this variety on the national seeds register? (WAQ33535)

Carwyn Jones: I am aware of the plant varieties and seeds committee's recommendation on the national listing trials for Chardon LL. I cannot, however, support its addition to the national list until it has obtained its revised consent under part C of the deliberate release directive and co-existence measures are in place.

Farm-scale Evaluations Maize Trials

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: Has the Minister, as required by directive 2001/18/EC, communicated the shortcomings of the farm-scale evaluations maize trials to the lead competent authority in France, and has he requested a variation in the conditions attached to the part C consent for Chardon LL fodder maize? (WAQ33536)

Carwyn Jones: The UK competent authority under directive 2001/18/EC wrote on 9 March 2004 to the French competent authority, which had issued the original part C consent for Chardon LL on behalf of all EU member states. The letter sought amendments to the part C consent to limit herbicide use on the crop in line with the advice of the Advisory Committee on Releases to the Environment.

Cattle Feeding Studies Involving Chardon LL

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: When did the Minister become aware that cattle feeding studies involving Chardon LL fodder maize had been requested by the Advisory Committee on Releases to the Environment and the Advisory Committee on Animal Feedingstuffs? (WAQ33539)

Carwyn Jones: I refer you to my answer to Tamsin Dunwoody-Kneafsey AM (WAQ33288).

The University of Reading's Cattle Feeding Studies Involving Chardon LL

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: Is the Minister satisfied that the University of Reading's cattle feeding studies involving Chardon LL fodder maize will be genuinely independent and scientifically robust? (WAQ33545)

Carwyn Jones: I am reserving judgment until outcomes from the University of Reading's cattle feeding studies have been published in a peer-reviewed journal and the results considered by the relevant statutory advisory committee.

Harvested Chardon LL Forage Maize

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: Is the Minister aware of when the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs gave consent for harvested Chardon LL forage maize from farm-scale evaluation sites to be taken off-site and used in cattle feeding studies at the University of Reading's Centre for Dairy Research, and will the Minister make a statement on what conditions were attached to that consent? (WAQ33546)

Carwyn Jones: The GM maize used in the farm-scale evaluations has Europe wide marketing consent for use in animal feed, so no consent was required to use the harvested crop in the cattle feeding study at the University of Reading. The agreement made with the supply chain initiative on modified agricultural crops in November 1999 required that none of the produce from GM crop plantings in the UK should be used in a way that would be of direct commercial benefit to the consent holders during the farm-scale evaluations period. The policy on use of harvested material outlined by SCIMAC has not changed.

Cost of Chardon LL Cattle Feeding Studies

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: What was the total cost of the Chardon LL cattle feeding studies at the University of Reading, and how much public funds were committed to this research? (WAQ33547)

Carwyn Jones: No public funds were provided for the research. No information is available on the costs of the work, which was financed by Bayer CropScience.

Changes to Part C Consent

Helen Mary Jones: What expert advice has the Minister received regarding the commercial viability of implementing the proposed conditions under changes to the Part C consent? (WAQ33549)

Helen Mary Jones: What expert advice has the Minister received regarding the practicality of implementing the proposed conditions under changes to the Part C consent? (WAQ33550)

Helen Mary Jones: Will the Minister stipulate on the proposed changes to the Part C consent? (WAQ33551)

Carwyn Jones: The commercial viability of implementing the proposed changes to the Part C consent for T25 maize is a matter for growers. The farm-scale evaluation protocols were drafted by independent experts and the biotechnology industry and are designed to reflect commercial growing practices. The proposed amendments to the Part C consent for T25 maize are based on independent advice from ACRE.

Changes to Part C Consent

Helen Mary Jones: What penalties will be enforced with regard to the non-compliance of changes to the Part C consent? (WAQ33552)

Carwyn Jones: Penalties for breaches of GMO consent conditions are specified in Part VI of the Environmental Protection Act 1990.

Monitoring Producers of T25 Maize

Helen Mary Jones: What is the anticipated cost of monitoring the compliance of producers growing T25 maize in line with proposed changes to Part C consent, and who will pay for this monitoring? (WAQ33553)

Helen Mary Jones: What independent monitoring will be needed to ensure compliance by all farmers growing T25 maize? (WAQ33554)

Carwyn Jones: Should commercialisation of T25 maize occur, the Government will ensure that compliance with the conditions in the part C consent is monitored. The costs will depend on the extent to which T25 maize is planted and the monitoring mechanisms to be put in place.

New Norwegian Research

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: Will the Minister give an assurance that new scientific evidence from Norway on the cauliflower mosaic virus promoter will be taken into account before any decision is taken on the seed listing of Chardon LL fodder maize? (WAQ33555)

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: Will the Minister give an assurance, in the light of new Norwegian research, that the cauliflower mosaic virus promoter used in the Chardon LL transgenic insert is completely safe and harmless? (WAQ33556)

Carwyn Jones: The reported new scientific evidence from Norway on the cauliflower mosaic virus promoter has yet to be published. When the details of this research become available, ACRE, which advises the Assembly Government on the risks posed by the intentional release of GMOs, will be asked to evaluate the data and advise on its implications for existing consents and future applications.

Chardon LL Feeding Trial Involving Broiler Chickens

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: Is the Minister satisfied that the Chardon LL feeding trial involving broiler chickens provides adequate evidence as to the health and safety of the genetically modified herbicide-tolerant fodder maize? (WAQ33557)

Carwyn Jones: ACRE and ACAF were satisfied that, on the basis of the information available, which included the broiler chicken studies, there was nothing to indicate that T25 maize grain, or its products, poses any more risk to humans or animals than non-GM varieties if used in animal feed. More detailed comments are available at <http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/acre/advice/advice20d.htm>

Chardon LL

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: Will the Minister give an assurance that if Chardon LL is placed on the national seeds register, it will only be grown in the UK in the future with a herbicide regime exactly the same as that employed in the farm-scale evaluations programme, that is, one application of Liberty herbicide at the rate of 3.5 litres per hectare, applied before the 10-leaf stage? (WAQ33558)

Carwyn Jones: I confirm that a condition of Part C consent is that any future commercial cultivation of GM herbicide-tolerant maize is grown under the same conditions in which it was grown during the farm-scale evaluations, or under conditions that have been shown not to result in adverse effects. This is driven by a recommendation made by ACRE as a result of its assessment of the farm-scale evaluations.

Glufosinate Ammonium Herbicide Review

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: Has the Minister received the results of the glufosinate ammonium herbicide review undertaken by the Swedish herbicide authorities on behalf of the European Union, and will these

results inform the decision on the granting of herbicide approval for Liberty herbicide to be used in the management of Chardon LL fodder maize? (WAQ33559)

Carwyn Jones: No. The review of glufosinate ammonium is ongoing. Pesticides Safety Directorate, the lead authority for England and Wales, received a copy of the Swedish authorities' draft report in December 2003 and a number of EU expert working groups will meet over the summer to discuss it further. Assembly officials will be informed of any outcome in due course. Any application for approval of the use of Liberty on Chardon LL will be considered in the light of the report's findings along with the data submitted in support of the application itself. Approval will only be granted if Ministers are satisfied that the use proposed by the applicant is safe for people and the environment, and any such approval would need to be supported by advice from the Advisory Committee on Pesticides.

Chardon LL Feeding Trial Involving Broiler Chickens

Tamsin Dunwoody-Kneafsey: Could the Minister make a statement on whether the Chardon LL feeding trial involving broiler chickens provides adequate evidence as to the health and safety of the genetically modified herbicide-tolerant fodder maize? (WAQ33560)

Carwyn Jones: I refer you to my answer to Rhodri Glyn Thomas AM (WAQ33557).

Harvested Material from Genetically Modified Crops

Tamsin Dunwoody-Kneafsey: Will the Minister make a statement on whether there has been a change in the UK policy that previously stated that no harvested material from genetically modified crops involved in the farm-scale evaluations programme would be fed to animals or otherwise enter the food chain? (WAQ33561)

Tamsin Dunwoody-Kneafsey: Will the Minister state when the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs gave consent for harvested Chardon LL forage maize from farm-scale evaluation sites to be taken off-site and used in cattle feeding studies at the University of Reading's Centre for Dairy Research? (WAQ33563)

Carwyn Jones: I refer you to my answer to WAQ33546.

Glufosinate Ammonium Herbicide Review

Tamsin Dunwoody-Kneafsey: Could the Minister state whether the results of the glufosinate ammonium herbicide review will inform the decision on the granting of herbicide approval for Liberty herbicide to be used in the management of Chardon LL fodder maize? (WAQ33562)

Carwyn Jones: Officials in the Pesticides Safety Directorate of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, the lead authority for England and Wales, received a copy of the draft report from the Swedish authorities in December 2003. The EU review is ongoing, and a series of meetings will be held throughout the summer to further discuss issues arising from the report. Assembly officials will be informed of any outcome in due course. Any information arising from the report that may be of use in the scientific assessment of any application for approval for the use of Liberty on Chardon LL will be taken into account. Data submitted in support of the application will also be considered. Only if Ministers are satisfied that the use proposed by the applicant is safe for people and the environment, as backed by expert advice from the Advisory Committee on Pesticides, will approval be granted.

Proposed Sites of Scientific Interest

Lisa Francis: Does the Countryside Council for Wales have the authority to confiscate the garden of any individual if it is a proposed site of scientific interest and special area of conservation site if there is spring sandwort, *Minuartia verna*, present in the garden? (WAQ33574)

Carwyn Jones: The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 gives the Countryside Council for Wales power to purchase compulsorily any part of a site of special scientific interest. These powers can only be used where other measures to manage the land have failed and where the council considers it necessary to do so as a last resort. These powers have not been used since enactment.

Spring sandwort is not a qualifying feature for a SSSI or candidate special area of conservation. However, it is usual practice for the council to record the presence of all interesting flora within sites.

Support to Fairtrade

Nick Bourne: What support does the Government of Wales give to Fairtrade? (WAQ33589)

Carwyn Jones: The Assembly passed a motion on 4 February that resolved to ensure that the principles of fair trade are promoted while following its policies of international trade. We will consider how best to take this commitment forward in the context of the recently published sustainable development action plan.

The Wildlife Trusts

Nick Bourne: What help is given by the Government of Wales to the Wildlife Trusts throughout Wales? (WAQ33594)

Carwyn Jones: The Welsh Wildlife Trusts are provided with financial support by the Countryside Council for Wales from within its annual grant in aid approved by the Assembly. In the current financial year, the Countryside Council for Wales has so far provided some £321,000 in grant support, primarily for conservation and other project work undertaken by the trusts. A number of the Welsh trusts have also been successful in securing lottery funding for their work, and the Gwent Wildlife Trust was awarded some £82,000 in 2003 under the Adfywio grant scheme funded by the Assembly Government.

Discussions with the Dutch Ambassador (Potato Ringrot)

Nick Bourne: Will the Minister give details of any discussions he had on the recent visit of the Dutch ambassador to Cardiff concerning potato ring rot and the situation of Middlewood Farm, Bwlch, Breconshire? (WAQ33603)

Carwyn Jones: I raised the subject of potato ring rot during my brief discussion with the Dutch ambassador. He is aware that the first outbreak of the disease in the UK is associated with seed potatoes imported from the Netherlands. The ambassador explained that his country undertakes a more extensive testing programme for certified seed potatoes than many other European Union member states.

Section 91 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990

Christine Chapman: Would the Minister list each instance since 1999 where a local authority in Wales has been subject to a legal challenge under section 91 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990? (WAQ33649)

Carwyn Jones: This information is not held centrally. However, inquiries made by officials indicate that there have been no legal challenges made against Welsh local authorities under section 91 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990.

Fixed Penalty Fines for Dog Fouling

Christine Chapman: Since 1999, how many fixed penalty fines have been issued in each local authority area in Wales with respect to dog fouling under the Dogs (Fouling of Land) Act 1996? (WAQ33650)

Carwyn Jones: This information is not held centrally. However, a Keep Wales Tidy survey of Welsh local authorities to discover how many fixed penalty notices they had issued for dog fouling offences over the three years from 2000-01 to 2002-03 indicated the following:

	Apr 2000- Mar 2001	Apr 2001- Mar 2002	Apr 2002- Mar 2003	Total
Anglesey	0	0	0	0
Blaenau Gwent	0	0	0	0
Bridgend	0	0	28	28
Caerphilly	18	28	25	71
Cardiff	0	0	0	0
Carmarthenshire	0	0	23	23
Ceredigion	60
Flintshire	0	0	0	0
Gwynedd	142	0	85	227
Merthyr Tydfil	71
Monmouthshire	0	0	0	0
Pembrokeshire	0	38	72	110
Rhondda Cynon Taf	0	0	0	0
Swansea	0	0	52	52
Torfaen	0	0	24	24
Vale of Glamorgan	0	0	14	14
Wrexham	5	75	70	150

Two local authorities only gave overall data for the three years from 2000-01 to 2002-03. Data from the remaining five authorities is not available.

.. indicates that the data is not available.

Epidemiological Investigations

Glyn Davies: Further to WAQ29400 what were the results of the epidemiological investigations? (WAQ33809)

Carwyn Jones: The investigations into the outbreak of bovine tuberculosis on Ynys Môn have shown that the cause is spoligotype 9, a strain which is prevalent throughout south-west Wales, south Powys and the south-west of England.

Figures for 2003

Glyn Davies: Further to WAQ28503 what are the figures for 2003? (WAQ33810)

Carwyn Jones: A total of 1,330 bovine animals were confirmed on post-mortem or bacteriological examination as reactors in 2003, with a further 755 slaughtered as direct contacts. By law, all animals reacting to the tuberculin test are considered infected with M.bovis and must be slaughtered. It is important to remember that failure to confirm the presence of TB in a tuberculin test reactor does not necessarily mean that the animal did not have TB.

Chardon LL

Mick Bates: Will the Minister make a statement on the legal justifications used by the EU nations for not adding Chardon LL maize to their national seeds lists since 1998, and whether any of these nations have been prosecuted for their stance? (WAQ33816)

Carwyn Jones: The addition of Chardon LL or any other GM crop to the national seeds lists of a European Union member state depends on the submission of a listing application from a GM plant breeder. With the exceptions of the Netherlands and the UK, I am not aware of any applications for Chardon LL to be added to other member states' national lists. Chardon LL was added to the Netherlands' national list in 1999.

Funding Allocated to Flintshire

Sandy Mewies: How much Assembly funding, specific to the Minister's portfolio, has been allocated to Flintshire since May 2003? (WAQ33875)

Carwyn Jones: It has not been possible to establish all the Assembly funding to Flintshire from my portfolio as the spend is not all collated on a local-authority basis. I am only able to identify the following spend by organisations in Flintshire:

Flintshire County Council	£35,000 to provide Flintshire (and other local authorities) with additional resources to implement the Planning: Delivering for Wales programme
Countryside Council for Wales	£57,000 (from April 2003)
Environment Agency	£1,102,000 in 2003-04

Unwanted Horses

Nick Bourne: What measures will the Minister be taking to avoid unwanted horses being dumped in Wales? (WAQ33880)

Carwyn Jones: It will be a matter for local authorities to enforce the legislation and, where necessary, take action to prosecute those who abandon unwanted animals.

Horse Passport Scheme

Nick Bourne: Will the Minister make a statement on the introduction of the horse passport scheme in Wales? (WAQ33883)

Carwyn Jones: The European Commission decision 2000/68/EC requires all horses to have passports. Domestic legislation is under consideration, but is unlikely to be in place until the autumn of 2004.

On-farm Burials

Nick Bourne: Will the Minister advise whether the regulations regarding on-farm burials apply to horses? (WAQ33884)

Carwyn Jones: Under the EU regulation on animal by-products 2002, there is a derogation that allows pet animals—defined as animals that belong to species that are normally nourished and kept, but not consumed by humans for purposes other than farming—to be buried. With regard to equines, although it can be argued that we do not consume these animals, the UK does export equines, which may be used for human consumption. Consequently, one interpretation of the EU legislation may prohibit the burial of pet equines, but this is not the only interpretation. On the basis of legal and veterinary advice, we have suggested that local authorities, who are responsible for enforcing the legislation, take a pragmatic

approach and have regard to the purposes for which the equines were kept. Clearly, horses kept for export and destined to be consumed are not permitted to be buried and will need to be disposed of by an approved route other than burial.

Limiting the Right to Roam

Leighton Andrews: What representations has the Minister received concerning the need to limit the right to roam in areas affected by landslips, and will he make a statement? (WAQ33902)

Carwyn Jones: I have not received any representations concerning the need to limit the new right of access in areas affected by landslips. However, there are provisions within the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 that allow for public access to be restricted or excluded for different reasons, including avoidance of danger to the public. It would be for the Countryside Council for Wales or relevant national park authority to consider each case on its merits, but the risk of landslips could be one of the situations where these provisions could be utilised.

Research on Sheet Feed

Helen Mary Jones: Will the Minister make a statement on (a) the research on sheep feeding trials involving GM maize meal at the University of Leeds, and (b) the recent research on the cauliflower mosaic virus conducted in Norway? (WAQ33911)

Carwyn Jones: I am advised that the Food Standards Agency commissioned and published a series of research projects that included an assessment by the University of Leeds of the risks of transferring antibiotic resistance determinants from transgenic plants to micro-organisms. The research has been considered by the GM Science Review panel alongside all other published work on transgene survival and potential for gene transfer. It was described at chapter 5.4 of the GM Science Review panel's first report, published on 21 July 2003.

The reported new scientific evidence from Norway on the cauliflower mosaic virus promoter has yet to be published. When the details of this research are available, ACRE, which advises the Assembly Government on the deliberate release of genetically modified organisms, will be asked to evaluate these data and advise on their implications for existing consents and future applications.

The Right to Prohibit or Restrict GMO Crop Varieties

Helen Mary Jones: Will the Minister confirm that the Cartagena protocol on biosafety signatory nations have the right to prohibit or restrict specific GMO crop varieties such as Chardon LL when there is scientific uncertainty about their short-term to long-term safety and environmental effects? (WAQ33912)

Carwyn Jones: Parties to the Cartagena protocol, such as the UK, are obliged to take necessary and appropriate legal, administrative and other measures to ensure that the development, handling, transport, use, transfer and release of any living modified organisms is undertaken in a manner that prevents or reduces the risks to biological diversity, also taking into account risks to human health.

Chardon LL

Helen Mary Jones: Will the Minister make a statement on the suitability of the GM maize variety Chardon LL for cultivation and use in Wales? (WAQ33913)

Carwyn Jones: The criterion for adding a variety to the UK national list is that it should, taking its qualities as a whole, represent a clear improvement compared with other forage maize varieties already on the UK list. Chardon LL has been assessed on this basis and found to meet the performance standards set for indicating a clear improvement in value for cultivation and use.

GM Fodder Maize Silage

Helen Mary Jones: What steps has the Minister taken to ensure that there are no animal welfare implications that might arise from continuous feeding on GM fodder maize silage? (WAQ33914)

Carwyn Jones: Research from the University of Reading feeding trials, in which dairy cattle were fed on T25 maize silage, has now been completed and is currently awaiting publication in a peer-reviewed journal. Both Bayer (who funded the research) and Reading university have confirmed that the study does not reveal any adverse effects of T25 maize on the health of ruminants.

Assessment of the GM Characteristics of Chardon LL

Helen Mary Jones: Will the Minister confirm that the value for cultivation and use herbage group asked, prior to the national list Trials for Chardon LL maize, for its specific GM characteristics to be assessed, and will the Minister be asking that such an assessment be carried out? (WAQ33915)

Carwyn Jones: I am advised that the remit of the herbage VCU group includes making recommendations on the assessment of any special characteristics claimed by national list applicants in respect of a variety's value for cultivation and use. In the case of Chardon LL, the variety's resistance to the herbicide glufosinate ammonium was not claimed by the applicant to be a special characteristic for the purpose of the VCU trials.

Retrial of Field-scale Evaluation Trials

Helen Mary Jones: Has the Minister asked for a retrial of the field-scale evaluation trials in view of the fact that a herbicide used in those trials will shortly be banned? (WAQ33916)

Carwyn Jones: Assembly officials are currently seeking advice from the Advisory Committee on Releases to the Environment on the paper published on 5 March 2004 by the scientific journal, *Nature*.

Validity of National List Trials

Helen Mary Jones: Will the Minister make a statement on the validity of the national list trials for Chardon LL maize in 1998 and 1999? (WAQ33917)

Carwyn Jones: The data from the Chardon LL trials were reviewed in 2000 by the independent herbage value for cultivation and use group and the national list and seeds committee. It was agreed that the data were sufficient and sound as a basis for assessing the VCU performance of Chardon LL.

The data were reviewed again in 2003 in the light of information presented in written representations to the Chardon LL hearing. The same conclusion was reached.

The Commercialisation of GM Maize

Helen Mary Jones: What assessments have been made with regard to the implications for Wales if the commercialisation of GM maize was granted? (WAQ33918)

Carwyn Jones: I expect the agricultural implications of any potential commercialisation of Chardon LL to be among the issues considered in the consultation on coexistence.

Marketing Genetically Modified Organisms

Helen Mary Jones: Will the Minister make a statement on the process involved when a joint decision is made by the UK Competent Authority to submit advice to the European Commission on applications to market genetically modified organisms under directive 2001/18/EC? (WAQ33919)

Carwyn Jones: Applications for a marketing consent under the deliberate release directive received from another EU competent authority are initially screened for completeness by the ACRE secretariat and copied to the UK competent authorities for their comments. The dossier, along with any questions raised by the UK competent authorities is submitted to the Advisory Committee on Releases to the Environment for its advice. ACRE's advice is then considered by the UK competent authorities and a response sent to the lead authority, other member states and the Commission.

Chardon LL

Helen Mary Jones: Will Minister confirm (a) that the product label for Bayer Liberty herbicide used with Chardon LL fodder maize specifies application at a concentration of up to 8 litres per hectare, and (b) that the application rate actually employed during the Chardon LL farm-scale evaluations programme was 3.5 litres per hectare? (WAQ33920)

Carwyn Jones: The volume of Liberty herbicide used per hectare will depend on the concentration of active ingredient. The recommended concentration was 0.8kg/ha active ingredient per application with a limit of up to 1.6kg/ha per growing season. Statistics show the average application rate of active ingredient on the GMHT maize per growing season in the farm-scale evaluations was 0.965kg/ha \pm 0.063kg/ha while the average number of applications was 1.18 times \pm 0.06.

Saethu Hwyaidd Coch

Alun Ffred Jones: Pwy sydd â hawl i osod cytundebau trwyddedu saethu hwyaid coch yng Nghymru? (WAQ33924) [W]

Carwyn Jones: Mae Adran yr Amgylchedd, Bwyd a Materion Gwledig yn arwain ar fenter i edrych ar ddulliau o reoli'r hwyaden goch ym Mhrydain. Y Cynulliad Cenedlaethol sy'n parhau â'r cyfrifoldeb dros drwyddedu.

Shooting the Ruddy Duck

Alun Ffred Jones: Who has permission to grant licensing contracts for shooting the ruddy duck in Wales? (WAQ33924) [W]

Carwyn Jones: Methods of controlling the ruddy duck are being investigated as part of a United Kingdom initiative led by the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. Licensing responsibility in Wales remains with the National Assembly.

Trwyddedau sy'n Ymwneud â Difa

Alun Ffred Jones: Pa drwyddedau sy'n ymwneud â difa sy'n cael eu gosod yng Nghymru? (WAQ33925) [W]

Carwyn Jones: Gellir rhoi trwyddedau i reoli anifeiliaid neu adar drwy saethu neu symud wyau o dan Ddeddf Bywyd Gwylt a Chef'n Gwlad 1981, ar ôl ymgynghori gyda Chyngor Cefn Gwlad Cymru a sefydliadau eraill lle y bo hynny'n berthnasol. Rhoddwyd cyfanswm o 13 o drwyddedau yn ystod 2003 i reoli gwyddau Canada, gwyddau gwylt, mulfrain, hwyaid danheddog, hwyaid brongoch, hwyaid gwylt, ieir dŵr a'r crëyr.

Culling Licences

Alun Ffred Jones: Which culling licences are granted in Wales? (WAQ33925) [W]

Carwyn Jones: Licences to permit the control of animals or birds under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 by shooting or egg removal may be issued after consultation with the Countryside Council for Wales, and, where relevant, with other organisations. A total of 13 licences were issued during 2003 for the local control of Canada geese, greylag geese, the cormorant, the goosander, the red-breasted merganser, the mallard, the moorhen and the heron.

Hwyaid Coch yn Ynys Môn

Alun Ffred Jones: A oes unrhyw gorff wedi cael y drwydded i saethu hwyaid coch yn Ynys Môn? (WAQ33926) [W]

Carwyn Jones: Mae gan y Labordy Gwyddoniaeth Canolog drwydded hyd at 31 Mawrth 2004 i reoli'r hwyaden goch mewn safleoedd penodol yn Ynys Môn fel rhan o'r treialon ledled Prydain i reoli'r hwyaden goch. Mae'r dulliau o reoli'n cynnwys saethu a gwneud tyllau mewn wyau.

Ruddy Ducks in Anglesey

Alun Ffred Jones: Has anybody been licensed to shoot ruddy ducks in Anglesey? (WAQ33926) W

Carwyn Jones: The Central Science Laboratory is licensed until 31 March 2004, to undertake the control of the ruddy duck at selected sites in Anglesey as part of the United Kingdom ruddy duck control trial. Control methods include shooting and egg pricking.

Sand Dredging Licences

Alun Cairns: Would the Minister make a statement on any sand dredging licences requested to dredge in the Bristol Channel? (WAQ33928)

Alun Cairns: When was the sand dredging licence application made for Culver Sands? (WAQ33929)

Alun Cairns: When was the sand dredging licence application made for North Bristol Deep? (WAQ33930)

Alun Cairns: What tonnage of sand has the Minister received an application for to dredge from North Bristol Deep and over what period? (WAQ33933)

Alun Cairns: What tonnage of sand has the Minister received an application to dredge from Culver Sands and over what period? (WAQ33934)

Carwyn Jones: Dredging applications currently with the Assembly for determination are:

Helwick Bank	area 373	to take up to 300,000 tonnes/year for 15 years
Nobel Banks	area 476	to take up to 300,000 tonnes/year for 15 years, both by Llanelli Sand Dredging Ltd
North Middle Grounds	areas 455, 459	to take up to 400,000 tonnes/year for 10 years by Crossavon Ltd (Severn Sands)
North Bristol Deep	Area 470	to take up to 1,000,000 tonnes/year for 10 years by Hanson Aggregates Marine Ltd and United Marine Dredging; (the

		application was made on 12 July 2000 to both the Assembly and UK Governments, but the area was changed and now lies wholly within Welsh waters.
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An application was made on 16 August 2000 to extract a maximum of 1,000,000 tonnes for 15 years at Culver Sands (Area 472). The area has been changed and is now in English waters, so is being dealt with by the UK Government. The Assembly Government is a consultee.

An application for planning permission at Bedwyn for up to 250,000 tonnes/year to 2013 by Crossavon Ltd (Severn Sands) is with Monmouthshire County Council for determination.

Sand Dredging Licence Applications for Culver Sands and North Bristol Deep

Alun Cairns: When does the Minister expect to respond to applications for sand dredging licences for Culver Sands and North Bristol Deep? (WAQ33931)

Carwyn Jones: For the Culver Sands application, the Assembly Government is a consultee only (see WAQ33928). The North Bristol Deep application is at the consultation stage of the Government view procedure; the time-scale will depend on the responses received and additional environmental information required.

Sandbanks Crossing the English and Welsh Borders

Alun Cairns: What policy agreement is in place between Westminster Government and the Welsh Assembly Government when sandbanks cross the English and Welsh borders? (WAQ33932)

Carwyn Jones: The applicant must obtain a favourable Government view for an application to dredge from both the Assembly Government and the English department (the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister) when the application crosses the boundary between Welsh and English waters.

Planning and Compulsory Purchase Bill

Lisa Francis: What effect will the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Bill have on the national parks in Wales? (WAQ33985)

Carwyn Jones: The three national parks in Wales are local planning authorities and as such will be affected by the provisions of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Bill, when enacted, like other LPAs in Wales. This includes the need to prepare local development plans, to have regard to the Wales spatial plan in preparing those plans, and to effect the other detailed provisions of the Bill to improve the planning decision-making process.

Rural Stress

Nick Bourne: Will the Minister make a statement on Welsh Assembly Government policy to alleviate rural stress? (WAQ34013)

Carwyn Jones: We recognise the pressures faced by people living in rural areas and acknowledge how important it is to ensure that good services, whether health, social services or voluntary sector, are available throughout the whole of Wales. Tackling rural stress is of course not simply about the provision of health and social services. Indeed, the public health agenda identifies that it is about addressing the wider determinants of health such as poverty, employment and healthy relationships that will also contribute.

The Welsh Assembly Government has funded the community advice and listening line and the Wales rural stress helpline since 2001. These helplines provide free and confidential help and advice and offer emotional support and practical help to all of the people of Wales, including those living in rural communities. This includes providing information about all aspects of rural life, including transport, business advice, voluntary organisations, local groups and clubs, and health and local authority services.

In the case of the Wales rural stress helpline, the Minister for Health and Social Services will provide funding to 30 June 2004, after which the helpline number will be diverted to the CALL helpline operators. The CALL helpline will from now on actively promote itself as providing a service to rural as well as to urban callers, ensuring that an effective and efficient service is provided for people throughout the whole of Wales.

In addition, both the Minister for Health and Social Services and I have supported measures to alleviate rural stress in the wake of foot and mouth disease. We are also investigating the case for further action in the future and working with partners such as the Institute of Rural Health in an ongoing programme of research to establish the nature, scale and incidence of rural stress.

The Brecon Beacons National Park

Lisa Francis: In respect of the Brecon Beacons National Park new secondary legislation/planning protocol, on what date did the Public consultation start and in what media context? (WAQ34023)

Lisa Francis: When is the public consultation in respect of the Brecon Beacons National Park new secondary legislation/planning protocol going to finish? (WAQ34030)

Lisa Francis: If the Brecon Beacons National Park new secondary legislation and planning protocol is awaiting adoption, what date will the adoption be on? (WAQ34031)

Lisa Francis: In respect of the Brecon Beacons National Park new secondary legislation/planning protocol, how would members of the public submit proposals for amendments? (WAQ34025)

Lisa Francis: In respect of the Brecon Beacons National Park, is the new secondary legislation/planning protocol yet approved or adopted? (WAQ34029)

Carwyn Jones: The planning protocol was approved by the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority on 30 January 2004. It is not secondary legislation and is separate from, and supplements, the statutorily required code of conduct adopted by the park authority in November 2001. Arrangements for the preparation and review of the protocol are matters for the national park authority.

Questions to the Finance Minister

Circulation Levels

Leighton Andrews: Further to WAQ32563, what assessment has the Minister made of the circulation levels of the four publications selected, and will she make a statement? (WAQ33264)

The Finance Minister (Sue Essex): I am advised that the circulation levels of the publications are:

<i>The Western Mail</i> (average daily circulation)	53,315
<i>Daily Post</i> – Wales edition (average circulation for Monday and Thursday)	40,835
<i>Y Cymro</i> (weekly)	4,802
<i>Golwg</i> (weekly)	4,500

ASPB Board Appointments

Leighton Andrews: Further to WAQ32563, which Assembly sponsored public body board appointments are regarded as ‘higher profile’? (WAQ33265)

Sue Essex: Decisions on advertising strategies are taken in the light of the particular vacancy to be filled. However, vacancies on the boards of the following ASPBs would usually be advertised in the press:

- Arts Council of Wales
- Care Council for Wales
- Countryside Council for Wales
- Health Professions Wales (to be established on 1 April 2004)
- Higher Education Funding Council for Wales
- National Council for Education and Training for Wales
- National Library of Wales
- National Museums and Galleries of Wales
- Qualification, Curriculum and Assessment Authority for Wales
- Sports Council for Wales
- Welsh Development Agency
- Welsh Language Board
- Wales Tourist Board

Communities First (Remit Letters to ASPBs)

Leighton Andrews: What instructions does the Minister give in remit letters to ASPBs within her portfolio area regarding engaging with Communities First agendas? (WAQ33321)

Sue Essex: As an advisory ASPB, the Local Government Boundary Commission is not issued with a remit letter.

Referendum in Ceredigion

Nick Bourne: Has the Minister had any representations with regard to the referendum in Ceredigion on a mayor for Ceredigion, and will she publish those representations? (WAQ33579)

Sue Essex: I have received correspondence from Ceredigion County Council. I have also had correspondence from the Electoral Commission, which is made reference to in the statement I have laid before the Assembly to accompany the referendum regulations.

Date of Proposed Referendum in Ceredigion

Nick Bourne: Has the Minister had any discussions regarding the date of the proposed referendum in Ceredigion, and, if so, will she publish the proposed date of the referendum? (WAQ33580)

Sue Essex: I have communicated with Ceredigion County Council as well as Llais y Cardi (the petition organisers) and the Electoral Commission.

The actual date of the referendum is a matter for Ceredigion County Council, as is the publication of that date. The council will have to hold the referendum within two months of the Assembly’s regulations coming into force.

Amount of Grant from the Welsh Assembly Government

Nick Bourne: Will the Minister please set out the amount of grant from the Welsh Assembly Government, by local authority area, for each of the years since 1999? (WAQ33598)

Sue Essex: Consistent with the answer to question WAQ33599, the information provided in the table below is the amount of central support provided by the Welsh Assembly Government. This includes revenue support grant, redistributed non-domestic rate income and, for the relevant years, council tax reduction and transitional grants.

Welsh Assembly Government central support, by authority (a)

	£ thousand				
	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04
Isle of Anglesey	58,000	60,074	66,435	69,272	75,268
Gwynedd	101,838	107,060	116,019	122,142	134,830
Conwy	88,358	92,093	99,754	107,162	116,381
Denbighshire	79,018	83,275	89,344	94,855	104,049
Flintshire	115,089	120,342	126,270	130,777	141,845
Wrexham	96,544	100,931	107,171	113,300	123,995
Powys	112,372	116,781	123,352	127,750	139,307
Ceredigion	60,286	64,136	69,199	71,261	77,911
Pembrokeshire	97,919	102,455	111,791	116,289	127,035
Carmarthenshire	146,325	153,705	164,049	170,465	187,509
Swansea	184,116	191,167	203,896	216,577	234,618
Neath Port Talbot	119,725	124,998	131,285	138,746	152,179
Bridgend	106,373	112,066	117,575	120,704	131,918
Vale of Glamorgan (The)	91,654	95,755	100,580	105,341	114,414
Rhondda Cynon Taff	212,806	222,872	236,558	243,220	268,251
Merthyr Tydfil	56,593	59,246	62,131	63,643	69,797
Caerphilly	143,882	152,628	163,688	172,370	191,422
Blaenau Gwent	68,264	71,359	74,732	78,280	84,296
Torfaen	78,463	83,094	88,366	92,143	100,732
Monmouthshire	61,590	63,199	66,121	68,561	74,328
Newport	112,922	119,504	128,043	133,441	146,533
Cardiff	245,588	256,889	270,415	285,450	306,024
Total Unitary Authorities	2,437,725	2,553,629	2,716,774	2,841,749	3,102,642

(a) Welsh Assembly Government central support includes revenue support grant, re-distributed non-domestic rates, council tax reduction scheme (1999-2000 and 2000-01), transitional grant (2001-02 and 2002-03), performance incentive grant (2001-02 and 2003-04) and deprivation grant (2003-04). Excludes hypothecated funding provided by the Assembly and other central Government departments in the form of grants for specific purposes.

Source: budget requirement returns.

Local Government Spending Funded by the Welsh Assembly Government

Nick Bourne: Will the Minister please set out the proportion of local government spending funded by the Welsh Assembly Government for each of the years since 1999, by local authority area? (WAQ33599)

Sue Essex: The information requested is provided in the table below.

Welsh Assembly Government support to local authorities as a percentage of budget requirement (a)

	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04
Isle of Anglesey	83	81	82	81	81
Gwynedd	81	80	81	80	81
Conwy	84	82	82	81	81
Denbighshire	81	80	80	79	79
Flintshire	81	80	79	79	79
Wrexham	81	80	80	79	80
Powys	83	82	81	81	81
Ceredigion	80	80	80	80	80
Pembrokeshire	83	82	83	84	84
Carmarthenshire	81	81	81	80	81
Swansea	82	80	81	81	80
Neath Port Talbot	81	79	79	78	78
Bridgend	81	80	80	78	78
The Vale of Glamorgan	81	80	79	78	77
Rhondda Cynon Taff	83	83	83	82	83
Merthyr Tydfil	84	84	83	82	82
Caerphilly	83	83	83	83	83
Blaenau Gwent	86	85	84	84	83
Torfaen	85	84	84	84	83
Monmouthshire	81	77	76	75	73
Newport	84	84	85	85	85
Cardiff	82	81	80	80	79
Total Unitary Authorities	82	81	81	81	80

(a) Welsh Assembly Government support includes revenue support grant, re-distributed non-domestic rates, council tax reduction scheme (1999-2000 and 2000-01) and transitional grant (2001-02 and 2002-03). Excludes hypothecated funding provided by the Assembly and other central Government departments in the form of grants for specific purposes.

Source: budget requirement returns.

Mayoral Referendum in Ceredigion

Nick Bourne: Will the Minister confirm that the costs of meeting the mayoral referendum in Ceredigion is to be met by Ceredigion County Council? (WAQ33602)

Sue Essex: Yes. Section 36(4) of the Representation of the People Act 1983 refers. It deals with responsibility for council elections but applies also in the case of mayoral referendums.

Staffing Costs of the Welsh Assembly Government

Jonathan Morgan: What were the staffing costs of the Welsh Assembly Government for each financial year since 1999-2000? (WAQ33815)

Sue Essex: The staffing costs of the Welsh Assembly Government for each financial year from 1999 – 2000 to the anticipated expenditure for this year are as follows:

1999–2000	£58,549	(7 staff from Teacher Training Agency transferred in during the year)
2000–01	£67,202	(197 staff transferred in from Welsh Health Common Services Agency, Health Promotion Wales, Wales Office research and development, Welsh European Programmes Executive and WalesTrade International)
2001–02	£78,031	(116 staff transferred in from Clinical Effectiveness Support Unit, Welsh Drug and Alcohol Unit, and the Farming and Rural Conservation Agency)

2002–03	£90,062	(254 staff transferred in from Care Standards Inspectorate Wales, Welsh Nursing and Midwifery Board and the Wales Export Association)
2003–04	£105,171	(73 staff transferred in from Health Commission Wales, Rent Officer Service and the Drug and Alcohol Team)

Assembly Funding Allocated to Flintshire

Sandy Mewies: How much Assembly funding, specific to the Minister's portfolio, has been allocated to Flintshire since May 2003? (WAQ33872)

Sue Essex: For the period May 2003 to March 2004, Flintshire has received £82.9 million in revenue support grant and non-domestic rates payments. In addition to this, for the 2003-04 financial year, Flintshire has received an allocation of £0.2 million from the deprivation grant and £1.4 million from the performance incentive grant.

(NB: the deprivation grant is current in the social justice and regeneration main expenditure group but will move to the local government MEG from 1 April.)

Public Private Partnership/Private Finance Initiative Projects

Nick Bourne: Will the Minister list PPP/PFI projects undertaken by the Government of Wales since 1999 by location, value and date? (WAQ33988)

Sue Essex: The Welsh Assembly Government has undertaken no new PFI projects since 1999. The enhancement of the A55 across Anglesey is a PFI scheme, which was inherited from the former Welsh Office at devolution. The road became operational from March 2001, with capital costs in the region of £100 million.

Questions to the Minister for Health and Social Services

The Modernisation of GP Surgeries and Hospitals

Lorraine Barrett: Will the Minister make a statement on the modernisation of GP surgeries and hospitals in Cardiff South and Penarth? (WAQ33269)

The Minister for Health and Social Services (Jane Hutt): All NHS trusts and local health boards are responsible for considering how best to deliver modern healthcare services within their area and whether or not buildings require modernisation. Cardiff and Vale NHS Trust, for example, is currently engaged in a range of schemes to modernise the delivery of healthcare services in its area. Local health boards are required to submit their primary care estates strategy to the Assembly by 1 April 2004. This will allow them to implement and plan future premises development in their area effectively.

Communities First (Remit Letters to ASPBs)

Leighton Andrews: What instructions does the Minister give in remit letters to ASPBs within her portfolio area regarding engaging with Communities First agendas? (WAQ33320)

Jane Hutt: Assembly sponsored public bodies are expected to conduct their business in line with the Assembly's values, principles and standards and to contribute, as appropriate, to its strategic agenda for Wales. This includes delivering against the key priorities and values set out in 'Wales: A Better Country'. To ensure that this happens, the Assembly Government has been developing a new business planning process, which emphasises the importance of partnership working in delivering the Government's agenda. In relation to the Communities First agendas, the remit letters being issued to each executive ASPB

require them to identify how they will engage with Communities First partnerships, assist in and support the formulation and delivery of community action plans and participate in the development of local authority community strategies. Assembly sponsored public bodies will be required to demonstrate in their corporate plans how they will achieve this.

Asthma Treatment in Wales

Nick Bourne: Will the Minister make a statement on asthma treatment in Wales? (WAQ33334)

Jane Hutt: The Welsh Assembly Government is developing a policy for respiratory disease, which will set out a long-term programme of action to develop fair, high quality, integrated health and social care services for people with respiratory disease, including asthma. The policy will develop future priorities for the care of people across health and social services. The strategy will focus on:

- providing person-centred needs led care and support
- promoting health and independence
- developing more equitable, high quality services and support.

An implementation planning group has been developed to contribute to the planning and help to take forward the respiratory policy for Wales. This multi-agency, multi-professional partnership between representatives of the Welsh Assembly Government, NHS organisations, local authorities, the voluntary sector and service users will help determine the content of the policy and its delivery and implementation. The first meeting of the group was held on 16 March.

The needs of children with asthma are addressed within the general context of the children's national service framework. The overarching aim of the framework is to ensure that all children and young people achieve optimum health and wellbeing and are supported in fulfilling their potential.

Staffing Needs for the Future Delivery of Healthcare Services

Nick Bourne: What estimates does the Minister have of staffing needs for the professions of medicine, pharmacy, dentistry and optometry for the next 10 years, broken down by local health board areas to meet the needs of its plans for the future delivery of healthcare services? (WAQ33335)

Jane Hutt: It is assumed that the question refers to primary care, in which case dentists, optometrists and pharmacists are private contractors and workforce information on these is not held centrally. However, the dental workforce review report recommended an increase in the number of undergraduate students from 55 to 76 per year. The Welsh Assembly Government is committed to considering the need for the expansion of dental undergraduate training as an integrated element of its dental strategy for Wales. Assembly officials are working closely with the University of Wales College of Medicine in identifying the options for expansion.

The attached table provides information for individual local health boards from the 2003 workforce planning round, which was the first year that local health boards carried out the workforce planning process. Figures are updated on an annual basis. Information is provided on the forecast required staff in post for general practitioners in 2009 and for pharmacists in 2007.

	General Practitioners	Pharmacists
	Forecast required SIP 2009	Forecast required SIP 2009
Anglesey	44.5	0
Blaenau Gwent	78.1	1
Bridgend	103.5	4
Caerphilly	126.9	2.8
Cardiff	204	0

Carmarthen	96.25	1
Ceredigion	66.75	1
Conwy	65.25	6.5
Denbighshire	58.25	5.1
Flintshire	83.75	8.2
Gwynedd	106.25	3.83
Merthyr Tydfil	42.06	0
Monmouthshire	66.7	1.5
Neath/Port Talbot	111	12
Newport	104.3	0
Pembrokeshire	73.5	2
Powys	100.2	0
Rhondda Cynon Taf	140.65	0
Swansea	201.25	4
Torfaen	61.89	5.5
Vale of Glamorgan	70.5	0
Wrexham	77	6
General practitioners includes salaried GPs and specialist GPs. Pharmacists are LHB employed or GP pharmacists only.		

Data from 2003 workforce plans.

Improving Capacity in Cancer Services in Wales

Lynne Neagle: Will the Minister make a statement on the action being taken by the Assembly Government to improve capacity in cancer services in Wales? (WAQ33489)

Jane Hutt: Pressures on capacity are due to a number of variables needing different solutions. Any increased activity should be addressed through the commissioning process. For cancer services, the re-configuration of complex surgical services for the less common cancers will follow the National Institute for Clinical Excellence's guidance, and these are to be reflected in the new cancer standards currently being finalised. This will address some of the capacity issues, with fewer, well-resourced teams making best use of our scarce specialist resources. The three cancer networks are key to achieving these changes and will need to work very closely with commissioners, Health Commission Wales and local health boards, as this requires planning at least at a regional level.

Implementation of the NICE service guidance, unlike the NICE guidance on drugs, is not mandatory within three months and is dependent on the commissioning process and resources.

The Royal National Institute for the Deaf's Survey

William Graham: Will the Minister make a statement concerning the Royal National Institute for the Deaf survey, 'A Simple Cure'? (WAQ33490)

Jane Hutt: The Welsh Assembly Government welcomes the report of the Royal National Institute for the Deaf, which clearly illustrates many of the issues for people who are deaf, or hard of hearing in accessing healthcare. I recently met with the Royal National Institute for the Deaf to discuss the report in detail.

The Welsh Assembly Government is firmly committed to ensuring that the differing needs of people are taken into account in the planning and delivery of healthcare. In Wales, the provision of healthcare services for people who are deaf, or hard of hearing is actively supported by local health boards through local arrangements, including the provision of interpreter facilities.

The 'Informing Healthcare' Strategy

Lynne Neagle: Will the Minister make a statement on the effect the Assembly Government's 'Informing Healthcare' strategy will have on the provision of cancer services in Wales? (WAQ33491)

Jane Hutt: The informing healthcare strategy is designed to support the delivery of healthcare in Wales in a comprehensive cross-community sense, rather than on a speciality or condition basis. Its benefits for cancer services will, therefore, be generic in the first instance. For clinicians working in the cancer field, early benefits will include, improved infrastructure, better access to knowledge bases, and access to IT and information management skills.

The informing healthcare team will be working closely with clinicians to develop the first phase of the single electronic health record for Wales. This will be developed throughout 2004 with a phased rollout planned to begin by the end of 2005. The first phase is intended to provide access to information and functions, which will help clinicians and carers, including those working in cancer services. This will be in addition to the specialist electronic support already available from the cancer information system provided across Wales by Velindre NHS Trust.

Informing healthcare is a long-term strategy, which over the coming years, guided by clinicians, carers and patients will seek to support the integration of high-quality services within the cancer field.

Provision of Services for the Physically Disabled in South Wales East

Laura Anne Jones: Would the Minister make a statement on the arrangements available for the physically disabled in South Wales East? (WAQ33492)

Jane Hutt: There are many initiatives, which provide services for disabled people across the NHS, social care and voluntary sector. Some excellent examples of these include, the Monmouth user and patients forum, which was set up two years ago and is funded through the flexibilities and joint working grant. Caerphilly Local Health Board funds a number of voluntary sector services, which include the Bobath children's therapy centre Wales and 'Care and Repair', which enables individuals to remain independent and at home and also facilitates earlier discharge from hospital. Rhondda Cynon Taff Local Health Board has a 'Pathways to Work' project, which aids the physically disabled to return to work. Blaenau Gwent Local Health Board is developing a joint planning group to look at services in the future.

Neo-natal Provision

Owen John Thomas: Will the Minister make a statement on neo-natal provision for Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan? (WAQ33493)

Jane Hutt: There are currently 20 available cots at the University Hospital of Wales Cardiff and 14 at Llandough hospital, comprising of intensive, high dependency and special care. Although, shortages of nursing and medical staff exist within the units, not only here in Wales, but across the UK, current staff have shown a high level of commitment and dedication to ensure that the service is carried out as effectively as possible under the difficult circumstances.

It is recognised that it is important to maintain high-quality neo-natal services that focus on the needs of babies and their families, and to achieve the best outcomes possible in all circumstances. The Welsh Assembly Government, as part of the children and young people's specialist services project is, therefore, working in partnership with Health Commission Wales to plan a future for neo-natal services that are safe, of high-quality and suitable to local needs. To date, funding for two additional consultant neo-natologist posts has been given to the Cardiff and Vale NHS Trust.

ITU and HDU Beds in Wales

Peter Black: Will the Minister make a statement on the provision of ITU beds in Wales? (WAQ33494)

Peter Black: Will the Minister make a statement on the provision of HDU beds in Wales? (WAQ33495)

Jane Hutt: The emergency pressures taskforce in 2000 identified the need for an increase in adult intensive therapy unit beds in Wales and while there has been an increase in adult general high dependency unit and ITU beds since then, the level of this does not yet match the level of increase recommended.

In the short term, in order to make further progress, the Welsh Assembly Government has set targets for the NHS for the coming year. These are linked to a reduction in the number of operations cancelled as a result of the lack of adult critical care beds and to the inappropriate transfer of patients requiring critical care.

In the longer term, the Welsh Assembly Government is addressing issues affecting critical care, such as capacity, via a multi-disciplinary development group that I established. This group has already formulated proposed standards of care for differing levels of adult critical care, which have been consulted upon and welcomed by the NHS. The group has now turned its attention to addressing the implementation of these and is due to consult upon its plans for that later this year.

Waiting Lists in North Wales

Carl Sargeant: Would the Minister make a statement on waiting lists in north Wales? (WAQ33496)

Jane Hutt: Local health boards and NHS trusts in north Wales are reporting that they will achieve the target setting a maximum waiting time of 18 months for in-patient, day case treatment and first out-patient appointments. The local health boards and trusts are also confident that in most specialties, the 18-month target will be improved upon by 31 March 2004.

Health Gain Targets

Carl Sargeant: Would the Minister give an update on the Welsh Assembly Government's health gain targets? (WAQ33497)

Jane Hutt: Following a comprehensive development process involving representatives from a wide range of organisations, new national health targets and health inequality indicators have been established for the period 2002 to 2012 in five priority health areas. National targets for cancer, mental health and the health of children were formally launched in January 2004, with targets for coronary heart disease and the health of older people being announced during 2003.

A publication summarising the new targets is currently being disseminated widely to local health boards, the National Public Health Service, primary care, NHS trusts, local authorities, the voluntary and community sectors and academic institutions. Copies of this publication are available on the Welsh Assembly Government website:

<http://www.cmo.wales.gov.uk/content/work/health-gain-targets/index-e.htm>

<http://www.cmo.cymru.gov.uk/content/work/health-gain-targets/index-w.htm>

The website also provides background information on the development of the health targets and the continuing work to develop determinants of health indicators. Baseline data for each target will also be provided as the information becomes available. A date is currently being scheduled for discussion of the health targets in Plenary.

Pain Management Services

Sandy Mewies: Would the Minister make a statement on the provision of pain management services in Wales? (WAQ33498)

Jane Hutt: Pain management services are an issue relating to a wide and varied spectrum of healthcare, and there are numerous issues and services to be considered. To develop services in the longer term, an all-Wales pain management services development group has been established to consider how best to develop a more integrated and effective service. The work of the group will help to develop a service framework to ensure that all future services are developed and provided on a more accessible and equitable basis across Wales.

Locum Cover Under the New GP Contract

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: Will the Minister make a statement on the financing of locum cover during the 26-week maternity leave under the new GP contract? (WAQ33499)

Jane Hutt: Payments to be made by local health boards to a contractor under a general medical services contract are contained within the statement of financial entitlement. Part 4, section 9 provides details of how contractors are reimbursed by the local health board for engaging a locum. Subject to the conditions contained within section 9, for 2004-05, a local health board should reimburse the contractor a maximum of £948.33 per week for a maximum of 26 weeks.

Social Services in Cardiff

Owen John Thomas: What meetings has the Minister had with the leader of Cardiff County Council regarding the council's commitment to strengthen social services in Cardiff? (WAQ33500)

Jane Hutt: Following the publication in September 2002 of the joint review report, I met councillor Goodway on 3 October and 25 November 2002 and 11 March 2003 to satisfy myself of the authority's commitment to strengthening social services. I commissioned a special inspection report on Cardiff's children's services by the Social Services Inspectorate for Wales, which reported in November 2003. As a result, I invoked the protocol for dealing with serious concerns and I asked the chief inspector to set out targets for improvement and a monitoring programme for the authority. Arrangements are in hand for me to meet councillor Goodway to discuss progress on these matters.

Current Spending Priorities in Health and Social Services

Nick Bourne: Will the Minister update us on her current spending priorities? (WAQ33501)

Jane Hutt: The final budget for health and social services is £4.6 billion in 2004-05. This represents an increase of £397 million over 2003-04. My spending plans for 2004-05 include:

- Provision of £2.7 billion for the local health boards and Health Commission Wales revenue allocations, which were issued on 15 December 2003 (WHC(2003)124);
- Funding is being held centrally for pay modernisation (the consultant contract, 'Agenda for Change') and 'Informing Healthcare';
- £5 million is being held in central budgets for the implementation of the Townsend report, awaiting advice from the Standing Committee on the most appropriate use of the resources in 2004-05;
- £369 million was set aside for the new general medical services contract, £253 million was issued under WHC (2003) 124, the remaining sums are to be issued later;
- £29 million for nursing home care, the responsibility for which has transferred from local government to the national health service and this will be allocated as soon as the data has been validated to identify where it should be distributed;
- £12 million has been set aside from 1 April 2004 to reduce waiting times;

- £11.2 million will promote and encourage the development of formal partnerships between the NHS and local government, including £2.2 million to support local authority participation in local health boards;
- £3 million to support implementation of the older persons strategy; and
- funding has also been earmarked for the NHS and social services jointly to Wanless reforms.

Bed Blocking in the NHS

Nick Bourne: Will the Minister make a statement on her plans to tackle bed blocking in the NHS? (WAQ33502)

Jane Hutt: Delayed transfers of care are the result of several interlinking issues affecting the health and social care system. Improving performance in people receiving care in the right setting at the right time is an important element of the work that we are doing, following the Wanless review of health and social care.

The Chest Clinic in Abergavenny (Waiting Times)

David Davies: Will the Minister make a statement on the waiting times for assessments at the chest clinic in Abergavenny? (WAQ33503)

Jane Hutt: In order to reduce out-patient waiting times, including chest clinic appointments, the Gwent Healthcare NHS Trust has introduced a partial booking system. This has had the effect of reducing the numbers waiting for a first appointment. The trust continues to seek ways for further improvement aiming to provide patient care that is both equitable and accessible

Waiting Times for Brain Scans (Monmouthshire)

David Davies: Will the Minister make a statement on the waiting times for brain scans following strokes in Monmouthshire? (WAQ33504)

Jane Hutt: The Gwent Healthcare NHS Trust's aim is to scan all patients needing brain scans within 48 hours, wherever possible. However, there are occasions when this may not be achieved due to a high level of referrals for trauma/in-patient emergency cases, or at weekends. The out-of-hours service is covered by on-call teams and is extensively used for emergency caseloads.

The NHS Appointment System

Lorraine Barrett: Can the Minister make a statement on the appointment system within the NHS? (WAQ33505)

Jane Hutt: The key aspects of a new appointment system within the NHS in Wales were set out in 'A Guide to Good Practice' published by innovations in care in November 2003. In this guide, it was stated that there should be a standard integrated approach to making all appointments within NHS trusts. The process should cover all new and follow-up appointments, physiotherapy, endoscopy, and radiology. The same principles should also apply for elective in-patient and day case events.

A key feature of the new appointment system is patient choice. All appointments should be made so that the patient is directly involved in agreeing the date and time, either in person or by phone. As well as giving more flexibility to patients, choice of date and time has been shown to significantly reduce the number of patients who do not attend out-patient appointments. The new appointment system is contributing to the improvement in out-patient waiting times seen in the past 18 months. All trusts in Wales are introducing this form of booking. In Carmarthenshire NHS Trust, 95 per cent of all patient appointments are now made using the new approach. Other trusts are booking most new referrals in this way, and are moving to implement the approach for follow-up appointments.

Waiting Times to see an Orthopaedic Consultant in Wales

Brynle Williams: Will the Minister state the maximum allowed waiting time for a referral to see an orthopaedic consultant in Wales? (WAQ33542)

Jane Hutt: The service and financial framework for 2004-05 sets a maximum waiting time target for orthopaedics of 18 months for both elective in-patients/day cases and out-patients. Maintaining or improving upon it is a key aim for the regional offices and the NHS in Wales for 2004-05.

The Children's Bill 2004

Nick Bourne: What representations has the Minister had from organisations in Wales about provision in the Children's Bill 2004? (WAQ33567)

Jane Hutt: I have held discussions on the Welsh aspects of the Bill with the Local Government Partnership Council and local government portfolio holders for social services. I have also discussed with the Children's Commissioner for Wales his relationship with the proposed commissioner for England.

Timescale of the Inquiry into the Murder of Mr Brian Dodd

Ann Jones: Will the Minister make a statement on the timescale of the inquiry into the circumstances leading up to the murder of my constituent, Mr Brian Dodd, last March? (WAQ33569)

Ann Jones: Will the Minister make a statement on the composition of the inquiry panel tasked with investigating the circumstances leading up to the murder of my constituent, Mr Brian Dodd, last March? (WAQ33570)

Ann Jones: Will the Minister make a statement on the progress of the inquiry into the circumstances leading up to the murder of my constituent, Mr Brian Dodd, last March? (WAQ33571)

Ann Jones: Will the Minister make a statement on the remit of the inquiry panel tasked with investigating the circumstances leading up to the murder of my constituent, Mr Brian Dodd last March? (WAQ33572)

Jane Hutt: Following this tragic incident Cardiff local health board was asked, on 27 October 2003, to commission an independent external review into the care management arrangements and events surrounding the homicide committed by Mr Paul Khan. The overall purpose being to learn lessons to reduce the risk of a similar incident happening again, and to share that learning across Wales.

It was for the local health board to determine the precise remit of the panel, but it is understood that it will be considering the care provided to Mr Khan for as far back as is necessary to learn from the events of 2003. The local health board was also specifically asked to ensure that the review was undertaken by experts in this field and from outside of Wales. Such panels would also include lay representation. However, as this is an independent review, it would not be appropriate for me to determine the precise composition of the review panel. It is for Cardiff local health board and the panel to agree the timescale for the review. However, such reviews would normally take around six months to complete. The review is well underway.

Care and Repair Agencies

Nick Bourne: Will the Minister make a statement on care and repair agencies in Wales? (WAQ33585)
Transferred for answer by the Minister for Social Justice and Regeneration.

The Minister for Social Justice and Regeneration (Edwina Hart): I have recently announced £3.77 million in funding for care and repair services throughout Wales for 2004-05. These resources will ensure that care and repair agencies, as well as Care and Repair Cymru, continue to play an important role in enabling elderly and disabled people to remain in their own homes.

Annual Running Costs of the Five Health Authorities

Nick Bourne: What were the annual running costs of the five health authorities during the last year? (WAQ33593)

Jane Hutt: The annual accounts of health authorities in Wales do not contain an analysis of running costs. However, they do provide an analysis of administration expenses, which are shown below by health authority:

	Bro Taf	Dyfed Powys	Gwent	Iechyd Morgannwg	North Wales	Total
2002-03	£9,434	£8,296	£10,453	£7,325	£8,701	£44,209

Source: Audited annual accounts of health authorities in Wales 2002-03.

Medical Litigation

Nick Bourne: Will the Minister please set out for each of the years since 1999 the budgeted amount for medical litigation in her budget, and the actual amount spent on litigation in each of those years? (WAQ33600)

Jane Hutt: The NHS does not set central budgets for medical litigation. Any expenses incurred are paid out of total local health board allocations or trust income. The defence legal fees and other administration charges are shown below.

Defence Legal Fees and other Administrative Costs

1998-99	£2.671 million
1999-2000	£2.031 million
2000-01	£3.029 million
2001-02	£4.356 million
2002-03	£8.385 million

Government Policy on Fluoridation

Nick Bourne: When will the Minister publish Government policy on fluoridation? (WAQ33680)

Jane Hutt: I wrote to National Assembly for Wales members on 23 December 2003 to inform them of the Welsh Assembly Government's current position on water fluoridation in Wales.

I have no immediate plans to publish Government policy on fluoridation. The Welsh Assembly Government is considering the implications for Wales of the fluoridation provisions in the Water Act 2003. The Water Act 2003 contains powers on fluoridation of water supplies—section 58 of the Act—and received Royal Assent on 20 November 2003. The next legislative step will be for section 58 of the Act to be commenced in Wales by the Assembly in Plenary. The Act requires regulations to be made governing the public consultations, which must be held before the Welsh Assembly Government could instruct a water undertaker to fluoridate the water supply in an area. The earliest that the public consultation regulations could be put in place is by the end of this year. While these legislative arrangements need to be made, they will not necessarily lead to any new fluoridation schemes being introduced.

NHS Chiropody Lists in Wales

Nick Bourne: How many people are on the NHS chiropody lists in Wales? (WAQ33681)

Jane Hutt: The information is given in the table below. The figures provided give the position as at 31 January 2004. Officials are undertaking a series of projects with diagnostic and therapy services, including chiropody/podiatry, to look at how the NHS can use performance data, alongside the innovations in care good practice guide, to better manage their waiting times.

Trust	Under 6 wks	6-12 wks	12-24 wks	24-36 wks	36-48 wks	48-60 wks	60-72 wks	Over 72 wks	Grand total
Bro Morgannwg	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cariff Vale	386	606	611	641	601	400	421	239	3905
Carmarthen	56	92	27	9	9	0	0	0	193
Ceredigion	82	59	55	45	41	15	17	42	356
Conwy-Denb	191	37	41	28	7	0	0	0	304
Gwent	214	307	685	396	381	251	262	456	2952
N Glam	136	110	15	0	0	0	0	0	261
NE Wales	178	27	19	0	0	0	0	0	224
NW Wales	264	36	0	0	0	0	0	0	300
Pembs-Derwen	114	130	113	136	70	33	39	133	768
Ponty-Rhondda	189	57	5	0	0	0	0	0	251
Powys	49	17	6	5	0	1	0	2	80
Swansea	42	104	305	26	0	0	0	0	477
Grand total	1901	1582	1882	1286	1109	700	739	872	10071
Percentage of grand total	18.88	15.71	18.69	12.77	11.01	6.95	7.34	8.66	

In-patient Rheumatology Services

Brynle Williams: Will the Minister detail what discussions she has had with Conwy and Denbighshire NHS Trust regarding its plan to move in-patient rheumatology services from Abergele hospital to Glan Clwyd hospital? (WAQ33683)

Jane Hutt: I have had no discussions with the Conwy and Denbighshire NHS Trust about this matter. I am aware that the transfer of ward 9, Abergele hospital, to Glan Clwyd this autumn is part of the trust's wider development of clinical services to bring about a major overall improvement to patient services in the area. I understand that the development has been fully discussed with all appropriate consultant medical staff and that they are fully supportive.

Abergele hospital will remain an integral part of the trust's acute services for the foreseeable future. The vacation of ward 9 will provide the trust with the opportunity to examine the development of further services at Abergele. This might include further development of the trust's non-emergency orthopaedic service and some day case general surgery.

Patient Rights to be Transferred to English Hospitals

Jenny Randerson: What rights has a patient to ask or insist that she or he be transferred for treatment to an English hospital that has a higher success rate than in Wales? (WAQ33811)

Jane Hutt: If a patient has concerns or issues of any nature regarding which hospital they are to be treated in, they should discuss these with their GP at the time of first referral. It is unlikely, however, that this would result in a referral to an English hospital, except for some specialist operations or where the patient’s local health board has an agreement with the hospital—as is the case, for example, with Powys local health board and nearby English hospitals. Once on a waiting list, transfer to another hospital is likely to result in joining the end of its out-patient waiting list. Success rates need to be interpreted with caution. An excellent surgeon or department may appear to have a low success rate simply because more complex cases are referred to them.

Individual Items of Guidance Issued by the Minister since 1999

Jonathan Morgan: How many individual items of guidance has the Minister issued since 1999? (WAQ33812)

Jane Hutt: The main method of issuing guidance to health organisations in Wales is via a Welsh health circular. Since 1999, the Welsh Assembly Government has issued 693 of these. There is no clear definition of what constitutes ‘guidance’, but a proportion of these are specifically aimed at disseminating information, while others seek specific actions. Some circulars have a statutory basis, and a number reflect guidance issued across the UK.

The Assembly Health and Social Care Budget

Jonathan Morgan: What proportion of the Assembly health and social care budget is spent on

- staffing for the Assembly Health Department; and
- NHS trusts, and how does this compare each year since 1999? (WAQ33814)

Jane Hutt: The staffing costs for the Assembly’s Health Department forms part of the Assembly’s central administration budget and is not contained within the health and social care budget. With regard to staffing costs for trusts, the table below details the actual spend, and shows staffing costs as a proportion of the overall health budget (excluding social care):

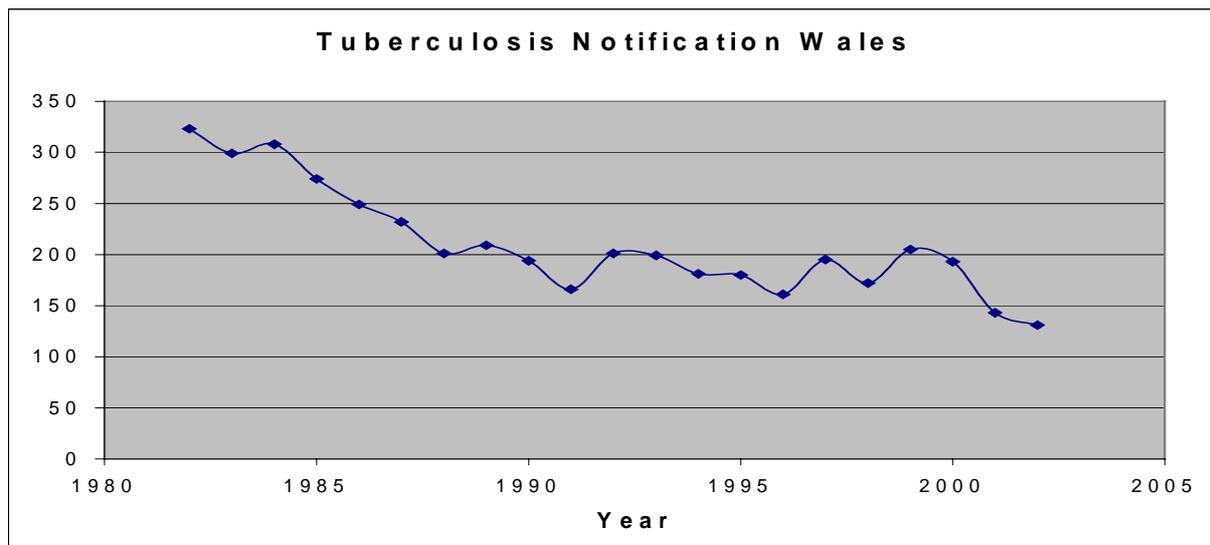
Year	Health budget (£000’s)	Trust staff costs (£000’s)	per cent
1999-2000	2,619,978	1,230,043	46.95
2000-01	2,879,216	1,333,123	46.30
2001-02	3,198,755	1,484,476	46.41
2002-03	3,580,235	1,630,090	45.53

Counteracting the Threat of TB in Humans

Glyn Davies: What plans does the Minister have to counteract the threat of tuberculosis in humans in Wales? (WAQ33819)

Jane Hutt: We are fortunate to have one of the regional TB laboratories in Cardiff that serves Wales and the south-west England. Tuberculosis is a significant disease and, as such, is subject to enhanced surveillance by the Health Protection Agency and by our own National Public Health Service in Wales. We will continue to keep a close eye on the disease in Wales, and I can assure you that we will not become complacent over this disease.

Tuberculosis is re-emerging in parts of the UK, principally in London. However, it is important to realise that, at present in Wales, the incidence of TB is half that for the UK—six cases per 100,000 population as opposed to 12 cases per 100,000 population. The incidence of TB has continued to decline in Wales, as illustrated in the graph below.



Employed Midwives

Brynle Williams: Will the Minister state the number of employed midwives in Wales? (WAQ33820)

Jane Hutt: As at 30 September 2002, there were 1,568 registered midwives—1,121 are employed on a whole time equivalent basis. This figure excludes midwives who are employed as managers, 14 of which are employed on a whole time equivalent basis by the NHS in Wales.

Action to Increase the Number of Employed Midwives

Brynle Williams: What action is the Minister taking to increase the number of employed midwives in Wales? (WAQ33821)

Jane Hutt: The recruitment and retention of midwives, in line with other healthcare professions, is considered in the recruitment and retention strategy for NHS Wales. The purpose of the strategy is to address the issue of recruitment and retention in NHS Wales. It does this by determining the framework that will be followed to ensure all actions are clearly identified and their contribution to overall objectives monitored in order to provide an effective and modern workforce in the NHS in Wales.

There has been a 5 per cent increase in the number of whole-time equivalent midwives working in the NHS in Wales between September 1997 and September 2002. Staffing targets were set in 2002 to increase the number of nurses working in the NHS in Wales by 6,000. This figure represents the target increase for nurses, midwives and health visitors. Training commissions for midwives have increased from 72 in 1998 to 100 in 2003, matching the need identified in the annual workforce plans submitted by trusts in Wales.

In addition, a return to practice campaign targeting nurses, midwives and health visitors was delivered by the Welsh Assembly Government in 2003. Since then, 21 return to practice courses have been held. A further return to practice campaign took place in January 2004, and the responses to this are currently being assessed. Further return to practice courses are planned.

Midwifery Posts

Brynle Williams: Will the Minister state the number of vacant midwifery posts and number of midwifery posts filled by agency or temporary staff in Wales? (WAQ33822)

Jane Hutt: As at 31 March 2003, there were 8.5 whole-time equivalent vacancies in midwifery that had been unfilled for three months or longer. Information on posts filled by agency or temporary staff is not collected centrally.

Encouraging People in Wales to Eat Healthy Foods

Val Lloyd: What action has the Minister taken to encourage people in Wales to eat healthy foods? (WAQ33864)

Jane Hutt: Nutrition has a major influence on people's health and, therefore, improving the diet of people in Wales is a major priority. In March last year, I launched 'Food and Well Being', the national nutrition strategy for Wales, which sets out an action plan to improve the diet of people in Wales. It has already led to a number of initiatives aimed at encouraging people to eat a healthy diet, such as:

- the food and fitness health promotion grant scheme, which provides financial support for community projects that encourage healthier eating and/or more active lifestyles;
- a joint BBC/Welsh Assembly Government social action campaign on tackling overweight and obesity through healthy lifestyles advice;
- a two-year pilot scheme to develop a minimum of 26 sustainable food co-operatives in Wales; and
- a range of resources to back up advice from health professionals on healthy eating for specific target groups.

We recently held three regional conferences at which we identified innovative ideas to enhance current programmes on food and fitness for children and young people. I am in the process of setting up a food and fitness for children task group, which will seek to integrate the implementation and monitoring of relevant strategies.

Health and Social Services Funding Allocated to Flintshire

Sandy Mewies: How much Assembly funding, specific to the Minister's portfolio has been allocated to Flintshire since May 2003? (WAQ33874)

Jane Hutt: The Flintshire Local Health Board was allocated £110.8 million revenue funding in 2003-04. A total of £132.9 million has been made available for 2004-05.

Amount of Health Budget Spent on Cancer Prevention

Jonathan Morgan: How much is spent in this financial year by the Assembly Government on schemes to prevent cancer, and what were the figures each year since 1999? (WAQ33892)

Jonathan Morgan: What percentage of the Assembly's health budget in this year, is spent by the Assembly Government on schemes to prevent cancer, and what were the figures each year since 1999? (WAQ33893)

Jonathan Morgan: How much is spent by each local health board on commissioning services to treat cancer? (WAQ33894)

Jonathan Morgan: How much does the Assembly Government spend each year on cancer research schemes? (WAQ33895)

Jane Hutt: Smoking is responsible for causing most cases of lung cancer and contributes substantially to upper respiratory tract cancers and other cancers, including bladder and stomach cancer. The Welsh Assembly Government has a comprehensive national smoking prevention and cessation programme and expenditure on this is:

- 1999-2000: £1.750 million
- 2000-01: £1.995 million

- 2001-02: £2.010 million
- 2002-03: £2.060 million
- 2003-04: £1.970 million

In addition, diets high in fruit and vegetables and low in refined foods, combined with physical activity at recommended levels, have the potential to reduce cancer incidence and mortality by between 30 and 40 per cent. These protective effects apply particularly to gastrointestinal and colorectal cancers. Following the development of the nutrition strategy for Wales, the Assembly Government has initiated the food and fitness grants scheme to promote healthy eating and physical activity. This scheme started in 2003-04 and is costing £0.118 million this year.

In 2002, the Assembly Government joined other UK health departments to support the SunSmart campaign and other actions to raise public awareness of the risks of skin cancer. Expenditure on sun awareness schemes has been:

- 2002-03: £0.015 million
- 2003-04: £0.011 million

Screening for cancer allows early detection and, potentially, the prevention of development to an advanced stage. The Assembly Government has allocated the following ring-fenced resources for breast cancer and cervical cancer screening respectively since 1999:

Year	Cervical screening	Breast screening
1999-2000	£7.974 million	£4.527 million
2000- 01	£8.452 million	£4.799 million
2001- 02	£8.959 million	£6.069 million
2002- 03	£9.497 million	£6.433million
2003- 04	£10.067 million	£7.362 million

Much other spending, for example, on sexual health issues and health and safety schemes, also contributes to some extent to cancer prevention, but total expenditure on the programmes and schemes to prevent cancer that I have mentioned and its size in comparison to the Assembly's total health expenditure are as follows:

	Spend on identified cancer prevention schemes	Percentage of total Assembly health expenditure
1999-2000	£14.251 million	0.544 per cent
2000-01	£15.246 million	0.530 per cent
2001-02	£17.038 million	0.533 per cent
2002-03	£18.005 million	0.503 per cent
2003-04	£19.528 million	0.490 per cent

The Welsh Assembly Government does not currently have information on the discretionary spend by local health boards on cancer services. This information gap is being addressed through the establishment of a programme budgeting project, which will attribute all health expenditure to healthcare conditions, including cancer services. A preliminary analysis of expenditure for the 2003-04 financial year is expected to be available by December 2004.

As an indication of annual spend on cancer research, it is estimated that in 2003-04, the Assembly Government allocated some £4 million on research and development in cancer via various funding schemes including the research and development support funding to NHS providers scheme, Wales cancer bank, Wales cancer trials network, excess treatment costs, as well as research grant schemes.

Carers Charities

Nick Bourne: Does the Minister plan to give any additional support to carers charities such as Crossroads? (WAQ33896)

Jane Hutt: I am increasing our 2004-05 grant funding for all-Wales carers voluntary organisations by 4 per cent to some £379,000. Crossroads Wales's 2004-05 grant allocation will be just over £174,000.

The 'Better Advice: Better Health' Project

Sandy Mewies: How much funding has been allocated to Flintshire to support the 'Better Advice: Better Health' project? (WAQ33906)

Jane Hutt: The Assembly has provided £700,000 to the National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux to run 'Better Advice: Better Health' projects in each of the local authorities in Wales. This money is allocated by NACAB to the individual projects. I understand that the Flintshire project will receive £31,000.

Funding for the 'Better Advice: Better Health' Project

Sandy Mewies: Would the Minister indicate how long the 'Better Advice: Better Health' project will continue to be funded by the Welsh Assembly Government? (WAQ33907)

Jane Hutt: The Assembly is providing £700,000 recurrent funding for this project. As with all funding supplied by the Assembly Government, the initiative will be monitored and reviewed at regular intervals. Any decision on future funding will be taken in the light of Assembly Government priorities.

The Availability of Fresh and Affordable Fruit and Vegetables

Val Lloyd: What action is the Minister taking to improve the availability of fresh and affordable fruit and vegetables to disadvantaged and isolated communities? (WAQ33935)

Jane Hutt: Earlier this month, I launched a two-year pilot scheme to develop food co-operatives in Wales. Support from the inequalities in health fund will lead to the development of at least 26 food co-operatives across Wales, with associated links to schools and communities. The focus of the pilot will be to supply, from locally produced sources as far as possible, quality affordable fruit and vegetables to disadvantaged communities through the development of sustainable local food distribution networks.

For further information, I refer you to my written Cabinet statement on food co-operatives and the nutrition strategy, which was issued on 11 March 2004.

Myalgic Encephalopathy and Chronic Fatigue Syndrome

Lisa Francis: When will a timetable be drawn up for the three regional workshops on myalgic encephalopathy and chronic fatigue syndrome to be organised for health professionals, local health boards, planners and commissioners. (WAQ33936)

Lisa Francis: What plans does the Welsh Assembly Government have to achieve a cost-effective health service provision for adult and young patients with the physical illness of myalgic encephalopathy? (WAQ33938)

Jane Hutt: The Welsh Assembly Government is developing proposals to involve all relevant stakeholders in progressing plans for ME in Wales. I recently met with the Welsh Association of ME and CFS Support to discuss issues relating to service developments in Wales for CFS/ME and I am keen to build upon this relationship to ensure that the needs of patients with this condition are addressed.

My officials are also maintaining contact with the Department of Health to monitor developments with the clinical network co-ordinating centres. Furthermore, the Welsh Assembly is looking to establish formal collaborative working arrangements with colleagues in the Department of Health and Scottish Executive to ensure that we build on their expertise and contribute to future proposals for CFS/ME.

We are also closely monitoring the findings of the Medical Research Council, which has been commissioned by the Department of Health to develop a broad strategy for advancing biomedical and health service research into the condition.

Preliminary baseline work is also underway to help identify current service provision and needs across Wales, and officials have been working with local health boards on this. We are also progressing plans to hold workshops across Wales to raise the profile of the condition with health professionals and commissioners of services. The timetable for these workshops has not been finalised, but I anticipate that they will be held later this year.

Hospital Beds Currently Blocked in NHS Wales

Jonathan Morgan: How many hospital beds are currently blocked in NHS Wales? (WAQ33954)

Jane Hutt: The system of counting delayed transfers of care in Wales records delays for all reasons both within the NHS and between the NHS and the community. The February 2004 census point recorded a total of 1,032 delayed transfers of care in Wales. If counted on the same basis as England, the total would be 202.

Number of Blocked Beds in March 1997

Jonathan Morgan: How many blocked beds were there in March 1997 and will the Minister give an annual average breakdown to the present day? (WAQ33955)

Jane Hutt: Comparable information prior to April 2002 is not available. The average delay per month across Wales for the period April 2002 to March 2003 was 1,037, and for the period April 2003 to February 2004 is 1,053.

The first two months following the introduction of the new database in 2002 recorded an untypically low number of delays—in April, there were 860 and May, 998—suggesting that higher levels in subsequent months may reflect more accurate reporting procedures.

Percentage of Blocked Beds in NHS Wales

Jonathan Morgan: What percentage of NHS hospital beds are blocked in Wales? (WAQ33956)

Jane Hutt: Delays recorded at the February 2004 census point account for 7.2 per cent of the average daily beds available within the NHS in Wales. This includes mental health, acute and community hospital beds and has been calculated from the average number of staffed beds available daily in 2002-03. Source statistical bulletin SB 92/2003.

Main Reasons for Bed Blocking

Jonathan Morgan: What are the main reasons for bed blocking in NHS Wales? (WAQ33957)

Jane Hutt: In Wales, delayed transfers of care are counted using a definition and reporting system that includes eight main categories and 45 reasons for delay. These reasons cover delays for health, social care and family or patient-related reasons.

The following is a breakdown of the figures at the February 2004 census point by the eight major categories:

Social care reasons	
Awaiting community care assessment	50
Awaiting community care arrangements	352
Healthcare reasons	
Awaiting healthcare assessments	99
Awaiting healthcare arrangements	189
Patient/carer/family-related reasons	
Legal/financial	21
Disagreements, for example, between relatives	41
Choice/other	275
Principal reason not agreed	5

Number of Care Homes in Wales

Jonathan Morgan: How many care homes are there in Wales today and will the Minister give an annual breakdown of this figure over the last six years? (WAQ33961)

Jane Hutt: Changes in the legal definition of care homes by the Care Standards Act 2000, service developments such as deregistrations brought about by supported housing developments and changes in the way small homes are counted make comparisons across this period in time unreliable. When a home is sold, it is also closed in law, but may not stop providing the same service under new ownership.

The CSIW is currently doing a major data quality assurance exercise. The current data that we hold is used below. These figures may change in light of the quality assurance exercise, but they provide an overall picture of provision. With these significant caveats in mind, the following figures are presented for your information. The total number of adult residential and nursing care homes reported by local and health authorities was:

At 31 March 1999	1,355
At 31 March 2000	1,351
At 31 March 2001	1,355

Notes:

1. Excludes homes with fewer than four beds;
2. nursing home figures for 1999 are not available due to problems of data quality. Figures for 2000 are used as an estimate
3. some dual registered homes may be counted under both residential and nursing categories.

The CSIW data shows the following registered adult care homes at:

31 March 2003	1,606
29 February 2004	1,402

Notes:

1. Includes homes with fewer than four places.

Care Home Places Available in Wales

Jonathan Morgan: How many care home places are available in Wales today and will the Minister give an annual breakdown of this figure over the last six years? (WAQ33962)

Jane Hutt: Changes in the legal definition of care homes by the Care Standards Act 2000, service developments such as deregistrations brought about by supported housing developments and changes in

the way small homes are counted make comparisons across this period in time unreliable. When a home is sold, it is also closed in law, but may not stop providing the same service under new ownership.

The CSIW is currently doing a major data quality assurance exercise. The current data that we hold is used below. These figures may change in light of the quality assurance exercise, but they provide an overall picture of provision. With these significant caveats in mind, the following figures are presented for your information. The total number of adult residential and nursing care homes reported by local and health authorities was:

At 31 March 1999	29,041
At 31 March 2000	29,215
At 31 March 2001	28,869

Notes:

1. Excludes places in homes with fewer than four beds;
2. nursing home figures for 1999 are not available due to problems of data quality. Figures for 2000 are used as an estimate;
3. some dual registered homes may be counted under both residential and nursing categories.

The CSIW data shows the following registered places in registered adult care homes at:

29 February 2004	27,787
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Notes:

1. Includes places in homes with fewer than four beds.

Full Consultation on Fluoridating Water Supplies

Laura Anne Jones: Will the National Assembly for Wales undertake a full consultation before it enters into an arrangement to fluoridate water supplies and if so, would the Minister provide details? (WAQ33966)

Jane Hutt: Yes. I can confirm that the Welsh Assembly Government would undertake a consultation before entering into an arrangement to fluoridate water supplies. The Water Act 2003, amends the Water Industry Act 1991 and requires the Assembly to make regulations governing the public consultation prior to making a request to a water undertaker. I anticipate that the earliest that such regulations could be made by the Assembly would be towards the end of 2004. I propose to consult on proposed draft regulations later this year. While the consultation regulations required by the Water Act 2003 need to be made, they will not necessarily lead to any new fluoridation schemes being introduced.

The Local Ambulance Service (New GP Contract)

Lisa Francis: Has the Gwynedd local health board made any assessment of additional duties which may be imposed on the local ambulance service as a result of providing cover during out-of-hours provision when the new GP contract comes into being, and if so, what will be the costs of this be, and what will the additional duties be? (WAQ33980)

Jane Hutt: It is not anticipated that increased ambulance journeys will occur. Gwynedd local health board has invited, and will continue to invite, the ambulance service to attend working groups supporting the implementation of the new GMS contract. The final out-of-hours plan demonstrates the involvement of the ambulance service. All local health boards will want to ensure that all clinical professionals are appropriately involved in new service models. Over time, this may lead to increasing roles for a range of professionals, including nurses and paramedics.

Ambulance Service (Gwynedd Local Health Board)

Lisa Francis: What research has been undertaken by the Gwynedd local health board into the impact of out-of-hours provision on the ambulance service in the area when the new GP contract comes into being? (WAQ33981)

Jane Hutt: There has been no research as such. Gwynedd local health board has invited, and will continue to invite, the ambulance service to attend working groups supporting the implementation of the new GMS contract. The final out-of-hours plan demonstrates the involvement of the ambulance service. At this stage, there is no evidence to suggest any negative effects on the ambulance service in terms of increased workload. The introduction of triage services may well help emergency service providers to ensure the appropriate categorisation of calls.

The New GP Contract

Nick Bourne: What steps is the Minister taking to ensure that people living in remote and rural areas are properly served under the new GP contract? (WAQ33992)

Jane Hutt: People in rural and remote areas should benefit in the same way as the rest of the Welsh population from the improved quality of service that the contract is expected to deliver. We are looking carefully at aspects of the new contract, which have a particular bearing on rural and remote areas. Out-of-hours services are, perhaps, the most obvious example and we are evaluating local plans for these services, with particular emphasis on ability to deliver in this type of area.

Needle Exchange Programmes in Wales

Nick Bourne: Will the Minister make a statement on needle exchange programmes in Wales? (WAQ33996) *Transferred for answer by the Minister for Social Justice and Regeneration.*

Edwina Hart: A model of care for needle exchange services is currently being developed as part of the substance misuse treatment framework project, with the aim of ensuring consistency of needle exchange programmes across Wales. A consultation on the needle exchange model that has been drafted will be launched very shortly.

Wind Turbines' Effect on Health

Nick Bourne: Has the Minister made any assessment of the effect on health of wind turbines, and if so will she publish that assessment? (WAQ34014)

Jane Hutt: No. However, a question was addressed in the House of Lords recently on investigations into the health of persons living in the vicinity of wind farms. The UK Government believes that existing planning guidelines on the siting of wind turbines are sufficient to protect human health. Fears concerning the health effects of wind turbines have focused upon low frequency noise. The methodologies applied during the planning application stage of a wind farm to satisfy authorities that noise emission levels will fall within accepted levels, do not include the measurement of infra-sound. We are not aware of any scientifically validated evidence that infra-sound emitted from wind turbines affects human health. The Department of Trade and Industry has completed a detailed review of the body of published research on low frequency noise and its effects. It concluded that effects of low frequency noise and vibrations from wind farms are at minimal levels in terms of their effect on human health. I understand that the Department of Health will consider whether any further work in this particular area is required.

Questions to the Minister for Social Justice and Regeneration

Communities First (Assembly Sponsored Public Bodies)

Leighton Andrews: What instructions does the Minister give in remit letters to ASPBs within her portfolio area regarding engaging with Communities First agendas? (WAQ33319)

The Minister for Social Justice and Regeneration (Edwina Hart): There are no executive ASPBs falling within my portfolio responsibilities.

Financial Support for the Boys' and Girls' Club of Wales

Alun Cairns: Will the Minister make a statement on the financial support given to the Boys' and Girls' Club of Wales and any plans to increase the budget? (WAQ33526)

Edwina Hart: The Welsh Assembly Government already funds the Boys' and Girls' Club of Wales for the work that it does in Welsh communities. It currently receives £35,000 in 2003-04, under the scheme of grants to national voluntary youth organisations, to support the delivery of good youth work across Wales. A further grant of £37,100 has been allocated for 2004-05. With regard to individual communities, Clydach Vale Boys' and Girls' Club and Penygraig Boys' and Girls' Club are receiving £48,525 and £15,000 respectively in 2003-04 under our community facilities and activities programme.

Wales's Energy Efficiency Aim

Peter Black: With reference to OAQ32477, will the Minister provide a timetable setting out when she expects to declare Wales's energy efficiency aim under the Sustainable Energy Act 2003? (WAQ33578)

Edwina Hart: The Assembly Government is in the process of setting out a timetable for developing and publishing the aim. To set a realistic timetable we need to consider a number of issues that will impact on formulation of an aim. These include having regard for parallel activities in England, given that responsibility for overall energy policy and many of the policies and programmes for reducing carbon emissions rest with the UK Government. This will enable us to consider what practical actions are available to us to meet an energy efficiency aim for Wales. We are also examining the implications for, and contribution of, our existing objectives, such as those set out in the Welsh Assembly Government's energy efficiency action plan, 'Energy Saving Wales', currently out to consultation. When these are concluded, I will announce a timetable.

Combating Vandalism

Nick Bourne: What measures is the Welsh Assembly Government supporting in relation to combating vandalism? (WAQ33583)

Edwina Hart: The Assembly encourages community safety partnerships throughout Wales to tackle vandalism and other forms of anti-social behaviour. The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 adds considerably to the range of measures available to the police and partnerships to tackle vandalism, graffiti, fly-tipping and other public nuisance. Significant Assembly and Home Office funding is provided in support.

Vandalism in Mid and West Wales

Nick Bourne: Has the Minister had any representations regarding vandalism in Mid and West Wales? (WAQ33584)

Edwina Hart: I have not received any representations about vandalism in Mid and West Wales. However, I understand that Dyfed-Powys Police recorded the lowest the number of criminal vandalism

cases in England and Wales in 2002-03: a total of 4,920 cases were recorded against the national average of 25,799, which represents 19 per cent of the England and Wales average. Dyfed Powys also had the highest level of detection rates of criminal damage cases: 44 per cent, against the average of 13 per cent for England and Wales.

Diogelwch Cymunedol

Alun Ffred Jones: A wnaiff y Gweinidog ddatganiad ar ddiogelwch cymunedol? (WAQ33655) [W]

Edwina Hart: Un o nodau allweddol 'Cymru: Gwlad Well' yw datblygu cymunedau cadarn a diogel. Mae Llywodraeth y Cynulliad yn cydweithio â phartneriaethau diogelwch cymunedol ac ag asiantaethau allweddol eraill er mwyn datblygu a chyflawni strategaethau lleol i leihau troseddu, ymddygiad gwrthgymdeithasol a cham-drin sylweddau.

Community Safety

Alun Ffred Jones: Will the Minister make a statement on community safety? (WAQ33655) [W]

Edwina Hart: One of the key aims of 'Wales: A Better Country' is to develop strong and safe communities. The Assembly Government is working with community safety partnerships and other key agencies to develop and deliver local strategies that reduce crime, anti social behaviour and substance misuse.

Community Regeneration Initiatives in Swansea East

Val Lloyd: Can the Minister provide details of funding for community regeneration initiatives in Swansea East? (WAQ33664)

Edwina Hart: Within my own portfolio, around £990,000 has been awarded to projects in Communities First areas, which have also benefited from approximately £300,000 for play and recreational activities for children and young people, and transport and safety initiatives. The local authorities non-match local regeneration fund has assisted Bonymaen and District Healthy Living Centre with a grant of £103,500. The community facilities and activities programme (including the former community/voluntary sector local regeneration fund) has provided £15,000 to 104 Community House, and £312,400 to Swansea Council for Voluntary Service's city-wide small grants scheme.

The Principle of Equality of Opportunity

Owen John Thomas: In promoting the principle of equality of opportunity, what discussions has the Minister had with local authorities? (WAQ33825)

Edwina Hart: I have regular meetings with the Welsh Local Government Association and discuss all issues relating to equality of opportunities.

Registering Houses in Multiple Occupation

Ann Jones: What discussions has the Minister had with the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister regarding the process of registering houses in multiple occupation in Wales once the Housing Bill achieves Royal Assent? (WAQ33826)

Edwina Hart: The Housing Bill introduces mandatory and additional licensing, not registration schemes. The Assembly Government is in close contact with the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister as the Bill is being considered in Parliament.

Anti-Social Behaviour

Irene James: How is the Welsh Assembly Government working with other relevant authorities to combat anti-social behaviour in communities in Wales? (WAQ33827)

Edwina Hart: The Welsh Assembly Government encourages strong partnership working across Wales to ensure a joined-up, multi-agency approach to combating anti-social behaviour. Community safety partnerships lead at a local level and several have established anti-social behaviour units, bringing together staff from the police, local authority, fire service and other partner agencies. Action to combat anti-social behaviour is being supported by substantial Assembly and Home Office funding, including £25,000 for each partnership annually to fund an anti-social behaviour co-ordinator, while the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 brings together a wide range of practical statutory tools.

The Influx of Illegal Drugs

Irene James: Would the Minister make a progress report on what the Welsh Assembly Government is doing to help combat the influx of illegal drugs into Welsh communities? (WAQ33828)

Edwina Hart: The Welsh Assembly Government is supporting Operation Tarian—the response of the Welsh police forces to the threat of an influx of class A drugs and related organised crime. The operation is already seriously disrupting the supply of crack cocaine and heroin, of which there have been significant hauls.

Tackling Poverty in Wales

Lynne Neagle: Will the Minister make a statement on the implications of the Chancellor's budget on the Assembly Government's programme to tackle poverty in Wales? (WAQ33829)

Edwina Hart: Over the next three years the budget ensures that extra resources will be transferred to the Welsh Assembly Government to be used to improve public services in Wales. The Assembly Government's spending review process will determine how this money can best serve people in Wales.

Substance Misuse

Brynle Williams: What action is the Minister taking to combat substance misuse in the north Wales area? (WAQ33830)

Edwina Hart: The Welsh Assembly Government is tackling substance misuse through the delivery of our national strategy. The six community safety partnerships in north Wales, like all community safety partnerships in Wales, have developed local plans to deliver the strategy and provide services appropriate to the needs of their own communities. To help achieve this, over £1.6 million has been allocated between them from the substance misuse action fund for 2004-05.

Recent Meetings with Representatives of Police Forces

William Graham: Will the Minister make a statement concerning recent meetings with representatives of police forces in Wales? (WAQ33831)

Edwina Hart: I have regular meetings with the Welsh chief constables and police authority chairs for wide-ranging discussions covering the whole community safety field. This dialogue underpins our shared aim of building safer communities across Wales.

Banning the Drinking of Alcohol in Public Places

William Graham: Will the Minister make a statement on the effectiveness of measures introduced to ban drinking alcohol in public places in Wales? (WAQ33832)

Edwina Hart: Designation orders to restrict anti-social drinking in public places are often just a component of a package of measures to tackle alcohol-related street crime and disorder. The full impact of the most recent orders in Wales has yet to be formally evaluated, but recordings of violent crime over a year in one designated area, in Rhyl, suggest that the order contributed to a significant decrease in the rate of alcohol-related assaults. Designation orders can also impact on disorder, under-age drinking and serve to reassure the public.

Anti-Social Behaviour

Rosemary Butler: How is the Welsh Assembly Government working with other relevant authorities to combat anti-social behaviour in communities in Wales? (WAQ33833)

Edwina Hart: The Welsh Assembly Government encourages strong partnership working across Wales to ensure a joined-up, multi-agency approach to combating anti-social behaviour. Community safety partnerships lead at a local level and several have established anti-social behaviour units, bringing together staff from the police, local authority, fire service and other partner agencies. Action to combat anti-social behaviour is being supported by substantial Assembly and Home Office funding, including £25,000 for each partnership annually to fund an anti-social behaviour co-ordinator, while the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 brings together a wide range of practical statutory tools.

Tackling Poverty in Wales

Nick Bourne: What is being done to address poverty in Wales? (WAQ33834)

Edwina Hart: My social justice report for 2004 sets out the range of policies and programmes within my portfolio that impact on poverty in Wales.

Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour in South Wales East

Laura Anne Jones: How is this Assembly working with local police forces in tackling anti-social behaviour in South Wales East? (WAQ33835)

Edwina Hart: The Welsh Assembly Government supports community safety partnerships throughout Wales in their implementation of local strategies to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour. The police are key partners in each of the community safety partnerships, including in south-east Wales.

The Rees Inquiry

Lynne Neagle: Will the Minister make a statement on how the Rees inquiry into higher education will assist the delivery of the Assembly Government's social justice agenda? (WAQ33836)

Edwina Hart: The terms of reference for the review by Professor Rees were announced by the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning on 11 February 2004. Professor Rees has been asked specifically to consider how the newly transferred student support powers might be used to support access to higher education for the least advantaged learners, and to examine the effect of different tuition fee regimes in Wales on students facing hardship.

Alcohol Abuse

John Griffiths: Will the Minister make a statement on progress in tackling alcohol abuse in Wales? (WAQ33838)

Edwina Hart: The Welsh Assembly Government considers tackling alcohol misuse to be just as important as tackling drug misuse, and that is why we included alcohol in our national strategy. The 22 community safety partnerships in Wales have developed local action plans to deliver the strategy and they have taken into account provision of services for alcohol misuse.

I am also in discussion with the Welsh police authorities and the WLGA about the new licensing laws and measures that can be taken to encourage sensible drinking and combat disorderly behaviour.

Residential Beds for Substance Misuse Treatment in North Wales

Brynle Williams: Will the Minister advise how many residential beds there are in north Wales for substance misuse treatment? (WAQ33839)

Edwina Hart: There are 33 beds available in north Wales for substance misuse treatment. They are located as follows:

Hafan Wen, Wrexham	24 beds
Ysbyty Gwynedd	2 beds
Tyn Rodyn, Bangor	7 beds

Longest Length of Time to Reply to a Letter

Peter Black: What is the longest length of time that the Minister has taken to reply to a letter? (WAQ33855)

Edwina Hart: Fifty-five working days. While this is significantly longer than the average time taken to reply to letters (10 working days), some correspondence does require additional time for a comprehensive response to be formulated. Generally, such additional time is required when UK Government departments or outside organisations have to be consulted.

Average Length of Time Taken to Reply to Letters from Assembly Members

Peter Black: What is the average length of time that the Minister has taken to reply to letters from Assembly Members? (WAQ33856)

Edwina Hart: Nine working days.

Deadlines for Replying to Correspondence

Peter Black: What deadlines has the Minister set for replying to correspondence and how many times have these been breached? (WAQ33857)

Edwina Hart: While no deadlines have been set for replies to correspondence, the normal practice is for officials to process correspondence within 17 working days. Ninety-two per cent of my ministerial correspondence has been replied to within 17 working days.

Acceptable Behaviour Contracts

Ann Jones: How many acceptable behaviour contracts are in force in each local authority area in Wales? (WAQ33858)

Edwina Hart: As at December 2003 there were 108 acceptable behaviour contracts in force in Wales. The table below provides a breakdown by local authority area.

Local Authority	Number of ABCs in force
Blaenau Gwent	6
Bridgend	0
Caerphilly	24
Cardiff	12
Carmarthenshire	0
Ceredigion	0
Conwy	6
Denbighshire	0
Flintshire	10
Gwynedd	0
Merthyr Tydfil	9
Monmouthshire	1
Newport	0
Neath Port Talbot	5
Pembrokeshire	5
Powys	0
Rhondda Cynon Taf	4
Swansea	21
Torfaen	2
Vale of Glamorgan	0
Wrexham	3
Ynys Môn	0
Total	108

Empty Houses in each Local Authority

Ann Jones: How many empty houses are there in each local authority area in Wales? (WAQ33859)

Edwina Hart: Information on the number of empty dwellings in each local authority area in Wales is provided in the following table:

Empty dwellings by local authority area in Wales as at 1 April 2001.

	All household spaces with no residents: Vacant	All household spaces with no residents: second residence / holiday accommodation	Total household spaces with no usual residents
Isle of Anglesey	1,524	1,163	2,687
Gwynedd	3,112	4,437	7,549
Conwy	2,291	1,143	3,434
Denbighshire	1,431	347	1,778
Flintshire	1,751	130	1,881
Wrexham	1,700	119	1,819
Powys	2,278	1,256	3,534
Ceredigion	1,150	964	2,114
Pembrokeshire	2,788	3,322	6,110
Carmarthenshire	3,574	510	4,084

Swansea	4,452	698	5,150
Neath Port Talbot	2,889	108	2,997
Bridgend	1,816	142	1,958
Vale of Glamorgan	2,077	179	2,256
Cardiff	3,629	267	3,896
Rhondda Cynon Taf	4,599	160	4,759
Merthyr Tydfil	1,391	48	1,439
Caerphilly	2,600	79	2,679
Blaenau Gwent	1,765	37	1,802
Torfaen	1,117	37	1,154
Monmouthshire	1,322	280	1,602
Newport	1,996	90	2,086
Wales	51,252	15,516	66,768

Source: 2001 Census.

Homeless Persons in Each Local Authority Area

Ann Jones: How many homeless persons are there in each local authority area in Wales? (WAQ33860)

Edwina Hart: Information about local authorities' decisions about homelessness in Wales is only available at a household level. The number of households accepted as homeless in each local authority area in Wales during 2002-03 is provided in the following table.

Number of households accepted as homeless in each local authority area in Wales: 2002-03

	Number of households eligible, unintentionally homeless and in priority need*
Isle of Anglesey	128
Gwynedd	248
Conwy	213
Denbighshire	120
Flintshire	271
Wrexham	211
Powys	307
Ceredigion	153
Pembrokeshire	341
Carmarthenshire	400
Swansea	768
Neath Port Talbot	182
Bridgend	569
Vale of Glamorgan	231
Cardiff	971
Rhondda Cynon Taf	571
Merthyr Tydfil	118
Caerphilly	456
Blaenau Gwent	71
Torfaen	397
Monmouthshire	97
Newport	142
Wales	6,965

Source: Welsh Assembly Government: WHO12 statistical returns.

*‘Eligible, unintentionally homeless and in priority need’ as defined under Part VII of the Housing Act 1996.

Social Housing Units

Ann Jones: How many social housing units which fail the decent homes standard exist in each local authority area in Wales? (WAQ33861)

Edwina Hart: The decent homes standard only applies in England.

Houses in Multiple Occupation Liable for Business Rates

Lisa Francis: Does the Welsh Assembly Government have any intention of making owners of houses in multiple occupation liable for business rates? (WAQ33863)

Edwina Hart: The Local Government and Finance Act 1992 defines a dwelling for the purposes of charging council tax as a property that is used wholly for the purposes of a private dwelling. Domestic properties (which include houses in multiple occupation) are therefore subject to the council tax rather than business rates.

Changing these arrangements would require primary legislation.

Deprivation in Swansea East

Val Lloyd: What action is the Minister taking to combat deprivation in Swansea East? (WAQ33865)

Edwina Hart: Policies and programmes throughout my portfolio are geared towards the reduction of deprivation. Swansea East has benefited directly from the focusing of resources on the most deprived areas through the Communities First programme.

Underage Drinking

Sandy Mewies: What action is the Minister undertaking to tackle underage drinking? (WAQ33871)

Edwina Hart: One of the key objectives in the Welsh Assembly Government’s substance misuse strategy is ‘to reduce the proportion of young people under 18 reporting drunkenness’. All of the community safety partnerships in Wales now have action plans in place to deliver the national strategy locally.

Assembly Funding Allocated to Flintshire

Sandy Mewies: How much Assembly funding specific to the Minister’s portfolio has been allocated to Flintshire since May 2003? (WAQ33873)

Edwina Hart: The information is as follows:

Voluntary Sector

The local voluntary services scheme provides funding for the 19 county voluntary councils in Wales. The overall budget for 2003-04 is £2.629 million, of which Flintshire Local Voluntary Council received £111,670.

Regeneration

Flintshire Groundwork had core funding of £67,000 in 2003-04.

Local authorities non-match local regeneration fund—no new allocations were made while the scheme was under review, but payments this year to Flintshire total £636,237.

Community facilities and activities programme (including community/voluntary sector local regeneration fund)—new commitments were made in August 2003 for £370,700 to four separate voluntary projects. Payments this year for existing commitments have included: Flintshire Local Voluntary Council, £128,748 for its small grants and support for sector; and Refurbs Flintshire, £77,297 for a furniture recycling scheme.

The Coalfields Regeneration Trust receives funding from the Assembly to grant aid projects in former mining areas. It has made grants totalling £95,113 in Flintshire: to Youth Action, Broli Cymraeg Trust Ltd, Flintshire County Council, and Trelawnyd and Gwaenysgor millennium trail.

Communities First

There are five Communities First areas in Flintshire—Flint Castle Ward, rated 75 in the Welsh index of multiple deprivation; Higher Aston, Shotton, Holywell Neighbourhoods and Bryn Gwalia Estate, which are pockets of deprivation; and Rural North Flintshire, which is an imaginative proposal.

A total of £720,381.63 has been awarded for various preparatory projects that will benefit the five areas up until March 2004. Of this, £582,415.64 has been paid to date.

The areas also benefited from £400,000 in December 2002 to provide play and recreational activities for children and young people, and also transport and safety initiatives. In addition, the Communities First trust fund has awarded funding totalling £67,000.

Housing

Supplementary credit approval of £1.342 million was allocated for strategic housing schemes (the supplementary credit approval was issued in April 2003). A sum of £71,125 (50 per cent of the cost of its local house condition survey) was processed for payment to Flintshire on 12 March.

Funding of £7.541 million was provided for Supporting People.

Home efficiency energy scheme—£810,000.

Community Fire Safety—£70,000 allocated for hard-wired smoke alarm installation.

Social housing grant is £2.22 million, plus homebuy top-up of £42,000.

Section 180 funding allocated to Flintshire via a voluntary organisation:

- YMCA private rented accommodation and bond—£43,889
- YMCA Flintshire bond scheme—£18,264.

Community Safety

Flintshire community safety partnership has been allocated £46,341 in 2003-04, £127,721 in 2004-05 and £194,932 in 2005-06 (Total £368,994) from the Assembly's safer communities fund.

The community safety partnership has also been allocated an additional £120,000 in 2004-05, 2005-06 and 2006-07 (total £360,000) from the Assembly's substance misuse action plan fund. This brings their total substance misuse allocation for each year to £287,030 (£166,848 had been allocated before May 2003).

The Assembly has allocated the north Wales domestic abuse project £82,250 in 2003-04, £160,500 in 2004-05, £160,500 in 2005-06. The project funds a manager and six domestic violence co-ordinators across north Wales, one of whom covers the Flintshire area. We are unable to give an actual cost allocated for the co-ordinator in Flintshire.

Post Office Development Fund (Flintshire)

Carl Sargeant: In Flintshire, what post offices have received support from the development fund? (WAQ33909)

Edwina Hart: No post offices in Flintshire have received assistance under rounds 1 or 2 of the post office development fund. I have yet to make an announcement on awards under rounds 3 and 4.

The National Housing Strategy Target

Ann Jones: Will the Minister make a statement on the progress made towards achieving the national housing strategy target to lift 38,000 households out of fuel poverty in Wales? (WAQ33986)

Edwina Hart: As set out in the Assembly Government's national housing strategy, 'Better Homes for People in Wales' and 'Fuel Poverty Commitment for Wales', the home energy efficiency scheme is our main vehicle for lifting Welsh households out of fuel poverty. The scheme is on course to meet our target of assisting 38,000 vulnerable households in Wales by 31 March 2004.

The Work of Credit Unions

Nick Bourne: What is the Minister doing to support the work of credit unions? (WAQ33989)

Edwina Hart: Our commitment to the development of credit unions in Wales has been underlined by nearly £1.5 million of Assembly funding for the Welsh credit union strategy over the past three years. This has enabled the Wales Co-operative Centre to access European structural funds exceeding £4 million in total. The project has delivered almost a three-fold increase in credit union membership, and a 150 per cent increase in deposits.

We will continue to support credit unions through a grant and bursary fund, which, with Welsh Assembly and European funds, will make available a further £1.5million over three years to credit unions in the most deprived areas of Wales.

The Impact of Rising House Prices

Nick Bourne: Are any studies being planned to assess the impact of rising house prices on first-time buyers in rural areas? (WAQ33990)

Edwina Hart: I have commissioned Cardiff University to carry out a study of rural housing markets, which will report in the summer. This study is investigating the affordability of home ownership for first-time buyers. My officials are also carrying out in-house research on affordability and housing demand.

Solar Panelling

Brynle Williams: Will the Minister state what grants are available to assist residents in Wales installing solar panelling in their homes for solar energy? (WAQ34043)

Edwina Hart: Responsibility for promotion of renewable energy in Wales rests with the Department of Trade and Industry.

The Welsh Assembly Government has awarded funding to registered social landlords to install solar water heating in new build social housing, through the social housing innovation programme.

Questions to the House Committee

Land Adjacent to the Site of the New Assembly Building

Nick Bourne: Would a representative of the House Committee make a statement on plans to acquire additional land adjacent to the site of the new Assembly building? (WAQ33142)

The Deputy Presiding Officer (John Marek): I have nothing further to add to what I said in the Chamber on 11 February.