

## Written Questions answered between 22 and 29 January 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

### Welsh Representation in the New Year's Honours List

**Mark Isherwood:** Will the First Minister make a statement on Welsh representation in the new year's honours list? (WAQ31215)

**The First Minister (Rhodri Morgan):** Wales was well represented in the new year 2004 honours list.

### British Sign Language

**Ann Jones:** Will the First Minister clarify the Cabinet portfolio with responsibility for British sign language? (WAQ31310)

**The First Minister:** The Minister for Social Justice and Regeneration has responsibility for equality issues, but all Ministers have a general responsibility to ensure that their portfolios have due regard to equality matters, including the use of British sign language.

### Responsibilities under the Data Protection Act 1998

**Leighton Andrews:** Who maintains the residual responsibilities under the Data Protection Act 1998 for the former non-departmental public body Tai Cymru, and for the Welsh Office? (WAQ31472)

**The First Minister:** The National Assembly stores records relating to the former non-departmental public body Tai Cymru and the Welsh Office on behalf of the Secretary of State for Wales. Dealing with data protection matters directly arising from these records is the responsibility of the Secretary of State for Wales. Where necessary, the Assembly has access to that information for the purposes of the exercise of its functions. In doing so, the Assembly must ensure that it also complies with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998.

### An Additional Assembly Building

**Nick Bourne:** What discussions has the First Minister had with any Member of the House Committee regarding the proposal to build an additional Assembly building alongside the new debating chamber currently under construction? (WAQ31473)

**The First Minister:** None and I know of no such proposal.

### An Additional Assembly Building

**Nick Bourne:** What discussions has the First Minister had with the Business Minister regarding the possible construction of a new Assembly building alongside the new Assembly chamber currently under construction? (WAQ31490)

**Nick Bourne:** What discussions has the First Minister had with the Business Minister regarding the possible acquisition of land alongside the site of the new Assembly building? (WAQ31491)

**The First Minister:** None prior to 2004. Following press speculation on the House Committee's decision on this matter, which arose in the week beginning Monday 5 January, I had a briefing on the House Committee's discussions from the Business Minister.

## Questions to the Minister for Culture, Welsh Language and Sport

### Cymraeg yn y Gweithle

**Owen John Thomas:** Pa gamau y mae'r Gweinidog wedi'u cymryd i roi gwybodaeth i gyflogwyr a darpar weithwyr am swyddi sy'n gofyn am sgiliau Cymraeg, gan ddangos gwerth y Gymraeg yn y farchnad swyddi? (WAQ30869) [W]

*Ateb terfynol yn dilyn yr ateb dros dro a roddwyd ar 29 Rhagfyr 2003.*

**Y Gweinidog dros Ddiwylliant, y Gymraeg a Chwaraeon (Alun Pugh):** Fel rhan o'r broses o lunio cynlluniau iaith Gymraeg, o dan Ddeddf yr Iaith Gymraeg 1993, mae Bwrdd yr Iaith Gymraeg yn cydweithio â chyrff unigol er mwyn sicrhau bod ganddynt fesurau i sicrhau mynediad digonol at siaradwyr Cymraeg sy'n meddu ar y sgiliau priodol. Mae angen hefyd i'r cynlluniau gynnwys disgrifiad o'r camau y dylid eu dilyn i hysbysu'r ffaith bod croeso i siaradwyr Cymraeg ymuno â'r gweithlu. Mae ymgyrch 'Iaith Gwaith' y bwrdd, sy'n cael ei adolygu ar hyn o bryd, yn anelu at gynyddu'r defnydd o'r Gymraeg yn y gweithle. Ym mis Mawrth, bydd y bwrdd hefyd yn cynnal wythnos Cymraeg yn gyntaf, sef cyfres o ddigwyddiadau i annog pobl i siarad Cymraeg yn y gweithle am y tro cyntaf. Mae Llywodraeth y Cynulliad hefyd yn gweithio mewn partneriaeth â Menter a Busnes i gynorthwyo siaradwyr Cymraeg i wireddu eu potensial ym myd busnes.

### Welsh in the Workplace

**Owen John Thomas:** What steps has the Minister taken to provide information to employers and potential employees regarding posts that require Welsh-language skills, illustrating the value of the Welsh language in the jobs market? (WAQ30869) [W]

*Substantive answer following holding reply issued on 29 December 2003.*

**The Minister for Culture, Welsh Language and Sport (Alun Pugh):** As part of drawing up Welsh language schemes, under the Welsh Language Act 1993, the Welsh Language Board works with individual organisations to ensure that workplaces have measures in place to seek access to sufficient and appropriately skilled Welsh speakers. The 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 board's 'Iaith Gwaith' campaign, which is currently subject to review, aims to increase the use of Welsh in the workplace and, in March, the board will be holding *wythnos Cymraeg yn gyntaf*, which will include a series of events to encourage people to speak Welsh in the workplace for the first time. The Welsh Assembly Government is also working in partnership with Menter a Busnes to help Welsh speakers to fulfil their potential in business.

### Defnyddio'r Gymraeg

**Owen John Thomas:** Ers cychwyn 'Iaith Pawb', pa gamau y mae'r Gweinidog wedi'u cymryd i gynyddu'r ystod o weithgareddau dysgu, cymdeithasol a chwaraeon/hamdden drwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg? (WAQ30878) [W]

*Ateb terfynol yn dilyn yr ateb dros dro a roddwyd ar 29 Rhagfyr 2003.*

**Alun Pugh:** Mae Llywodraeth y Cynulliad yn gweithio i gynyddu'r cyfleoedd i ddefnyddio'r Gymraeg ar nifer o lefelau. Er enghraifft, sianelir arian ychwanegol tuag at athrawon bro a Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin, ac mae'r ddarpariaeth Cymraeg i oedolion yn cael ei hadolygu ar hyn o bryd er mwyn cadw safonau.

Mae Bwrdd yr Iaith Gymraeg hefyd yn cydweithio'n agos â'i brif bartneriaid, megis y mentrau iaith, cynlluniau gweithredu iaith, Urdd Gobaith Cymru a'r clybiau ffermwyr ifanc, er mwyn cynyddu'r ystod o weithgareddau cymdeithasol a chwaraeon/hamdden sydd ar gael drwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg. Mae'r bwrdd

wrthi'n datblygu prosiectau penodol ar hyn o bryd ar gyfer pobl ifanc, a fydd yn canolbwyntio ar y clybiau ffermwyr ifanc, chwaraeon drwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg a phop a roc Cymraeg.

### The Use of Welsh

**Owen John Thomas:** Since the introduction of 'Iaith Pawb', what steps has the Minister taken to increase the range of learning, social and sport/leisure activities available through the medium of Welsh? (WAQ30878) [W]

*Substantive answer following holding reply issued on 29 December 2003.*

**Alun Pugh:** The Welsh Assembly Government is working to expand the opportunities to use the Welsh language at a number of levels. For example, additional funding is being channelled to *athrawon bro* and Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin, and the Welsh for adults provision is being reviewed to improve standards.

The Welsh Language Board is also working closely with its key partners, such as *mentrau iaith*, language action plans, Urdd Gobaith Cymru and young farmers' clubs to increase the range of social and sport/leisure activities available through the medium of Welsh. The board is currently developing specific projects for young people, which will focus on the young farmers' clubs, sports through the medium of Welsh and Welsh-language rock and pop.

### Marchnata a Hyrwyddo'r Gymraeg

**Owen John Thomas:** Ers cyflwyno 'Iaith Pawb', pa gamau y mae'r Gweinidog wedi'u cymryd i godi proffil a defnydd o'r Gymraeg mewn sefyllfaoedd gwaith, busnes, cymdeithasol a hamdden drwy farchnata a hyrwyddo'r Gymraeg? (WAQ30879) [W]

*Ateb terfynol yn dilyn yr ateb dros dro a roddwyd ar 29 Rhagfyr 2003.*

**Alun Pugh:** Mae Bwrdd yr Iaith Gymraeg wrthi ar hyn o bryd yn paratoui strategaeth farchnata gyda'r nod o gynyddu'r defnydd o'r Gymraeg. Bydd y strategaeth yn ganolog i waith y bwrdd, a bydd yn canolbwyntio ar farchnata'r iaith mewn modd holistig—ymhlith pobl ifanc, yn y sector fusnes, ar lefel gymunedol, a'i throsglwyddiad o fewn teuluoedd. Caiff drafft o'r strategaeth ei chyflwyno i gyfarfod cyhoeddus y bwrdd fis Mawrth, gyda'r bwriad o gael drafft terfynol yn barod erbyn mis Mai.

### Marketing and Promoting Welsh

**Owen John Thomas:** Since the introduction of 'Iaith Pawb', what steps has the Minister taken to raise the profile and use of the Welsh language in work, business, social and leisure settings by marketing and promoting the Welsh language? (WAQ30879) [W]

*Substantive answer following holding reply issued on 29 December 2003.*

**Alun Pugh:** The Welsh Language Board is currently developing a marketing strategy with the aim of increasing the use of the Welsh language. The strategy will be fundamental to the board's work and will focus on marketing the language holistically—among young people, in the business sector, at a community level, and its transmission within families. A draft of the strategy will be presented to the board's public meeting in March, with a view of a final draft being in place by May.

### Strategaeth Technoleg Gwybodaeth ar gyfer y Gymraeg

**Owen John Thomas:** Ers cyflwyno 'Iaith Pawb', pa gamau y mae'r Gweinidog wedi'u cymryd i ddatblygu strategaeth technoleg gwybodaeth ar gyfer defnyddio'r Gymraeg ar y rhyngwrdd ac ehangu cymhorthion cyfieithu peirianyddol er mwyn hwyluso defnyddio'r Gymraeg mewn ystod o weithgareddau a sefydliadau? (WAQ30880) [W]

*Ateb terfynol yn dilyn yr ateb dros dro a roddwyd ar 29 Rhagfyr 2003.*

**Alun Pugh:** Mae Bwrdd yr Iaith Gymraeg wedi cynnal ymgynghoriad cyhoeddus am dri mis ar strategaeth technoleg gwybodaeth ar y cyd â Chymru Ar-lein. Bydd canlyniadau'r ymgynghoriad hwn yw llywio'r gwaith o lunio strategaeth TG ar gyfer y Gymraeg, gyda'r strategaeth honno yn destun ymgynghori cyhoeddus yn 2004. Yn y cyfamser, mae'r bwrdd yn bwriadu llunio adroddiad cynhwysfawr ar fanteision posibl cyfieithu peirianyddol i'r Gymraeg, ac mae hefyd wedi cyhoeddi canlyniadau ail arolwg annibynnol o wefannau cyrff a chanddynt gynlluniau iaith statudol. Mae'r adroddiad hwnnw yn cynnwys manylion am yr arferion gorau ym maes gwefannau dwyieithog.

### **An Information Technology Strategy for the Welsh Language**

**Owen John Thomas:** Since the introduction of 'Iaith Pawb', what steps has the Minister taken to develop an information technology strategy for using the Welsh language on the internet and to enhance the availability of machine translation support systems as a means of facilitating the use of the Welsh language across a range of activities and organisations? (WAQ30880) [W]

*Substantive answer following holding reply issued on 29 December 2003.*

**Alun Pugh:** The Welsh Language Board has held a three-month public consultation in conjunction with Cymru Ar-lein. The results of this consultation will inform the work of preparing an IT strategy for the Welsh language, and the draft strategy itself will be issued for public consultation in 2004. In the interim, the board plans to compile a comprehensive report on the benefits that machine translation could bring to the Welsh language, and has also published the results of a second independent snapshot survey of the websites of bodies with statutory language schemes. This report contains detailed good practice for bilingual websites.

### **Strategaeth Cyfieithu Genedlaethol**

**Owen John Thomas:** Ers cychwyn 'Iaith Pawb', pa gamau y mae'r Gweinidog wedi'u cymryd i ddatblygu strategaeth gyfieithu genedlaethol i sicrhau cysondeb a datblygu cymhwyster safonol ar gyfer cyfieithwyr? (WAQ30881) [W]

*Ateb terfynol yn dilyn yr ateb dros dro a roddwyd ar 29 Rhagfyr 2003.*

**Alun Pugh:** Mae Bwrdd yr Iaith Gymraeg yn gweithio ar ddraft o'r strategaeth ar hyn o bryd, gyda'r bwriad o ymgynghori arni yn gynnar yn 2004.

### **A National Translation Strategy**

**Owen John Thomas:** Since the introduction of 'Iaith Pawb', what steps has the Minister taken to develop a national strategy for translation, to ensure consistency and to develop a standard qualification for translators? (WAQ30881) [W]

*Substantive answer following holding reply issued on 29 December 2003.*

**Alun Pugh:** The Welsh Language Board is currently working on a draft strategy that will go out to consultation early in 2004.

### **Gwrych Castle, Abergele**

**Mark Isherwood:** Will the Minister make a statement on Gwrych castle in Abergele? (WAQ31097)

**Alun Pugh:** Gwrych castle is an outstanding historic building in private ownership. The Welsh Assembly Government, through Cadw, has funded emergency works and a feasibility study, and has indicated that, subject to a financial appraisal, further grant aid would be made available for an appropriate scheme of historic repair.

### **Spending Priorities**

**Nick Bourne:** Will the Minister outline his department's spending priorities for the coming year? (WAQ31098)

**Alun Pugh:** Our spending priorities for the coming financial year are set out in 'Wales: A Better Country' and reflected in the recent final budget.

### **'Creative Future: Cymru Greadigol'**

**Jenny Randerson:** What analysis or assessment is currently being undertaken of progress in achieving targets set in 'Creative Future: Cymru Greadigol'? (WAQ31217)

**Alun Pugh:** Progress against the eight priority action plans is monitored by the cultural consortium Cymru'n Creu, which receives a report on all outstanding action points at each of its meetings. A sub-group of Cymru'n Creu is also working on the framework for a detailed evaluation of 'Creative Future: Cymru Greadigol', its aims and objectives and its targets.

### **Responsibility for the Future of Welsh Language**

**Glyn Davies:** What steps have been taken to ensure that responsibility for the future of Welsh language is shared by all Assembly Ministers? (WAQ31237)

**Alun Pugh:** 'Iaith Pawb' clearly states that responsibility for the future of the Welsh language is shared by all Assembly Ministers and their supporting officials. The Cabinet has agreed and wholly supports this policy.

### **The Approval of Welsh Language Schemes**

**Glyn Davies:** How many new Welsh language schemes were approved in each of the last four years by the Welsh Language Board and how many will be approved in each of the next two years? (WAQ31240)

**Alun Pugh:** During the last four years, 106 new Welsh language schemes were approved by the Welsh Language Board: 23 in 1999-2000, 23 in 2000-01, 32 in 2001-02 and 28 in 2002-03. I cannot predict how many will be approved in the next two years, as that is a matter for the board.

### **Establishing a Fforwm Iaith**

**Glyn Davies:** What steps have been taken or are planned to establish a fforwm iaith and what consultations have taken place on the functions and structure of such a forum? (WAQ31242)

**Alun Pugh:** The establishment of a fforwm iaith was the subject of a recent Cabinet discussion, and the Assembly Government will shortly be consulting on this issue.

### **Subsidising Access to Public Facilities**

**Nick Bourne:** Will the Minister advise what effect the recent European Court of Justice ruling that it can be unlawful to use differential pricing to subsidise the access of local residents to public facilities has on the Welsh Assembly Government's policy of free entry to swimming pools? (WAQ31264)

**Alun Pugh:** The national free swimming initiative has been widely welcomed, and the summer 2003 pilot for young people was a huge success. The pilot is currently being evaluated, and any implications resulting from the ECJ ruling will obviously be considered. Assembly lawyers are currently analysing the court's decision in detail.

### **The Appointment of Members of the Broadcasting Council for Wales**

**Leighton Andrews:** Can the Minister confirm whether BBC Wales has invited him to nominate a representative to participate in the appointments procedure for members of the Broadcasting Council for Wales? (WAQ31474)

**Alun Pugh:** I have not received any such representations.

### **Consultation with the Assembly**

**Leighton Andrews:** How, in what form, and on what broadcasting issues and appointments has the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport consulted the Minister and his predecessors since the National Assembly for Wales was created? (WAQ31475)

**Alun Pugh:** The Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport has consulted the Welsh Assembly Government in writing regarding the communications White Paper, the draft Communications Bill and the forthcoming review of S4C.

Regarding appointments, the Secretary of State has consulted the Welsh Assembly Government on appointments to the S4C Authority, the BBC National Governor for Wales, and the national members for the Independent Television Commission, the Radio Authority and the Broadcasting Standards Commission.

### **Concordat with the Department for Culture, Media and Sport**

**Leighton Andrews:** When was the concordat with the Department for Culture, Media and Sport last reviewed? (WAQ31476)

**Alun Pugh:** The concordat with the Department for Culture, Media and Sport was last reviewed in June 2000.

### **Middleton—the National Botanic Garden of Wales**

**Nick Bourne:** When did the Minister last personally speak to the general manager of Middleton—the National Botanic Garden of Wales about the garden, and can he give details of this conversation? (WAQ31477)

**Nick Bourne:** When did the Minister last speak or meet personally with the trustees of the national botanic garden, and will he give details of his discussions? (WAQ31479)

**Alun Pugh:** I met the general manager on 2 December 2003 when he, along with the chairman of the board of trustees, presented their recovery strategy. Officials continue to work closely with partners and potential partners. I held my last meeting with officials on 21 January 2004.

### **Contact with the Charity Commission (Middleton)**

**Nick Bourne:** What contact has the Minister had personally with the charity commissioners regarding the national botanic garden? (WAQ31478)

**Alun Pugh:** I have not had any personal contact with the Charity Commission regarding the national botanic garden of Wales.

#### **The Draft Code of Television Access Services**

**Lorraine Barrett:** What discussions has the Minister had about the Office of Communications' consultation on the draft code of television access services? (WAQ31504)

**Alun Pugh:** I have not taken part in discussions regarding the consultation on Ofcom's draft code of television access services.

#### **The Draft Code of Television Access Services**

**Lorraine Barrett:** What discussions has the Minister had with representatives of the Wales Council for the Deaf about Ofcom's consultation on the draft code of television access services? (WAQ31505)

**Alun Pugh:** I have not had discussions with, or any approaches from, the Wales Council for the Deaf regarding Ofcom's consultation on the draft code of television access services.

#### **The Draft Code of Television Access Services**

**Lorraine Barrett:** What action is the Minister taking to ensure that Ofcom's consultation on the draft code of television access services conforms with disability discrimination legislation? (WAQ31506)

**Alun Pugh:** Compliance with disability discrimination legislation is a matter for each statutory body, in this particular case, Ofcom. The Assembly has no powers to enforce such legislation.

#### **Adroddiad PricewaterhouseCoopers ar Middleton**

**Eleanor Burnham:** Beth oedd prif argymhellion adroddiad PricewaterhouseCoopers ar yr ardd fotaneg genedlaethol? (WAQ31527) [W]

**Eleanor Burnham:** A wnaiff y Gweinidog ddatganiad ynglŷn ag adroddiad PricewaterhouseCoopers ar yr ardd fotaneg genedlaethol? (WAQ31528) [W]

**Alun Pugh:** Nid wyf yn ymwybodol o unrhyw adroddiad penodol gan PricewaterhouseCoopers ar ardd fotaneg genedlaethol Cymru. Fodd bynnag, fel yr eglurais yng nghyfarfod y Pwyllgor Diwylliant, y Gymraeg a Chwaraeon ar 21 Ionawr, mae PricewaterhouseCoopers yn rhoi cyngor proffesiynol i ardd fotaneg genedlaethol Cymru.

#### **The PricewaterhouseCoopers Report on Middleton**

**Eleanor Burnham:** What were the main recommendations of the PricewaterhouseCoopers report on the national botanic garden? (WAQ31527) [W]

**Eleanor Burnham:** Will the Minister make a statement on the PricewaterhouseCoopers report on the national botanic garden? (WAQ31528) [W]

**Alun Pugh:** I am not aware of any specific report by PricewaterhouseCoopers on the national botanic garden of Wales. However, as I made clear in the Culture, Welsh Language and Sport Committee meeting on 21 January, PricewaterhouseCoopers does act as professional adviser to the national botanic garden of Wales.



### **Grants for Chamber Orchestras (Purpose)**

**Lisa Francis:** What are Arts Council of Wales grants for chamber orchestras in Wales specifically aimed at? (WAQ31529)

**Alun Pugh:** The aim of the scheme, as stated in the published scheme guidelines, is to support and to develop audiences for chamber orchestras based in Wales through supporting concert and outreach activity.

### **Grants for Chamber Orchestras (Availability)**

**Lisa Francis:** When was the availability of grants for chamber orchestras in Wales advertised by the Arts Council of Wales in the course of last year? (WAQ31530)

**Alun Pugh:** The Assembly Government press notice advertising the availability of funds for 2003-04 and the means of applying was issued on 20 February 2003.

### **Grants for Chamber Orchestras (Checks)**

**Lisa Francis:** How many checks (and what sort of checks) have been carried out on chamber orchestras who have received grants from the Arts Council of Wales since the spring of 2003? (WAQ31531)

**Alun Pugh:** I announced the grant awards on 1 July 2003. Officers from the Assembly Government and the Arts Council of Wales then met representatives of each orchestra to clarify reporting procedures. Each orchestra was required to submit a report, by 5 December 2003, on activities funded under the scheme, including a recording of a performance funded under the scheme. Those reports and the recordings are being considered and will inform decisions for the next phase of the scheme.

## **Questions to the Minister for Economic Development and Transport**

### **The Impact of the Government's Policies on Rural Wales**

**Nick Bourne:** Will the Minister make a statement on how his Government's economic policies are impacting on rural Wales? (WAQ31204)

**The Minister for Economic Development and Transport (Andrew Davies):** The economic policies set out in 'A Winning Wales' and 'Wales: A Better Country' are creating the right climate for business throughout Wales and are supporting job creation and the development of a prosperous and diverse economy.

### **Discussions on Economic Development in Wales**

**John Griffiths:** Will the Minister make a statement on any recent discussions he has had with UK Government Ministers on economic development in Wales? (WAQ31205)

**Andrew Davies:** I regularly discuss economic development in Wales with the Secretary of State for Wales. I also had a recent meeting with the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry to discuss a range of economic issues. I anticipate future discussions with UK Government Ministers, not least on the Lyons independent review of public sector relocation, which is expected to be published in mid-year.

### Train Times (Cardiff Central to London Paddington)

**Jenny Randerson:** Has the Minister had any discussions with the Strategic Rail Authority or with First Great Western Trains about the timing of the last train from Cardiff Central to London Paddington? (WAQ31218)

**Andrew Davies:** I discussed this with the managing director of First Great Western Trains on 11 December 2003. They are reviewing the timing of the last train to determine whether a favourable solution can be found for implementation in December 2004.

### Companies Supported by Grants

**Janet Ryder:** In the light of the response to WAQ29227, would the Minister publish a table showing the number of companies supported by grants, county by county? (WAQ31221)

**Andrew Davies:** I can set out the information requested with regard to combined numbers of offers of regional selective assistance and Assembly investment grant for which I am responsible. The investment grant was introduced on 1 April 2002.

### Regional selective assistance and Assembly investment grant offers by unitary authority and year of offer.

Unitary authority	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Blaenau Gwent	12	11	15	16	31
Bridgend	7	10	14	29	43
Caerphilly	18	14	15	54	67
Cardiff	12	4	10	35	56
Carmarthenshire	8	9	11	27	52
Ceredigion	0	2	2	12	12
Conwy	0	2	6	11	27
Denbighshire	4	7	14	30	37
Flintshire	10	17	12	30	36
Gwynedd	3	9	12	34	32
Isle of Anglesey	8	2	3	7	16
Merthyr Tydfil	7	3	6	7	19
Monmouthshire	3	0	0	5	4
Neath Port Talbot	5	10	24	38	42
Newport	6	3	7	19	14
Pembrokeshire	9	3	11	13	25
Powys	0	0	1	11	8
Rhondda Cynon Taf	13	15	24	55	68
Swansea	7	8	9	25	36
Vale of Glamorgan	5	1	3	11	8
Torfaen	3	8	11	14	40
Wrexham	8	4	1	4	10

### **Subsidising Access to Public Facilities**

**Nick Bourne:** Will the Minister advise what effect the recent European Court of Justice ruling that it can be unlawful to use differential pricing to subsidise the access of local residents to public facilities has on the Welsh Assembly Government's policy of free bus travel for pensioners? (WAQ31263)

**Andrew Davies:** The free bus travel scheme for pensioners and disabled people has been warmly welcomed and is a major success. The scheme is based on residency and not nationality, but any implications resulting from the court's ruling will obviously be considered. Assembly lawyers are currently analysing the decision in detail.

### **Articles for *The Western Mail's* Objective 1 Supplement**

**Nick Bourne:** How much Assembly money was spent on producing articles for *The Western Mail* Objective 1 supplement of January 2004? (WAQ31311)

**Andrew Davies:** Officials drafted my editorial and the Welsh European Funding Office article, which had no financial implications other than officials' time. The advertising space that WEFO took out cost £3,318.38 (excluding value-added tax). The WalesTrade International feature on ExportAssist cost £4,633 (excluding VAT).

### **Job Creation**

**John Griffiths:** Will the Minister make a statement on the Assembly Government strategy for job creation in Wales? (WAQ31316)

**John Griffiths:** Will the Minister make a statement on Assembly Government policy to create jobs in Wales? (WAQ31452)

**Andrew Davies:** Our job-creation policies are set out in 'A Winning Wales' and 'Wales: A Better Country'. Using structural funds, 'A Winning Wales', and its accompanying action plans for skills, innovation, entrepreneurship, business and the environment and trade, we have a clear 10-year vision for Wales. Employment and inactivity figures indicate the very good start that we have already made towards creating a Wales where businesses are comfortable to invest, grow and flourish.

### **The Ethnic Business Support Programme**

**David Davies:** Could the Minister make a statement on the exact payments made to individuals within the ethnic business support programme, particularly the chief executive and managing director, directors and board members? (WAQ31436)

**Andrew Davies:** Part of your request relates to personal information and, in responding, I need to ensure that the individuals' rights to privacy are protected. I have asked my officials to consider whether the information that you have requested can be made available to you in a way that is consistent with the provisions contained within the National Assembly's code of practice on the provision of information to Assembly Members but which does not contravene any individuals' rights. I will write to you when I have received further advice on this matter.

Board members receive £132 for their attendance at each board meeting which, on average, are held on a monthly basis.

### **The Ethnic Business Support Programme (Recruitment Procedures)**

**David Davies:** Could the Minister make a statement on the recruitment procedures for the chief executive and managing director of the ethnic business support programme and also the race and religion of staff and board members? (WAQ31437)

**Andrew Davies:** The chief executive and operations director of the ethnic business support programme, which does not have a managing director, were founder members of the organisation, which is a private company. The Welsh Development Agency has raised with the ethnic business support programme, as it has with all the organisations with whom it has contracted to provide front-line business support services, the need for its board and staff to reflect the ethnic composition within Wales. The WDA does not request details of the race or religion of either board members or individual staff, and neither does the Welsh Assembly Government hold the specific information that you have requested.

### **The Ethnic Business Support Programme**

**David Davies:** Could the Minister make a statement on the role that Mashuq Ally played in the establishment of the ethnic business support programme? (WAQ31439)

**Andrew Davies:** At the relevant time, Mashuq Ally was the head of the Commission for Racial Equality Wales. That body is not accountable to the National Assembly for Wales and such questions should, therefore, be directed to the body itself.

### **Investment in the Upper Rhymney Valley**

**Huw Lewis:** Would the Minister inform me what investment the Assembly Government has made towards economic development in the Upper Rhymney Valley in my constituency? (WAQ31440)

**Andrew Davies:** It is difficult to give a specific breakdown for the Upper Rhymney Valley because of data collection limitations. However, for Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney, there have been 18 Objective 1-supported projects, which involved grants of over £8.3 million (as at November 2003). The total project costs of these are in excess of £18.6 million, and nearly 110 jobs are expected to be created and safeguarded.

In respect of regional selective assistance and Assembly investment grant, 48 projects have been approved in Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney, involving grant of almost £17 million in the period July 1999 to December 2003. Total associated project costs exceed £51 million and involve the creation or safeguarding of nearly 2,000 jobs.

### **20 miles per hour Zones**

**Ann Jones:** Will the Minister make a statement on the extension of 20 mph zones around Wales? (WAQ31441)

**Andrew Davies:** The Assembly Government made a manifesto commitment in May 2003 to extend 20 mph zones. We have already made additional funding available to local authorities to provide 20 mph zones and other road-safety initiatives. We will be increasing the allocation next year to ensure that more 20 mph zones are implemented across Wales.

### **The Walking and Cycling Strategy for Wales**

**Ann Jones:** Will the Minister make a statement on how he intends to take forward the proposals contained in the walking and cycling strategy for Wales published in December 2003? (WAQ31442)



**Andrew Davies:** In April 2003, average gross weekly earnings for adults working full-time in Wales were £414.5—an increase of 3.7 per cent since April 2002. Average weekly full-time earnings across the UK increased by 2.4 per cent over the same period.

### **The UK Government's Rail Transport Strategy**

**William Graham:** Will the Minister confirm whether Wales is on-track to achieve the targets outlined in the UK Government's rail transport strategy? (WAQ31450)

**Andrew Davies:** The Strategic Rail Authority is working to deliver the UK Government's priorities for the national railway network, including Wales, through its strategic plan.

On 19 January, the Secretary of State for Transport announced that the UK Government is reviewing the progress being made with investment in the railways, and the structural and organisational changes needed so that the railways can operate more effectively in passengers' interests. The review will also consider how more decisions on public transport might be devolved, within a nationally coherent framework.

### **Census Figures on Economic Development**

**William Graham:** Will the Minister make a statement on the impact upon economic development in Wales, arising from the census report issued this year by the Office for National Statistics, which indicates a brain drain from Wales to England? (WAQ31451)

**Andrew Davies:** The recent census report used information from the Labour Force Survey on the number of graduates born in Wales who are now resident in other parts of the UK. Data from the Welsh Local Labour Force Survey show that 120,500 people with degrees who were born in Wales now live elsewhere in the UK, and press reports highlighted this fact. However, graduates move in as well as out, and the survey shows that 78,000 graduates are now resident in Wales who were born elsewhere in the UK. It is likely that the overall pattern is broadly similar to that seen in the English regions outside London and the south-east.

The Labour Force Survey also shows that the increase in graduates resident in Wales over the period since the early 1980s is comparable with the increase seen in most UK regions. The Welsh Assembly Government has put in place a range of strategies (including 'Wales: A Better Country', 'A Winning Wales', 'A Learning Country', 'Reaching Higher' and the spatial plan) designed to strengthen Wales as a place in which the highly skilled want to live and in which businesses that create good jobs want to locate.

### **Welsh Economic Development and Business Optimism**

**Mark Isherwood:** Will the Minister make a statement on the impact of UK public finances on Welsh economic development and business optimism? (WAQ31453)

**Andrew Davies:** As the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development recently stated:

'The UK economy has proved remarkably resilient during the recent downswing with output falling only a little below potential. At the same time, inflation has remained close to the target and the unemployment rate is among the lowest in the OECD. More recently the economy has been gaining considerable momentum, well ahead of the euro area. This strong performance is underpinned by wide-ranging structural reforms and sound macroeconomic policy frameworks.'

The Welsh economy has shared in the strong performance within these frameworks, including the code for fiscal stability, and can expect to continue to do so.

### **Manufacturing Jobs in Mid and West Wales**

**Lisa Francis:** Will the Minister make a statement about manufacturing jobs in mid and west Wales? (WAQ31454)

**Andrew Davies:** According to the annual business inquiry, there were 18,200 employee jobs in manufacturing in mid and west Wales in December 2002, accounting for 12 per cent of all employee jobs in that area.

### **The Importance of Tourism**

**Lisa Francis:** Will the Minister make a statement about the importance of tourism to mid and west Wales? (WAQ31455)

**Andrew Davies:** I fully recognise the importance of tourism to mid and west Wales, and the region is benefiting from the significant increase in funding for tourism at the regional level. The Wales Tourist Board has delegated £750,000 to the south-west Wales tourism partnership, and £600,000 to tourism partnership mid Wales respectively for 2003-04 to support the tourism industry in those areas.

The board has also designated nine tourism growth areas in the mid and west Wales regions and has earmarked over £7.5 million over 2001-08 for the development of tourism in those areas.

### **Successful Objective 1 Application Forms**

**Elin Jones:** Will the Minister publish copies of successful Objective 1 application forms by Assembly sponsored public bodies and the Assembly Government? (WAQ31489)

**Andrew Davies:** The Welsh European Funding Office is currently considering allowing individual forms to be made available in a way that is consistent with the Assembly's code of practice on public access to information.

### **Safeguarding Call Centre Business**

**Brynle Williams:** What measures are in place to safeguard the call centre business in Wales? (WAQ31557)

**Andrew Davies:** Our economic development strategy, 'A Winning Wales', recognises that Wales cannot compete with emerging industrial nations on the basis of cost alone. We have placed a clear emphasis upon the need to drive innovation and research and development in creating a future that is based upon higher value-added products and processes. This need applies to all sectors of economic activity.

## **Questions to the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning**

### **Planning Advice for Newport City Council (Primary School)**

**Michael German:** What advice has the Welsh Assembly Government given to Newport City Council on its plans to build a primary school on the Glebelands site to replace the current Durham road school? (WAQ30658)

*Substantive answer following holding reply issued on 16 December 2003.*

**The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning (Jane Davidson):** Neither my officials nor I have offered advice to Newport City Council. I understand that the project is being progressed under private

finance initiative arrangements, which fall within the portfolio of the Finance Minister. Her officials will have provided general advice to the authority as to the issues to be covered in making the case for private finance initiative support. The Minister for Health and Social Services also wrote to the leader of the authority on 15 November 2001 about issues raised by the Children's Commissioner for Wales, following which she arranged for her officials to brief the authority on the small area health statistics unit landfill study.

### **Athrawon Bro**

**Owen John Thomas:** Faint o athrawon bro a oedd yn cael eu cyflogi gan bob un o'r awdurdodau lleol ar gyfer y blynyddoedd academaidd 2002-03 a 2003-04? (WAQ30867) [W]

*Ateb terfynol yn dilyn yr ateb dros dro a roddwyd ar 29 Rhagfyr 2003.*

**Jane Davidson:** Cyflogwyd 161 o athrawon bro gan yr awdurdodau lleol yn 2002-03 a 163 yn 2003-04. Yn ychwanegol at y ffigurau hyn, mae cydgysylltwyr dalgylchol yng Ngwynedd a Môn yn cyfrannu i'r gwasanaeth athrawon bro. Mae'r niferoedd yn cynnwys athrawon bro amser llawn a rhan amser, ac maent yn seiliedig ar fanylion a gyflwynwyd gan y siroedd eu hunain. Maent yn cyfeirio at y gwasanaeth yn ei gyfanrwydd, nid yn unig at y swyddi a gyllidir gan Fwrdd yr Iaith Gymraeg. Mae natur y ddarpariaeth yn amrywio o sir i sir. Yn ogystal, mae'r staff mewn rhai siroedd yn gweithio'n bennaf yn y canolfannau hwyr-ddyfodiaid, ac eraill yn rhannu eu hamser rhwng y canolfannau ac ysgolion yn ôl y galw a'r pwysau sydd arnynt.

### **Athrawon Bro**

**Owen John Thomas:** How many 'athrawon bro' were employed by each of the local authorities during the academic years 2002-03 and 2003/04? (WAQ30867) [W]

*Substantive answer following holding reply issued on 29 December 2003.*

**Jane Davidson:** During 2002-03, local authorities employed 161 *athrawon bro* and 163 in 2003-04. In addition to those figures, area co-ordinators in Gwynedd and Anglesey contribute to the *athrawon bro* service. The figures include full-time and part-time *athrawon bro* and are based on details supplied by the local authorities. They refer to the service in its entirety, not only to the posts funded by the Welsh Language Board. The nature of the provision varies between each authority. In addition, the staff in some authorities work primarily in the latecomer centres, and others share their time between the centres and the schools according to demand and the pressure on them.

### **Canolfannau Hwyr-ddyfodiad**

**Owen John Thomas:** Sawl canolfan hwyr-ddyfodiad sydd wedi agor yng Nghymru er mwyn darparu cyrsiau Cymraeg i blant sy'n symud i ardaloedd Cymraeg? (WAQ30868) [W]

*Ateb terfynol yn dilyn yr ateb dros dro a roddwyd ar 29 Rhagfyr 2003.*

**Jane Davidson:** Mae 20 o ganolfannau hwyr-ddyfodiaid penodol yng Nghymru. Ym Mhowys a Sir Gaerfyrddin, nid oes canolfannau fel y cyfryw, gyda'r ddarpariaeth yn rhan o'r gwasanaeth athrawon bro.

### **Latecomer Centres**

**Owen John Thomas:** How many latecomer centres have been opened in Wales to provide Welsh courses for children who move into Welsh-speaking areas? (WAQ30868) [W]

*Substantive answer following holding reply issued on 29 December 2003.*



**Jane Davidson:** There are 20 specific latecomer centres in Wales. In Powys and Carmarthenshire, there are no centres as such with the provision forming part of the *athrawon bro* service.

### School Sixth Forms

**David Davies:** Will the Minister make a statement on the role school sixth forms play in providing post-16 year old education in Wales? (WAQ31251)

**Jane Davidson:** Sixth forms continue to play a crucial role in the provision of post-16 education in Wales. They will evolve over time, in line with the policy endorsed by the Assembly in February 2000 for implementing the education and training action plan. New arrangements for sixth forms and other post-16 providers will be introduced in August 2004 to establish a fair, transparent and equitable system of future funding. I have no doubt that schools will take advantage of these new arrangements to play a full part in the delivery of high quality cost-effective provision.

### Cyfleoedd i Rieni Ddewis Addysg Gymraeg i'w Plant

**Owen John Thomas:** Pa gamau y mae'r Gweinidog wedi'u cymryd i gynyddu'r cyfleoedd sydd ar gael i rieni ddewis addysg drwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg ar gyfer eu plant pan fyddant yn dechrau ar eu haddysg feithrin? (WAQ31257) [W]

**Jane Davidson:** Mae darparu addysg yn y blynyddoedd cynnar drwy economi gymysg, sy'n cynnwys rhoi cyfle i rieni ddewis addysg cyfrwng Cymraeg, yn hollbwysig i'm polisi ar ehangu'r ddarpariaeth hon. Mae'r cyfnod sylfaen yr wyf yn ei gynnig, a fydd yn darparu cwricwlwm newydd ar gyfer pob plentyn tair i saith oed, yn ehangu'r cyfleoedd hyn. Yr wyf yn bwriadu ychwanegu dwyieithrwydd ac amlddiwylliant fel meysydd dysgu penodol, a bydd hyn yn sicrhau bod gweithgareddau cyfrwng Cymraeg ar gael bob dydd mewn ysgolion a gynhelir ac ysgolion nas cynhelir.

Yr wyf hefyd wedi darparu £7 miliwn, £2 filiwn yn 2004-05 a £5 miliwn yn 2005-06, er mwyn hyfforddi 150 o athrawon ychwanegol i ddysgu drwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg. Bydd hyn yn help mawr i gyflawni ein hamcan i feithrin gallu yn y maes pwysig hwn.

### Opportunities for Parents to Choose Welsh-medium Education for their Children

**Owen John Thomas:** What action has the Minister taken to increase opportunities for parents to opt for Welsh-medium education for their children on entering nursery education? (WAQ31257) [W]

**Jane Davidson:** Central to my policy for the expansion of early years provision is that it should be delivered through a mixed economy, which includes the ability of parents to opt for Welsh-medium education. These opportunities are being further enhanced through my proposal for the foundation phase, which will provide a new curriculum for all three to seven-year-olds. I intend that both bilingualism and multiculturalism be added as specific areas of learning, which will ensure that Welsh-medium activities are available daily in all maintained and non-maintained settings.

I have also provided £7million, £2 million in 2004-05 and £5 million in 2005-06, to enable 150 additional Welsh-medium practitioners to be trained. This will go some way towards meeting our objective of building capacity in this important area.

### Assembly Learning Grants

**Jenny Randerson:** What percentage take-up of Assembly learning grants does the Minister forecast for further education students for 2004-2005? (WAQ31276)

**Jane Davidson:** I expect the number of Assembly learning grants awarded to further education students to increase progressively from academic year 2002-03 to 2004-05, as there will be a greater awareness

among students of the grant's availability. However, only preliminary data are available for 2003-04 and, as it will take a few years for the scheme to bed-in completely, I cannot predict how soon, or at what rate, the scheme will reach its full potential.

### **Teachers' Television**

**Leighton Andrews:** Can the Minister confirm whether teachers' television will be available in Wales? (WAQ31483)

**Jane Davidson:** It is too early to make any decisions at the moment. I am aware of the Department for Education and Skills' plans to provide a television channel for teachers. My officials have been in touch with the department about developments in England. The channel has yet to be piloted, however, and will be evaluated before any decision is taken on it going live. I will take that evaluation into account before considering the need for similar developments in Wales.

### **School Placements for PGCE Students**

**Michael German:** What percentage of students currently undertaking postgraduate certificate of education courses at the University of Wales College, Newport have been provided with school and college training placements? (WAQ31493)

**Michael German:** Will the Minister make a statement on whether students on the PGCE course at the University of Wales College, Newport have been provided with appropriate placements? (WAQ31494)

**Jane Davidson:** The University of Wales College, Newport has not been experiencing any problems in arranging school placements for students on postgraduate courses of initial teacher training leading to qualified teacher status. In addition, 92 per cent of students following PGCE (further education) courses at UWCN have also been provided with training placements appropriate to their course. However, a combination of limitations upon the ability to travel and the number of students at Cardiff University seeking similar placements in the area, have resulted in five PGCE (FE) students at UWCN not yet having secured a placement. The college's obligation to be mindful of the quality of experience available to students has also been a limiting factor in identifying suitable placements.

I am advised that the college is endeavouring to resolve the matter as quickly as possible, and considers that it should be possible to achieve the requisite number of teaching hours during the remainder of the course. It is also reviewing its arrangements for the next academic year.

The standards expected of PGCE (FE) courses are set by the Further Education National Training Organisation. Courses must include a minimum of 20 teaching practice hours at stage 1, 40 at stage 2, and 60 at stage 3. Therefore, those at stage 3 will have carried out a minimum of 120 teaching practice hours. The requirement that new entrant further education lecturers must hold (or gain within a specified period) a relevant teaching qualification, such as the PGCE (FE), is set out in the Further Education Teachers' Qualifications (Wales) Regulations 2002, Statutory Instrument 2002 No. 1663 (W.158).

Requirements for courses of initial teacher training leading to qualified teacher status are set out in Welsh Office Circular 13/98. For PGCE courses, the circular provides that the amount of time spent by trainees in schools during their training, excluding schools holidays, must be at least 24 weeks for all full-time secondary courses and at least 18 weeks for all full-time primary postgraduate courses and all part-time postgraduate courses.

### **Treialu Cyfnodau Dysgu Sabothol**

**Owen John Thomas:** Pa gamau y mae'r Gweinidog wedi eu cymryd i dreialu cyfnodau dysgu sabothol i ymarferwyr er mwyn cefnogi'r cyflenwad o staff addysg uwch cyfrwng Cymraeg? (WAQ31502) [W]

**Jane Davidson:** Mae swyddogion wrthi'n chwilio am ddarparwyr hyfforddiant ac yn llunio cynigion ar gyfer gweinyddu'r cynllun y flwyddyn nesaf pan fydd arian ar gael o dan 'Iaith Pawb' ar gyfer rhaglen beilot o wersi Cymraeg i athrawon cymwys. Wrth gwrs, mae athrawon eisoes yn gallu gwneud cais i Gyngor Addysgu Cyffredinol Cymru am arian ar gyfer cyfnodau dysgu sabothol o'r rhaglen datblygu proffesiynol parhaus y mae'n ei gweinyddu ar ein rhan.

### **Trialling Sabbatical Teaching Practice**

**Owen John Thomas:** What action has the Minister taken to put on trial sabbatical teaching practice for trainees to reinforce the supply of Welsh-medium secondary education staff? (WAQ31502) [W]

**Jane Davidson:** Officials are identifying potential training providers and developing proposals for the administration of the scheme in readiness for next year, when funding under 'Iaith Pawb' for a pilot programme of Welsh-language training for qualified teachers will be available. School teachers can, of course, already apply for funding for sabbaticals from the General Teaching Council for Wales out of the continuing professional development programme it administers on our behalf.

### **Supply Work (Length of Time)**

**Lorraine Barrett:** Can the Minister make a statement on the length of time for which a recently qualified teacher can perform supply work? (WAQ31507)

**Jane Davidson:** Under the current Education (Induction Arrangements for School Teachers) (Wales) Regulations 2003, newly qualified teachers are required to complete an induction year on taking up their first post. The induction year must consist of complete terms. Newly qualified teachers can work as short-term supply teachers for up to four terms. Thereafter, they must complete an induction year in complete terms. The four-term limit starts as soon as the newly qualified teacher starts his or her first short-term supply placement. A short-term supply placement would be any period of employment that is less than one term. Supply contracts that are for a whole term count towards fulfilling the induction period.

Supply contracts of less than one term are not counted towards induction because the induction process is designed to support and assess newly qualified teachers' professional development against specific standards (the end of induction standard). Periods of teaching that are for less than a term are not generally considered to provide newly qualified teachers with an adequate opportunity to benefit from the support of induction and to demonstrate their competence and progress in the classroom.

A limit on supply teaching is essential in order to ensure that all newly qualified teachers in Wales benefit, at the beginning of their career, from the support and professional development that induction provides. It is also highly desirable for them to undertake induction as soon as possible after the completion of initial teacher training.

However, I recognise the need to keep the induction arrangements under review, particularly as they are so new. Therefore, a consultation exercise on proposals to amend the Education (Induction Arrangements for School Teachers) (Wales) Regulations 2003 was launched on 24 November 2003.

### **Supply Work (Proposed Changes to Length of Time)**

**Lorraine Barrett:** Can the Minister make a statement on any changes that are proposed to the length of time for which a recently qualified teacher can perform supply work? (WAQ31508)

**Jane Davidson:** The consultation on the proposed amendments to the Education (Induction Arrangements for School Teachers) (Wales) Regulations 2003 was launched on 24 November 2003 and closed on 16 January 2004.

The consultation proposes to enable more newly qualified teachers in Wales to benefit from the support that induction provides by making the four-term limit on short-term supply teaching more flexible. The consultation proposes that newly qualified teachers undertaking short-term supply should be able to continue supply teaching for a maximum of 12 months after they have passed the current four-term limit on supply teaching. Similar changes were made to induction regulations in England in September 2003.

The consultation exercise closed on 16 January, and the responses indicate that the proposal to increase the four-term limit on supply teaching has been welcomed. Revised regulations will be put to Plenary.

### **Increasing the Number of Students with Disabilities who Attend University**

**Val Lloyd:** Can the Minister make a statement on measures to increase greater numbers of students with disabilities attending University? (WAQ31509)

**Jane Davidson:** A key priority for the Welsh Assembly Government is to widen access to higher education. This includes encouraging more disabled students to participate.

The Assembly provides, via the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales, specific funding of £0.5 million by way of the disability premium and disability provision development funds.

Each higher education institution is also required to produce a disability strategy as part of its more general widening access plan.

### **The Funding Formula for Welsh Schools**

**Lorraine Barrett:** Will the Minister make a statement on the funding formula for Welsh schools? (WAQ31534)

**Jane Davidson:** Each local authority has to adopt a local funding formula to determine its schools' delegated budgets. The Financing of Maintained Schools Regulations 1999 (as amended) require that 75 per cent of funding delegated to secondary and primary schools must derive from pupil-led factors, as pupil numbers are the main determinant of school funding needs. Local authorities can choose to distribute the remaining 25 per cent using a range of factors specified in the regulations.

An authority has to consult its school budget forum and individual governing bodies and headteachers on any proposed changes to its local funding formula.

In light of responses to initial consultation last year, we will consult shortly on new draft regulations. These would reduce the requirement for primary and secondary school budgets to be determined by reference to pupil number factors—from 75 per cent to 70 per cent—and require authorities to include a deprivation factor in their funding formulae. If approved by the Assembly, the changes would apply to school budgets for 2005-06 onwards.

### **Reviewing Funding Arrangement for Schools**

**Lorraine Barrett:** What additional funding is available to schools for children who join a school once a school's budget is set? (WAQ31535)

**Lorraine Barrett:** What plans does the Welsh Assembly Government have to review the ways schools are funded when pupils join a school during term-time? (WAQ31536)

**Jane Davidson:** In accordance with the Financing of Maintained Schools Regulations 1999 (as amended), authorities must include factors or criteria in their local funding formulae to enable them to re-determine a school's budget share during the course of a financial year to take account of changes in the

number or estimates of registered pupils at the school by reference to which the budget share was determined.

The funding of pre-16 provision in maintained schools is a matter for local government, which is best placed to take account of local needs and circumstances.

### Modern Apprenticeship Trainees

**Alun Cairns:** Will the Minister list, year by year, the number of modern apprenticeship trainees available since 1999? (WAQ31580)

**Jane Davidson:** The numbers in training on modern apprenticeships in Wales between 1999 and 2003 are detailed in the attached table.

#### Number in training on foundation modern apprenticeships, modern apprenticeships and modern skills diplomas at 31 March 2003

	Numbers (Thousands)				
	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003 (a)
Foundation modern apprenticeships (b)	3.9	8.1	9.9	11.1	11.2
Modern apprenticeships	9.2	9.0	8.7	10.0	11.1
Modern skills diploma	n/a	n/a	n/a	0.9	1.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>13.1</b>	<b>17.1</b>	<b>18.6</b>	<b>22.0</b>	<b>23.6</b>

Source: The Department for Education and Skills prior to 2001-02, ELWa national trainee database from 2001-02.

- a) In January 2003, entry to programmes which in the past were exclusive to young people was extended to allow people aged 25 and over to participate:
- b) Formerly known as national traineeships.

### Shortage of Skilled Tradesmen and Women

**Brynle Williams:** How is the Minister tackling the shortage of skilled tradesmen and women such as plumbers, electricians and mechanics? (WAQ31584)

**Jane Davidson:** I am looking to the new sector skills council for the building services and engineering sector, called Summit Skills, to consult widely with employers and others and draw up a comprehensive five-year workforce development plan to address existing and future skills shortages and requirements in its sector. I will also expect Summit Skills to work in close collaboration with employers, Education and Learning Wales, the Welsh Development Agency, Careers Wales, Jobcentre Plus, the Qualifications, Curriculum and Assessment Authority for Wales and the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales to agree and deliver the plan.

I shall also be looking to Summit Skills to help stimulate the level of engagement by employers in Wales in providing appropriate learning and job opportunities, particularly in craft and technician occupations, through programmes such as our all-age modern apprenticeships.

#### Increasing Student Awareness of the Need for more Plumbers, Electricians and Mechanics

**Brynle Williams:** What specific action is the Minister taking to increase student awareness of the need for more plumbers, electricians and mechanics? (WAQ31585)

**Jane Davidson:** I shall be working with, and looking to, the new network of sector skills councils in Wales to develop and provide good quality advice and information to Careers Wales, Jobcentre Plus and other employment agencies on job opportunities and career pathways in their sectors, to enable all people of working age, and in the education system, to make informed career choices.

## **Educating People in Skilled Professions**

**Brynle Williams:** What ring-fenced funds are directed towards educating people in skilled professions such as plumbers, electricians and mechanics? (WAQ31586)

**Jane Davidson:** The Assembly Government does not ‘ring-fence’ funding to be directed towards educating people in skilled professions such as plumbers, electricians and mechanics. The National Council—ELWa makes informed decisions on the allocation of funding for vocational learning through evidence-based labour market analysis.

## **Secondary School Reorganisation in Wrexham**

**John Marek:** Pursuant to her answer to me on 19 January about meetings between her and representatives of Wrexham County Borough Council, will the Minister state the number of meetings her officials held with the council to discuss the present secondary school reorganisation in Wrexham? (WAQ31588)

**Jane Davidson:** Department for training and education officials have not met representatives of Wrexham County Borough Council to discuss the secondary school reorganisation in Wrexham. In December 2001, in the course of a visit to Wrexham, the head of schools management division received a presentation on the proposal from the authority. Discussion was confined to the timing of the proposal.

## **ELWa Proposals for Organisations of Sixth Forms**

**Leighton Andrews:** How many schools were consulted on the ELWa proposals for organisations of sixth forms? (WAQ31604)

**Leighton Andrews:** Which schools in the Rhondda constituency are being consulted on ELWa’s proposals for organisations of sixth forms? (WAQ31605)

**Jane Davidson:** The Assembly Government issued a consultation document in December on draft regulations to enable ELWa to make proposals for the reorganisation of sixth forms in a particular locality.

In accordance with normal practice for such consultations—and in line with the recommendations of the Reducing Bureaucratic Burdens on Schools project—the consultation document was sent to a random sample of 232 schools throughout Wales, representing 10 per cent of all schools in the country. This sample includes 17 per cent of all schools with sixth forms. Within the Rhondda constituency, the following four schools were consulted:

1. Penpych Community Primary School, Treherbert
2. Gilfach Goch Infants School, Porth
3. Abercerdin Primary School, Gilfach Goch
4. Treorchy Comprehensive School, Treorchy

Within the wider Rhondda Cynon Taf area, a further 16 schools were also consulted.

The consultation period runs until 2 February and, following consultation, the draft regulations will be considered by the Assembly—along with commencement of the relevant provisions of the Education Act 2002 under which they will be made—in accordance with Standing Orders.

Until the relevant provisions of the Act have been commenced and these regulations have been made, ELWa will not be able to make proposals for the reorganisation of sixth forms. Indeed, I would not expect any such proposals to be formulated until related procedural guidance has been issued and until community consortia for education and training have subsequently had an opportunity to offer views to

ELWa on the configuration of post-16 learning provision in their respective localities. Any such proposals will then be subject to the formal consultation procedures required by the regulations and specified in the guidance.

## **Questions to the Minister for Environment, Planning and Countryside**

### **The East Pit Opencast Mining Application**

**Alun Cairns:** Would the Minister publish advice received from officials in relation to the calling in of the east pit opencast mining application? (WAQ29882)

*Substantive answer following holding reply issued on 19 November 2003.*

**The Minister for Environment, Planning and Countryside (Carwyn Jones):** The information that you request has been published as further information to this document.

### **The Cost of Equine Passports**

**Glyn Davies:** What is the cost of an equine passport to be? (WAQ30371)

*Substantive answer following holding reply issued on 8 December 2003.*

**Carwyn Jones:** The cost of the passport is a commercial decision to be taken by the passport issuing organisations. I understand that such costs vary from £10 to £50, although some passport issuing organisations are updating existing passports to include the medicines pages for £5.

### **DNA Testing (Cuts of Meat)**

**Helen Mary Jones:** What provision has the Minister made available for DNA testing that allows individual cuts of meat to be traced back to the animal they came from? (WAQ30875)

*Substantive answer following holding reply issued on 29 December 2003.*

**Carwyn Jones:** I recognise the importance of traceability for the development of the agri-food strategy set out in 'Farming for the Future', and especially for building markets of quality, premium branded products. A feasibility study, funded by the Welsh Development Agency and carried out by the Institute of Grassland and Environmental Research at Aberystwyth, has explored improved traceability including the option for DNA tracking from 'farm to fork' in Wales. The results of this study are currently being considered, together with wider farm assurance issues, in conjunction with key stakeholders including Hybu Cig Cymru.

### **Chardon LL (Feeding Studies)**

**Helen Mary Jones:** What feeding studies have been made with regard to Chardon LL? (WAQ31209)

**Carwyn Jones:** I am advised that certain feeding studies were considered by the Advisory Committee on Releases to the Environment as part of its deliberations of the safety assessment of Chardon LL. Further information is available on the ACRE website. ACRE is also reporting on ongoing feeding studies on dairy cattle that will be used to examine the wholesomeness of T25 maize silage and any effect in milk production and consumption.

### **Chardon LL (Listing)**

**Helen Mary Jones:** When will the decision regarding the listing of Chardon LL be made? (WAQ31210)

**Carwyn Jones:** There is no date set yet for the national listing of Chardon LL. The decision is to be made jointly by UK Ministers. The National Assembly for Wales is pressing for deferment of the decision until the outcomes of the farm-scale evaluations, recently considered by the Advisory Committee on Releases to the Environment, and the GM public debate, science review and cost/benefits analysis have been fully taken into account.

#### **Assembly Forestry Estate (Hectares of Woodland Cut Annually)**

**Helen Mary Jones:** How many hectares of woodland have been cut annually on the Assembly's forestry estate since 1999? (WAQ31212)

**Carwyn Jones:** The area cut on the Assembly's forestry estate since 1999 is:

1 April 1999 to 31 March 2000	2,212
1 April 2000 to 31 March 2001	2,312
1 April 2001 to 31 March 2002	2,002
1 April 2002 to 31 March 2003	2,472
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,998</b>

The figures are in hectares and exclude roads, rides and quarries.

#### **The Construction of A New River Crossing (Monmouth)**

**Michael German:** Will the Minister provide a timetable for the issuing or rejection of permission to demolish the cattle sheds at the former Monmouth cattle market, for the construction of the new river crossing? (WAQ31224)

**Carwyn Jones:** Consent for the demolition of buildings at the former cattle market, Monmouth, was granted by one of my officials under delegated powers on 12 January 2004.

#### **Farming Connect (North Wales Applicants)**

**Brynle Williams:** Further to WAQ30848, will the Minister list all north Wales applicants to Farming Connect for the conversion of farm buildings for holiday accommodation, the decision made on the application and the supporting reasons? (WAQ31225)

**Carwyn Jones:** Nine applications for the farm tourism grant administered by the Wales Tourist Board as part of the Farming Connect initiative have been received from farmers in the North Wales constituency area. All nine have been approved, and a total grant commitment of £241,327 has been made, based on total project costs of £864,894.

#### **Land Adjacent to the New Assembly Building (Planning Permission)**

**Glyn Davies:** What discussions has the Minister had with the local planning authority regarding the planning conditions and restrictions attached to the planning permission given to the land adjacent to the new Assembly building, the purchase of which by the National Assembly is currently under discussion? (WAQ31275)

**Carwyn Jones:** None.

#### **Land Adjacent to New Assembly Building (Calling In Applications)**

**Glyn Davies:** What discussions have taken place between the Minister and the local planning authority about the possibility of calling in any application on the land adjacent to the new Assembly building which is currently under discussion? (WAQ31277)



**Carwyn Jones:** I have not had any discussions with the local planning authority about the possibility of calling in any application on the land adjacent to the new Assembly building.

### **The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000**

**Kirsty Williams:** What assistance is the Minister giving to assist national parks with the increasing workload due to the provisions of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000? (WAQ31279)

**Carwyn Jones:** Between 2001-02 and 2003-04, Assembly grant to national park authorities in Wales has increased by 20 per cent, and the park authorities' additional responsibilities under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 were fully taken into account in reaching budget decisions during this period. New guidance is also being prepared to assist the park authorities in fulfilling their statutory role under the Act.

### **Compensating Farmers for Notifiable Diseases**

**Kirsty Williams:** Will the Minister make a statement on any link between the compensation of farmers for notifiable diseases and any increase in risk of them spreading? (WAQ31510)

**Carwyn Jones:** Individuals are under a legal obligation to report any notifiable diseases regardless of whether compensation is paid or not. There are international obligations to tackle infection and contain the spread of disease and, under EU legislation, compensation is required to be paid in respect of some diseases in the animal health sector.

### **Anomalies in the Current Compensation System**

**Kirsty Williams:** Will the Minister make a statement on the anomalies in the current compensation system, which automatically reimburses livestock but not arable farmers? (WAQ31511)

**Carwyn Jones:** The evidence to date implies that the absence of compensation has not hindered plant health control action. In the light of recent plant disease outbreaks, the Assembly is encouraging industry, the UK Government and the devolved administrations to engage in dialogue on the issue.

### **Potatoes Infected with Ring Rot**

**Kirsty Williams:** Will the Minister make a statement on when potatoes infected with ring rot should be reintroduced into the food chain? (WAQ31512)

**Carwyn Jones:** Article 7 of EC directive 93/85 states that potatoes designated as contaminated with ring rot must be either destroyed or disposed of in accordance with Annex IV of the directive. The method of disposal must involve no identifiable risk of the organism spreading. Planting for further production, or selling directly for human consumption, are not permitted methods—not because of any human health concerns, but because of the risk of the organism finding its way back onto agricultural land.

### **Modernising the Policy for Decommissioning the UK's Nuclear Facilities**

**Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Has the Minister had any discussions with his UK Government counterpart regarding the public consultation that is being undertaken by the Department of Trade and Industry on modernising the policy for decommissioning the UK's nuclear facilities, in association with HM Treasury, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, the Scottish Executive, and the Ministry of Defence? (WAQ31525)

**Carwyn Jones:** The Welsh Assembly Government is also a party to the public consultation, launched on 28 November 2003, on the modernising of policy in relation to the decommissioning of nuclear facilities.

I have not had ministerial discussions relating to it but, in October 2003, on behalf of the First Minister, I responded to Patricia Hewitt in full support of this joint consultation.

### **Phytophthora Ramorum**

**Brynle Williams:** What steps are being taken to prevent further cases of the tree disease phytophthora ramorum? (WAQ31713)

**Carwyn Jones:** The Plant Health and Seeds Inspectorate, on behalf of the Assembly, has been conducting an intensive survey programme of retail outlets, nurseries, gardens and other established planting areas. Precautionary containment and eradication action has been taken where the pathogen has been detected. Complementary surveys of the Assembly's woodlands are being undertaken by the Forestry Commission.

### **The Potato Ring Rot Outbreak**

**Nick Bourne:** What plans does the Minister have to compensate farmers affected by the potato ring rot outbreak in mid Wales last year? (WAQ31716)

**Carwyn Jones:** The Assembly, in common with other UK and European administrations, does not directly compensate growers whose crops are infected with ring rot. The Assembly, along with DEFRA, is encouraging the potato industry to explore how it could help growers now and in any future outbreaks of ring rot, and would be interested in any proposals that were put forward.

### **Legislation to Speed up the Removal of Abandoned Vehicles**

**Ann Jones:** What plans does the Minister have to bring forward legislation to speed up the removal of abandoned vehicles in Wales? (WAQ31717)

**Carwyn Jones:** Discussions have taken place with DEFRA on the reduction of notice periods for abandoned vehicles in Wales so that they match those applied in England from April 2003. Although the Assembly Government currently does not have the powers to amend the notice periods in the regulations the next transfer of functions Order from the Wales Office will allow the Assembly the relevant police powers under the road traffic Acts. In anticipation of this transfer, we are currently consulting with stakeholders.

### **Composting**

**Peter Black:** What is the Assembly Government doing to encourage composting? (WAQ31726)

**Carwyn Jones:** The Assembly Government is encouraging composting in a number of different ways.

- Targets in the Wales waste strategy require local authorities to recycle or compost at least 15 per cent of municipal waste by the end of 2003-04, of which a 5 per cent minimum must be composted. Future targets will require at least 10 per cent composting in 2006-07 and 15 per cent in 2009-10. An Assembly sustainable waste management grant is being paid to each authority in Wales to fund this and other additional waste management work.
- Authorities are able to use this resource to encourage householders to start home composting. In conjunction with the Environment Agency, the Assembly Government is seeking to establish a robust method whereby local authorities can gain a credit towards their waste targets for home composting, which they encourage by distributing equipment and advice.
- The latest published municipal waste survey figures show that composting in Wales increased from 18,418 tonnes in 2000-01 to 35,921 tonnes in 2001-02.

- The Assembly has also supported the development of the British Standard PAS 100 for waste-derived compost as a means to stimulate market demand for this as a commercial and a retail product. Waste-derived compost is already finding a market in Welsh land regeneration schemes.
- The Assembly has been sponsoring the creation of regional waste plans, which will make provision for regional composting plants that will boost capacity to meet the expected increases in demand. Planning applications have been made for several composting plants by local authorities, the private sector and community sector partnerships.
- In the longer term, the Assembly is also supporting education, technical research and marketing work being carried out by the Wales Environmental Trust and the Waste and Resources Action Programme. This research will help develop markets for compost in Wales and develop a range of compost products to supply those markets.

## **Questions to the Finance Minister**

### **Past Service Awards (Future Election)**

**William Graham:** Will the Minister detail the procedures that she has implemented to ensure that those councillors who accept a past service award and do not stand in the June 2004 local government elections are not eligible to stand for future elections? (WAQ31084) [R]

**The Finance Minister (Sue Essex):** Past service awards are, in legal terms, a gratuity payment given in return for long service. Applicants are eligible if, along with other qualifications, they retire at the 2004 elections. There can be no penalties attached to the payment of a gratuity and the law does not permit the Assembly to prevent an individual from standing for election in the future. My firm expectation is that all recipients will see this as marking the end of their political career at county level, and I do not anticipate them standing again.

### **Past Service Awards (Number of Applications)**

**Peter Black:** Will the Minister make a statement on the total number of councillors who have applied for past service award payments? (WAQ31085)

**Sue Essex:** I refer you to the oral answer I gave to Jenny Randerson on 14 January 2004 (OAQ31025).

### **The Dispersal of Performance Improvement Grants**

**Peter Black:** Will the Minister make a statement on the dispersal of performance improvement grants to local councils in 2004-05? (WAQ31086)

**Sue Essex:** The performance incentive grant for 2004-05 will be distributed to local authorities as set out in section 5 of the policy agreements prospectus 2004-07, which we issued to authorities in November 2003. The total performance incentive grant for 2004-05 will be £30 million, distributed between local authorities according to their relative share of the current element of their standard spending assessment. My intention is that authorities should receive their performance incentive grant at the beginning of the 2004-05 financial year, provided their policy agreement has been made.

### **Past Service Awards**

**Nick Bourne:** Will the Minister update us on the past service award scheme for councillors? (WAQ31088)

**Sue Essex:** The regulations, which introduced the past service award scheme, came into force on 16 October 2003. They required the full council of each local authority to determine whether to introduce the scheme for its particular area. It was then for participating authorities to determine the eligibility criteria,

which included a minimum of 16 years' service and a condition of retirement at the 2004 local government elections, and to set the amount of the payment up to a maximum of £20,000. Applications for awards had to be made by 20 November 2003. Eight local authorities have decided to operate the past service award scheme.

### **Preparations for the Local Government Elections**

**Nick Bourne:** Will the Minister make a statement on preparations for this year's local government elections? (WAQ31089)

**Sue Essex:** The Assembly does not have responsibility for the conduct of elections: that is a matter for the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. However, officials are working closely with the Electoral Commission, returning officers and others to build on lessons learnt from the Assembly elections. A seminar was held in November to enable electoral administrators to share experiences and knowledge from the Assembly elections. A working group has also been established of those involved with local and European elections in 2004. The aim of the group will be to promote best practice and a consistency of approach in such areas as postal voting, disabled access, promotion of turnout, training and any other related matters.

### **Provision for Disabled People in Local Government Elections**

**Mark Isherwood:** Will the Minister make a statement on provision for disabled people in local government elections? (WAQ31090)

**Sue Essex:** The National Assembly is not responsible for the conduct of the local elections: that responsibility lies with the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. However, the Welsh Assembly Government is doing its utmost to promote good practice in this area. A working group has been established by Assembly officials and will meet later this month, with the aim of encouraging best practice in the 2004 elections. The group, which will include representatives of the Electoral Commission, the Disability Rights Commission, returning and elections officers, will focus on issues relating to accessibility, postal voting and encouraging turnout.

The Assembly recently organised a seminar to complement the launch of the Electoral Commission's report on the conduct of the elections. Its focus was on sharing best practice in relation to the election process paying particular attention to accessibility issues.

In light of the Polls Apart Cymru report, I feel that it is extremely important to focus on the issue of disabled access to the democratic process. I also believe that, in order to make the necessary changes to attain accessible democracy, it will be vital to involve stakeholders in any future discussions, particularly returning officers, electoral administrators and the Disability Rights Commission.

### **European Union Funding**

**Jenny Randerson:** In your budget speech, you referred to £268 million for European Union funding, which is an increase of £47 million. Please can you provide details of the budget headings under which this money is placed? (WAQ31219)

**Sue Essex:** A sum of £268 million is contained in the Welsh European Funding Office sub-expenditure group of the final budget. This includes £234 million of expenditure cover for structural funds, £33.588 million for local regeneration funding and £0.779 million for structural funding support.

### **Past Service Awards (Payments Made to Dependants)**

**Glyn Davies:** After what dates will payments under the Local Authorities (Allowances for Members of County and County Borough Councils) (Past Service Awards) (Wales) Regulations 2003 be made to dependants in the event of the death, retirement or ill health of a councillor? (WAQ31232)

**Sue Essex:** This matter is provided for in the Local Government (Gratuities) (Members of County and County Borough Councils) (Wales) Regulations 2003, made in the UK Parliament by the Deputy Prime Minister. They stipulate that, in the event of the death of a council member after he or she has qualified but before receiving payment, that payment should be made to his or her personal representative. Payment must be made no sooner than the day following the close of nominations for the local elections and no later than the fourth day after the election.

A member who had retired on grounds of ill health could not qualify for an award unless he or she was still in office on the qualifying date, namely the close of nominations.

### **Past Service Awards (Inheritance Tax)**

**Glyn Davies:** What steps have been taken to include any payment made under the Local Authorities (Allowances for Members of County and County Borough Councils) (Past Service Awards) (Wales) Regulations 2003 following the death of a councillor in the estate of the councillor for the purposes of liability to inheritance tax? (WAQ31233)

**Sue Essex:** This is not a matter for the Assembly.

### **Past Service Awards (Publishing the Names of Councillors)**

**Glyn Davies:** Has the Minister discussed the publication of the names of councillors who have registered an interest in the Local Authorities (Allowances for Members of County and County Borough Councils) (Past Service Awards) (Wales) Regulations 2003 with the leader of the Welsh Local Government Association? (WAQ31234)

**Sue Essex:** Yes.

### **Improving Public Services in Wales**

**Nick Bourne:** Will the Minister make a statement on how the Government intends to improve public services in Wales during the coming year? (WAQ31315)

**Sue Essex:** There is a clear commitment to improve public services in Wales over the coming year and beyond as set out in our strategic agenda, 'Wales: A Better Country', and the budget allocations clearly reflect that. Working in collaboration with partner organisations, through initiatives such as the Wales programme for improvement we aim continuously to enhance quality standards.

### **Council Tax Percentages (North Wales)**

**Brynle Williams:** Will the Minister state what percentage of council tax collected by north Wales councils is kept by the councils and what percentage is returned to central Government? (WAQ31492)

**Sue Essex:** None of the council tax collected is returned to central Government. Unlike national non-domestic rates, there is no central Government redistribution of council tax. It is a local tax set and collected by local authorities to fund local services.

## Questions to the Minister for Health and Social Services

### Kidney Dialysis Facilities (Mid and West Wales)

**Lisa Francis:** Will the Minister make a statement on kidney dialysis facilities in mid and west Wales? (WAQ31081)

**The Minister for Health and Social Services (Jane Hutt):** The availability of renal dialysis capacity is a growing issue across Wales. The strategic plan of the managed clinical network and Health Commission Wales for mid and west Wales recognises the need to urgently replace the facilities at Carmarthen and Bronglais with modern purpose-built facilities, allowing increased capacity in both locations and a new satellite facility in Pembrokeshire. This replacement and expansion programme will be one of the highest priorities in Health Commission Wales's commissioning plan for 2004-05, together with additional capacity in Swansea.

### The Health Department's Spending Plans

**Nick Bourne:** Will the Minister provide an update on her department's spending plans for the coming year? (WAQ31200)

**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:

- £2.7 billion for local health boards and Health Commission Wales's revenue allocations, which were issued on 15 December 2003 (Welsh health circular (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 have 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 support Wanless reforms.

### Waiting Times

**Nick Bourne:** Will the Minister update us on the length of time people are waiting for treatment in Wales? (WAQ31201)

**Jane Hutt:** The latest waiting times figures are available at:

[http://www.statswales.wales.gov.uk/eng/ReportFolders/Rfview/explorerp.asp?IF\\_ActivePath=P.280.281](http://www.statswales.wales.gov.uk/eng/ReportFolders/Rfview/explorerp.asp?IF_ActivePath=P.280.281).

These relate to the number of people waiting at the end of November 2003. The next release, relating to the number of people waiting at the end of December 2003, will be published on 28 January 2004.

## Health League Tables

**William Graham:** Will the Minister make a statement on the findings of the recently published Cardiff University School of City and Regional Planning health league tables? (WAQ31202)

**Jane Hutt:** A person's lifestyle has an important influence on his or her health. Individual lifestyles are affected by family circumstances, living and working conditions and by the wider cultural and socio-economic environment.

We are taking action to promote smoking prevention and cessation, healthy eating and physical activity in a range of settings, including schools, the workplace and the community. Our strategy to improve health in Wales recognises the issues raised in the Cardiff University report which, in turn, recognises the initiatives that we have launched. 'Wales: A Better Country' already extends beyond the NHS to improve health to tackle the social, economic and environmental factors that affect people's health. It is a solid platform on which to build further. As part of the implementation of the review of health and social care in Wales, there are plans to prepare and implement a coherent, evidence-based programme of actions to prevent ill health and limit disease and disability. This fits in with the Assembly-wide approach to improve health and reduce health inequalities. Capturing and recognising existing work in the prevention field will be intrinsic to the work programme.

## Free Prescription Medicines Not Used by Patients

**Jonathan Morgan:** What a) actual figures and b) estimates does the Welsh Assembly Government have for free prescription medicines which are not used by patients, and will the Minister make a statement? (WAQ31244)

**Jane Hutt:** There is no reliable way of establishing the actual figures for unused prescription medicine, whether free or subject to a prescription charge. There have been some efforts to estimate the cost, and the best figure that we have puts the cost of unused prescription medicine, both free and subject to charge, as around £7 million a year in Wales. I stress that this figure needs to be treated with caution.

## Nursing Services for People with Epilepsy

**Leighton Andrews:** What guidelines are given to general practitioners on providing nursing services to people with epilepsy? (WAQ31266)

**Jane Hutt:** The treatment of patients diagnosed with neurological conditions, including epilepsy, is the responsibility of general practitioners and, where appropriate, NHS trust services. Specialist epilepsy nurses are employed by several trusts across Wales and are governed by clinical guidelines and protocols.

## Haemophiliacs (Treated for Hepatitis C and CJD)

**Jenny Randerson:** How many haemophiliacs in the United Kingdom have been treated in each year since 1975 for (a) hepatitis C, and (b) Creutzfeldt Jakob disease acquired from contaminated blood products? (WAQ31278)

**Jane Hutt:** The number of haemophilia patients who have been treated for hepatitis C is not collected centrally. No haemophilia patients have been diagnosed with variant Creutzfeldt Jakob disease acquired from blood products.

## Haemophiliacs (Deaths from Blood Product Acquired Infections)

**Jenny Randerson:** How many haemophiliacs in Wales died from blood products acquired infections in each year from 1975 to 1987? (WAQ31280)

**Jane Hutt:** Information on the number of haemophilia patients who may have died from hepatitis C from blood products is not collected centrally. Information from the United Kingdom Haemophilia Centre Doctors' Organisation shows that 212 patients with haemophilia have died from liver disease up to January 2000. Viral inactivation of blood products and screening for HIV were first introduced in 1985. Information on the number of haemophilia patients who have died from HIV from blood products is not collected centrally.

### **Cot/Incubator Provision at the University Hospital of Wales**

**Owen John Thomas:** What was the total cot/incubator provision at the University Hospital of Wales's neonatal unit for each of the years April 2002-03 and 2003-04? (WAQ31312)

**Jane Hutt:** On the last day of the financial year 2002-03, 25 staffed beds were allocated at the special care baby unit at the University Hospital of Wales and, during the year, an average of 25.0 were available daily. Data for the financial year 2003-04 are not yet available.

### **Cot/Incubator Provision at Llandough Hospital**

**Owen John Thomas:** What was the total cot/incubator provision at Llandough's neonatal unit for each of the years April 2002-03 and 2003-04? (WAQ31313)

**Jane Hutt:** On the last day of the financial year 2002-03, 17 staffed beds were allocated at the special care baby unit at Llandough Hospital and, during the year, an average of 17.3 were available daily. Data for the financial year 2003-04 are not yet available.

### **Kidney Dialysis Facilities in Gwynedd**

**Lisa Francis:** Will the Minister make a statement on kidney dialysis facilities in Gwynedd? (WAQ31317)

**Jane Hutt:** Patient demand for all forms of renal replacement therapy is increasing year on year, and it is expected that this increase will continue for the next 10 years in line with population projections.

The managed clinical network for renal dialysis and Health Commission Wales are working together to formulate a plan for north Wales. Already this year, Health Commission Wales has agreed a substantial increase in capacity in Conwy and Denbighshire, which will begin to be available in mid to late 2004. In developing the strategic plan for north Wales, the potential for additional satellite facilities will be considered to increase capacity and bring facilities closer to patients. This aspect of the review will consider the balance between travel times for patients, safe standards of care, including medical cover, and the sustainability of nursing provision.

### **The Distribution of Funding to Local Health Boards**

**Alun Cairns:** Further to WAQ30773, would the Minister list the distribution to each local health board in Wales? (WAQ31397)

**Jane Hutt:** The £9.6 million additional funding targeted at orthopaedic waiting times was distributed to local health boards as follows:

Caerphilly	£0.853 million
Blaenau Gwent	£0.550 million
Torfaen	£0.607 million
Monmouthshire	£0.511 million
Newport	£0.879 million
Rhondda Cynon Taff	£0.442 million



Merthyr Tydfil	£0.141 million
Cardiff	£4.000 million
Ceredigion	£0.150 million
Pembrokeshire	£0.050 million
Carmarthenshire	£0.105 million
Swansea	£0.397 million
Bridgend	£0.950 million

### **The Direct Payments Scheme**

**Brynle Williams:** Will the Minister name the councils in Wales that run support services for the direct payments scheme and which are funded by the Assembly? (WAQ31435)

**Jane Hutt:** Responses to our 2003 direct payments scheme local authority survey show that, at August 2003, the only local authority without such a support service in place was Powys. I understand that Powys is considering introducing a support scheme. Assembly support for the direct payments services is part of the local government revenue settlement.

### **Funding Support Services for Direct Payments Scheme**

**Brynle Williams:** Does the Minister plan to fund support services for the direct payments scheme for every council in Wales? (WAQ31485)

**Jane Hutt:** I am about to consult on proposals to develop further the direct payments scheme. The draft direct payments guidance, which forms part of the consultation, encourages local authorities to consider establishing local support schemes. I have made £700,000 available to local authorities from 2004-05 in the local government revenue settlement to meet the costs associated with the development of the direct payments scheme.

The consultation documents will be circulated to interested parties and made available on the Assembly's website.

## **Questions to the Minister for Social Justice and Regeneration**

### **The Post Office Development Fund**

**Val Lloyd:** Can the Minister make a statement on the current situation regarding the post office development fund? (WAQ31262)

**The Minister for Social Justice and Regeneration (Edwina Hart):** The post office development fund was launched in November 2002, and over £1 million has been awarded to 28 individual projects under rounds 1 and 2. In October 2003, I announced to the Social Justice and Regeneration Committee that I had instructed officials to undertake a review of the fund with a view to simplifying how it is managed and operated.

### **The Homelessness Commission Report**

**Peter Black:** What additional research has been commissioned by the Welsh Assembly Government as a consequence of the report of the Homelessness Commission? (WAQ31457)

**Edwina Hart:** One of the recommendations of the Homelessness Commission was that the National Assembly should adopt a strategy for addressing homelessness in Wales. I am pleased to say that we have achieved this objective and that the homelessness strategy for Wales and its objectives now provide a

focus for our future work. There has been progress in taking forward the research-focused objectives, a list of which can be found at annex A.

- Officials are currently contributing to a study commissioned by the Department for Work and Pensions into the effects of the reform of the single room rent regulations;
- we have provided funding to Tai Trothwy's Triangle Wales project to research into homelessness among lesbian, gay and bisexual people;
- we have commissioned external consultants to undertake research into the housing histories of homeless people;
- we have appointed a charities evaluation service to undertake research and produce guidance on gathering the views of homeless people on service provision; and
- the University of York is carrying out an evaluation into the main forms of action taken by agencies to prevent homelessness.

### **Annex A**

Progress with research projects identified in the national homelessness strategy:

- An annual survey of evictions by social landlords has been introduced. More in-depth research has begun on reasons for evictions and how these can be reduced;
- ELWa has commissioned research into the learning needs of clients in supported housing, and the Assembly Government is represented on the steering group;
- We have commissioned ORS to evaluate the outcome of current research to identify gaps in learning opportunities for homeless people;
- Commissioned research into the best methods of consulting homeless people; to include development of good practice guidance for voluntary and statutory agencies;
- Rural affairs division funded research into rural issues, including rural homelessness;
- Evaluation of the outcome of the Salford University project into access to health services for homeless people is currently under way;
- Officials currently contributing to a study commissioned by the Department for Work and Pensions into the effects of the reform of the single room rent regulations;
- Provided funding to Tai Trothwy's Triangle Wales project to research into homelessness among lesbian, gay and bisexual people;
- Commissioned external consultants to undertake research into the housing histories of homeless people;
- Appointed Charities Evaluation Service to undertake research and produce guidance on gathering the views of homeless people on service provision; and
- The University of York carrying out an evaluation into the main forms of action taken by agencies to prevent homelessness.

### **The Social Housing Grant for 2003-04**

**Peter Black:** How much of the social housing grant for 2003-04 has been committed as of 1 January 2004? (WAQ31458)

**Edwina Hart:** For the period ending 31 December 2003, the social housing grant budget shows a commitment of £31,387,024.79. This figure includes grant payments made to date in 2003-04, grant commitments arising from approvals issued in previous years and recycled grants arising from disposals by registered social landlords.

### **The Assembly's Crime Fighting Fund**

**Denise Idris Jones:** Would the Minister give an update on the Welsh Assembly Government's plans for a £100 million crime fighting fund? (WAQ31459)

**Edwina Hart:** The elements that make up the crime fighting fund are already in place, and the fund brings together various funding streams into a new focused package. The crime fighting fund will support us in driving forward one of our key pledges—to build safe and strong communities where people do not live in fear of crime. It also links into our determination to tackle drug-related crime and to improve treatment services for substance misuse addicts.

### **Credit Unions**

**Denise Idris Jones:** Will the Minister make a statement on the development of credit unions in Wales? (WAQ31460)

**Edwina Hart:** The promotion and support of credit unions form part of the Assembly Government's wider agenda to develop a sustainable social economy and regenerate Wales's deprived communities.

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.

This commitment to credit union development will continue over the next three years, where credit unions, as part of the wider co-operative movement, will benefit from increased support through a partnership between the Wales co-operative centre and the Assembly Government. Approximately £750,000 of European structural funds will be levered in to the 'retaining wealth through credit unions' project.

### **Community Safety in the Valleys**

**Leighton Andrews:** Will the Minister make a statement on community safety in the Valleys? (WAQ31461)

**Edwina Hart:** The Welsh Assembly Government continues to support community safety partnerships in their implementation of local strategies, which are having a significant impact on crime and disorder in the Valleys. That the partnerships must now also devise substance misuse strategies will permit a more concerted response to the twin problems of drugs and crime. We have made significant new funding available, and the partnerships have been notified of three-year funding allocations from the new Safer Communities fund. Community safety remains a high priority in many Communities First areas, and the police are offering tangible support to many with designated community beat officers or community support officers.

### **The Reclassification of Cannabis**

**William Graham:** Will the Minister outline her discussions with chief constables in Wales with regard to the implementation of the reclassification of cannabis, which comes into force on 29 January 2004? (WAQ31462) [R]

**Edwina Hart:** I speak regularly with chief constables in Wales about a wide range of issues.

From 29 January, cannabis will still be an illegal drug. It is being reclassified from class B to class C, and possession will still be an offence with a maximum penalty of two years' imprisonment. The maximum penalty for supplying the drug to others remains 14 years' imprisonment.

The Association of Chief Police Officers has issued guidance for the implementation of these changes to the law, and I am sure that the four Welsh police forces will ensure that it is operated consistently throughout Wales.

## **The Fire Service**

**William Graham:** Will the Minister make a statement on developments in the fire service within Wales? (WAQ31463) [R]

**Edwina Hart:** On 24 September, I presented my statement on the devolution of the fire and rescue service to Wales. This stated my intention to work in partnership with all interested parties to ensure a smooth devolution of responsibility, and to work with Government on the modernisation of the service to ensure that we have a fire and rescue service that can meet the needs of the people of Wales, but can also play its role in reacting to wider UK resilience and civil contingencies.

The Fire and Rescue Service Bill has now been published and will commence its passage through Parliament. Assembly officials have been involved in framing the detail of the Bill and are maintaining an ongoing dialogue, as am I, with our counterparts in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister over the ongoing devolution and other post devolution issues.

I will make further announcements when discussions are significantly progressed.

## **Empty Properties in Rural Wales**

**Nick Bourne:** What action is the Minister taking to deal with the problem of empty properties in rural Wales? (WAQ31464)

**Edwina Hart:** Local authorities already have enforcement powers to deal with empty homes. They are able to serve improvement notices, have the power to enter properties and execute works and can also use compulsory purchase. The Assembly Government has encouraged authorities to develop local empty homes strategies making full use of these powers. We have also recently consulted on proposed new arrangements that will strengthen and extend the powers available to authorities.

## **Improving the Quality of Housing in Wales**

**John Griffiths:** Will the Minister make a statement on Assembly Government policy to improve the quality of housing in Wales? (WAQ31467)

**Edwina Hart:** Our wide-ranging plans to improve housing in Wales are set out in our national housing strategy. This includes our vision for the quality that we want for all housing in Wales and our target for all social housing to be achieved by 2012. Recent changes that we have made to private sector renewal arrangements give local authorities much more flexibility to deal with the renewal of older housing.

## **The Role of Affordable Housing in Social Justice and Regeneration**

**Mark Isherwood:** Will the Minister make a statement on the role of affordable housing in social justice and regeneration? (WAQ31468)

**Edwina Hart:** Our vision for housing in Wales is that everyone should have the opportunity to live in good quality, affordable housing, and to be able to choose where they live and decide whether buying or renting is best for them and their families. 'Better Homes for People in Wales', our national housing strategy, sets out many ways in which housing can address the issues of deprivation and social injustice. We remain committed to its delivery.

Achieving the Welsh housing quality standard by 2012 will be a major platform for social and economic regeneration in our most deprived communities through housing improvement, inward investment and job creation. Alongside this, the social housing grant programme will continue to provide resources for the provision of additional affordable housing to meet needs arising throughout Wales.

## **Housing in Mid and West Wales**

**Lisa Francis:** Will the Minister make a statement on housing in mid and west Wales? (WAQ31469)

**Edwina Hart:** The last few months have seen some positive developments in the field of housing in mid and west Wales. The Assembly's financial support for the post of rural housing enabler in south Powys and north Monmouthshire will provide an opportunity to explore rural housing issues and to provide assistance to local communities to identify local solutions to local housing problems.

The declaration of the Cardigan housing renewal area is a welcome advance in community regeneration in the area. This is the first ever renewal area to be declared in Ceredigion and will contribute to the improvement in the living conditions and environment of local residents.

There is anticipation of the publication of both the Powys and Ceredigion housing strategy documents in the coming months. The strategies will identify and quantify the housing situation in the area in both the private and public sectors, and will inform the authorities' priorities for housing in the future.

The Assembly Government will continue to support local authorities to provide an effective housing service to all residents, tenants and homeowners in mid and west Wales.

## **Communities First Projects in Mid and West Wales**

**Lisa Francis:** Will the Minister make a statement about Communities First projects in mid and west Wales? (WAQ31470)

**Edwina Hart:** Around £2.9 million has been awarded for various preparatory activities throughout the Communities First areas in mid and west Wales. These areas have also benefited from an additional £500,491 from the Communities First trust fund and approximately £1.3 million for play and recreational activities for children and young people, and transport and safety initiatives.

## **The Designation of the Energy Efficiency Aim for Wales**

**Mark Isherwood:** Will the Minister make a statement on when she intends to designate the energy efficiency aim for Wales pursuant to section 3 of the Sustainable Energy Act 2003? (WAQ31471)

**Edwina Hart:** The Act requires the National Assembly for Wales to designate at least one energy efficiency aim within one week of the provisions of the Act coming into force in Wales. The Act further requires the Assembly to take reasonable steps to achieve the aim. We are currently considering how best to implement the requirements of the Act having regard to our existing priorities and previously published obligations.

## **The Refusal of a Grant Application (Communities First)**

**Lisa Francis:** Will the Minister make a statement on why the application of a grant (£1,300) made by Aberystwyth town council to the Communities First fund was refused? (WAQ31486) [R]

**Edwina Hart:** Town and community councils are ineligible for funding from the Communities First trust fund, which is only open to voluntary organisations. Town and community councils are not constituted as voluntary organisations, and they receive funding through local taxation or from local authorities. They are, in effect, statutory bodies.

## **Communities First Projects (Advice or Training)**

**Lisa Francis:** Are the local co-ordinators involved in Communities First projects given advice or training enabling them to give advice to applicants for grants? (WAQ31488) [R]

**Edwina Hart:** Local Communities First co-ordinators can seek advice and support from the Communities First support network and Welsh Assembly Government to enable them to give advice to applicants for grants. In addition, in a number of areas across Wales, county voluntary councils also provide advice to co-ordinators.

### **Initiatives to Reduce Crime (Swansea)**

**Val Lloyd:** Can the Minister provide information of initiatives in the Swansea area to reduce levels of crime? (WAQ31590)

**Edwina Hart:** The Swansea community safety partnership continues to make an impact on crime and disorder in the area through its local strategy and targeted initiatives. It is using its allocation from the Assembly's Safer Communities fund to provide situational crime prevention equipment to reassure the public about crime, an alcohol-free zone within the city centre, a mobile vehicle crime-reduction unit and a number of schemes to combat youth annoyance.

Alongside this, the partnership is using the Home Office Building Safer Communities fund to provide a graffiti reduction scheme, burglary reduction projects, an arson awareness initiative, an automatic number-plate recognition system, a zero tolerance policing campaign and reassurance projects to address the fear of crime. In addition, Home Office basic command unit funding will be used to provide for pulse policing, an alcohol-related street violence initiative and an auto crime initiative. Vulnerable small retailers in deprived parts of the city are benefiting from Home Office funding to provide security lighting and reinforced security gating. The partnership has created a new anti-social behaviour unit, which links in with other agencies and has structures in place to provide a comprehensive solution to reported disorderly behaviour.

With its prison population, Swansea is at the forefront of Assembly-funded work on the throughcare and aftercare of prisoners with substance misuse problems. Funding supports prison support workers to help offenders gain key life-skills—a transitional support scheme providing a mentoring service to substance misusers on their release from prison and the Swansea halfway house project, which will provide accommodation and an intensive support package for prisoners on release from jail.

## **Questions to the House Committee**

### **Assembly Meetings in North Wales**

**Brynle Williams:** Will the House Committee representative list all the occasions where Assembly meetings will be held in north Wales? (WAQ31744)

**The Deputy Presiding Officer (John Marek):** Assembly meetings held in north Wales supported by the Presiding Office are as follows:

- Committee meetings—the North Wales Regional Committee meets at various locations in each of the six north Wales local authority areas during each year. Subject Committees aim to meet and undertake visits across Wales. The Culture, Welsh Language and Sport Committee, Economic Development and Transport Committee and Health and Social Services Committee are planning to visit north Wales in the near future:
- Public information service—the north Wales regional public information team engages with members of the public and the education sector at various venues across north Wales. The team aims to raise public awareness and understanding of the National Assembly for Wales and its work. This includes providing a welcome and reception service at North Wales Regional Committee meetings. The team is currently based at a St Asaph office, but will move to the new Presiding Office and visitor centre in

Colwyn Bay by Monday, 2 February 2004. Event schedules are kept of all forthcoming engagements supported by each regional team. They are available from the manager of the regional teams, Jacqui Bowen, telephone: 029 2089 8039 or e-mail [jacqui.bowen@wales.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:jacqui.bowen@wales.gsi.gov.uk).

#### **Plans to Hold Assembly Meetings in England**

**Brynle Williams:** Does the Assembly plan to hold any meetings in England due to accommodation problems in north Wales? (WAQ31745)

**The Deputy Presiding Officer:** There are no such plans for Assembly meetings supported by the Presiding Office.