

# **Answers to the Written Assembly Questions for answer on 1 February 2010**

[R] signifies that the Member has declared an interest.

[W] signifies that the question was tabled in Welsh.

## **Contents**

2	Questions to the First Minister
2	Questions to the Minister for Business and Budget
2	Questions to the Minister for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills
4	Questions to the Deputy First Minister and Minister for the Economy and Transport
6	Questions to the Minister for Environment, Sustainability and Housing
7	Questions to the Minister for Health and Social Services
9	Questions to the Minister for Heritage
10	Questions to the Minister for Rural Affairs
12	Questions to the Minister for Social Justice and Local Government

***To ask the First Minister***

**Andrew RT Davies (South Wales Central):** By how much has the Welsh Assembly Government increased Wales' profile amongst international bodies, including institutions associated with the European Union. (WAQ55523)

***Answer issued on 02 February 2010***

The Welsh Assembly Government is committed to pursuing its policy objectives through international and supranational bodies where appropriate. The Assembly Government aims to influence EU decisions in Wales' favour and engages actively with all the EU institutions: the Council of Ministers, the European Parliament and the European Commission. The Assembly Government has played an active part in a range of international organisations and has taken lead roles in a number, including the Presidency of the Regions with Legislative Power (RegLeg), the Vice Presidency of the European Association for Regional and Local Authorities for Lifelong Learning (EARLALL), and Co-Chair of the Network of Regional Governments for Sustainable Development (nrg4sd), all of which has contributed to raising the profile of Wales.

***To ask the Minister for Business and Budget***

**Andrew RT Davies (South Wales Central):** What is the cost of the task and finish groups relating to the Minister's portfolio for each year since 2005. (WAQ55541)

***Answer issued on 01 March 2010***

The information you requested is not collected.

**Andrew RT Davies (South Wales Central):** What is the cost of the external reviews undertaken by the Minister's department for each year since 2005. (WAQ55549)

***Answer issued on 01 March 2010***

I will write to you as soon as possible and a copy of the letter will be published on the Official Record.

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

**Alun Cairns (South Wales West):** Will the Minister make a statement on any discussions he has had or considerations he has given to the establishment of a Welsh Centre for Financial Education. (WAQ55516)

***Answer issued on 02 February 2010***

The Welsh Assembly Government set up the Welsh Financial Education Unit, in partnership with the Financial Services Authority, in September 2008.

**Alun Cairns (South Wales West):** Will the Minister make a statement on the Welsh Assembly Government's policy on financial education in Wales. (WAQ55517)

***Answer issued on 02 February 2010***

The Welsh Assembly Government's Financial Inclusion Strategy 'Taking Everyone into Account' sets out our plans to address the barriers to financial inclusion and support those who can least afford to be financially excluded.

The strategy gives specific attention to financial education, recognising the importance of ensuring that people have the knowledge and skills to manage their finances and make informed financial decisions. The strategy sets out plans to improve financial education in schools, further and higher education institutions, the workplace and by organisations that help young and often excluded adults. An annual report will be published on the progress made.

**Andrew RT Davies (South Wales Central):** How much progress has been made in relation to the Welsh Assembly Government's promise to halve child poverty by 2010. (WAQ55518)

**Andrew RT Davies (South Wales Central):** How much progress has been made in relation to the Welsh Assembly Government's promise to eradicate child poverty by 2020. (WAQ55533) *Transferred for answer by the Deputy Minister for Children*

*Answer issued on 02 February 2010*

**The Deputy Minister for Children (Huw Lewis):** The Welsh Assembly Government has made clear its commitment to the UK Government's child poverty targets. We are committed to doing all we can within the powers available to us to help achieve the goal of eradicating child poverty in the UK by 2020.

The Children and Families (Wales) Measure, passed by the National Assembly on 10 November 2009, has allowed us to demonstrate that we, in Wales, are ahead of the game and take seriously the challenge of ensuring that we have a robust statutory framework in place to direct and support action on child poverty.

Despite the effects of the recession, Welsh Assembly Government statistics published in November 2009 showed an improvement in half of the child poverty indicators for which we have sufficient data available for an assessment to be made. The statistics relate to indicators monitoring progress against our child poverty strategy targets set out in "Eradicating Child Poverty in Wales: Measuring Success", published in October 2006.

It is vital that the new strategy creates a sense of unified national purpose, working with the UK Government to eradicate child poverty by 2020. The UK Government will be developing its new Child Poverty Strategy to 2020 alongside the Welsh Strategy and it will be important that the Welsh Strategy dovetails with the UK Strategy in view of the significant policy levers at the UK level that have the capacity to reduce levels of income poverty in particular.

It is anticipated that a first draft of the new Child Poverty Strategy will be considered by the Children and Young People Cabinet Committee soon. This will be followed by a period of consultation later this year.

**Andrew RT Davies (South Wales Central):** What is the cost of the task and finish groups relating to the Minister's portfolio for each year since 2005. (WAQ55543) *Transferred for answer by the Minister for Business and Budget*

*Answer issued on 01 March 2010*

**The Minister for Business and Budget (Jane Hutt):** The information you requested is not collected.

**Andrew RT Davies (South Wales Central):** What is the cost of the external reviews undertaken by the Minister's department for each year since 2005. (WAQ55551) *Transferred for answer by the Minister for Business and Budget*

*Answer issued on 01 March 2010*

**Jane Hutt:** I will write to you as soon as possible and a copy of the letter will be published on the Official Record.

*To ask the Minister for the Economy and Transport*

**Andrew RT Davies (South Wales Central):** What work has been done towards the establishment of new National Research Centres. (WAQ55519) *Transferred for answer by the Deputy Minister for Skills, Innovation and Science*

*Answer issued on 02 February 2010*

**The Deputy Minister for Skills, Innovation and Science (Lesley Griffiths):** Government is fully committed to the establishment of Research Centres which will help to draw in substantial additional research funding and develop their international profile. To date, two National Research Centres have been established in Wales- the Research Institute of Visual Computing, and the Wales Institute of Social and Economic Research, Data and Methods (WISERD). The Welsh Assembly Government will continue to support Centres that have demonstrable world-class expertise, a critical mass of research capacity, that are focused on Welsh Assembly Government priority sectors and that have a focus on higher level skills provision.

We will continue with our existing action to create a network of Research Centres in Wales and ensure that the research undertaken increasingly leads to commercialisation and economic impacts as reflected in the priorities set out in “For Our Future”, the national priorities for Welsh Assembly Government’s research match funding and reflecting the importance of developing STEM opportunities in Wales. (science, technology, engineering and mathematics)

The priorities are:

- Digital economy (ICT).
- Low carbon economy (including climate change mitigation).
- Health and biosciences.
- Advanced engineering and manufacturing.

The Higher Education Funding Council for Wales established the Reconfiguration and Collaboration Fund to strengthen the Welsh higher education sector by promoting collaboration between institutions. The Fund supports developments across the full range of institutions’ activities, not just research. It has, however, played an important role in strengthening the research base in Wales by supporting a number of research partnerships.

Research Partnerships funded by the Reconfiguration and Collaboration Fund

Aberystwyth/Bangor Research and Enterprise Partnership

Low Carbon Research Institute

Wales Institute of Cognitive Neuroscience

Wales Institute of Mathematical and Computational Sciences

Wales Institute of Social and Economic Research, Data and Methods (WISERD)

Wales Institute of Visual Computing

Biosciences and Environmental Alliance

Climate Change Consortium

**Andrew RT Davies (South Wales Central):** What work has been done towards the establishment of a National Science Academy. (WAQ55520) *Transferred for answer by the Deputy Minister for Skills, Innovation and Science*

*Answer issued on 02 February 2010*

**Lesley Griffiths:** A scoping study for the One Wales commitment to a National Science Academy was commissioned and undertaken between February and April 2009. The study identified what the Welsh Assembly Government is currently doing, highlighted examples of best practice, investigated any existing barriers to take up of STEM subjects, (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) and put forward recommendations on what the Science Academy needs to achieve for Wales. Further consultations have followed. The Assembly Government will now deliver the Academy which will have a strong pan-Wales co-ordinating role working with existing players, as well as a key role in influencing the curriculum and persuading more young people to study STEM subjects.

**Andrew RT Davies (South Wales Central):** How has the Welsh Assembly Government advanced its pledge to develop a targeted programme to improve skill levels for current and future workplace needs. (WAQ55521) *Transferred for answer by the Deputy Minister for Skills, Innovation and Science*

*Answer issued on 03 February 2010*

**Lesley Griffiths:** Skills are a key driver of both employment and productivity. DCELLS responded quickly to the economic downturn, with a number of targeted initiatives to help individuals and businesses.

ProAct, which provides firms with financial support to increase the skills levels of their workforce has, to date, supported 8357 individuals through 221 training applications.

We also extended ReAct, to help individuals who have been made redundant, return to employment as quickly as possible. We are tackling basic skills in the workplace through our work with Trade Unions and the Basic Skills Employers Pledge.

We have committed £79.7million during the current financial year for investment in our mainstream Apprenticeship programme and £20million in special apprenticeships programmes for young people in specific sectors.

There continues to be high demand for support under the Workforce Development Programme and during the current financial year 1,753 employers have joined the programme, representing 78,603 employees.

The Sector Priorities Fund Pilot Programme is piloting activity with Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) in order to inform recommendations for, and effect a smooth transition to the 2011 Sector Priorities Fund identified in "Skills that Work for Wales". This will ensure the delivery of post-16 skills provision that is more responsive and aligned to the needs of employers. By developing strategic and sustainable partnerships within and between sectors and training providers, we hope to: raise skills levels of employment; raise pay levels of employment; and, enable participants to gain part qualifications.

**Nick Bourne (Mid & West Wales):** What is the Welsh Assembly Government doing to ensure that the construction of the new Pembroke Power Station will provide jobs for British construction workers. (WAQ55535)

*Answer issued on 10 March 2010*

Responsibility for employment and recruitment issues is vested in the Department for Work and Pensions and discharged by Jobcentre Plus.

My officials are presently engaging with local learning providers, the careers service, sector businesses and Jobcentre Plus in exploring whether an up-skilling initiative may be possible to help maximise the

take up jobs in mechanical trades (welding, pipefitting and plating) to support the needs of contractors at the power station and more widely in the local energy labour market.

**Nick Bourne (Mid & West Wales):** What is the Welsh Assembly Government doing to ensure that the building of the new Pembroke Power Station will provide the maximum benefit to local and Welsh businesses during the construction phase. (WAQ55536)

*Answer issued on 03 February 2010*

We are supporting Welsh companies to win business from Alstom, the main contractor for the power station through our EnergyNet Wales programme; the FS4B Networks project, where we have contracted a local company to work with other contractors and buyers for the power station build; through ongoing discussions with RWEpower regarding procurement opportunities for local goods and services for the operational phase of the power station; and through the Pembrokeshire Energy Sector Workforce Development Group.

**Andrew RT Davies (South Wales Central):** What is the cost of the task and finish groups relating to the Minister's portfolio for each year since 2005. (WAQ55539) *Transferred for answer by the Minister for Business and Budget*

*Answer issued on 01 March 2010*

**Jane Hutt:** The information you requested is not collected.

**Andrew RT Davies (South Wales Central):** What is the cost of the external reviews undertaken by the Minister's department for each year since 2005. (WAQ55547) *Transferred for answer by the Minister for Business and Budget*

*Answer issued on 01 March 2010*

**Jane Hutt:** I will write to you as soon as possible and a copy of the letter will be published on the Official Record.

**Lynne Neagle (Torfaen):** When does the Minister expect to implement the extension of the Blue Badge Scheme to parents of children under three who have severe disabilities. (WAQ55554)

*Answer issued on 02 February 2010*

The Blue Badge Action Plan, which I published at the beginning of January, identifies extending eligibility to children under the age of three with specific medical conditions, as a priority. We are currently working on the proposal, which will be consulted upon, and hope that the regulations can be made by 2011.

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

**Andrew RT Davies (South Wales Central):** What improvement has been made by the Welsh Assembly Government in its commitment to tackle homelessness in Wales. (WAQ55522) *Transferred for answer by the Deputy Minister for Housing and Regeneration*

*Answer issued on 02 February 2010*

**The Deputy Minister for Housing and Regeneration (Jocelyn Davies):** Homelessness has been reducing gradually since 2005. Action taken by the Assembly Government has helped to reinforce this downward trend. From June 2007 to June 2009, the headline homelessness figures fell by 17%, whilst the numbers in temporary accommodation came down by 11%. The number of people in Bed and Breakfast accommodation has declined by 14%

In July last year I launched our Homelessness Plan for Wales. This sets out a long term vision based on prevention and early intervention.

I have included homelessness in the Housing Legislative Competence Order which will enable us to change the legislation to meet the needs of Wales.

The financial and housing market environment remains difficult, but we have in place a wide range of action to prevent homelessness. I am confident that with the continued help of the many organisations that play a part in tackling homelessness, we can continue to make progress.

**Andrew RT Davies (South Wales Central):** What progress has been made in the developing of new not-for-profit nursing homes. (WAQ55525) *Transferred for answer by the Deputy Minister for Housing and Regeneration*

*Answer issued on 02 February 2010*

**Jocelyn Davies** The written statement I issued on 10 December 2009 explained that the Welsh Assembly Government has considered a range of options for the development of new not-for-profit nursing homes. The preferred model is the development of an integrated model of services that will provide a broad range of local services and facilities. These may include nursing home bed, day care facilities, Extracare housing, a GP surgery, and a base for community services such as nursing and care. The service would be based on an analysis of local needs.

Officials from Housing and Health and Social Services are working closely with officers in local authorities and Local Health Boards to develop the new model. Demonstration projects are being developed in Builth Wells in Powys and Tregaron in Ceredigion.

**Andrew RT Davies (South Wales Central):** What is the cost of the task and finish groups relating to the Minister's portfolio for each year since 2005. (WAQ55540) *Transferred for answer by the Minister for Business and Budget*

*Answer issued on 01 March 2010*

**Jane Hutt:** The information you requested is not collected.

**Andrew RT Davies (South Wales Central):** What is the cost of the external reviews undertaken by the Minister's department for each year since 2005. (WAQ55548) *Transferred for answer by the Minister for Business and Budget*

*Answer issued on 01 March 2010*

**Jane Hutt:** I will write to you as soon as possible and a copy of the letter will be published on the Official Record.

*To ask the Minister for Health and Social Services*

**Andrew RT Davies (South Wales Central):** What progress has the Welsh Assembly Government made on creating a National Institute of Health Research. (WAQ55524)

*Answer issued on 02 February 2010*

The National Institute for Social Care and Health Research (NISCHR) was launched as a virtual institute in March 2009. I have made new funds available for the development of NISCHR.

**Andrew RT Davies (South Wales Central):** How close is the Welsh Assembly Government to ensuring provision of one family nurse per secondary school by 2011. (WAQ55526)

*Answer issued on 02 February 2010*

We are on target to meet the One Wales commitment to “provide a minimum of one family nurse per secondary school by the end of the Assembly term”. I refer you to my letter of 27 January for detail of progress.

**Andrew RT Davies (South Wales Central):** What progress has been made with regard to eliminating the use of private sector hospitals by the NHS. (WAQ55527)

*Answer issued on 02 February 2010*

The NHS is working to eliminate the need to use private sector hospitals in NHS Wales by the end of 2011.

**Andrew RT Davies (South Wales Central):** How has the Welsh Assembly Government moved forward on its pledge to implement an All-Wales Alcohol Reduction Strategy aiming to increase the number of drug rehabilitation places available in Wales. (WAQ55534)

*Answer issued on 02 February 2010*

In July 2008 guidance was issued to support Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) and treatment providers to improve the quality and capacity of residential rehabilitation and inpatient detoxification (Tier 4) services in Wales.

To assist with this £1m of recurring revenue funding has been made available. Last year this funding provided an additional 80 residential rehabilitation and 37 inpatient detoxification places. In addition CSPs and Tier 4 providers have also been encouraged to access the Substance Misuse Capital Fund to improve the standard of existing facilities and a number of Tier 4 providers have already benefited as a result of this funding. The details of which can be found in my recently published Substance Misuse Annual Progress Report.

A seminar is planned for later this year to review progress and to consider whether any further support is required.

**Andrew RT Davies (South Wales Central):** What is the cost of the task and finish groups relating to the Minister’s portfolio for each year since 2005. (WAQ55538) *Transferred for answer by the Minister for Business and Budget*

*Answer issued on 01 March 2010*

**Jane Hutt:** The information you requested is not collected.



**Andrew RT Davies (South Wales Central):** What is the cost of the external reviews undertaken by the Minister's department for each year since 2005. (WAQ55546) *Transferred for answer by the Minister for Business and Budget*

*Answer issued on 01 March 2010*

**Jane Hutt:** I will write to you as soon as possible and a copy of the letter will be published on the Official Record.

*To ask the Minister for Heritage*

**Andrew RT Davies (South Wales Central):** How much progress has made to boost grassroots sports through the Welsh Assembly Government's pledge to train additional coaches to latest standards. (WAQ55528)

*Answer issued on 02 February 2010*

Since 2004, the Welsh Assembly Government has provided investment of £1.4M per year for the development of coaching through the Coaching Plan for Wales. We now have about 14,000 voluntary coaches in Wales.

As I indicated to you during plenary on 20 January, better coaches can help to encourage participation in sport and we are in discussion with the Sports Council for Wales about a scheme that aims to increase the number of coaches and I plan on making an announcement soon.

**Andrew RT Davies (South Wales Central):** How much progress has been made to boost grassroots sports through the Welsh Assembly Government's pledge to ensure school children undertake at least five hours of physical activity a week. (WAQ55529)

*Answer issued on 02 February 2010*

The Welsh Assembly Government fully supports the development of grassroots sport and good progress is being made to increase the number, quality and range of opportunities for school children to achieve 5 hours a week of physical activity each week.

Schemes such as 5 x 60 continue to make a significant contribution which is about turning schools into hubs of activity so that pupils get active and develop habits that will last a lifetime. Moreover, the Sports Council for Wales are putting structures in place to ensure that there is an effective link and pathway from school participation in sport into joining local sports clubs.

**Andrew RT Davies (South Wales Central):** How has the Welsh Assembly Government taken steps to expand funding and support for Welsh-medium magazines and newspapers, including the establishment of a Welsh-language daily paper. (WAQ55530)

*Answer issued on 02 February 2010*

The Welsh Assembly Government's support for Welsh-medium magazines and newspapers is channelled through the Welsh Books Council. During the 2009-10 financial year, the Welsh Books Council provides grants to the value of £360,000 to support 17 magazines.

The Welsh Books Council also supports the on-line Welsh-language news service, Golwg 360, funded by the Welsh Assembly Government. This fulfils the commitment in One Wales. To this end, a sum of £200,000 annually has been awarded to Golwg Newydd for the period 2008-11.

The Welsh Assembly Government, through the Welsh Language Board, also fund the popular publications papurau bro and they will receive £74,073 during the 2009-10 financial year.

**Andrew RT Davies (South Wales Central):** What is the cost of the task and finish groups relating to the Minister's portfolio for each year since 2005. (WAQ55545) *Transferred for answer by the Minister for Business and Budget*

*Answer issued on 01 March 2010*

**Jane Hutt:** The information you requested is not collected.

**Andrew RT Davies (South Wales Central):** What is the cost of the external reviews undertaken by the Minister's department for each year since 2005. (WAQ55553) *Transferred for answer by the Minister for Business and Budget*

*Answer issued on 1 March 2010*

**Jane Hutt:** I will write to you as soon as possible and a copy of the letter will be published on the Official Record.

### *To ask the Minister for Rural Affairs*

**Andrew RT Davies (South Wales Central):** What steps have been taken in pursuing a programme for bTB eradication. (WAQ55531)

*Answer issued on 02 February 2010*

As I have set out in my updates to the National Assembly for Wales, we have put in place a comprehensive programme to eradicate bovine TB in Wales. We are tackling the disease on all fronts and have already taken considerable steps to address the problem of cattle spreading the disease.

In September 2008 I announced that all cattle herds in Wales would be tested for bovine TB over a 15 month period as part of the TB Health Check Wales initiative. This came to an end in December 2009 and resulted in the slaughter of 185 infected cattle from 96 herds previously thought to be free from bovine TB. Sixty two of these herds were located in North Wales, an area not previously considered to have a significant bovine TB problem. As a consequence of the TB Health Check, the number of overdue tests has been reduced considerably. All cattle herds in Wales will be subject to annual TB testing in 2010 which also means all herds will need to meet Pre-Movement Testing requirements.

A consultation is currently underway on the Tuberculosis and Brucellosis (Wales) Order 2010 which proposes changes to both Pre-Movement Testing exemptions and compensation arrangements, so that farmers who do not comply with TB testing regulations see their compensation reduced.

I believe that we need to deal with all sources of infection in order to achieve eradication. Previous studies have concluded that badgers are a source of bovine TB so in my most recent statement on 13 January 2010 I announced that a limited badger cull, alongside stricter cattle control measures, will take place in a pilot area in west Wales.

We are also setting up a framework to prevent and manage bovine TB in camelids and monitoring levels of bovine TB in feral goats and wild deer.

Information on the TB Eradication Programme, including details of all the measures implemented so far and links to my statements can be found on the Welsh Assembly Government bovine TB website ([www.wales.gov.uk/bovinetb](http://www.wales.gov.uk/bovinetb)) and I will continue to report annually to the Rural Development Sub-Committee.

**Andrew RT Davies (South Wales Central):** What progress has been made in implementing the Strategic Action Plan for the dairy industry. (WAQ55532)

*Answer issued on 02 February 2010*

The Strategic Action Plan for the Welsh dairy industry was launched in November 2007. To date work has focused on efficiency on farms, driving innovation in new production techniques, to new product development. The main aims of the strategy – to provide a sustainable, profitable, efficient and innovative Welsh Dairy Sector, which benefits the people of Wales – are still relevant today, and partners across industry are working together to deliver these aims.

Dairy farmers, like all our farmers in Wales, must look to improve productivity through reducing costs and increasing output. Through Farming Connect we have worked to encourage dairy farmers to adopt more sustainable approaches. We have also worked to develop and demonstrate production systems and management techniques that improve herd health and welfare, to contribute to producer profitability. My view is that this provides us with a strong foundation, and the basis for promoting the dairy industry in Wales.

The dairy industry is vitally important to the Welsh economy, and I am deeply conscious of the pressures it faces. Dairy farming is a dynamic business and, like all businesses, can never remain static. In Wales we may limit exposure to the highly volatile world market and avoid direct competition with the world's lowest cost milk producers by endeavouring to increase the proportion of milk being used for value added products and highlight the high animal welfare and environmental standards practised in Wales.

I believe that there is a positive future for the sector if it embraces the vision contained within the Strategic Action Plan and acts to capitalise on opportunities by working together, increasing production, improving efficiency, increasing product innovation, and concentrating on added value branded markets.

**Andrew RT Davies (South Wales Central):** What is the cost of the task and finish groups relating to the Minister's portfolio for each year since 2005. (WAQ55544) *Transferred for answer by the Minister for Business and Budget*

*Answer issued on 01 March 2010*

**Jane Hutt:** The information you requested is not collected.

**Andrew RT Davies (South Wales Central):** What is the cost of the external reviews undertaken by the Minister's department for each year since 2005. (WAQ55552) *Transferred for answer by the Minister for Business and Budget*

*Answer issued on 01 March 2010*

**Jane Hutt:** I will write to you as soon as possible and a copy of the letter will be published on the Official Record.

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

**Andrew RT Davies (South Wales Central):** What has been done to ensure access to a credit union for every secondary school in Wales by 2011. (WAQ55537)

***Answer issued on 02 February 2010***

Credit unions throughout Wales are working closely with secondary schools to engage more closely with young people. The Assembly Government is currently supporting 15 credit unions through our all-Wales funding programme to develop these partnerships. We have also funded the Wales Co-operative Centre to support this work via a new interactive website resource – CU@theCU - which has been developed to help make these important links between credit unions and secondary schools.

**Andrew RT Davies (South Wales Central):** What is the cost of the task and finish groups relating to the Minister's portfolio for each year since 2005. (WAQ55542) ***Transferred for answer by the Minister for Business and Budget***

***Answer issued on 01 March 2010***

**Jane Hutt:** The information you requested is not collected.

**Andrew RT Davies (South Wales Central):** What is the cost of the external reviews undertaken by the Minister's department for each year since 2005. (WAQ55550) ***Transferred for answer by the Minister for Business and Budget***

***Answer issued on 01 March 2010***

**Jane Hutt:** I will write to you as soon as possible and a copy of the letter will be published on the Official Record.