

Answers to the Written Assembly Questions for answer on 24 February 2011

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

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

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To ask the First Minister

Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales): Will the Minister provide details of all overseas ministerial travel in each of the last three years, broken down into (a) the cost, (b) the destination, (c) the purpose of, and (d) the number of accompanying officials. (WAQ57193)

Information further to WAQ57193 was issued by The First Minister (Carwyn Jones) during March 2011.

Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales): Will the Minister provide details of (a) the cost and (b) the purpose of all hotel accommodation for Ministers in each of the last three years. (WAQ57194)

Answer issued on 28 February 2011

This information could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Angela Burns (Carmarthen West and South Pembrokeshire): What estimate has the Minister made of the number of jobs to be lost in the public sector for which the Welsh Assembly Government is directly responsible over the next 12 months. (WAQ57204)

Answer issued on 02 March 2011

The Permanent Secretary has delegated responsibility for staffing issues in the Welsh Assembly Government. On 8 February, the Permanent Secretary wrote to you, in your role as Chair of the Finance Committee, and detailed the expected further reduction in staffing levels of 350-450 staff within the Assembly Government over the next three years through voluntary exits. We are doing everything we can to minimise the need for job losses. This includes the Managing With Less programme which has resulted in a reduction in spending of £11m to date.

Angela Burns (Carmarthen West and South Pembrokeshire): What is the total number of Welsh Assembly Government staff in each of the last five years. (WAQ57207)

Answer issued on 07 March 2011

The Permanent Secretary has delegated responsibility for staffing issues in the Welsh Assembly Government. The Permanent Secretary will respond to you directly with the details you have requested.

To ask the Minister for Business and Budget

Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales): Will the Minister provide details of the total amount paid in overtime to staff in each of the last three years. (WAQ57190) ***Transferred for answer by the Permanent Secretary***

Answer issued on 03 March 2011

The Permanent Secretary (Dame Gill Morgan): The amount of overtime paid in the 2008/09 and 2009/10 financial years was £962,030.34 and £890,779.03 respectively. At the end of February 2011, the total for 2010/11 stood at £566,700.99.

These figures represent a significant reduction in overtime payments year on year, and are part of our continuing efforts to drive down all elements of staff related costs. Our Managing with Less programme

has engaged staff at all levels and enthused them to develop innovative approaches and ideas to reduce spend across a broad range of administrative areas. As a direct result of this programme, in the first nine months of this year we have reduced administrative spend by over £11 million, in areas ranging from overtime and non permanent staff costs, through to spend on meetings and hospitality.

The reductions in spend brought about through the Managing with Less programme, including overtime, is particularly commendable against a background of reducing staffing levels. This year we have already reduced our headcount by almost 10% and we will be reducing our numbers still further over the next three years. It is at times such as this that overtime and other administrative costs would be expected to increase, as fewer staff are available to meet the organisation's objectives. The fact that we are able to reduce these administrative costs in parallel with staffing numbers is clear evidence of the significant efforts of our staff to increase efficiency and play their part in the economic recovery of Wales.

Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales): Will the Minister provide details of the total amount paid out in bonuses to staff in each of the last three years. (WAQ57191) *Transferred for answer by the Permanent Secretary*

Answer issued on 28 February 2011

The Permanent Secretary (Dame Gill Morgan): In preparing a response to your question, my staff have reviewed the information we hold centrally. Bonuses, or variable pay awards, are determined at the end of the performance year which runs from 1 April to 31 March and awards paid in the following financial year. They are only paid to Senior Civil Service (SCS) level and are part of the contractual entitlements of SCS members.

The rules for variable pay awards are set down by the Cabinet Office. The Prime Minister has asked that, for performance year 2010/11, 25% of SCS staff receive variable pay awards. The SCS Remuneration Committee within the Welsh Assembly Government, which is chaired by a non-executive director, made the decision to implement this recommendation a year early.

The figures below cover variable pay awards for Senior Civil Servants for the last three years.

Performance Year	Financial Year	SCS Variable Pay
2007/08	2008/09	£773,135.14
2008/09	2009/10	£863,054.04
2009/10	2010/11	£262,500.00

Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales): Will the Minister provide details of the total amount spent on corporate credit cards in each of the last three years. (WAQ57192)

Answer issued on 02 March 2011

The amount spent on corporate credit cards/procurement cards over the last three years is £4,779,083 (2008/9), £3,765,816 (2009/10) and £1,910,737 (to date in 2010/11).

Darren Millar (Clwyd West): How much has the Welsh Assembly Government spent on corporate hospitality in each of the last three years. (WAQ57198)

Answer issued on 28 February 2011

The amount spent on Corporate Hospitality was £150,425 in 2009/10 and is £7,861 to date for financial year 2010/11.

Figures prior to 2009/10 were not maintained centrally and would incur disproportionate cost to obtain.

Darren Millar (Clwyd West): How much has the Welsh Assembly Government spent on (a) wine, (b) beer and (c) spirits in each of the last three years. (WAQ57199)

Answer issued on 28 February 2011

The Assembly Government does not incur expenditure on wine, beer or spirits.

Darren Millar (Clwyd West): How much has the Welsh Assembly Government spent on bottled water in each of the last three years. (WAQ57200)

Answer issued on 28 February 2011

The Assembly Government does not incur any expenditure in the purchase of bottled water.

Darren Millar (Clwyd West): How much has the Welsh Assembly Government spent on postage in each of the last three years. (WAQ57201)

Answer issued on 28 February 2011

Postage costs are not separately identified and to obtain them would incur disproportionate costs.

Angela Burns (Carmarthen West and South Pembrokeshire): What is the total amount of empty office space in the Welsh Assembly Government estate and what is the estimated annual cost of maintaining it in each of the last three years. (WAQ57209)

Answer issued on 28 February 2011

Total vacant space on the Welsh Assembly Government's administrative estate and associated annual costs for each of the last three financial years are as follows:

As at	Total Vacant Space (sq m)	Total Annual Cost (£)
31 March 2009	3,660	922,173
31 March 2010	1,441	344,073
31 March 2011	1,817	449,927

The total proportion of vacant space on the Assembly Government's administrative estate compares favourably with the Central Civil Mandated Estate. The Office of Government Commerce reported the national average for vacant space on the Central Civil Mandated Estate to be in the order of 2.33% as at 31st December 2009. The Assembly Government's published State of the Estate report for 2009/10 reports vacant floor area at only 1.53% of the total as at 31st March 2010. Estimated vacant space on the administrative estate as at 31 March 2011 is 1.77% of the total estate.

It should be noted that the cost information shown in the above table reflects whole year occupational costs, which include all usual building running costs such as rent, rates, service charge, utilities, cleaning and maintenance. Certain properties were vacant for only part of the year so the actual cost of vacant accommodation would have been less.

To ask the Minister for Children, Education and Lifelong Learning

Darren Millar (Clwyd West): Will the Minister provide details of the total number of new regulations imposed on schools in Wales in each of the last three years. (WAQ57197)

Answer issued on 02 March 2011

In 2010, 8 Statutory Instruments were made in respect of schools.
In 2009, 23 Statutory Instruments were made in respect of schools.
In 2008, 15 Statutory Instruments were made in respect of schools.

To ask the Minister for the Economy and Transport

Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales): Further to the Minister's response to WAQ57139, will the Minister provide details of the levels of funding set aside by the Welsh Assembly Government in order to "strengthen our presence in London". (WAQ57187)

Answer issued on 02 March 2011

We have made our clear commitment to strengthen our London presence to maximise commercial opportunities for Wales from London and the South East of England. We are currently considering how best to take this forward. These detailed considerations will enable us to make an informed decision on the level of funding required going forward.

Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales): Further to the Minister's response to WAQ57139, will he provide details of (a) the total number of staff, (b) civil service grades, and (c) job titles and responsibilities he envisages would be required to strengthen the Welsh Assembly Government's presence in London. (WAQ57188)

Answer issued on 02 March 2011

The precise number of staff, their grades, and job titles are subject to a review that we are currently undertaking to inform us on how we can best utilise our London presence to exploit current and future commercial and economic development opportunities for the benefit of Wales.

Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales): Further to the Minister's response to WAQ57139, will he provide details of decisions taken on (a) the location of any new offices, (b) floor space, (c) rental cost per month, and (d) length of lease required to strengthen the Welsh Assembly Government's presence in London. (WAQ57189)

Answer issued on 02 March 2011

We are currently considering how we might best utilise our presence in London to capitalise fully on the commercial opportunities presented by companies based in the South East of England. Decisions about any additional accommodation needs in London will be taken only once the way forward is clear.

Mick Bates (Montgomeryshire): Will the Minister outline details of the 'Pass Plus Cymru' scheme supported by the Welsh Assembly Government. (WAQ57202)

Mick Bates (Montgomeryshire): Will the Minister clarify the total financial support given by the Welsh Assembly Government for the 'Pass Plus Cymru' scheme giving details on how this funding is spent. (WAQ57203)

Answer issued on 02 March 2011

Pass Plus Cymru is targeted at young, newly qualified drivers. It involves a three hour discussion forum aimed at increasing drivers' awareness and knowledge of key driving issues. This is followed by a minimum of eight hours practical driving with an Approved Driving Instructor. Responsibility for running Pass Plus Cymru rests with the local authorities who can use our Local Road Safety Grant funding to subsidise the cost of the course. The Assembly Government does not hold information on individual authorities spend on running Pass Plus Cymru.

To ask the Minister for Environment, Sustainability and Housing

Mark Isherwood (North Wales): Will the Minister detail any plans relating to access agreements on the River Dee. (WAQ57210)

Answer issued on 28 February 2011

The Assembly Government has no plans relating to an access agreement on the River Dee. A sub-group of the Water Recreation Ministerial Advisory Group has noted that securing opportunities for improving access to the River Dee, in the section from Llangollen to Farndon, would be worthy of support. We would respond positively through our agencies and with the Splash Water Recreation Fund to any request from local stakeholders to make progress here.

To ask the Minister for Health and Social Services

Darren Millar (Clwyd West): Will the Minister provide details of the total number of new regulations imposed on the NHS in Wales in each of the last three years. (WAQ57196)

Answer issued on 28 February 2011

This information is in the public domain and can be found on the Assembly Commission's website at: <http://www.assemblywales.org/bus-home/bus-legislation/bus-legislation-sub.htm>

To ask the Minister for Rural Affairs

Darren Millar (Clwyd West): Will the Minister provide details of the total number of new regulations imposed on the farming industry in Wales in each of the last three years. (WAQ57195)

Answer issued on 02 March 2011

The Welsh Assembly Government has made approximately 24 new farming based regulations (Welsh Statutory Instruments) since 2008. This covers the making of nine in 2008, six in 2009 and nine in 2010. Two amendment regulations are covered in these figures as I consider that they result in additional requirements for the farming industry.

You should also note that some of these regulations:

- are deregulatory;
- are purely technical in nature with no effect on industry;
- would only be used in the event of an outbreak of exotic disease;
- consolidate requirements from earlier regulations;
- are revocations and remakes of previous regulations; or
- provide voluntary schemes for industry to participate.

A full consultation process is undertaken with industry before regulations are implemented.

You will also be aware that in January 2008 I announced a review of Red Tape - designed to reduce the bureaucratic burden on the farming industry.

The Review is not time bound; it is an ongoing commitment to ensure that reducing bureaucracy is mainstreamed within policy, operational and delivery activities. It recognised, at an early point, that farmers, themselves, have an important role to play in reducing bureaucracy. Consequently, effort has been put into alerting farmers to the main areas on non compliance and educating them on ways to address these issues.

Mick Bates (Montgomeryshire): Will the Minister give an update on discussions between Welsh Government officials and the Welsh Local Government Association regarding the funding mechanism for animal health and welfare enforcement activity in Wales. (WAQ57216)

Answer issued on 02 March 2011

Officials met with WLGA and local authority representatives on 3 February to discuss the future funding of Animal Health enforcement work, then wrote to WLGA and local authority chief executives on 18 February to detail the maximum available funding for each authority during the 2011/12 financial year, subject to the appropriate budget being transferred from DEFRA to the Assembly Government.

Payment for the 2011/12 period will be made via a grant and discussions continue with WLGA and local authority representatives to agree a simple administration process, to include monitoring of outcomes. Discussions will also consider future alternative delivery systems given the reduced funding for the remainder of the spending review period.

To ask a Representative of the Assembly Commission

Angela Burns (Carmarthen West and South Pembrokeshire): Will the Commission provide details of the number of staff (a) disciplined, (b) suspended and (c) dismissed in each of the last five years. (WAQ57205)

Answer issued on 23 February 2011

Assembly Commissioner for Assembly Resources, William Graham AM:

The details you request are shown in the table below:

Year	Number of staff		
	Disciplined ^{1,2}	Suspended ³	Dismissed
2010-11 (to 21 February 2011)	5 + 2 in progress	5	1
2009-10	9	0	4
2008-09	14	1	1
2007-08	10	0	2
2006-07	11	0	0

¹ As at date of outcome of disciplinary procedure

² Formal disciplinary processes only

³ As at date of suspension

Angela Burns (Carmarthen West and South Pembrokeshire): What is then total number of Commission staff in each of the last five years. (WAQ57208)

Answer issued on 23 February 2011

Assembly Commissioner for Assembly Resources, William Graham AM:

The details you request are shown in the table below:

As at	Number of Staff	
	Total Headcount	Full-time equivalents
31 January 2011	345	330.52
31 March 2010	379	364.38
31 March 2009	362	348.20
31 March 2008	321	308.11
31 March 2007	300	286.75