

Written Questions answered from 22 to 29 November 2001

[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

Savings on Assembly Sponsored Public Bodies

Nick Bourne: Could the First Minister set out what savings there have been on Assembly sponsored public bodies in the last 12 months, the 12 months previously, and if any are expected in the next 12 months? (WAQ14404)

The First Minister (Rhodri Morgan): Efficiency savings achieved by Assembly sponsored public bodies cannot be quantified specifically. ASPB accounting officers are required to ensure that their respective bodies achieve value for money and there is a presumption that ASPBs will seek opportunities to achieve savings in the course of their work. National Assembly guidance to ASPBs on the preparation of their annual pay remit applications requires them to identify the extent to which efficiency gains can be used to offset pay costs. Bids for resources by ASPBs are also subject to robust scrutiny in the context of the Assembly's annual budget planning round, and the targets and commitments set out in their respective corporate and operational plans.

Cancelled Meetings

Alun Cairns: Will the First Minister please list all meetings cancelled that he had scheduled for the week commencing 12 November 2001? (WAQ14405)

The First Minister: None save for the Liège Conference of Presidents of Regions with Legislative Powers.

Co-ordinating Policy on European Matters

Peter Black: Will the First Minister make a statement on how he co-ordinates Ministers' and Government policy on European matters? (WAQ14438)

The First Minister: I co-ordinate ministerial and Government policy on European matters through the Cabinet. Formulation of policy is informed primarily by the Committee on European Affairs, which I chair and by the Subject Committees.

Questions on Economic Development to the First Minister

Addressing Unemployment in Powys

Nick Bourne: What is being done to address the unemployment figures in Talgarth? (WAQ14380)

Nick Bourne: What is being done to address the unemployment figures in Knighton? (WAQ14381)

Nick Bourne: What is being done to address the unemployment figures in Llandrindod Wells? (WAQ14382)

Nick Bourne: What is being done to address the unemployment figures in Ystradgynlais? (WAQ14383)

The First Minister: Powys is benefiting from the £60 million additional funding for the rural recovery plan, which includes specific measures to support rural businesses of all kinds, including tourism and the development and diversification of farm businesses. Education and Learning Wales has prioritised existing expenditure to help areas hit by foot and mouth disease. The Welsh Development Agency is actively working in the specific areas concerned to develop sites and market the areas to investors. The areas will benefit from the Objective 2 programme. Ystradgynlais is also an assisted area and thus eligible for additional support from the Welsh Development Agency and the Welsh Assembly Government.

These measures and those in the Welsh Assembly Government's economic development strategy 'A Winning Wales' will improve employment across Wales and help find employment for the 272 unemployed claimants in Talgarth, Knighton, Llandrindod Wells and Ystradgynlais.

Cymorth Rhanbarthol Dewisol a Gynigiwyd i BT

Ieuan Wyn Jones: A wnaiff Prif Weinidog Cymru ddatgan maint y cymorth rhanbarthol dewisol a gynigiwyd i BT ar gyfer canolfan data rhyngrywyd 'Ignite' yng Nghaerdydd? (WAQ14395) [W]

Prif Weinidog Cymru: Caiff manylion am gynigion unigol o gymorth rhanbarthol dewisol o £75,000 neu fwy eu cyhoeddi yn *Labour Market Trends* yn y chwarter cyntaf yn dilyn talu rhandaliad cyntaf y grant. Dyma fu'r arfer yn y Deyrnas Unedig ers dros 25 mlynedd ac mae'n cynrychioli cydbwysedd rhwng cyfrinachedd masnachol a rhyddid gwybodaeth.

Regional Selective Assistance Offered to BT

Ieuan Wyn Jones: Will the First Minister state the amount of regional selective assistance subsidy offered to BT for the internet data centre 'Ignite' in Cardiff? (WAQ14395) [W]

The First Minister: Details of individual offers of regional selective assistance of £75,000 or above are published in *Labour Market Trends* in the first quarter following payment of the first instalment of grant. This has been the practice across the United Kingdom for over 25 years and represents a balance between commercial confidentiality and freedom of information.

Best of Rural Wales E-commerce Project

Peter Rogers: How much public money has been spent on the best of rural Wales e-commerce site? (WAQ14412)

The First Minister: The total cost of the best of rural Wales e-commerce project is a little over £285,000 of which around £105,000 is website costs. The whole project is publicly funded.

Objective 1 Projects (Anglesey County Council)

Peter Rogers: Will the First Minister list all those approved Objective 1 projects where Anglesey County Council was the sponsor? (WAQ14494)

The First Minister: This information is available through the Welsh European Funding Office website. The current list of approved projects submitted by the council is as follows:

Fund/Project	Grant
European regional development fund:	
MONSAFLE	£668,000
MONFENTER	£216,000
European social fund:	
Môn shared apprenticeship	£9,082

Objective 1 Applications (Anglesey County Council)

Peter Rogers: Will the First Minister list all those applications for Objective 1 funding where Anglesey County Council was the sponsor? (WAQ14495)

The First Minister: Details of applications which have not yet been approved, or which have been rejected or withdrawn, are not normally published. Details of approved projects are available on the Welsh European Funding Office website.

Questions to the Minister for Assembly Business

‘The People’s ICT Network’ Initiative

Rosemary Butler: What impact will ‘the people’s ICT network’ initiative have on libraries throughout Wales? (WAQ14595)

The Minister for Assembly Business (Andrew Davies): We have provided £6.5 million, through the new opportunities fund, for the people’s information and communications technology network in public libraries. All public libraries, where practicable, should be online by the end of 2002 and the number of computer terminals in Welsh public libraries will rise from about 200 to some 2,000. No Welsh authority plans to charge for the service.

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

Promoting the Arts in Mid and West Wales

Nick Bourne: What is the Minister doing to promote the arts in mid and west Wales? (WAQ14587)

The Minister for Culture, Sport and the Welsh Language (Jenny Randerson): Last year, the Arts Council of Wales spent £2.53 million in mid and west Wales.

As a result of the excellent budget outcome, the Arts Council of Wales will receive an increase of nearly £3 million next year on top of the £1.3 million increase already planned. This will enable it to increase its level of support to all aspects of the arts in Wales.

In addition, the council plans to open a regional office in mid Wales designed to improve the service it provides to its clients in that area.

Wales’s Profile Abroad

Rosemary Butler: What steps has the Minister taken within her portfolio to extend the profile of Wales abroad? (WAQ14588)

Jenny Randerson: In the year since I was appointed as Minister for Culture, Sport and the Welsh Language I have visited Belgium, Luxembourg and the United States to raise the profile of Wales. My officials have also been forging links with UNESCO, the UN’s education, science and culture organisation.

I have asked the Arts Council of Wales to strengthen Wales Arts International, the partnership body it jointly funds with the British Council. Wales Arts International’s remit is to raise the profile of Wales abroad through support for cultural events and for artists.

The Wales Tourist Board (a member of Cymru’n Creu) is working with the cultural Assembly sponsored public bodies to increase the contribution cultural tourism makes to the Welsh economy.

A Cymru’n Creu ICT sub-group is building on the ‘gathering the jewels’ project to utilise new technologies in digital format to better display the treasures of Wales, both at home and abroad.

Questions to the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning

Developing Parental Choice in Education

Alun Cairns: Would the Minister make a statement on any plans to develop parental choice in education? (WAQ14280)

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning (Jane Davidson): I have no plans to further develop parental choice in education. Parents already have a right to express a preference for the school they would like their child to attend, including preferences for Welsh-medium and denominational schools in many areas. This is not an absolute right to choose a school, because school places are limited and popular schools may receive applications for more pupils than they can accommodate. Admission authorities nevertheless have a duty to comply with the preferences parents have expressed unless to do so would prejudice efficient education in the school.

Developing Welsh-medium Education

Alun Cairns: Would the Minister make a statement on developing Welsh-medium education? (WAQ14281)

Jane Davidson: It is the responsibility of local education authorities to assess the demand for Welsh-medium education within their areas and to make appropriate provision for it. I look to LEAs to set out forecasts of demand for a five-year planning period in their annual school organisation plans and, within the wider context of managing the supply of school places, to indicate whether they need to make additional Welsh-medium places available.

Special Educational Needs Tribunals

Lorraine Barrett: Can the Minister give a statement on the progress of special educational needs tribunals? (WAQ14282)

Jane Davidson: The SEN tribunal was set up in 1994 and operates in accordance with sections 333 to 336 of the Education Act 1996. It is an England and Wales tribunal, the functions of which are not currently devolved to the Assembly.

In the year September 2000 to August 2001, there were 2,728 appeals compared to 2,463 in the previous year, an increase of over 10 per cent. Of these, 113 were Welsh, compared to 106 in the previous year. The Welsh LEAs with the greatest number of appeals were Bridgend with 16, Newport with 14, Cardiff with 12, and Flintshire with 11.

My proposal to establish a separate SEN tribunal for Wales was set out in the paving document 'The Learning Country' and I have had discussions on this matter with the Secretary of State for Education and Skills. These discussions are ongoing and I propose to seek at the earliest opportunity an appropriate power to establish such a separate tribunal for Wales.

The Wales Union Learning Fund

Ann Jones: Will the Minister make a statement on the Wales union learning fund? (WAQ14284)

Jane Davidson: The Wales union learning fund was launched in April 1999 to promote learning activity by trade unions in partnership with others, which is innovative and supports the National Assembly's objective of creating a lifelong learning society in the widest sense. Since its launch, the Wales union learning fund has funded over 40 projects, with over £800,000 being contributed by the Assembly to promote and embed activity by trade unions to support the Assembly's objective of making Wales a

learning country. In addition, it has provided funds of £300,000 towards a special project, which is a part of the Corus mitigation measures.

The success of the Wales union learning fund is due to the innovation and hard work of trade unions and training providers, supported by the National Assembly for Wales and Wales TUC. This has directly resulted in many people receiving, and tangibly benefiting from, training which would otherwise not be available to them.

I am pleased that, as a result of this success, from April 2002, I have increased the maximum funding available for each project from £25,000 to £35,000 for one-year projects, and from £50,000 to £70,000 for two-year projects. We are currently undertaking an external evaluation of the Wales union learning fund to ensure that it is working as effectively as possible in meeting its aims.

Tribiwnlys Anghenion Addysgol Arbennig (Ceisio am Aelodaeth)

Gareth Jones: Beth fydd y trefniadau ar gyfer ceisio am aelodaeth o'r tribiwnlys anghenion addysgol arbennig ar ôl i achosion y tribiwnlys gael eu trosglwyddo i'r Cynulliad? (WAQ14393) [W]

Jane Davidson: Mae hwn yn un o nifer o faterion y byddai angen i ni eu hystyried pe bai'r pŵer angenrheidiol i sefydlu tribiwnlys anghenion addysgol arbennig i Gymru yn cael ei ddatganoli i'r Cynulliad. (Yr oedd darpariaeth i'r perwyl hwn yn rhan o'r Mesur Addysg drafft a gyhoeddwyd yn gynharach heddiw, ac a fydd bellach yn gorfod cwblhau ei daith drwy'r Senedd.)

Special Educational Needs Tribunal (Seeking Membership)

Gareth Jones: What arrangements will be made for seeking membership of the special educational needs tribunal when tribunal matters will be devolved to the Assembly? (WAQ14393) [W]

Jane Davidson: This is one of several issues that would need to be considered should the necessary power to establish a separate special educational needs tribunal for Wales be devolved to the Assembly. (Such a provision features in the draft Education Bill announced earlier today and which will now need to successfully complete its passage through Parliament.)

Tribiwnlys Anghenion Addysgol Arbennig

Gareth Jones: Pryd y bydd y tribiwnlys anghenion addysgol arbennig yn cael ei drosglwyddo dan adain y Cynulliad? (WAQ14394) [W]

Jane Davidson: Ceir darpariaeth ar gyfer tribiwnlys anghenion addysgol arbennig i Gymru yn y Mesur Addysg drafft a gyhoeddwyd heddiw. Pe bai'r Mesur yn cwblhau ei daith drwy'r Senedd, yr wyf yn rhagweld y byddai tribiwnlys o'r fath yn cael ei sefydlu o 2003 ymlaen.

Special Educational Needs Tribunal

Gareth Jones: When will the special educational needs tribunal be devolved to the Assembly? (WAQ14394) [W]

Jane Davidson: Provision for a separate special educational needs tribunal for Wales is made in the draft Education Bill that has been announced today. Subject to its successful passage through Parliament, I would anticipate the establishment of such a tribunal from 2003.

Sale of Educational Establishments used for Sporting Activities

Glyn Davies: How many parts of education establishments (schools, universities, colleges etc) which have been used for sporting activities have been sold in Wales since 1 May 1997? (WAQ14428)

Jane Davidson: This information is not collected centrally.

Financial Support for Mature Students

Delyth Evans: What financial support is available to mature students in Wales? (WAQ14597)

Jane Davidson: A range of financial support is available to all students, depending on their individual circumstances, the majority of which is statutory support provided by the Department for Education and Skills. This includes additional measures to support mature students who may have parental or other responsibilities. In higher education these include: a means-tested childcare grant and/or dependants grant; a non-repayable bursary; an income-assessed grant to meet their children's school meals costs; and further support, depending on circumstances, from the hardship fund provided by the Assembly *via* the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales. Income assessment for mature students has been eased substantially, since many have financial commitments that younger students do not.

Students in further education may apply to their local education authority for a discretionary award. The National Assembly also makes access funds available to all publicly funded further education institutions, *via* the national council to enable them to provide selective help, at their discretion, to students who have financial difficulties. The Assembly has also established individual learning accounts to help promote lifelong learning and to improve skill levels.

Financial Support for Part-time Mature Access Students

Delyth Evans: What financial support is available to part-time mature access students? (WAQ14598)

Jane Davidson: Regarding general support available to students, I refer you to my reply to WAQ14597. In addition, it is open to mature students enrolled on part-time access courses to apply to their institution for assistance from the access/hardship fund, which may be awarded at the institution's discretion to students who find themselves in financial difficulty. They may also apply for an individual learning account or a career development loan.

Questions to the Minister for Environment

Yr Adolygiad o Eithriadau i Reoliadau Trwyddedu Rheoli Gwastraff 1994

Ieuan Wyn Jones: A wnaiff y Gweinidog roi dyddiad cychwyn yr adolygiad o eithriadau i Reoliadau Trwyddedu Rheoli Gwastraff 1994? (WAQ14389) [W]

Y Gweinidog dros yr Amgylchedd (Sue Essex): Mae'n debyg y bydd Adran yr Amgylchedd, Bwyd a Materion Gwledig a'r Cynulliad Cenedlaethol yn cyhoeddi papur ymgynghori ar y cyd ar yr adolygiad o eithriadau yn gynnar y flwyddyn nesaf.

The Review of Waste Management Licensing Regulations 1994 Exemptions

Ieuan Wyn Jones: Would the Minister give the starting date of the review of Waste Management Licensing Regulations 1994 exemptions? (WAQ14389) [W]

The Minister for Environment (Sue Essex): It is likely that a joint Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs/National Assembly consultation paper on the review of exemptions will now be issued early next year.

Digolledu Busnesau

Ieuan Wyn Jones: Dan ba amgylchiadau y mae'r Cynulliad yn gallu digolledu busnesau pan fo gwaith adeiladu ffyrdd yn digwydd? (WAQ14390) [W]

Sue Essex: Os caiff tir unrhyw fusnes ei brynu'n orfodol, y prif Ddeddfau sy'n rheoli digolledu yw Deddf Digolledu Tir 1961, Deddf Digolledu Tir 1973, a Deddf Cynllunio a Digolledu 1991.

Os na chaiff unrhyw dir ei gymryd, mae dyletswydd ar y Cynulliad, o dan adran 10 Deddf Prynu Gorfodol 1965, i dalu iawndal os yw'r gwaith o adeiladu priffordd yn amharu ar hawl gyfreithiol, a hynny'n arwain at leihad yng ngwerth eiddo. Gall hynny ddigwydd os yw'r gwaith adeiladu yn difrodi adeilad, er enghraifft, neu'n rhwystro mynediad. Dim ond mewn amgylchiadau prin y gellir gwneud y taliadau hyn, ac ychydig o achosion o'r fath sy'n codi.

Compensating Businesses

Ieuan Wyn Jones: Under what circumstances can the Assembly compensate businesses while road construction work is in progress? (WAQ14390) [W]

Sue Essex: Where land has been compulsorily acquired from a business, the main bases of compensation are the Land Compensation Act 1961, the Land Compensation Act 1973, and the Planning and Compensation Act 1991.

Where no land is taken, the Assembly has an obligation under section 10 of the Compulsory Purchase Act 1965 to pay compensation when a legal right has been infringed by the execution of highway works, and this has resulted in depreciation of the capital value of the business. This might occur, for example, when the construction works cause damage to property or when access arrangements are obstructed. The circumstances in which payments of this kind can be made are very restricted, and very few cases arise.

The Britannia Bridge Assessment

Ieuan Wyn Jones: Will the Minister publish the results of the Britannia bridge assessment conducted by Railtrack plc? (WAQ14396)

Sue Essex: The results of the Britannia bridge assessments can be made available, on request, when the assessment has been completed. It is not current practice to publish the results of bridge assessments.

Plans to Restructure the M4

Jonathan Morgan: Does the Minister have any plans to restructure the M4 road in the south Wales region? (WAQ14439)

Sue Essex: My officials in the Transport Directorate are concluding their work on further options for addressing the problems of the M4 at Newport and will be advising me of their findings shortly.

An Airport for South-east Wales

Jonathan Morgan: Is she aware of any plans to develop a new airport for south-east Wales? (WAQ14440)

Sue Essex: A consortium lead by Severnside International Airport Limited have expressed an interest in developing a severnside airport but have not submitted an application for an order under the Transport and Works Act 1992.

The Cost of Providing Free Public Transport

Janet Ryder: Has the Minister held discussions with local authorities regarding the cost of providing free public transport for the elderly? (WAQ14487)

Sue Essex: The concessionary fares working group (including representatives of local government, bus operators and my officials) has examined the cost of providing free public transport for the elderly. The extra costs identified have been included in the revenue support grant settlement for 2002-03. We are also funding a study of the costs of implementation. I have also discussed concessionary fares with the Welsh Local Government Association.

Research into the Real Costs of Free Bus Fares

Janet Ryder: When will the research into the real costs of free bus fares for the elderly for local authorities be concluded? (WAQ14488)

Sue Essex: The study into actual costs on the use of free bus concessions from April 2002 will be concluded in February 2003, i.e. obtaining data from a significant operational period.

Y Cynllun i Wella'r A497 ger Llanystumdwy

Dafydd Wigley: Beth oedd y rheswm dros yr oedi rhwng 4 Mai 2000, pan gyflwynodd yr arolygydd ei adroddiad ar y cynllun i wella'r A497 ger Llanystumdwy, a'r 26 Medi 2001 pan gyflwynwyd llythyr gan yr Arolygiaeth Gynllunio i Gyngor Sir Gwynedd yn nodi materion yn codi o'r ymchwiliad cyhoeddus; ac a wnaiff y Gweinidog ddatganiad ar y mater hwn? (WAQ14508) [W]

Sue Essex: Y prif reswm am yr oedi oedd bod yr Arolygiaeth Gynllunio wedi cael anawsterau gweithredu gorchymynion prynu gorfodol ddiwedd blwyddyn 2000 a dechrau'r flwyddyn hon. Cyfrannodd hyn, a'r angen i roi blaenoriaeth i gynlluniau ffordd pedwar awdurdod lleol arall oedd i fod dechrau o'i flaen, at yr oedi a amlinellwyd yn eich cwestiwn.

Er hynny, mae'r Arolygiaeth Gynllunio wedi cymryd camau i ddatrys y problemau a bellach mae mwy o adnoddau wedi'u neilltuo i'r gwaith. Mae'r llythyr a anfonwyd at Gyngor Sir Gwynedd ar 26 Medi, o ganlyniad, yn rhestru tua 80 o faterion y bydd gofyn i'r cyngor i fynd i'r afael â hwy, gan gynnwys trefnlen diwygiedig a chaffael tir ychwanegol. Unwaith y derbynnir ei ymateb, a bod yr Arolygiaeth Archwilio a Swyddfa Cwnsler Cyffredinol y Cynulliad yn fodlon â'r modd y'u datrys, gall yr achos fynd yn ei flaen.

Nid yw'n bosibl i mi ddweud wrthyf pryd caiff penderfyniad ei wneud ar y gorchymyn am nad wyf yn gwybod faint o amser y bydd ei angen ar y cyngor i fynd i'r afael â'r materion a godwyd. Gallaf, er hynny, eich sicrhau y gwneir popeth sy'n bosibl i hwyluso'r broses o ystyried a phennu'r gorchymyn unwaith y bydd y materion hynny wedi'u datrys.

The A497 Improvement Scheme near Llanystumdwy

Dafydd Wigley: What was the reason for the delay between 4 May 2000, when the inspector submitted his report on the A497 improvement scheme near Llanystumdwy, and 26 September 2001, when a letter was sent by the Planning Inspectorate to Gwynedd County Council to note matters arising from the public inquiry; and would the Minister make a statement on this matter? (WAQ14508) [W]

Sue Essex: The main reason for the delay is that the Planning Inspectorate has experienced operational difficulties with respect to compulsory purchase orders in the latter part of 2000 and the early part of this year. That, together with the need to give priority to four other local authority road schemes with more imminent start construction dates, has been the major contributory factor to the delay outlined in your question.

However, the Planning Inspectorate has taken steps to overcome these problems and extra resources have now been allocated to this work. Consequently, the letter sent to Gwynedd County Council on 26 September detailed some 80 issues to be addressed by the council, including revised schedules and additional land take. Once its response has been received, and those issues resolved to the satisfaction of the Planning Inspectorate and the Assembly's Office of the Counsel General, the case will be able to move forward to conclusion.

It is not possible for me to tell you when a decision will be made on the order as I do not know how long it will take the council to address the issues raised with it. I can, however, assure you that everything possible will be done to expedite consideration and determination of the order once those issues have been resolved.

Questions to the Minister for Finance, Local Government and Communities

Future Cost of Civil Servants

Nick Bourne: Are any additional costs expected for civil servants in the next 12 months and, if so, where? (WAQ14379)

The Minister for Finance, Local Government and Communities (Edwina Hart): The cost of fair and equal pay for Assembly civil servants was set out in the draft budget. Other increases in costs due next year result from the Assembly taking on new functions, for example the Care Standards Inspectorate. Provision for these costs is included in the final budget.

Cost of Civil Servants

Nick Bourne: In respect of additional civil servants employed by the Assembly over the last two years, what is the breakdown of where they are being employed and the cost of their employment? (WAQ14401)

Edwina Hart: 642 (of which 84 are within the Presiding Office) additional civil servants have been employed by the Assembly over the last two years, of these 174 were from organisations which transferred into the Assembly. The following table identifies the organisations, the dates of transfer and where these posts were located on transfer:

Organisation	Number of Staff	Date of Transfer	National Assembly for Wales Group staff joined
Teacher Training Agency	6	December 1999	Training and Education Department
Welsh European Programme Executive	44	April 2000	Welsh European Funding Office
Wales Office Research and Development	8	April 2000	NHS Directorate
Farming and Rural Conservation Agency	103	April 2001	Agriculture Department
Welsh Drug and Alcohol Unit	7	June 2001	Community Regeneration and Social Inclusion Unit
Clinical Effectiveness Support Unit	6	July 2001	NHS Directorate

The remaining additional staff have joined across the Assembly to meet operational needs. The provision of information on where all additional staff are being employed, and the cost of their employment, can only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Number of Additional Civil Servants

Nick Bourne: What is the additional number of civil servants employed by the Assembly over the last two years, and how many of these additional civil servants were employed in the last year? (WAQ14402)

Edwina Hart: The additional number of civil servants (full-time equivalents) employed by the National Assembly over the two years to November 2001 is 642, 84 of these were employed in the Presiding Office. Four hundred and eighteen, including 40 in the Presiding Office, of these civil servants were employed in the last year.

Cost of Additional Civil Servants

Nick Bourne: In respect of additional civil servants employed by the Assembly in the last year, what is the breakdown of where they are being employed and the cost of their employment? (WAQ14403)

Edwina Hart: I refer to the answer I gave to WAQ14401.

Gwydyr House Employment Costs

Glyn Davies: What costs associated with the employment of officials at Gwydyr House falls upon the National Assembly? (WAQ14444)

Edwina Hart: All officials permanently based at Gwydyr House are employed by the Wales Office. The costs of their employment is a matter for the Secretary of State for Wales. The Assembly provides personnel, payroll and financial services to the Wales Office, but the costs of these services can only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Gwydyr House Employment Costs 2001

Glyn Davies: What is the anticipated cost to the National Assembly of employing officials located at Gwydyr House for any part of 2001? (WAQ14445)

Edwina Hart: I refer you to my answer to WAQ14444.

Free Public Transport for the Elderly (Cost)

Janet Ryder: Has the Minister held discussions with local authorities regarding the cost of providing free public transport for the elderly? (WAQ14485)

Edwina Hart: The concessionary fares working group, which includes local government representatives, bus operators and Assembly officials, has examined the cost of providing free public transport for the elderly. The extra costs identified have been included in the revenue support grant for 2002-03. A study of implementation costs has also been funded.

Free Public Transport for the Elderly (Formula)

Janet Ryder: What formula was used to calculate the sum of money provided to local authorities for the provision of free public transport for the elderly? (WAQ14486)

Edwina Hart: The formula used allocated 90 per cent of resources according to the distribution of population aged 60 and over, and the remaining 10 per cent of resources according to the distribution of population aged under 60. These weightings reflect the comparative take-up rate between elderly and disabled travel passes.

The Local Government Settlement

Janet Ryder: Can the Minister confirm that the local government settlement will be readjusted after further research into the costs of providing free bus fares for the elderly, and will this readjustment cover the full cost of the provision? (WAQ14489)

Edwina Hart: The concessionary fares working group, which includes local government representatives, bus operators and Assembly officials, has commissioned independent consultants to investigate the actual costs of providing free bus fares for the elderly. Once its findings are available I will consider whether any changes are needed to the financial provision that has been made. The Welsh Local Government Association has also been invited to consider whether there need to be any variations to the distribution formula.

Meeting with Representatives of the Coalfield Communities Campaign

Jocelyn Davies: Does the Minister intend meeting the Coalfield Communities Campaign (Wales)? (WAQ14584)

Edwina Hart: I have not been approached by the Coalfield Communities Campaign (Wales) for a meeting in my capacity as a Minister.

The Coalfield Communities Campaign

Jocelyn Davies: Has the Coalfield Communities Campaign (Wales) agreed that the funding it has received to regenerate coalfield communities will be used to complement Communities First? (WAQ14585)

Edwina Hart: The Coalfield Communities Campaign does not receive funding from the National Assembly. However, I have offered £1 million to the Coalfields Regeneration Trust in Wales, for it to continue its work in former coalfield areas in a way that will be complementary to the Communities First programme. This is subject to the trust submitting an acceptable business plan for 2002-03. My officials are discussing the plan with the trust and we hope to reach agreement in the near future.

The Communities First Programme (Amalgamation of Grants)

Janet Ryder: Which grants has the Minister amalgamated into the Communities First programme? (WAQ14586)

Edwina Hart: No grants have been amalgamated into the Communities First programme. The People in Communities and Sustainable Communities grant programmes form part of the community purposes budget along with Communities First.

However, the aim of Communities First will be to ensure that all relevant grant schemes are targeted at our most deprived communities. Guidance on the types and levels of grants available is currently being developed. It covers National Assembly grant schemes and grants and support available from a wide range of agencies.

Questions to the Minister for Health and Social Services

Drugs Recommended by the National Institute for Clinical Excellence

Rod Richards: Can the Minister tell me if the National Institute for Clinical Excellence recommended drugs as listed below are being prescribed in Wales: donepezil, rivastigmine and galantamine for Alzheimers disease, 19/01/01; riluzole for motor neurone disease, 19/01/01; orlistat for obesity, 9/03/01;

paclitaxel for ovarian cancer, 5/05/00; and docetaxal and paclitaxel for breast cancer, 16/06/00? (WAQ14391)

The Minister for Health and Social Services (Jane Hutt): I can confirm that all these products are being purchased by relevant hospitals in Wales for supply to patients.

The Assembly has asked the NHS to put systems in place to ensure NICE guidance is implemented and will be looking at how that might be monitored with the development of a performance management framework. NICE has also commissioned research into the implementation and impact of the institute's guidance.

The National Prescribing Centre has also produced a practical handbook for professionals, aimed at helping the process of local implementation of NICE guidance. This work was commissioned by NICE.

The Use of Beta Interferon for MS Sufferers

Rod Richards: Will the Minister make a statement on recent developments with regard to the use of beta interferon drugs for multiple sclerosis sufferers in Wales? (WAQ14392)

Jane Hutt: The report of the National Institute for Clinical Excellence on beta interferon has recently been published but is subject to appeal, so I cannot yet discuss its details. I am, however, very glad to confirm that I intend for Wales to participate fully in any extended clinical trials of beta interferon that are developed, and that resources will be made available for this. Assembly officials are working with their Department of Health counterparts and the Multiple Sclerosis Society in discussions with the manufacturers about options for a trial, and further progress will depend on agreement being reached with the parties concerned.

Y Gwasanaeth Iechyd yng Ngogledd Cymru

Dafydd Wigley: Pa sicrwydd sydd na fydd y gwasanaeth iechyd yng ngogledd Cymru yn dioddef o ganlyniad i unrhyw adolygiadau o'r fformiwla cyllido ar gyfer iechyd yng Nghymru? (WAQ14397) [W]

Jane Hutt: Diben comisiynu arolwg dyranu adnoddau'r NHS oedd sicrhau cyfleoedd tecach i boblogaeth Cymru gyfan gael mynediad at wasanaethau'r NHS yn unol â'u hanghenion iechyd. Caiff yr arolwg ei arwain gan yr Athro Peter Townsend sydd yn awdurdod ar dlodi ac anghydraddoldeb, a ddarparwyd ymchwil i anghydraddoldeb iechyd gan dîm o dan arweiniad Dr David Gordon o Brifysgol Bryste. Mae adroddiad yr Athro Townsend ar hyn o bryd yn destun ymgynghoriad cyhoeddus. Bydd canlyniad yr ymgynghoriad yn cael ei ystyried gan y Pwyllgor Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol yn gynnar yn 2002. Yna bydd gwneud penderfyniadau yn gyfrifoldeb i'r weinyddiaeth.

Bydd yn rhaid i'r Cynulliad Cenedlaethol gytuno ar gynllun gweithredu a chaiff dadansoddiad ei wneud i weld sut gellir delio â'r newidiadau hyn trwy dwf gwahaniaethol o fewn y rhagdybiaethau cynllunio adnoddau cyfredol. Wrth weithredu, mae adroddiad Townsend yn awgrymu y dylai'r newid i'r drefn sy'n seiliedig ar y cyfrannau targed newydd gael ei gyflawni trwy ailddosbarthu'r twf blynyddol yn adnoddau'r NHS. Ni fydd unrhyw ardal yn derbyn llai na'i lefel cyfredol o adnoddau a bydd yr ardaloedd hynny sydd bellaf o'u cyfran darged yn derbyn cyfradd twf uchaf.

The Health Service in North Wales

Dafydd Wigley: What assurance can be given that the health service in north Wales will not suffer as a result of any reviews made of the funding formula for health in Wales? (WAQ14397) [W]

Jane Hutt: The NHS resource allocation review was commissioned with the objective of ensuring more equitable access for the entire population of Wales in accordance with their health needs. The review is headed by Professor Peter Townsend who is an authority on poverty and inequality, and research input on

area inequalities in health was provided by a team headed by Dr David Gordon of Bristol University. Professor Townsend's report is currently subject to public consultation. The outcome of the consultation will be considered by the Health and Social Services Committee in early 2002. It will then be for the administration to take decisions.

The National Assembly will need to agree the implementation plan and analysis will be undertaken to see how these changes could be absorbed through differential growth within current resource planning assumptions. On implementation the Townsend report recommends that the transition to new target shares should be achieved through redistributing the annual growth in NHS resources. No area will receive less than its current level of resources and those areas that are furthest from their target share will receive the highest rate of growth.

Responses to NHS Restructuring Proposals

Nick Bourne: Would the Minister give details of the responses she has had to her proposals for the restructuring of the health services in Wales? (WAQ14398)

Jane Hutt: Responses to the structural consultation have been placed in the Assembly Libraries and are available to colleagues to examine. My conclusions on the responses given were delivered in a statement to Plenary on 15 November.

Volunteers in the Health and Social Services Sector

Nick Bourne: How is the Minister making it easier for volunteers to use their skills and offer help in the health and social services sector? (WAQ14399)

Jane Hutt: I am determined to ensure that the wealth of experience and knowledge that the voluntary sector, and volunteers, have in health and social care is brought to the fore at both national and local level. This is an important part of my proposals for renewing the NHS in Wales. Locally, by building stronger partnerships between local health boards, local authorities, NHS trusts and the voluntary sector, we will maximise voluntary organisations' contribution to the development and delivery of the health and wellbeing agenda. Further strengthening the voluntary sector membership of the local health boards will also ensure their greater involvement and influence on the decision-making processes. Nationally, the voluntary sector will be represented on the Health and Well-being Partnership Council, which will be advising me on a wide range of policy and planning issues. This builds on work taken forward on a number of fronts:

- a wide variety of initiatives and grant funding schemes aimed at the voluntary sector
- providing support to the international year of volunteers which highlighted 'health' as its theme last April
- strengthening links and networks for volunteering through a 'volunteering for health' webpage
- through the Active Community Wales, the Assembly also supports a number of initiatives to raise the profile of and stimulate more volunteering
- funding the production of a workbook and training on risk assessment and risk management in volunteering and has supported the development of model policies for volunteering in the NHS
- the Volunteering in Wales Fund, administered by Wales Council for Voluntary Action on behalf of the Assembly, supports the promotion of volunteering, particularly among unemployed people, in the fields of health and social welfare.

The Statement on NHS Structures

David Davies: When was the statement on the NHS structures consultation sent out? (WAQ14400)

Jane Hutt: Copies of the final draft of my oral statement on NHS structures were handed to the three party business managers by Andrew Davies approximately half an hour before I delivered the statement in the Assembly Chamber on Thursday 15 November.

Hope House, Oswestry

Rod Richards: What is the funding provided by Welsh health authorities to Hope House, Oswestry, which cares for Welsh children? (WAQ14424)

Jane Hutt: The information you require is not held centrally.

Officials have contacted North Wales and Dyfed Powys Health Authorities as the two Welsh health authorities that provide funding for Hope House, which caters for some Welsh children.

Hope House receives £32,000 under a service level agreement with North Wales Health Authority. We are still waiting final confirmation from Dyfed Powys on its funding arrangements with the hospice and will inform you when this is received.

The Disposal of the Talgarth Hospital Site

Rod Richards: Will the Minister make a full statement on the disposal of the Talgarth Hospital site in Powys? (WAQ14425)

Jane Hutt: The marketing campaign for the sale of the mid Wales hospital was started in 1997. The site comprised a range of buildings, first opened in 1903, totalling 192,790 square foot and set in 43 acres. Some of the outlying buildings could have been disposed of quickly and easily, but the large central core would always be a difficult proposition in terms of disposal and maintenance. It was decided that it was necessary to offer the property as a single entity in order to give a potential purchaser the benefit of some attractive elements in order to balance the more difficult parts. There was little interest until April 1998 when a company made an offer for the site that was conditional on receipt of grant aid and planning permission.

By June 1998, several other parties had showed interest and informal tenders were sought. To ensure that neither the health authority nor the department was left with unmarketable elements of the site, interested parties were invited to bid for the freehold interest for the whole site subject to a leaseback of some of the buildings to the local health trust (now Powys Health Care NHS Trust).

Five bids were received and, in September 1998, a preferred purchaser was identified. In February 1999, it became apparent that the preferred purchaser was not taking any action to progress the sale and the conclusion was reached that the company was not a serious buyer.

In March 1999, the decision was taken to remarket the hospital, but the original preferred purchaser was told that it would not be excluded and that its bid could stand if it wished. Adverts were placed in the *Brecon and Radnor Gazette*, *The Western Mail* and the *Property News* in April. The selling agents also contacted all parties who had previously shown an interest.

By 5 May, a further five bids had been received. As there was not a great deal of difference between the offers, it was agreed that the selling agents would write to the three main bidders to confirm with each that it had immediate funds, were fully aware of ongoing maintenance commitments, were able to exchange contracts in four weeks and were happy with the leaseback arrangements required by the NHS trust. The agents also wrote to two bidders who had advised that they would make revised offers, but the offers had not been made by the due date. All parties were given until 17 May to respond.

By 17 May, the selling agents had received four additional bids for the site, two of which were substantially higher than previous offers. A meeting was held on 18 May to consider all seven bids. It was

agreed that the selling agents would meet the two highest bidders to confirm the availability of finance, their intentions for the site and their ability to complete the sale.

Following the selling agents' meetings with the two bidders it emerged that one of the bids was conditional upon planning permission to demolish substantial portions of the main structure and turn the remainder into time share accommodation. As demolition had been regarded as undesirable by the local planning authority, Brecon Beacons National Park, and it had refused conversion to residential accommodation, such a proposal was deemed likely to be problematic.

The selling agents were satisfied that the second of the two highest bidders, Mrs Sheila Bailey, was in a position to proceed with the acquisition in line with the proposed timetable and recommended that her unconditional offer of £355,000 be accepted. The selling agent's recommendation was accepted by Dyfed Powys Health Authority and endorsed by the Welsh Office/National Assembly's estates advisers.

The selling agents wrote to Mrs Bailey on 7 June advising her that her bid had been accepted, and to the other six bidders advising that their bids were unsuccessful and thanking them for their interest in the property. The selling agents also wrote to the solicitors acting for Dyfed Powys Health Authority advising them of the accepted offer.

The health authority's solicitors were informed by the purchaser's solicitors that the property would be bought either by Mrs Bailey or by her nominee company. The purchasers' solicitors subsequently advised that the property would be purchased in the name of Chancefield Estates Limited and contracts were prepared on that basis. The solicitors acting for the health authority have confirmed that it is not unusual for a property to be bought by a company rather than the individual who made the original offer.

The contract was exchanged between the National Assembly for Wales, the vendor, Chancefield Estates Limited, the purchaser, and Powys Health Care NHS Trust, which was taking a leaseback on part of the site, on 16 September 1999 and provided for the whole of the hospital site to be sold to Chancefield Estates Limited for the sum of £355,000.

After exchange of contracts, the solicitors acting for Chancefield Estates Limited asked whether the property could be transferred in two tranches, part to Mr Bailey and part to Chancefield itself, but without a change to the total price of £355,000. The solicitors acting for the health authority were satisfied that such a request was not unusual and that, in agreeing to the request, they were merely accommodating the requirements of the buyer.

The change of arrangements did not materially alter the disposal in so far as the vendors were concerned. The sale price remained the same and was paid in accordance with the required schedule. The transfer deeds were drawn up accordingly and executed by the health authority on behalf of the Assembly.

Hospices in Wales

Rod Richards: Will the Minister list the hospices in Wales and the funding provided by each health authority to those hospices? (WAQ14429)

Jane Hutt: Details of the health authorities' funding arrangements for hospices have been placed in the Members' Library in response to your question WAQ14199.

It should be remembered that the health authorities purchase services on an assessment of local need and priorities. It is for them to determine the patterns of service, bearing in mind that palliative care may be provided at home or in hospital as well as in a hospice.

The Cost of Remicade and Enbrel

Rod Richards: With reference to WAQ14198, can the Minister list the cost to each health authority in Wales for the arthritis drugs, remicade and enbrel? (WAQ14430)

Jane Hutt: This information is not held centrally. My officials are in the process of collating it in the form you have requested. As soon as they have completed this exercise, I will pass on the details to you.

Reducing Incidents of Bed Blocking

Ron Davies: What progress has been made over the last two years to reduce incidents of 'bed blocking' in the NHS? (WAQ14441)

Jane Hutt: I prefer to use the term 'delayed transfers of care' as that implies no criticism of the individuals waiting in an inappropriate setting. Two years ago, the emergency pressures taskforce, which I chaired, recommended developing a robust monitoring system and action to tackle this.

Since, we have established a comprehensive, agreed definition in use across Wales. This has allowed us to get a clear initial picture of the size and nature of the problem and promote joint agency discussions in every local authority area to develop a plan to resolve the issues. To help manage such pressures, I have made £35 million available recurrently, with a further £8 million this year.

The Implications of the Children's Commissioner's Statement

David Melding: Will the Minister make a statement on the implications of the Children's Commissioner's statement on building schools on former landfill sites on 11 October 2001? (WAQ14442)

Jane Hutt: The Children's Commissioner has been established as an independent statutory office. In the case of the proposals to build schools on landfill sites, I understand that he does not propose to undertake a formal examination, but has decided to make his views known to the local authorities involved.

I have stated publicly that I believe the commissioner's views need to be treated with proper respect and I am sure that public bodies will respond to them with due seriousness.

In the final analysis, the commissioner's advice does not have the capacity to override any decision, which the local authorities might wish to make. In coming to any decision, however, I expect that the councils concerned will wish to explore fully the issue that he has raised.

The Implications of the Children's Commissioner's Statement

David Melding: Has the Chief Medical Officer for Wales advised the Minister on the implications of the Children's Commissioner's statement on building schools on former landfill sites on 11 October 2001? (WAQ14443)

Jane Hutt: The commissioner's opinion was addressed to the local authorities concerned. However, officials in different parts of the Assembly, including the Chief Medical Officer, are currently considering its more general implications in terms of policy and practice. I expect to discuss the outcome of this consideration with my Cabinet colleagues early in the new year.

A Response to the Document 'Structural Change in the NHS in Wales'

David Melding: Did Jon Owen Jones MP make a written response to the document 'Structural Change in the NHS in Wales'? (WAQ14446)

Jane Hutt: A response has been received by Jon Owen Jones MP, which has helped to inform the consultation process. A copy, together with all other responses received, has been made available in both the House of Commons and the National Assembly Members' Library.

Increasing the Fee Levels Paid to Independent Residential Care Homes

Peter Rogers: Of the £5 million made available to local authorities this winter, how much of that may be used by authorities to increase the fee levels paid to independent residential care homes for the elderly? (WAQ14496)

Jane Hutt: Planning and the supply of care is a statutory responsibility of local government. The National Assembly cannot tell local authorities what they should be paying independent providers. The care home sector is still a market and we need to be very mindful of that.

I have been consulting with representatives on the care home sector, local government, the NHS and others on the best way to spend the £5 million available to local authorities this winter. Consultation ends on 28 November and I hope to finalise the scheme shortly thereafter. I propose to allow local partners to spend their share of the £5 million in a way which most effectively and efficiently responds to local circumstances as long as the expenditure meets the objectives of the scheme. Expenditure must fund measures to meet immediate pressure in the acute and independent care sectors and reduce delayed transfers of care. In the longer term it must establish a platform for the development of longer-term strategies for sustainable improvement by stimulating change and partnership. Should authorities wish to increase fee levels using some or all of their share of the £5 million they would be able to do so as long as this supports the objectives of the scheme.

Major Treatments Not Available in All Health Authorities

Rod Richards: Will the Minister list the major treatments that are not available in all health authorities in Wales? (WAQ14599)

Jane Hutt: This information is not available centrally in a form which would allow the question to be answered.

Questions to the Minister for Rural Affairs

Cleaning and Disinfecting Procedures

Peter Rogers: Of the 89 holdings served with A-form notices on Anglesey, how many were subject to full cleaning and disinfecting procedures? (WAQ14364)

The Minister for Rural Affairs (Carwyn Jones): Thirty-one.

Testing for Transmissible Spongiform Encephalitis

Glyn Davies: How many cattle and sheep in Wales are to be tested for transmissible spongiform encephalitis next year? (WAQ14427)

Carwyn Jones:

Sheep Abattoir Survey

Under the Transmissible Spongiform Encephalitis Regulation the UK is required to undertake transmissible spongiform encephalitis testing of 15,000 sheep aged over 18 months. In addition, there is a national scientific survey requiring testing of brain stem and lymph nodes of a further 5,000 sheep, over 18 months of age. The Veterinary Laboratories Agency has prepared a draft sampling plan for these, which allocates 5,717 to abattoirs in Wales.

Fallen Sheep Survey

The Transmissible Spongiform Encephalitis Regulation also requires the UK to test 3,000 fallen stock. No sampling plan has yet been prepared, so a breakdown of this figure is not available.

Both of these surveys will commence on 1 January 2002.

Cattle

The Transmissible Spongiform Encephalitis Regulation requires us to test the following animals in the next year (estimates given below are for Great Britain, no breakdown is available):

- All cattle for human consumption over 30 months (less than 150 beef assurance cattle)
- All casualties over 24 months (estimated over 120,000)
- All fallen stock over 24 months (estimated 80,000)
- All over 30 months scheme cattle born between 1/8/96 and 31/7/97 (estimated 100,000)
- A UK sample of 50,000 other over 30 months scheme cattle (of which 43,500 in GB).

This programme of testing began on 1 July 2001.

Declaring Monmouthshire as Free from Foot and Mouth Disease

David Davies: What discussions has the Minister had with officials to have Monmouthshire declared foot and mouth disease free? (WAQ14590)

Carwyn Jones: Responsibility for the foot and mouth disease status of counties rests with the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. My officials maintain a close dialogue with their counterparts over the classification of counties in Wales. Subject to the outcome of the extended serology testing, my expectation is that Monmouthshire will move to 'disease free' status early next month.

The Use of Small Local Abattoirs

Nick Bourne: How does the Minister intend to increase the use of small local abattoirs? (WAQ14591)

Carwyn Jones: The Assembly Government has committed £609,000 in 2001-02 to help small abattoirs by reducing the burden of meat hygiene charges.

In addition, abattoirs are able to apply for financial assistance to develop their businesses under the processing and marketing grant arrangements.

Removing Foot and Mouth Disease Restrictions

William Graham: Will the Minister make a statement concerning the progress in removing of all the foot and mouth disease restrictions in Wales? (WAQ14592)

Carwyn Jones: My expectation is that south Powys and the adjoining six unitary authority areas in the south Wales valleys, currently classified as 'at risk' areas, will move to 'disease free' early next month. All of Wales would then be regarded as 'disease free' areas.

DEFRA is responsible for the present foot and mouth disease control regime and is in consultation with industry interests about changes to the regime.

The Sheep and Goat Meat Regime

William Graham: Will the Minister make a statement on the progress to implement the sheep and goat meat regime? (WAQ14593)

Carwyn Jones: I attended the European Council of Agriculture Ministers' meeting in Brussels on 20 November. The main item for discussion was the European Commission's proposals for reform of the EU sheepmeat regime.

There is widespread support for the way in which the commission proposes payments to be made on a flat rate headage basis with a less favoured area supplement. In addition, there is majority support for the introduction of national envelopes, similar to those for the beef sector, with flexibility for operation at a regional level within a member state.

No decision was reached on the level of payments for the sheep annual premium, including the less favoured area supplement. The EU sheepmeat proposals will be discussed at the Agriculture Council meeting in December.

Questions to the House Committee

Office Space in Crickhowell House

Glyn Davies: How much office space is occupied by each of the four political parties in Crickhowell House? (WAQ14426)

The Deputy Presiding Officer (John Marek): The current amount of office space in Crickhowell House occupied by each of the four political parties is as follows:

Conservative Party	309.26 m sq
Labour Party	928.71 m sq
Liberal Party	241.59 m sq
Plaid Cymru	544.12 m sq

Members' Salaries and Allowances

Brian Gibbons: Will the House Committee publish details of the total sums paid by the Assembly to its current Members and former Members under the National Assembly for Wales (Assembly Members and Officers) (Salaries, Allowances etc.) Determination 2001, in 2000-2001 as required by Standing Order No. 3.3? (WAQ14447)

The Deputy Presiding Officer: The information requested is given in the table below:

Expenditure on Assembly Members' Salaries and Allowances
2000-2001

	(£)
Members' salaries (including employer's national insurance contributions)	2,603,261
Employer's contributions to Members' pension scheme	506,680
Members' travel	295,016
Members' family travel	2,908
Members' support staff travel	6,110
Office cost allowance	525,195
Additional costs allowance	248,884
Staff salaries allowance	2,070,505
Support staff pension contributions	176,843
Members' insurance	6,302

TOTAL

6,441,704

The offices in the Assembly the holders of which were, in 2000-01, entitled to receive salaries or allowances greater than the salaries or allowances received by Members in general, together with the annual salary or allowance each such office-holder was entitled to receive are shown below:

Salaries

Office

Assembly First Minister	£66,173
Assembly Secretary/Presiding Officer	£34,327
Deputy Presiding Officer	£17,807
Leader of the largest party not represented in the Assembly Cabinet	£34,327

Allowances

Office

Party leaders allowance—basic	£46,200 p.a.
Party leaders allowance—additional amount per Member for groups not represented in Assembly Cabinet	£3,100 p.a.