

Written Questions answered between 20 and 27 May 2004

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

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

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Questions to the First Minister

The Counsel General for Wales (Unfilled Position)

Nick Bourne: Will the First Minister provide an update in relation to the unfilled position of the Counsel General for Wales? (WAQ35358)

The First Minister (Rhodri Morgan): The Permanent Secretary is considering the matter and I am awaiting his advice.

Former ASW Workers (Pension Situation)

Nick Bourne: What representations has the First Minister made in relation to the pension situation for former ASW workers, and what was the response of his colleagues at Westminster? (WAQ35360)

The First Minister: At a meeting with the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, Andrew Smith MP on 6 May, I pressed for a positive response to the pleas that had been made on behalf of members of the ASW pension scheme in wind-up. The response from the Secretary of State was that Her Majesty's Government was continuing to search for a solution that would meet the needs of members of private pension schemes now in wind-up, including ASW, without setting an uncostable precedent for financial compensation claims from public funds by other groups and individuals. I am pleased that on Friday 14th May, Andrew Smith announced that, while not accepting liability or paying compensation, the Government would be establishing a trust fund, which would offer significant support to those who lost out most heavily. It will be financed by £400 million of Government money over the next 20 years, with the possibility of additional contributions from industry.

Furniture for Homeworking

Nick Bourne: Will the Minister advise whether furniture is provided by the Assembly sponsored public bodies for which he is responsible to facilitate homeworking? (WAQ35690)

The First Minister: Accommodation issues are a matter for individual Assembly sponsored public bodies. The information is not held centrally

Entry into the Euro

Nick Bourne: How much money has been spent by the Welsh Assembly Government for preparing Wales for entry into the euro? (WAQ35711)

The First Minister: Responsibility for euro preparations across the UK rest with Her Majesty's Treasury. Staff time has been spent on preparatory work as part of the normal business planning process. Apart from that, the only expenditure incurred by the Assembly Government has been in respect of the Wales euro taskforce established to help Welsh businesses prepare for the introduction of the euro. That expenditure amounted to some £64,000.

Questions to the Minister for Culture, Welsh Language and Sport

National Art Gallery for Wales

Nick Bourne: With regard to the statement from the Minister in Plenary on 5 May 2004, that Labour was committed to a dedicated national art gallery for Wales, will the Minister outline his intentions and those of the Welsh Assembly Government in this regard? (WAQ35352)

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The Minister for Culture, the Welsh Language and Sport (Alun Pugh): My reply to you in Plenary session on 5 May made it clear that the Assembly Government is committed to careful consideration of the pledge in 'Wales: A Better Country' to examine the potential for a new national gallery for Welsh art. Clearly, in taking this matter forward, the Assembly Government will need to examine all the relevant options, timescales and resource issues.

Dedicated National Art Gallery for Wales

Nick Bourne: Will the Minister give a timetable for setting up a dedicated national art gallery for Wales, following his statement in answering questions in Plenary on 5 May 2004? (WAQ35353)

Alun Pugh: This is a substantial exercise with large capital and revenue implications. The Assembly Government will decide on the way forward after full consideration of the options. Not only the National Museums and Galleries of Wales, but also the Arts Council of Wales, the National Library of Wales and other interested parties, will all be involved in taking this matter forward.

The Wales Millennium Centre

Glyn Davies: Will the Minister list the sources of the slate and wood used in the construction of the Wales Millennium Centre? (WAQ35371)

Alun Pugh: The slate used on the outer walls of the Wales Millennium Centre buildings is Welsh slate. It comes from three quarries: Blaenau Ffestiniog, Machynlleth and Bethesda. The hardwoods on the balconies surrounding the main public concourse areas are Welsh hardwoods, while the auditorium balconies are a combination of Welsh hardwoods and veneers from European sources. The wood cladding on the outside of the building is spruce from European sources, mostly Norway.

Furniture for Homeworking

Nick Bourne: Will the Minister advise whether furniture is provided by the Assembly sponsored public bodies for which he is responsible to facilitate homeworking? (WAQ35697)

Alun Pugh: I refer you to the answer to WAQ35690.

The History of Welsh Boxing

Leighton Andrews: Will the Minister make a statement on whether his department is supporting any initiatives related to the history of Welsh boxing? (WAQ35710)

Alun Pugh: The Welsh sports hall of fame at the Museum of Welsh Life, St Fagans, contains a fine collection of boxing-related material, including a Lonsdale belt. In addition, Cyfarthfa Castle Museum, Merthyr Tydfil holds boxing memorabilia, particularly items connected with Johnny Owen.

Digitisation Initiatives

Leighton Andrews: What digitisation initiatives are being supported by the Minister's department? (WAQ35715)

Alun Pugh: The National Library of Wales's digital library initiative aims to make its collections available worldwide on the internet. It aims to improve the volume and use of the library, its services and its collections, and knowledge about those collections, and to ensure that electronic information relating to Wales is collected, preserved and made available.

The National Museums and Galleries of Wales has been engaged in a number of projects to digitise its collections. Digital images are included in the online art collection database, and work has begun on

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digitising the sketch books within the collection. Work is currently progressing on digitising the collection of topographic and geological antiquarian maps, and on producing an online photographic resource on mineral images. The National Museums and Galleries of Wales will be digitising its botanical illustrations in the very near future.

In addition, Culturenet Cymru promotes the culture and heritage of Wales online. The Gathering the Jewels project includes over 20,000 digitised images of items of Welsh cultural significance, while Books from the Past is an online collection of books of national cultural interest, which have long been out of print and which are unlikely to be reprinted.

Yr Iaith Gymraeg

Owen John Thomas: A wnaiff y Gweinidog amlinellu ei gyfrifoldebau, cyfan a rhannol, ynghylch yr iaith Gymraeg? (WAQ35716) [W]

Y Gweinidog dros Ddiwylliant, y Gymraeg a Chwaraeon (Alun Pugh): Yr wyf yn gyfrifol am arwain polisi yn y maes hwn. Mae hynny'n cynnwys darparu nawdd i Fwrdd yr Iaith Gymraeg, cynllun iaith Gymraeg Llywodraeth y Cynulliad a rhoi 'Iaith Pawb' ar waith.

Mae'r Gymraeg, fel maes trawsbynciol, yn gyfrifoldeb hefyd i'm cyd-aelodau o'r Cabinet a'u portffolios.

The Welsh Language

Owen John Thomas: Will the Minister outline his responsibilities wholly and in part for the Welsh language? (WAQ35716) [W]

Alun Pugh: I am responsible for taking the lead role in this policy area. That includes sponsorship of the Welsh Language Board, responsibility for the Assembly Government's Welsh-language scheme and the implementation of 'Iaith Pawb'.

The Welsh language, as a cross-cutting issue, is also the responsibility of my Cabinet colleagues within their respective portfolios.

The Arts Council of Wales's Collector Plan

Janice Gregory: How many of the art galleries that participate in the Arts Council of Wales's collector plan are located in the county boroughs of Bridgend and Rhondda Cynon Taf? (WAQ35749)

Alun Pugh: There are two: at the Model House in Llantrisant and the Rhondda Heritage Gallery at Trehafod.

Collector Plan Scheme (Selecting Art Galleries)

Janice Gregory: How does the Arts Council of Wales select art galleries to participate in its collector plan scheme? (WAQ35755)

Alun Pugh: Galleries apply to join the scheme. They complete an application form and applications are assessed by arts council officers or a member of the arts council's national list of advisers against the following criteria:

- a significant proportion of the business of the gallery must be the exhibition and sale of original art and/or craft works and the gallery programme must include a significant number of exhibitions of work by a range of professional artists and craftspeople;
- the gallery must stock and exhibit a high proportion of original works of art and craft;

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- the gallery must operate professionally in terms of its marketing and strategy to encourage sales, ensure the availability of staff to talk about the work exhibited and to effect a sale, and mount exhibitions in a professional manner;
- the gallery must make every effort to allow access for disabled people to exhibition areas;
- the gallery must enter into appropriate arrangements with exhibiting artists and craftspeople and ensure that sale proceeds are paid promptly.

Once approved for membership, galleries must then apply to the Office of Fair Trading and obtain a credit licence before they can broker sales through the collector plan scheme.

Collector Plan Scheme (Selecting Artists)

Janice Gregory: How does the Arts Council of Wales select artists to participate in its collector plan scheme? (WAQ35756)

Alun Pugh: The arts council does not select artists whose work can be sold through the collector plan. The scheme supports the purchase of original works and short-run limited editions by contemporary artists or craftspeople.

Questions to the Minister for Economic Development and Transport

The Cardiff Valleys Lines

Owen John Thomas: What steps has the Minister taken to improve the service on the Cardiff Valleys lines? (WAQ35281)

The Minister for Economic Development and Transport (Andrew Davies): The Strategic Rail Authority has funded a number of improvements to rail services on the Valleys lines, for example, the introduction last year of a half-hourly service for most of the day on the Aberdare line under Rail Passenger Partnership funding. The Welsh Assembly Government has given transport grant support, for example, to the passing loop at Mountain Ash and station lengthening on the Aberdare line to the local authority consortium's strategic rail improvement programme. We are discussing assistance for the future programme with South East Wales Transport Alliance and Arriva Trains Wales.

The Assembly Investment Grant

Irene James: Would the Minister make a statement on the progress of the Assembly investment grant since its launch in 2002? (WAQ35285)

Andrew Davies: Take-up across Wales has exceeded all expectations. Over 940 offers have been made so far, worth almost £30 million. These projects are expected to lever in more than £85 million of private sector investment and should also create well over 2,000 new jobs.

In Islwyn, 40 offers have been made with a combined value of £1.2 million. These projects are expected to lever in nearly £3 million of private sector investment and should also create more than 90 new jobs.

The recent review of the scheme was very positive, reflecting its flexibility and accessibility. Subject to some relatively minor improvements and refinements, Assembly investment grants will continue to operate along existing lines throughout the whole of Wales, offering grants of between £5,001 and £50,000 for small and medium-sized enterprises looking to invest in their businesses.

Economic Development in Newport

John Griffiths: Will the Minister make a statement on economic development in Newport? (WAQ35287)

Andrew Davies: I refer you to the answer given to WAQ34845.

The Assembly Government's Tourism Strategy

Tamsin Dunwoody-Kneafsey: Would the Minister give a progress update on the Assembly Government's tourism strategy: 'Achieving Our Potential'? (WAQ35288)

Andrew Davies: 'Achieving Our Potential' is a strategy developed by the Wales Tourist Board following close consultation with the tourism industry. It was commended to the industry by the First Minister in April 2000.

The Wales Tourist Board will be undertaking a mid-term review of 'Achieving Our Potential' involving the publication of a consultation document and a series of seminars during 2004. A final review paper is scheduled for completion by March 2005.

The Newport to Ebbw Vale Rail Link

William Graham: Will the Minister make a statement on the progress being made on the Newport to Ebbw Vale rail link? (WAQ35290)

Andrew Davies: The current plan is to provide a passenger service between Ebbw Vale Parkway and Cardiff by Summer 2006 and a service between Ebbw Vale Parkway and Newport by 2009, or earlier if possible.

The Contribution of Higher Education

John Griffiths: Will the Minister make a statement on progress in further developing the contribution of higher education in Wales to Economic Development in Wales? (WAQ35294)

Andrew Davies: The Assembly-led higher education and economic development task and finish group was established to explore how the higher education sector can contribute yet more to developing the knowledge economy. The group's final report is currently being considered by Cabinet.

Increase in the Bank of England's Base Rate

Nick Bourne: Will the Minister make a statement on the impact of the increase in the Bank of England's base rate on the Welsh Economy? (WAQ35351)

Andrew Davies: Stable macro-economic conditions have contributed significantly to the recent strong performance of the economy in Wales, as exemplified by the outstanding labour market data. Appropriate and timely changes in interest rates play a key role in achieving the macro-economic stability from which Wales has benefited so much.

The River Rheidol

Nick Bourne: Will the Minister make a statement on the danger of incursions from the river Rheidol on the A44 near Lovesgrove (Gelli Angharad) near Aberystwyth? (WAQ35361)

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Andrew Davies: While the flooding here can be extensive and encroach up to and beyond the highway boundary, at present the risk of the road itself being flooded is very small. Nevertheless, my officials will be setting up an investigation within the current financial year, to determine whether or not there is a problem for the longer term.

The Railway Line between Aberystwyth and Capel Bangor

Nick Bourne: Will the Minister make a statement regarding dangers to the railway line between Aberystwyth and Capel Bangor from the incursions of the river Rheidol? (WAQ35362)

Andrew Davies: Network Rail advises that the river Rheidol is not a cause for concern in terms of the main line from Aberystwyth via Borth. In terms of the privately owned Vale of Rheidol railway, which runs from Aberystwyth to Capel Bangor, the Environment Agency is aware of natural movements in the course of the river, which are not thought to represent an immediate threat.

Roadworks on the A44 (Near Ponterwyd, Ceredigion)

Nick Bourne: Will the Minister make a statement on roadworks on the A44 near Ponterwyd in Ceredigion? (WAQ35365)

Andrew Davies: The safety fence and edge support near Erwyd Cottage Bends was damaged following collision by a heavy goods vehicle. Our maintaining agents are drawing up a scheme to repair the damage and subject to the satisfactory acquisition of land necessary, we expect to carry out the work within the current financial year. It is not yet possible to give a date for the start of work.

Roadworks on the A44 (Eisteddfa Gurig, Ceredigion)

Nick Bourne: Will the Minister make a statement on roadworks on the A44 in the region of Eisteddfa Gurig in Ceredigion? (WAQ35366)

Andrew Davies: The headwall of a culvert at Pont Nant Lladron was damaged following a vehicle collision. Subsequent inspection found that some work was also required to the culvert under the road. Traffic signals were put in place for safety reasons. The work has recently been completed.

Wales as a Tourist Destination

Nick Bourne: What discussions has the Minister had with the Wales Tourist Board about promoting Wales as a tourist destination for foreign holidaymakers following its chief executive's summit meeting in London on 6 May? (WAQ35372)

Andrew Davies: I shall be discussing the summit when I next meet with the chairman and chief executive of the Wales Tourist Board on 17 May.

Transport Infrastructure

Nick Bourne: Will the Minister provide an update on the Government's policies to improve our transport infrastructure? (WAQ35425)

Andrew Davies: The Welsh Assembly Government's transport policies are set out in 'The Transport Framework for Wales', which was published in 2001. I am currently undertaking a review of these policies and their related programmes to ensure that they are fully in line with 'Wales: A Better Country' and the emerging spatial plan. I gave a full progress report to the Economic Development and Transport Committee on 1 April.

Job Creation Targets

Ann Jones: Will the Minister make a statement on progress made toward the job creation targets set out in 'A Winning Wales'? (WAQ35428)

Andrew Davies: The Labour Force Survey for the four quarters ending February 2004 show that there has been a net increase of 87,000 during 2001 in overall employment. The target is 175,000 by 2010. There has also been a net increase of 10,000 during 2001 in employment in financial and business services. The target is 20,000 by 2010.

The Island Farm Site near Bridgend

Alun Cairns: How much money has the WDA spent developing the Island Farm site near Bridgend? (WAQ35560)

Andrew Davies: The Welsh Development Agency's land reclamation grant of £1.92 million was paid to the former Mid Glamorgan County Council in the early 1990s for acquisition, investigation, demolition and site clearance. Subsequently, the agency's area development/construction department spent £87,000 undertaking a feasibility study for the extension of the science park.

Funds Spent on the Island Farm Site

Alun Cairns: What plans does the Welsh Development Agency have to claw back funds spent on the Island Farm site, as a result of the current planned development for housing and leisure facilities? (WAQ35561)

Andrew Davies: The Welsh Development Agency will claw back grant from the successor authority, Bridgend County Borough Council, in accordance with the conditions of grant. The conditions attached to the grant provide for recovery of after value in the event of the site being developed for whatever use.

The Proposed Development at Island Farm

Alun Cairns: How much does the Welsh Development Agency expect to claw back from the proposed development at the Island Farm site, near Bridgend following the change of use from the business park originally intended? (WAQ35562)

Andrew Davies: Discussions with the agents acting for the council have concluded that a sum of £1.96 million is due to the agency as a result of the proposed sale. In such circumstances, where the proposed use changes after award of grant, the Welsh Development Agency must be consulted on the proposals. It has been consulted in this case, and the agreed sum of £1.96 million reflects the proposed use.

Safe Routes to School Schemes in Flintshire

Sandy Mewies: Further to WAQ35071, to date how much funding has been allocated to the safe routes to school scheme in Flintshire? (WAQ35676)

Andrew Davies: Since 1999, the Assembly Government has allocated £1,070,000 to Flintshire County Council for its safe routes to school scheme.

Funding for Safe Routes to Schools

Sandy Mewies: Further to WAQ35071, could the Minister provide a list of those schemes and schools in Flintshire that have received funding for safe routes to schools? (WAQ35689)

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Andrew Davies: Funding for the safe routes to school scheme in Flintshire has been allocated directly to the local authority. Physical works have been carried out, or are in the process of being carried out, in the following schools:

Connah's Quay Area

Golftyn Primary
Wepre Primary
Bryn Deva Primary
Dee Road Infants
Custom House Lane Juniors
Connah's Quay High

Shotton Area

Venerable Edward Morgan
Taliesin Juniors
St Ethelwolds R.C.
Shotton Infants
John Summers High
Sealand Primary
Queensferry Primary

Mold Area

Bryn Coch Primary
St David's Primary
Bryn Gwalia Primary
Ysgol Glanrafon Primary
Ysgol Bryn Glas Special School
Ysgol Delyn Special School
Mold Alun Secondary
Ysgol Maes Garmon Secondary

Buckley Area

Drury Primary
Elfred High
Mountain Lane Primary
Southdown Primary
Westwood Primary
Pentrobin Primary
Ewloe Green Primary
Ysgol Belmont Special

Mynydd Isa Area

Ysgol y Bryn Juniors
Wat's Dyke Infants
Argoed Secondary

Broughton Area

Broughton Infants
Broughton Juniors

Hawarden Area

Hawarden Infants
Rector Drew (V.A.) Juniors
Penarlâg Primary
Sandycroft Primary

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Hawarden High School

Saltney Area

Saltney Ferry Primary
Wood Memorial Primary
St Anthony's R.C. Primary
St David's High School

Holywell Area

Holywell High
Ysgol y Fron Juniors
Perth y Terfyn Infants
St Winefride's RC
Ysgol Gwenffrwd Primary
Ysgol Maes Glas Primary, Greenfield
Ysgol Bro Carmel Primary
Llwyn Onn Support Centre (Special School)

Flint Area

St Mary's RC Primary
Cornist Park Primary
Flint High
St Richard Gwyn RC High
Ysgol Croes Atti
Gwynedd Primary
Ysgol Maes Edwin Primary, Flint Mountain

Bagillt Area

Merllyn Primary
Ysgol Glan Aber

Hope Area

Abermorddu Community Primary
Ysgol Estyn Primary, Hope
Castell Alun High, Hope
St John the Baptist VP, Penymynydd
Penyffordd Junior
Abbot's Lane Infants, Penyffordd
Ysgol Derwen Primary, Higher Kinnerton
Llanfynydd Primary
Ysgol Terrig, Treuddyn
Ysgol Parc y Llan Primary, Treuddyn
Ysgol Derwenfa Primary, Leeswood

Furniture for Homeworking

Nick Bourne: Will the Minister advise whether furniture is provided by the Assembly sponsored public bodies for which he is responsible to facilitate homeworking? (WAQ35694)

Andrew Davies: I refer you to the answer to WAQ35690.

The Firm Grundig

Lisa Francis: Was the firm Grundig, which is based at Llantrisant, offered any financial incentives by the Welsh Assembly Government, or any of its ASPBs and agencies to set up its business in south Wales? (WAQ35713)

Andrew Davies: The then Grundig factory was set up prior to the inception of the Welsh Assembly Government. I understand that the main financial assistance was offered by the Welsh Office and the Welsh Development Agency.

- 1994 (Welsh Office)—regional selective assistance of £1.4 million to establish the facility at Llantrisant;
- 1998 (Welsh Office)—regional selective assistance of £750,000 to introduce the manufacture of digital satellite set-top boxes;
- 1999 (WDA)—property development grant of £130,000.

In June 2002, Grundig at Llantrisant was acquired by a French company, Thomson Multi Media Inc.

The Development of Digital Content

Leighton Andrews: What initiatives does the Minister have under way to stimulate the development of digital content in Wales? (WAQ35714)

Andrew Davies: The Government has a number of initiatives in place that stimulate or support the creation of digital content, including business development support in the digital technicians in Swansea and Bridgend and the @Wales Digital Media Initiative in Cardiff, creation of educational content for schools in the National Grid for Learning Cymru, and cultural content in the Gathering the Jewels project in the National Library. The possibility of media technicians to specifically support businesses creating content, applications and services, is under consideration by the WDA. I am also expecting the review of the creative industries to help identify relevant actions that may be required to help stimulate the development of this important sector.

Restructuring within the Welsh Development Agency

Alun Cairns: Will the Minister make a statement on restructuring within the WDA? (WAQ35720)

Andrew Davies: The WDA is undertaking an organisation development and design exercise to examine its organisational structure. The outcome of the exercise is anticipated shortly.

Senior Management Appointments within the WDA

Alun Cairns: Will the Minister make a statement on recent senior management appointments within the WDA? (WAQ35721)

Andrew Davies: Welsh Development Agency staff appointments are a matter for its chief executive who, in accordance with the agency's management statement, has responsibility for the recruitment, retention and motivation of all agency staff.

Capital Programmes

Alun Cairns: Would the Minister make a statement on changes to capital programmes planned expenditure and strategy? (WAQ35723)

Andrew Davies: My expenditure plans were set out in the Assembly's supplementary budget in March 2004. Any changes will be reported by the Finance Minister after consultation with the Economic Development and Transport Committee as laid out in Standing Order No. 21.

Technology and Innovation

Alun Cairns: Would the Minister make a statement on changes to technology and innovation planned expenditure and strategy? (WAQ35724)

Andrew Davies: Technology and innovation activities are being taken forward in line with the priorities highlighted in 'Wales for Innovation', the Assembly Government's innovation action plan that I published in 2003.

The Technium Centre Programme

Alun Cairns: Would the Minister make a statement on changes to the technium centre programme planned expenditure and strategy? (WAQ35725)

Andrew Davies: The Welsh Development Agency is reviewing the future direction of the programme to ensure that the next stages continue to deliver the excellent progress already made.

Withybush Airport, Pembrokeshire

Nick Bourne: Will the Minister make a statement on the future of Withybush airport, Pembrokeshire? (WAQ35733)

Andrew Davies: Withybush airport near Haverfordwest is owned and operated by Pembrokeshire County Council, which is taking forward a five-year development plan that will significantly upgrade its facilities. The airport features on many of the possible route networks set out in my recent consultation document on intra-Wales scheduled air services. I am currently considering the responses to that consultation before deciding the way forward on these services.

Assembly Investment Grants Awarded to Companies in Alyn and Deeside

Carl Sargeant: To date, how many Assembly investment grants have been awarded to companies in Alyn and Deeside? (WAQ35750)

Andrew Davies: The Assembly investment grant scheme was introduced on 1 April 2002, since then, 38 offers of assistance worth £1,232,950 have been made to companies in the Alyn and Deeside constituency area. These offers were to encourage private investment of £4,548,150. While the primary purpose of Assembly investment grants is to stimulate enterprise, and it is not primarily a job-related scheme, it is anticipated that the grants awarded in Alyn and Deeside will lead to the creation of 87 jobs with 278 existing jobs to be maintained.

Regional Selective Assistance Allocated to Alyn and Deeside

Carl Sargeant: To date, how much regional selective assistance has been allocated to Alyn and Deeside? (WAQ35751)

Andrew Davies: Regional selective assistance is a demand-led scheme that depends on companies coming forward with eligible investment plans that will create or safeguard employment in the assisted areas. Since 1 July 1999, 60 offers of assistance worth £13,703,000 have been made to companies in the Alyn and Deeside constituency area. These offers were to encourage private investment of £77,016,667 that is forecast to create 2,126 jobs and safeguard 628 existing jobs.

Assembly Investment Grants Awarded to Companies in Delyn

Sandy Mewies: To date, how many Assembly investment grants have been awarded to companies in Delyn? (WAQ35752)

Andrew Davies: The Assembly investment grant scheme was introduced on 1 April 2002, since then 11 offers of assistance worth £421,000 have been made to companies in the Delyn constituency area. These offers were to encourage private investment of £2,660,970. While the primary purpose of Assembly investment grants is to stimulate enterprise, and it is not specifically a job-related scheme, it is anticipated that the grants awarded in Delyn will lead to the creation of 25 jobs with a further 35 existing jobs to be maintained.

Regional Selective Assistance Allocated to Delyn

Sandy Mewies: To date, how much regional selective assistance has been allocated to Delyn? (WAQ35753)

Andrew Davies: Regional selective assistance is a demand-led scheme that depends on companies coming forward with eligible investment plans that will create or safeguard employment in the assisted areas. Since 1 July 1999, six offers of assistance worth £1,744,000 have been made to companies in the Delyn constituency area. These offers were to encourage private investment of £24,306,000 that is forecast to create 160 jobs and safeguard 43 existing jobs.

Questions to the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning

Trecastle School and Libanus School in Powys

Nick Bourne: When does the Minister intend to make the decision about the future of Trecastle school and Libanus school in Powys? (WAQ35367)

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning (Jane Davidson): These proposals published by Powys County Council have attracted statutory objections and fall to me to determine. I normally aim to issue a decision within six months of the publication of the statutory notice. The target date for determination of these proposals is 5 August 2004, but as this would fall within the school holiday I hope to issue the decision before the end of the summer term. The notices propose that closure should take place on 31 August 2005. I cannot comment on what my decision might be since I will reach it in light of all of the relevant information.

ELWa (Cost of Administration)

Nick Bourne: Will the Minister make a statement on the cost of administration of ELWa in the current year, and in each succeeding year of its operation? (WAQ35369)

Jane Davidson: The Assembly budget for 2004-05 currently makes provision of £22.8 million for ELWa's running costs. Following completion of restructuring, running costs for 2005-06 and 2006-07 are set to fall with indicative allocations of £21.1 million in each year. These allocations are subject to adjustment during the budget and spending review 2004.

ELWa Funding for Further Education Colleges and Courses

Nick Bourne: Will the Minister make a statement on the impact of ELWa funding for further education colleges and courses in the light of the announcement of job losses at Coleg Gwent? (WAQ35370)

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Jane Davidson: As I said in Plenary on 12 May, ELWa has increased funding for further education from 2003-04 to 2004-05 by 4.76 per cent, or £11 million. I have asked the chairman of ELWa for a report early this week on the situation at Coleg Gwent and I will report to the Education and Lifelong Learning Committee on these matters on 19 May.

ELWa's Funding for Coleg Ceredigion

Nick Bourne: Will the Minister make a statement on ELWa's funding for Coleg Ceredigion? (WAQ35374)

Jane Davidson: The funding made available to Coleg Ceredigion in 2003-04 was some £3.349 million—an increase of 3.7 per cent on 2002-03. In addition, Coleg Ceredigion received £114,765 as its share of the £9 million for improving further education pay.

Education and Learning Wales has increased funding for further education from 2003-04 to 2004-05 by 4.76 per cent, or £11 million. The national council will consider ratification of provisional allocations to individual colleges at its next meeting on 27 May.

Furniture for Homeworking

Nick Bourne: Will the Minister advise whether furniture is provided by the Assembly sponsored public bodies for which she is responsible to facilitate homeworking? (WAQ35695)

Jane Davidson: I refer you to the answer to WAQ35690.

Asset Management Plans

Eleanor Burnham: Have all the local education authorities completed and submitted their asset management plans? (WAQ35740)

Eleanor Burnham: What were the total identified costs that accrued from the asset management plans submitted by local education authorities? (WAQ35741)

Eleanor Burnham: What percentage of the costs identified in the asset management plans are priority health and safety issues that require urgent remedial action (within the school life of a single pupil)? (WAQ35742)

Eleanor Burnham: Is the commitment of the Welsh Assembly Government to bring all school buildings up to an adequate state by the year 2010 still a realistic and achievable target? (WAQ35743)

Jane Davidson: The asset management plans are derived from building condition surveys of all local authority capital assets, apart from housing. They are intended to help authorities to identify priorities for investment and to make decisions on any rationalisation of provision. Authorities were expected to have plans in place by 1 April. The Assembly Government has yet to receive copies of the plans. We shall scrutinise the education elements of the plans and talk to local authorities about their intentions for investment in school buildings in light of the plan information.

We are firmly committed to the 2010 target and have pledged to spend £560 million during the lifetime of this Assembly. We have already made significant progress in addressing the problem of the poor condition of many school buildings. In Plenary on the 12 May, I announced projects to be supported in 2005-06 and 2006-07 under the first phase of £9 million allocations for larger projects under the school building improvement grant programme. In addition, all authorities will continue to have annual formula allocations of school building improvement grant programmes and annual capital allocations under general capital funding or basic credit approval arrangements, and funding of £9.5 million will be available each year for voluntary-aided schools. Overall from 2005-06 onwards, £139 million a year will

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be available for capital investment in school buildings. The adequacy of this will be reviewed in light of the information from asset management plans and discussions with local and diocesan authorities.

Grant Aid Allocated to Local Education Authorities

Eleanor Burnham: How much grant aid allocated to local education authorities by the Welsh Assembly Government for the period 2002-05 has actually been spent by those local education authorities (as opposed to having been transferred to them)? (WAQ35748)

Jane Davidson: Local authority funding for school buildings is secured in a number of ways.

The Assembly Government provides funding for capital investment in schools through general capital funding, which authorities are free to use for any capital purpose, and the school building improvement grant which can only be used for that purpose. Local authorities can also use available capital receipts and other locally raised funding.

Provision in the period 2002-05 is as follows:

	General capital funding £000s	School buildings improvement grant £000s	Year totals £000s
2002-03	54,939,000	36,475,000	91,414,000
2003-04	54,939,000	36,725,000	91,664,000
2004-05	54,939,000	42,725,000	97,664,000
Totals	164,817,000	115,925,000	280,742,000

Outturn spend for 2002-03 was £96.7 million. Outturn information for 2003-04 is not yet available.

Governing bodies of schools receive funding in their delegated budgets for repair and maintenance costs. Spending for these purposes was £29.9 million in 2002-03. Information is not yet available for 2003-04.

Questions to the Minister for Environment, Planning and Countryside

The A470 Road Improvements

Nick Bourne: When is work due to start on the A470 road improvements between Erwood and BUILT Wells? (WAQ35333) *Transferred for answer by the Minister for Economic Development and Transport*

The Minister for Economic Development and Transport (Andrew Davies): Work on the preparation of the environmental statement needed for the scheme is nearing completion. The scheme will be subject to statutory procedures, which will include publication of draft Orders and a possible public inquiry. Work is unlikely to start before late 2005-06.

Cost of Implementing the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000

Nick Bourne: What will the cost be to each local authority in Wales of implementing the obligations of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 in the current year, and what will the projected costs be of continuing obligations in succeeding years to each of the local authorities in Wales? (WAQ35363)

The Minister for Environment, Planning and Countryside (Carwyn Jones): The Assembly Government does not hold detailed information on actual costs to each local authority in implementing the provisions of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. However, we have made available,

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through the local government revenue settlement, additional resources totalling £2.4 million per annum from 2001-02 to local highway authorities in recognition of their responsibilities under the Act. This sum is apportioned between authorities on the basis of a formula agreed with the Welsh Local Government Association. As we progressively introduce the provisions in the Act, I shall continue to monitor the use and sufficiency of these additional resources with local government.

Large Energy Projects

Nick Bourne: Will the Minister make a statement on the progress made in relation to the transfer of powers over large energy projects from Westminster to the Welsh Assembly? (WAQ35364) *Transferred for answer by the Minister for Economic Development and Transport.*

Andrew Davies: The Assembly Government is part of a tri-partite group currently considering our request for the transfer of powers contained in sections 36 and 37 of the Electricity Act 1989.

The group is making good progress and has met on a number of occasions, including a visit to the Scottish Executive to examine the consent process there. The group aims to report to Ministers later this year. The final decision on the transfer will be a matter for the UK Cabinet Ministerial Committee Devolution Policy.

Equine Passports (Timetable for Implementation)

Tamsin Dunwoody-Kneafsey: Could the Minister report on the timetable associated with the implementation of equine passports in England and Wales? (WAQ35675)

Carwyn Jones: It is proposed that legislation requiring owners to apply for passports for all their equines will come into force in Wales during the late autumn of 2004. However, a common enforcement date of the 28 February, 2005 has been agreed by the UK Government, Wales and the other devolved administrations.

The Treatment for Waste

Peter Black: Will the Minister make a statement on the treatment for waste? (WAQ35677)

Carwyn Jones: The Wales waste strategy seeks to minimise waste and to maximise recycling and composting of the waste that does arise, with minimal disposal to landfill and with minimal use of measures such as energy from waste. We are also implementing new regulations covering, for example, hazardous, agricultural, packaging and electrical waste to ensure a regulatory framework that encourages diversion of waste from landfill, and treatment that better protects the public and the environment. This approach follows the waste hierarchy:

- prevent waste production
- reduce/minimise waste production and its potential hazard
- reuse materials
- recover materials
- recover energy
- dispose (landfill).

The Wales waste strategy approach seeks to maximise the environmental, social and economic benefits from more sustainable waste management in Wales.

Reducing Plastic Waste

Peter Black: Will the Minister make a statement on what is being done to reduce plastic waste? (WAQ35678)

Carwyn Jones: Much plastic waste comes from packaging. The Welsh Assembly Government is working closely with the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs on regulations for packaging recovery and recycling. Overall recovery rates are currently set at 65 per cent for packaging waste, including plastics. We are working with WRAP and, in Wales, CWMre—Creating Welsh Markets for Recyclates—to develop markets for recycled plastic.

New agricultural waste regulations reflecting requirements in the waste framework directive and the landfill directive will place controls on the disposal of plastic farm waste, such as silage wrap and horticultural film. We are considering, with the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, a voluntary or statutory national recycling scheme that would divert greater volumes of plastic from landfill.

The waste electrical and electronic directive is being transposed into England and Wales regulations and will increase producer responsibility for the recovery, recycling and safe disposal of electronic and electrical equipment, including plastics.

Concern for the Environment in Wales

John Griffiths: Will the Minister make a statement on progress in achieving attitudinal change towards greater concern for the environment in Wales? (WAQ35679)

Carwyn Jones: There are a range of ongoing activities to promote environmental awareness in Wales. In particular:

- Waste Awareness Wales has been established to promote waste reduction, reuse and recycling among all sectors of the community. The campaign is co-ordinated by the Welsh Local Government Association and Keep Wales Tidy and is funded by the Welsh Assembly Government;
- the Welsh Assembly Government provides funding to the National Society for Clean Air for the provision of publicity and promotional materials in support of noise action day—an annual event that highlights and proposes practical solutions to noise problems;
- the countryside code, currently being updated, outlines the responsibilities people have when they visit the countryside, the main message being communicated is ‘respect, protect, enjoy the countryside’;
- the climate change Wales newsletter, aimed at informing on climate change developments and their effect on Wales and the UK, was launched in October 2003. Work is underway on the second issue.

The Quality of Bathing Water at Popular Beaches

John Griffiths: Will the Minister make a statement on the quality of bathing water at popular beaches in Wales? (WAQ35680)

Carwyn Jones: The quality of bathing water at beaches in Wales is excellent and is among the best in the UK with 77 of the 78 designated waters in Wales achieving the EC mandatory standard in 2003. A record 83 per cent of Welsh designated bathing waters also met the more stringent EC guideline standard—the blue flag standard—compared with less than a quarter 10 years ago.

Tackling Air Pollution

Lorraine Barrett: What action is the Welsh Assembly Government taking to tackle air pollution? (WAQ35681)

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Carwyn Jones: The Welsh Assembly Government's air quality policies are set out in the air quality strategy for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. An addendum to the strategy was published in February 2003. A review of the strategy, taking account of the latest information on the health effects of air pollution and technical and policy developments, is to take place throughout 2004.

The strategy sets objectives for nine main air pollutants to protect human health and two objectives to protect vegetation and ecosystems. The air pollutants covered by the strategy are benzene, 1,3-butadiene, carbon monoxide, lead, nitrogen dioxide, particles (PM₁₀), ozone, sulphur dioxide and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons.

Air quality monitoring indicates that we are on course or have already met objectives for six of the nine pollutants in Wales, namely benzene, 1,3-butadiene, carbon monoxide, lead, sulphur dioxide and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons.

Local air quality management measures, including designation of air quality management areas, are expected to reduce nitrogen dioxide and particle levels. We are expecting to exceed the ozone objective in parts of Wales. However, internationally agreed measures are the most effective ways to tackle this pollutant as ground-level ozone concentrations are influenced largely by transboundary pollution.

European legislation, which impacts on air quality, has been transposed in Wales. The main drivers on air pollution are the air quality framework directive and daughter directives. In addition, there are several directives dealing with industrial pollution, such as the large combustion plant directive and waste incineration directive, which have benefits for air quality in Wales.

Tackling Fly-Tipping

Lorraine Barrett: What action is the Welsh Assembly Government taking to tackle fly-tipping? (WAQ35682)

Carwyn Jones: The Assembly Government is committed to stamping out the illegal disposal of waste. As part of this commitment, the Assembly Government has provided additional finance for the Environment Agency's 'Targeted Enforcement' campaign. Local authorities have also received new powers under section 55 of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003, with effect from 31 March 2004 to stop, search and seize vehicles suspected of being involved in the illegal disposal of waste and powers of entry to premises and collect evidence in such cases. I understand that further primary legislation is being considered.

A revised protocol on fly-tipping aimed at clarifying the shared responsibilities between local authorities and the Environment Agency in England and Wales for clearing up different types of fly-tipped waste is being considered.

It is important to monitor the situation effectively and from April 2004 a database on the incidence of fly-tipping and clean-up action was set up by the Environment Agency on behalf of the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and with the support of the Assembly Government. This will be a vital tool in assisting us to develop policy and direct resources efficiently.

The Assembly Government also supports Keep Wales Tidy in its community and awareness-raising work on the illegal disposal of waste.

The Removal of Vehicles Regulations 1986

Ann Jones: Further to the Minister's answer to WAQ32790, what representations has he received from representatives of the fire service in relation to the Assembly Government's consultation on proposed alterations to the Notice Periods for the Removal of Vehicles Regulations 1986? (WAQ35683)

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Carwyn Jones: I have received one response from the Fire Service. The north Wales Fire Service welcomes the proposed amendments and states that it believes the reduction in notice periods will be beneficial. It considers that a consistent approach across England and Wales will make it easier to engage all local authorities in measures to combat vehicle arson.

The Removal and Disposal of Vehicles Regulations 1986

Ann Jones: Further to the Minister's answer to WAQ32791, what progress has been made in obtaining the formal transfer of functions in relation to the Notice Periods for the Removal and Disposal of Vehicles Regulations 1986? (WAQ35684)

Carwyn Jones: I am currently in discussion with the Wales Office about arranging the transfer of these powers together with the transfer of animal health powers which are due to be completed by the end of this year.

Water Levels in the City

Owen John Thomas: What discussions has the Minister had with Cardiff City Council in respect of the effects of the Cardiff bay barrage on water levels in the city? (WAQ35685)

Carwyn Jones: None. Cardiff County Council's responsibilities as successor body to the Cardiff Bay Development Corporation lie within the Economic Development and Transport Minister's portfolio.

Decreasing Flood Risk

David Davies: What is the Minister doing to decrease flood risk in Wales? (WAQ35686)

Carwyn Jones: It is for the food defence operating authorities to promote measures to alleviate flood risk in Wales. I provide financial assistance to these authorities to support the promotion of such measures and this year, I have made £4 million available to local authorities and £3.713 million to the Environment Agency to enable them to support the promotion of such measures. I am also considering streamlining existing arrangements for delivering flood defences services in Wales and I will be announcing my decision shortly.

Fly-tipping

Laura Anne Jones: Would the Minister make a statement on the issue of fly-tipping? (WAQ35687)

Carwyn Jones: The Assembly Government is committed to stamping out the illegal disposal of waste. As part of this commitment, the Assembly Government has provided additional finance for the Environment Agency 'Targeted Enforcement' campaign. Local authorities have also received new powers under Section 55 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003, with effect from 31 March 2004 to stop, search and seize vehicles suspected of being involved in the illegal disposal of waste and powers of entry to premises and collect evidence in such cases. I understand that further primary legislation is being considered.

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The Assembly Government also supports Keep Wales Tidy in its community and awareness-raising work on the illegal disposal of waste.

Rural Wales

Nick Bourne: How are the Minister's policies benefiting rural Wales? (WAQ35688)

Carwyn Jones: All of my department's policies are geared towards benefiting rural Wales.

Furniture for Homeworking

Nick Bourne: Will the Minister advise whether furniture is provided by the Assembly sponsored public bodies for which he is responsible to facilitate homeworking? (WAQ35696)

Carwyn Jones: I refer you to the answer to WAQ35690.

CAP Subsidy Band

Lynne Neagle: Within the £100,000 and above CAP subsidy band, how many farmers are in receipt of payments above £120,000, £150,000, £200,000, £250,000, £300,000, £400,000, £500,000 and £750,000 and above? (WAQ35745)

Carwyn Jones: In Wales, there are 11 farmers in receipt of CAP subsidy payments between £120,000 and £150,000, eight between £150,000 and £200,000 and less than five in excess of £200,000. There are no farmers in receipt of CAP subsidies in excess of £250,000.

Joint Ministerial Committee Meetings

Michael German: How many joint ministerial committee meetings involving agriculture ministers have there been since the establishment of the Assembly? (WAQ35746)

Carwyn Jones: On formal devolved agriculture ministers' meetings, dates are available from 2001 onwards.

2001	2002	2003	2004
22 January 2001	16 January 2002	12 February 2003	21 January 2004
14 March 2001	13 February 2002	2 April 2003	11 March 2004
15 May 2001	22 May 2002	5 June 2003	
4 July 2001	19 June 2002	22 October 2003	
19 September 2001	9 October 2002	20 November 2003	
17 October 2001	13 November 2002	11 Decmeber 2003	
14 November 2001	11 December 2002		

GM Crops

Michael German: How many meetings involving agriculture ministers from the UK and devolved administrations have there been since the establishment of the Assembly which have discussed the issue of GM crops? (WAQ35747)

Carwyn Jones: UK and devolved administration's agriculture ministers have regular face-to-face meetings, video meetings and telephone conversations. Issues relating to genetically modified crops have formed part of those discussions.

Powers over Animal Welfare

Nick Bourne: Will the Minister advise how long it took for powers over animal welfare to be transferred to the National Assembly? (WAQ35772)

Carwyn Jones: A number of animal welfare powers were transferred to the National Assembly for Wales as part of the original Transfer of Functions Order in 1999 and were effective from 1 July 1999. Certain powers were retained by the Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, or subject to joint exercise. It is hoped that residual animal health and welfare powers will be transferred to the Assembly by the end of the year.

Questions to the Finance Minister

Contingency Funds

Brynle Williams: What money has the Minister put aside for contingency funds? (WAQ34535)

The Finance Minister (Sue Essex): The supplementary budget approved by the Assembly on 24 March, included an unallocated provision of £55.704 million for the 2004-05 financial year.

Guidance on the Provision of Furniture for Homeworking

Nick Bourne: What guidance does the Government of Wales give to employers in the public sector on the provision of furniture for homeworking? (WAQ35317)

Sue Essex: None.

Amount Spent on Advertising by the Assembly Government

Nick Bourne: How much has the Welsh Assembly Government spent on advertising in the years for which figures are available? (WAQ35373)

Sue Essex: We place press adverts through a contract to ensure that we target audiences effectively and achieve best value for money. For the 2002-03 financial year, the spend was £1,912,209 and for 2003-04 it was £2,303,681. This covers public notices, public appointments advertising, statutory transport notices and recruitment advertising.

Additional Funding for Key Government Priorities

Peter Black: What additional finance will be available over the next three years to fund key Government priorities? (WAQ35663)

Sue Essex: Details of any additional funding for the Assembly will not be known until the HM Treasury's spending review announcement later this summer. The allocation of resources following the announcement will be a matter for the Assembly to determine.

Financing Key Government Priorities

Peter Black: Will the Minister make a statement on how she will be financing key Government priorities? (WAQ35664)

Sue Essex: The Assembly's internal spending review is examining our existing programmes and evaluating their contribution to the effective delivery of the Assembly Government priorities as set out in

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'Wales: A Better Country'. The results of the review will be taken on board as part of the budget planning round process.

The Economic Development and Transport Budget

Lorraine Barrett: Will the Minister make a statement on the overall funding for the economic development and transport budget in 2004-05? (WAQ35665)

Sue Essex: The economic development and transport main expenditure group will receive over £1.3 billion in 2004-05. This represents an increase of 9.8 per cent or £120 million on 2003-04 after adjusting for transfers.

Key Cross-Cutting Projects

Ann Jones: What role does the Minister play regarding the co-ordination of budgets to support key cross-cutting projects? (WAQ35666)

Sue Essex: The spending review process is designed to address how well our budgets align with the objectives in 'Wales: A Better Country', including cross-cutting items. This will be a key aspect of the draft budget this autumn.

'Rhyl Going Forward'

Ann Jones: What discussions has the Minister had with ministerial colleagues regarding possible options to finance the proposals set out in 'Rhyl Going Forward'? (WAQ35667)

Sue Essex: I have had no formal discussions as yet with other Ministers, but I am aware of the work being undertaken on this matter.

Assembly Government Budget Procedure

John Griffiths: Will the Minister make a statement on any further steps she will take to improve Assembly Government budget procedure? (WAQ35668)

Sue Essex: I will be making changes to the presentation of Assembly Government budgets this autumn in order to ensure that the information is understandable and accessible.

The Promotion of PFI Projects

William Graham: Will the Minister specify the Assembly budget provision for the promotion of private finance initiative projects in Wales? (WAQ35672)

Sue Essex: There is no Assembly budget provision for the promotion of PFI projects in Wales.

Funding for the Economic Development and Transport Portfolio

David Davies: Will the Minister make a statement on the overall funding for the economic development and transport portfolio in 2004-05? (WAQ35670)

Sue Essex: The economic development and transport portfolio will receive over £1.3 billion in 2004-05. This represents an increase of 9.8 per cent or £120 million on 2003-04 after adjusting for transfers.

The Assembly Budget

Nick Bourne: What recent discussions has the Minister had with the Secretary of State for Wales about the Assembly budget? (WAQ35673)

Sue Essex: I meet the Secretary of State regularly to discuss a range of issues including the Assembly budget.

Assembly Cross-Cutting Themes (Budgeting Process)

John Griffiths: Will the Minister make a statement on progress in addressing the Assembly's cross-cutting themes through the budgeting process? (WAQ35674)

Sue Essex: As part of this year's budget planning and spending review, I have asked subject committees and Cabinet Ministers to consider how the priorities set out in 'Wales: A Better Country' can be achieved most effectively. This will include the delivery of cross-cutting objectives.

Furniture for Homeworking

Nick Bourne: Will the Minister advise whether furniture is provided by the Assembly sponsored public bodies for which she is responsible to facilitate homeworking? (WAQ35691)

Sue Essex: I refer you to the answer to WAQ35690.

Entry into the Euro

Nick Bourne: How much money has been spent by local government in Wales for preparing Wales for entry into the euro? (WAQ35712)

Sue Essex: The Welsh Assembly Government has not collected information from local government in Wales specifically in respect of any amounts spent in preparing for the introduction of the euro. Neither is it possible to provide this information by reference to our normal data collections from local government.

Questions to the Minister for Health and Social Services

The Rheumatoid Arthritis Infusion Centre

Owen John Thomas: What are the annual overall costs to NHS Wales of the rheumatoid arthritis infusion centre at the University Hospital of Wales, Cardiff? (WAQ35343)

Owen John Thomas: What are the annual overall costs to NHS Wales of the rheumatoid arthritis infusion centre at the Princess of Wales Hospital, Bridgend? (WAQ35344)

Owen John Thomas: What is the annual anti-tumour necrosis factor drug budget for the rheumatoid arthritis infusion centre at the Morriston Hospital, Swansea? (WAQ35345)

Owen John Thomas: What are the annual overall costs to NHS Wales of the rheumatoid arthritis infusion centre at the Morriston Hospital, Swansea? (WAQ35346)

Owen John Thomas: What is the annual anti-tumour necrosis factor drug budget for the rheumatoid arthritis infusion centre at the University Hospital of Wales, Cardiff? (WAQ35347)

Owen John Thomas: What is the annual anti-tumour necrosis factor drug budget for the rheumatoid arthritis infusion centre at the Princess of Wales Hospital, Bridgend? (WAQ35348)

Owen John Thomas: What proposals are there for the future of arthritis infusion centres in Wales in light of the new anti-tumour necrosis factor treatment approved by the medical strategy group, which does not require hospitalisation? (WAQ35350)

The Minister for Health and Social Services (Jane Hutt): This is a matter for the individual trusts. That information is not available neither centrally nor in the regional offices.

Cost of Employing Agency Staff

Nick Bourne: What is the cost to the NHS of the employment of agency staff in the current financial year, and what has the cost been in each year since 1999? (WAQ35359)

Jane Hutt: The total cost for all agency staff, including medical and nursing staff, as per the NHS trust statutory accounts is provided below for each year to March 2003:

- 2002-03—£38 million
- 2001-02—£28 million
- 2000-01—£18 million
- 1999-2000—£13 million.

Figures for 2003-04 are not yet available.

Reducing Deaths from Stroke

Ann Jones: Will the Minister list the local initiatives funded via the health inequalities fund that are aimed wholly or partially at reducing deaths from stroke? (WAQ35368)

Ann Jones: Will the Minister list the initiatives currently being undertaken by the Assembly Government/NHS Wales to reduce the death rate from stroke in Wales? (WAQ35378)

Jane Hutt: The inequalities in health fund was set up in 2001 to stimulate and support local action to address inequalities in health and the factors that contribute towards it. The priority focus for the fund is on tackling coronary heart disease and the risk factors associated with it, which are inextricably linked to the risk factors for stroke. Most projects supported by the inequalities in health fund are, therefore, relevant to reducing stroke. Attached is a list of the 63 current projects, all of which are seen as having some part to play in reducing death from stroke.

Inequalities in health fund

Projects supported by the inequalities in health fund, June 2002

Local health board/local authority area	Project title	Description	Project Ref.
Blaenau Gwent	Smoking cessation service	Support to help adults in disadvantaged communities to stop smoking.	072
Blaenau Gwent	Tackling obesity	A community-based service with a range of approaches tailored to individuals. To improve the outcomes of obesity management and develop a long-term support system for patients.	090
Blaenau Gwent	Risk assessment for coronary heart disease in primary care	Work within GP practices to develop disease registers to identify patients, both those at risk and those already diagnosed with heart disease.	094
Blaenau Gwent (and hospital	Angina management project	Rehabilitation for people with angina. Support and advice to minimise risk factors	005

catchment area)		and make lifestyle changes. An individualised programme for physical, psychological and emotional recovery.	
Blaenau Gwent (and hospital catchment area)	Heart failure management project	To increase the ability of patients to understand and control their treatment and to optimise pharmacological therapies. Combines education, counselling, supervision and exercise.	006
Bridgend	Communities lifestyle modification programme	Primary care-led community programme, supporting sustainable lifestyle changes, targeted at communities and individuals identified at high risk of developing coronary heart disease.	065
Bridgend	Mobile opportunistic screening service	To identify people at high risk of developing coronary heart disease, who do not traditionally present to, or access, primary health care.	066
Bridgend	Integrated cardiac rehabilitation teams	To improve access and take-up of cardiac rehabilitation services. To encourage patient groups to take responsibility for their health through advice, education and support.	069
Caerphilly	Coronary heart disease resource centre, local health initiatives	Comprehensive information on heart disease and healthy lifestyles, and activities to promote health to the elderly, children and young people.	082
Caerphilly	Disease register and structured risk assessment clinics	To identify, monitor and report patients' risks of heart disease and to help them to take action to prevent it. Project will also test the effectiveness of a risk assessment software programme.	083
Caerphilly	Exercise on prescription	To improve the health and wellbeing by promoting exercise and healthy lifestyles and by addressing factors that contribute to inequalities in health.	084
Caerphilly	Food and health advisor	Action to improve the health of the younger-aged population by promoting good nutrition	085
Cardiff	'Barefoot' health workers project	To help local communities to examine culturally appropriate ways of improving health with support to develop and deliver activities that address heart disease.	011
Cardiff	A multi-disciplinary team approach to developing a patient-focused coronary heart disease prevention programme	Support primary health care teams in developing systems to identify those at risk and to develop and implement a targeted programme to reduce risk factors for heart disease.	030
Cardiff	Cardiovascular disease—delivering health improvement	To deliver the requirements of the national service framework for coronary heart disease to the practice population by identifying those at risk.	081
Cardiff	Heart disease and diabetes - action in black and ethnic minority communities in south-	A comprehensive primary care-led service where current services are patchy and unco-ordinated to overcome language and cultural communication problems and to establish a	087

	west Cardiff	health screening service.	
Carmarthenshire	Outreach cardiac rehab programme	Improved access to the cardiac rehabilitation programme through an outreach programme to improve take-up rates, particularly for the elderly people.	020
Carmarthenshire	Provision of rapid access to chest pain clinic	A rapid access service to reduce the number of patients referred to cardiology out-patient clinics; to manage patients more appropriately in the community.	022
Carmarthenshire	Community heart disease prevention programme for Llanelli	A community heart disease project targeting those at risk and including an exercise referral scheme, coronary rehabilitation and community nutrition.	024
Carmarthenshire	Adding years to life for patients with coronary heart disease in Carmarthenshire	To create a register of patients with heart disease in GP practices and to ensure that those at risk have health screening.	026
Ceredigion	Ceredigion community thrombolysis	To introduce and evaluate the introduction of primary care pre-hospital community thrombolysis in rural areas.	054
Ceredigion	Communities for reducing inequalities in health	Work with people in deprived areas to enable them to identify and take action on heart disease and to develop local action and to improve access to existing services.	079
Denbighshire	Health communities programme	To reduce people at risk of developing coronary heart disease and to improve the outcomes of people with the disease.	060
Denbighshire	Community action on coronary heart disease – Rhyl and north Denbighshire	To address inequalities in access to, and use of, services that address heart disease and the risk factors that contribute to it and to encourage people to take greater control over their health.	114
Denbighshire	Community action on coronary heart disease – Denbigh and south Denbighshire	To address inequalities in access to, and use of, services and facilities that address heart disease and the risk factors that contribute to it; to encourage people to take greater control over their health and to develop a screening programme and pilot work for people with mental health needs.	115
Flintshire	Heart of Flintshire project	To encourage people to increase exercise in their day-to-day life, to promote healthy eating and to reduce smoking among people, including young women and people on low incomes.	044
Flintshire	The Mold primary care project	To implement standards 1, 2, 4 and 5 of the national service framework for coronary heart disease.	047
Gwynedd	‘Calon Lân’ Gwynedd	To establish ‘Calon Lân’, a heart disease rehabilitation service, to improve access to services and resources and to encourage healthy heart lifestyles.	016
Merthyr	Targeted ischaemic heart disease risk factor intervention project	Primary care action to review and audit existing services and standards to identify those at risk for primary prevention.	089

Merthyr	Community-based multidisciplinary cardiac rehabilitation	To promote and support increased lifelong exercise and increased independence for heart attack patients.	100
Merthyr	Promoting health in small workplaces	To raise awareness of, and promote, cardiovascular health via health promotion in the workplace.	105
Merthyr	Peer support system for people with diabetes in Merthyr and Cynon	Action to help patients with heart disease to manage their condition and to publicise the risk factors associated with heart disease.	111
Merthyr	The Merthyr Tydfil 'Heartlinks' project	A targeted physical activity and healthy eating programme which links to complementary services in Merthyr Tydfil.	112
Neath and Port Talbot	Integrated cardiac rehab teams	To develop integrated and co-ordinated teams to provide cardiac rehabilitation.	068
Neath and Port Talbot	Healthy hearts project	To improve access to cardiac rehabilitation programmes. An enhanced, community-led service to meet the needs of communities with a traditionally poor survival rate of myocardial infraction.	097
Neath and Port Talbot	'Alive and Ticking'—raising awareness of heart disease in the community	A risk assessment service targeted at risk groups. Will provide health and lifestyle advice, and information on additional support and services available locally.	098
Neath and Port Talbot	Heart food and health	To increase consumption of fruit and vegetables. To improve skills for buying and preparing fruit and vegetables and to promote personal responsibility for health and raise awareness of CHD risk factors.	099
Newport	Big sister	To prevent heart disease for people at risk, especially women, ethnic groups and young people, and improve access, support, guidance and awareness.	050
Newport	Ethnic minority coronary heart disease community project	To improve access to heart disease and diabetes services for people from black and ethnic communities. To increase knowledge and encourage a healthier lifestyle to minimise risks.	051
Newport	Coronary heart disease care for the older population	To co-ordinate the provision of consistent and effective care for over 65-year-olds who have, or who are at risk of developing heart disease.	052
Newport	Primary and community care nutrition project	To reduce incidence of heart disease by promoting nutrition in areas with evidence of deprivation and/or social disadvantage.	053
Newport (and hospital catchment area)	Cardiac rehabilitation and secondary prevention clients diagnosed with angina	Programme of risk factor assessment and risk factor management for people with angina in order to prevent further cardiac event and to delay the disease process.	064
Pembrokeshire	Pembrokeshire community heart health project	A screening project in GP practices and associated programmes and support to help people to reduce their risk of heart disease. (note: this project was originally managed as two individual projects.)	070 a/b
Powys	Community-based	A community-based exercise programme for	017

	cardiac rehab programme (phase IV)	people with coronary heart disease to local authority leisure centres in Powys.	
Powys	Tackling inequalities in health together	Work with people in deprived areas to enable them to identify and take action on heart disease and to develop local action and improve access to existing services.	080
Rhondda Cynon Taf	Coronary heart disease risk assessment and intervention—Rhondda and Taf Ely	To increase screening for heart disease, to monitor the effectiveness of treatment and to produce a care plan across care providers and engage GPs in care plans.	033
Rhondda Cynon Taf	Coronary heart disease risk assessment and intervention—Cynon Valley	To increase screening for heart disease, to monitor the effectiveness of treatment and to produce a care plan across care providers and engage GPs in care plans.	034
Rhondda Cynon Taf	Heart attack—active living strategy	A community-based physical activity initiative for those at risk of heart disease, which will also develop a ‘pals’ scheme and a ‘health walks’ scheme and self-help programmes for cardiac rehabilitation.	037
Rhondda Cynon Taf	Heart attack—‘Food for Living, Food for Life’	A programme of practical advice and assistance to those at high risk of heart disease. Will involve professionals and workers in programmes in workplaces, retail outlets and commercial settings.	038
Rhondda Cynon Taf (and hospital catchment area)	Nursing service for heart failure patients	To encourage patients and families to manage and monitor their own condition and to adopt beneficial lifestyle changes and to improve access, advice and support to maximise quality of life and help patients stay at home.	043
Rhondda Cynon Taf	A healthy start: targeting pregnant teenagers	A midwifery-led provision of psycho-social interventions that reduce low birth weight and improve the cardiovascular health of pregnant teenagers and their children.	106
Rhondda Cynon Taf	Community-based multidisciplinary cardiac rehabilitation in the Cynon Valley	To increase lifelong exercise and increased independence by managing weight and cholesterol levels and by improving physical flexibility.	107
Swansea	Coronary heart disease prevention in primary care	Additional nursing support to GP practices in communities with a lower-than-average level of support and a heart disease prevention programme.	040
Swansea	Dietetics in primary care	Specialist dietetic advice to each GP practice in Swansea to reduce levels of heart disease, which will ensure that all patients have access to specialist advice/support.	041
Swansea	Coronary artery disease	To achieve 100 per cent coverage of risk assessment for coronary artery disease in Swansea.	042
Torfaen	Targeted primary prevention heart disease clinics with access to ‘Exercise on Prescription’	Identification of local priorities for action and the development of a programme of action to contribute to reducing the incidence of heart disease and inequalities in health.	058

Vale of Glamorgan	Barry heart health	To work with primary care teams to identify those at risk and to reduce lifestyle risk factors as well as encourage smoking cessation, improve nutrition and exercise levels, and reduce stress and alcohol intake. This is a local campaign to identify and provide local advice and information on reducing coronary heart disease.	009
Wrexham	Coronary heart disease and travellers—'Redressing the Balance'	To improve access to health care services and to reduce and prevent the incidence of heart disease within a community of travellers.	012
Wrexham	Hearts and minds	To encourage physical health and wellbeing for people with learning difficulties and/or long-term mental health problems.	015
Wrexham	Healthy eating community classes	To support individuals in weight loss, to facilitate a holistic approach to healthy eating and weight loss, and peer support.	028
Wrexham	Targeting coronary heart disease action on a deprived housing estate in north Wales	To raise awareness of the benefits of health screening, support and access to appropriate healthcare service, and to encourage a healthier lifestyle.	029
Ynys Môn	Community action to prevent coronary heart disease in deprived communities—Ynys Môn	To improve access to existing services and to establish 'Calon Lân', a heart disease prevention team and community-based cardiac rehabilitation services.	045
Ynys Môn	Healthy community development officer	To create active and supportive communities to care for the wellbeing of individuals.	046

Reducing Deaths from Stroke

Ann Jones: What is the Welsh Assembly Government's target to reduce deaths from stroke in Wales? (WAQ35377)

Jane Hutt: The provision of health services, including stroke services, is the responsibility of the local health boards. They must undertake local needs assessments and, working with NHS trusts, the voluntary sector and others, plan and prioritise services to meet these needs within the resources available.

The national service framework for older people in Wales will focus on stroke care and help identify actions to reduce any unacceptable variation in service and drive up quality.

We have asked trusts and local health boards to put in place integrated care pathways to ensure that there are consistent measures, wherever you live in Wales, for the prevention and management of strokes.

Lack of Specialised Stroke Units

Ann Jones: Which district general hospitals in Wales presently lack a specialised stroke unit? (WAQ35379)

Jane Hutt: The provision of effective stroke services in Wales is a very important issue. Research indicates that dedicated stroke services can save lives and increase the number of independent survivors. We are committed to developing high-quality services that meet the needs of patients.

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The sentinel audit for stroke 2001-02 by the Royal College of Physicians was carried out in Wales between 1 April 2001 and 30 June 2001. Seventeen sites in Wales took part of which 11 reported that they had a stroke unit in their trust. However, the royal college did not state which sites did or did not have stroke units. The sentinel audit is currently being repeated and we are expecting the results in the summer.

The national service framework for older people in Wales will focus on stroke care and help reduce any unacceptable variation in service and drive up quality. The effectiveness of dedicated stroke units in Wales will be considered in taking this work forward. While stroke is not a condition confined to older people, we will ensure that recommendations for the provision of stroke services are relevant to all ages.

We have asked trusts and local health boards to put in place integrated care pathways to ensure that there are consistent measures, wherever you live in Wales, for the prevention and management of strokes.

The National Service Framework for Older People

Ann Jones: What plans does the Minister have to publish national standards for stroke care for Wales in the forthcoming national service framework for older people? (WAQ35380)

Jane Hutt: The national service framework for older people, which is now being developed for Wales, will include a standard on stroke. The standard will address the prevention and immediate and longer-term treatment of stroke in adults of all ages. It will incorporate measurable standards for stroke care in Wales, the achievement of which will be monitored through the national service framework performance management mechanism.

The national service framework standard on stroke is being developed by a sub-group, chaired until recently by Margaret Goose, chief executive of the Stroke Association. The sub-group consists of health and social care professionals, Assembly officials and service users.

The draft national service framework for older people in Wales will be issued for consultation in November 2004, with a view to final publication by June 2005.

The Rate of Deaths from Stroke

Ann Jones: How does the rate of deaths from stroke in Wales compare to those in other nations and regions of the UK? (WAQ35381)

Jane Hutt: These data are not available for Wales, but each year 110,000 people in England and Wales have their first stroke, and 30,000 people will go on to have further strokes. It is the single biggest cause of severe disability and the third most common cause of death in the UK and other developed countries.

Publication of Local Health Board Responses to the Wanless Report

Kirsty Williams: Will the local health board responses to the Wanless report be published and if so, when? (WAQ35382)

Jane Hutt: The Wanless local action plans were developed by local health boards with partners and stakeholders. They were signed off by local health boards and are, therefore, in the public domain. As part of the Plenary debate on the Audit Commission's report 'Transforming Health and Social Care in Wales' held on 18 May 2004, the Wanless local action plans were distributed to Assembly Members.

Local Health Board Responses to the Wanless Report

Kirsty Williams: Are local health board responses to the Wanless report being made to the Assembly or to the relevant regional office? (WAQ35383)

Jane Hutt: In the guidance issued on December 2003, local health boards were asked to submit their Wanless local action plans to the Assembly's health and social care department. All 22 Wanless local action plans were submitted in time for the deadline of 30 April 2004. A full evaluation began immediately and will continue until June 2004. Assembly regional offices will be involved in this detailed evaluation process.

Formulation of Local Health Board Responses to the Wanless Report

Kirsty Williams: Will the local health board responses to the Wanless report be formulated at a local health board level, or at a specialist level? (WAQ35384)

Jane Hutt: The Wanless local action plans have been formulated at local health board level. They are set in the framework of the health, social care and wellbeing strategies and developed partnership with local authorities, NHS trusts, voluntary sector organisations, clinical and specialist representatives and other local stakeholders.

The evaluation process will consider the Wanless local action plans from a range of perspectives spatially, for example, local, regional and national, and including specialist services, the voluntary sector and clinical networks.

The Role of Regional Offices (Local Health Board Responses)

Kirsty Williams: What will be the role of the regional offices with respect to the local health board responses to the Wanless report? (WAQ35385)

Jane Hutt: The three regional offices of the National Assembly based in mid and west, north and south-east Wales, support improved joint-working at local levels between local health boards, local authorities and trusts and monitoring the development of local health, social care and wellbeing strategies. They have a specific role to ensure that Assembly initiatives are carried out.

Regional offices have worked alongside local health boards in the development of the Wanless local action plans. The regional offices are an integral part of the Wanless local action plan evaluation process and will be assessing the plans from a regional perspective.

Nurse Training Places

Jonathan Morgan: Will the Minister list the number of nurse training places being offered for 2004-05 by each academic institution, and that delivered in each academic year since 1999? (WAQ35421)

Jane Hutt: The pre-registration numbers for 2004-05 have been commissioned to reflect the staffing requirements, as outlined in the 2003 workforce plans in conjunction with the enhanced return to practice initiative for the next three years.

The baseline pre-registration commission numbers, which include the four pre-registration branches—adult, child, mental health and learning disabilities—for 2004-05 are as follows:

	04-05
	Baseline commissions
Uni A	245
Uni B	284

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Uni C	316
Uni D	270
Uni E	115
TOTAL	1230

The number of pre-registration nurses completing training for each year since 1999 are:

1999-2000	730
2000-01	741
2001-02	823
2002-03	825
2003-04	936

The number due to complete pre-registration training in the following three years are:

2004-05	1070
2005-06	1239
2006-07	1278

The Nursing Profession

Jonathan Morgan: Will the Minister list the dates and details of meetings held this year between her officials and representatives of higher education involved in training students in the nursing profession? (WAQ35422)

Jane Hutt: Assembly officials meet annually with representatives of the higher education institutes that provide nurse training in Wales to discuss the annual contract, including nurse training places. There are other meetings held during the year.

To date in 2004, meetings attended by representatives of the higher education institutes were held on the following dates:

Date	Higher education institute
20 January 2004	Higher education institutes' representatives
26 January 2004	University of Wales College Swansea
29 January 2004	Higher education institutes' representatives
9 February 2004	University of Wales College of Medicine
13 February 2004	University of Wales Bangor
13 February 2004	North East Wales Institute
5 May 2004	Higher education institutes' representatives
17 May 2004	University of Wales College Swansea
18 May 2004	University of Wales Institute Cardiff

The meetings on 20 January 2004 and 5 May 2004 were the nursing, midwifery, allied health professions and healthcare scientist sub-group meetings. The remit of this group is to provide an advisory role to the all-Wales workforce development steering group on nursing, midwifery, allied health professions and healthcare scientist workforce and education issues at a national level. Representatives of the higher education institutes also attended the steering group meetings. The steering group last met on 29 January 2004, and the next meetings are scheduled for 25 May and 14 September 2004.

In addition, Assembly officials are meeting with representatives of the higher education institutes of Wales on 2 June 2004. The agenda for this meeting will include:

- partnership working,
- workforce planning,
- implications of the Wanless review into health and social care,
- education and training—a review of commissioning arrangements in Wales,

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- commissioning—discussion on the 2004-05 processes,
- ‘Return to Practice’—campaign discussion,
- widening the entry gate to training.

Nurse Training Places

Jonathan Morgan: How many nurse training places is the Assembly Government funding in the academic year 2004-05 and how does this figure compare to each academic year since 1999-2000? (WAQ35423)

Jane Hutt: The number of nurse training places funded by the Assembly year by year since 1999-2000 is as follows:

1999-2000	2,609
2000-01	2,897
2001-02	3,261
2002-03	3,499
2003-04	3,782
2004-05	3,934

Nurse Vacancies

Jonathan Morgan: How many nurse vacancies exist in Wales today? (WAQ35424)

Jane Hutt: The latest data relate to 31 March 2003, which shows 708.9 whole-time equivalent vacancies in the nursing, midwifery and health visiting group—664.5 for qualified staff and 44.4 for unqualified staff. As a percentage of the total nursing numbers, these vacancies represent 3.2 per cent of all qualified staff and 0.8 per cent of all unqualified staff.

Furniture for Homeworking

Nick Bourne: Will the Minister advise whether furniture is provided by the Assembly sponsored public bodies for which she is responsible to facilitate homeworking? (WAQ35693)

Jane Hutt: I refer you to the answer to WAQ35690.

The Provision of Advocacy Services (People with Learning Difficulties)

David Lloyd: Will the Minister make a statement on the provision of advocacy services for people with learning difficulties, based on ‘Fulfilling the Promises’ and ‘The Service Principles (Adult) Guidance’? (WAQ35698)

David Lloyd: Will the Minister make a statement on leisure facilities for adults with a learning disability as contained within the ‘Service Principles (Adult) Guidance’? (WAQ35699)

David Lloyd: Will the Minister make a statement on the role of family carers of adults with a learning disability as defined within the ‘Services Principles (Adult) Guidance’? (WAQ35700)

Jane Hutt: We have recently completed a consultation on the draft guidance on service principles and service responses for adults with learning disabilities. The 130 or so consultation responses are being analysed and considered. I will seek the views of the learning disability implementation advisory group on the consultation responses and the shape of the final guidance before I reach final decisions. Once the final guidance has been issued, I will ask authorities to audit their current arrangements against this

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guidance and come forward with changed action plans. I have made available £1.7 million this year to assist authorities to implement these action plans.

Last year, we introduced our new learning disabilities advocacy grant scheme, which is being administered on our behalf by the British Institute for Learning Disabilities. So far, over 30 advocacy organisations across Wales have received assistance.

Myasthenia Gravis

David Lloyd: Will the Minister make a statement on what support she has made available for those suffering from myasthenia gravis? (WAQ35701)

David Lloyd: How is the Minister raising awareness of myasthenia gravis among the medical profession? (WAQ35703)

Jane Hutt: Local health boards are responsible for the provision of local services that would include those for the treatment of myasthenia gravis. Local health boards are ideally placed to work with partners, including NHS trusts, local authorities and the voluntary sector, to identify the needs of the local population and develop services to meet those needs.

In addition, the local health boards' health, social care and wellbeing plans, currently being consulted on, provide a programme of action based upon a comprehensive assessment of local needs. Service developments will be clearly outlined within the plans of each local health board.

Myasthenia gravis sufferers are normally treated across Wales locally by primary care services with referral to specialist neuro-immunology clinics according to clinical need. If a different approach is needed, we would expect the local health boards to work with each other and with other partners to suggest the best way forward, be that on an all-Wales or other basis.

The specialist neuroscience review currently being undertaken by Health Commission Wales, will build upon preliminary findings of work undertaken by the Specialist Health Services Commission Wales prior to NHS restructuring. This review will provide a clearer understanding of the issues facing neuroscience services across Wales and will provide recommendations for coherent developments on an all-Wales basis. Resource and investment issues will also be an integral part of the review.

Patients Diagnosed with Myasthenia Gravis

David Lloyd: Will the Minister make a statement on hospital waiting times for patients diagnosed with myasthenia gravis? (WAQ35702)

Jane Hutt: There are no plans to collect in-patient or day case waiting times for myasthenia gravis following diagnosis. Treatment for this progressive condition may involve long-term medication under the supervision of a consultant, and/or therapy intervention for which the consultant would refer on to the relevant department at the appropriate time.

Myasthenia Gravis (Benefit Entitlement)

David Lloyd: What discussions has the Minister had with the Secretary of State for Wales on benefit entitlement for those diagnosed with myasthenia gravis? (WAQ35704)

Jane Hutt: This issue is the responsibility of the Department for Work and Pensions and has not been devolved to the Assembly.

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Symud Swyddi Gweinyddol yn y Gwasanaeth Iechyd

Alun Ffred Jones: Gyda golwg ar yr ateb i gwestiwn WAQ34842, faint o staff sydd dan sylw? (WAQ35707) [W]

Alun Ffred Jones: Gyda golwg ar yr ateb i gwestiwn WAQ34842, beth yw graddfeydd cyflog y swyddi hyn? (WAQ35705) [W]

Alun Ffred Jones: Gyda golwg ar yr ateb i gwestiwn WAQ34842, beth yw cyfrifoldebau'r staff? (WAQ35706) [W]

Alun Ffred Jones: Gyda golwg ar yr ateb i gwestiwn WAQ34842, i bwy mae'r gweithwyr hyn yn atebol? (WAQ35708) [W]

Jane Hutt: Mae'r ddogfen ymgynghori ddrafft yn awgrymu yr effeithir ar 20 o swyddi yng nghanolfan gwasanaethau busnes GIG Caernarfon, yn amrywio o staff clericio i uwchreolwyr.

Penderfynir ar y canlyniad ar ôl pwyso a mesur yr ymgynghoriad 90-diwrnod a fydd yn dechrau ar 27 Mai 2004. Tan y daw'r broses i ben, byddai'n amhriodol cynnig sylw pellach.

Moving Administrative Offices in the Health Service

Alun Ffred Jones: Further to the response to question WAQ34842, how many staff are involved? (WAQ35707) [W]

Alun Ffred Jones: Further to the response to question WAQ34842, what are the pay bands of these jobs? (WAQ35705) [W]

Alun Ffred Jones: Further to the response to question WAQ34842, what are the responsibilities of the staff? (WAQ35706) [W]

Alun Ffred Jones: Further to the response to question WAQ34842, to whom will these employees be answerable? (WAQ35708) [W]

Jane Hutt: The draft consultation document suggests that 20 posts at the Caernarfon NHS business services centre will be affected, ranging from clerical staff to senior management level.

The outcome will be determined by the evaluation of the 90-day consultation process due to commence on 27 May 2004. Until this process is complete, it would be inappropriate to comment further.

The Townsend Health Needs Formula

Jenny Randerson: What plans does the Minister have to increase the budget of Cardiff Local Health Board's hospital and community services allocation to bring it into line with the additional £9.6million, suggested by the Townsend health needs formula? (WAQ35709)

Jane Hutt: I announced in February that £30 million would be issued to local health boards to support progress towards implementing the reform agenda arising from the health and social care review. This funding was distributed to those areas whose current allocations were furthest under their direct needs formula target share. Cardiff Local Health Board is due to receive £2.7 million of this allocation. I will determine at the annual budget setting round the amount to be issued in each future year, dependent on the availability of funds.

Number of Staff Vacancies in Cancer Care

Lynne Neagle: Will the Minister issue a statement on the number of staff vacancies within cancer care in Wales by NHS trusts in the fields of community nurses, clinical nurse specialists, palliative care nurses, clinical oncologists, medical oncologists, diagnostic radiographers, therapeutic radiographers, and clinical radiologists? (WAQ35754)

Jane Hutt: Data on job vacancies are only collected by specialty for medical and dental staff and are, therefore, not available for cancer care in the fields of community nurses, clinical nurse specialists, palliative care nurses, diagnostic radiographers, therapeutic radiographers, and clinical radiologists. However, as at 31 March 2003, there were four whole-time equivalent vacancies for qualified nurses at Velindre NHS Trust—the main centre for cancer treatment in Wales.

The attached table shows the number of vacancies—which had been empty for three months or more—at 31 March 2003 for clinical oncologists. There were no vacancies for medical oncologists.

Clinical Oncology	31 March 2003
Bro Morgannwg	0
Cardiff and Vale	0
Carmarthenshire	0
Ceredigion and Mid Wales	0
Conwy and Denbighshire	0
Gwent Healthcare	0
North East Wales	0
North Glamorgan	0
North West Wales	1
Pembrokeshire and Derwen	0
Pontypridd and Rhondda	0
Powys Healthcare	0
Swansea	1
Velindre	0
Total for all trusts	2

The National Institute for Clinical Excellence's Guidance

Kirsty Williams: How much money has the Welsh Assembly Government earmarked for providing effective rehabilitation assessment and support as set out in NICE's guidance? (WAQ35761)

Jane Hutt: I am not clear whether you are referring to an individual piece of NICE guidance, or the institute's guidance in general. In 2002-03, I made an additional £10.5 million available to health authorities to help with cost and developmental pressures, including the implementation of NICE guidance. This funding is given recurrently to local health boards as part of their annual settlements, which are uplifted annually.

If you are referring to an individual piece of NICE guidance, please let me know and I will look into the issue further.

Questions to the Minister for Social Justice and Regeneration

The Provision of Affordable Housing

Nick Bourne: What is the Minister doing to ensure the provision of affordable housing in mid Wales? (WAQ35375)

The Minister for Social Justice and Regeneration (Edwina Hart): Nearly £3 million of the social housing grant has been allocated to the counties of Powys and Ceredigion in this financial year, which, with the addition of private finance raised by registered social landlords, will result in some £4 million investment in housing in mid Wales in this financial year. In line with our principle of local delivery, it is for local authorities to decide on their priorities for spending the money.

We are committed to undertake a review of the social housing grant regime and the process of developing new social housing in Wales. That work will involve a review of the size of the social housing grant budget as well as the distribution mechanisms and other criteria.

Furniture for Homeworking

Nick Bourne: Will the Minister advise on whether furniture is provided by the Assembly sponsored public bodies for which she is responsible to facilitate homeworking? (WAQ35692)

Edwina Hart: No ASPBs fall under my portfolio responsibilities.

Right to Buy (Consistency of Valuations)

Nick Bourne: Has the Minister had any representations about consistency of valuations in relation to right to buy in Penparcau, Aberystwyth, and will she give details of such representations? (WAQ35734)

Edwina Hart: I have received representations regarding valuations of right-to-buy properties in Penparcau. These have generally related to the application of the cost floor rule in respect of certain individual properties.

Right to Buy (Consistency of Practice)

Nick Bourne: Will the Minister make a statement about consistency of practice in relation to valuations of houses for right-to-buy purposes in Ceredigion? (WAQ35735)

Edwina Hart: The valuation of properties for right-to-buy purposes is carried out in accordance with the provisions of the housing acts. The same principles should apply throughout England and Wales and this, of course, includes Ceredigion. Issues relating to 'consistency of practice' should be raised with the council and, ultimately, the courts.

Right to Buy (Basis of Valuation)

Nick Bourne: Will the Minister make a statement about the basis on which valuations of houses are done for right-to-buy purposes in Ceredigion? (WAQ35736)

Edwina Hart: The valuation of properties for right-to-buy purposes must be carried out in accordance with the provisions of the housing acts. These rules apply to all right-to-buy landlords, including Ceredigion. Tenants have the right of appeal to the district valuer, if they are not satisfied with the valuation of their property.