

Written Questions answered between 21 and 28 November 2002

[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

Trade and Investment Offices

Nick Bourne: What plans does the Minister have to visit the proposed trade and investment offices when established? (WAQ20731)

The First Minister (Rhodri Morgan): I have no such plans.

Wales Overseas Centres

Jonathan Morgan: What is the projected cost of establishing and running the proposed Wales overseas centres? (WAQ20751)

The First Minister: Only the New York Wales International Centre is new, with start-up costs of £177,000 which includes a one-off payment of £93,000 redeemable plus interest after the expiry of the lease. The modification costs in each of the other existing locations (San Francisco, Tokyo, Hong Kong, and Brussels) are expected to be about £11,000.

Estimated Assembly Government running costs (including salaries and rental) are as follows:

New York	£220,000 p.a.
San Francisco	£110,000 p.a.
Tokyo	£130,000 p.a.
Hong Kong	£110,000 p.a.
Brussels	£60,000 p.a. (subject to further negotiation in relation to the wider Assembly Government presence in Brussels)

These are provisional costs.

Questions to the Deputy First Minister and Minister for Rural Development and Wales Abroad

Agricultural Land in Bridgend

Alun Cairns: What representation has the Minister received regarding the loss of agricultural land in Bridgend? (WAQ20078)

Substantive answer following holding reply issued on 5 November.

The Deputy First Minister and Minister for Rural Development and Wales Abroad (Michael German): I have received no such representations on this specific point, although the Assembly's Agriculture Department has made representations to Bridgend County Council expressing concern over the possible loss of high quality agricultural land in relation to a planning application for development at Island Farm, Bridgend. In addition, various groups and individuals have asked the Assembly to call in this application; these requests are being considered.

I hope that this information is helpful.

Bridgend County Borough Council

Alun Cairns: Would the Minister please publish a copy of his correspondence to Bridgend County Borough Council regarding the loss of agricultural land in Island Farm? (WAQ20675)

Michael German: Copies of letters sent to Bridgend County Borough Council are [available here](#).

Arable Aid Payments

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: Will the Minister clarify when arable aid payments will be made? (WAQ20677)

Michael German: We expect to make 2002 arable area payments within the payment window determined by EU legislation, which closes on 31 January 2003.

Trade and Investment Offices

Nick Bourne: What plans does the Minister have to visit the proposed trade and investment offices when established? (WAQ20739)

Michael German: I have no such plans. However I envisage a number of visits to the Assembly Government's office in Brussels.

Dairy Farmers

Nick Bourne: What is the Minister doing to ensure that dairy farmers receive a fair price for their product? (WAQ20947)

Michael German: The price that dairy farmers receive for their milk is not within the Welsh Assembly Government's control. It is a commercial matter, for negotiation between producers and milk purchasers. Among the factors that influence it are demand within the UK market, world prices and the euro/sterling exchange rate.

The Assembly Government's approach, through the agri-food partnership, is to help milk producers to strengthen the long-term competitive position of the industry in Wales, by encouraging adding value to milk, developing new markets and products, as well as boosting market demand and improving efficiency. The dairy action plan, prepared in conjunction with the industry, is currently being reviewed to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of the industry. The WDA Food Directorate is actively assisting processors with trade shows and exhibitions, and through grant aid for processing and marketing.

Sheep Annual Premium Scheme (Paying Interest)

Nick Bourne: Given the delay in making payments under the sheep annual premium scheme, will the Minister consider paying interest on those payments in order to compensate sheep farmers? (WAQ20948)

Michael German: The EU payment window for sheep annual premium subsidy closes on 31 March next year. The European Commission requires 96 per cent (by value) of sheep annual premium payments to have been made by this date. Any payments made after this date, due to maladministration, would be deemed late, and I would then consider whether compensatory payments were appropriate, on a case-by-case basis.

Sheep Annual Premium Scheme (Financial Hardship)

Alun Cairns: What analysis has the Minister made of the financial hardships experienced by Welsh farmers owing to delays in the payment of sheep annual premium? (WAQ20949)

Michael German: There were four applications for urgent payment of sheep annual premium because of financial hardship. These have been paid.

Sheep Annual Premium Scheme (Securing Payment)

Alun Cairns: What progress has the Minister made in securing payment of sheep annual premium schemes to Welsh farmers? (WAQ20950)

Michael German: Sheep annual premium and sheep national envelope payments commenced on 18 November. I anticipate that over 90 per cent of claims will be processed by the end of the month, which means that the vast majority of farmers, especially those receiving electronic BACS payments, will receive their money by the end of November.

Payments of the less favoured area supplement, where appropriate, will follow the validation of farmers' individual integrated administration and control system 2002 applications. These payments are due to start in early December.

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

Trade and Investment Offices

Nick Bourne: What plans does the Minister have to visit the proposed trade and investment offices when established? (WAQ20738)

The Minister for Culture, Sport and the Welsh Language (Jenny Randerson): I have no such plans.

Gohebu yn y Gymraeg

Alun Cairns: Beth yw polisi'r Cynulliad ar ddefnyddio cyfeiriadau yn Gymraeg wrth ohebu yn Gymraeg ag unigolion a chyrrff? (WAQ20901)

Jenny Randerson: Nid oes polisi ffurfiol fel y cyfryw ond buasai'n arferol defnyddio fersiynau Cymraeg o gyfeiriadau ar lythyrau Cymraeg. Wrth ymateb i ohebiaeth, buasem fel arfer yn defnyddio'r un cyfeiriad â'r person a oedd wedi ysgrifennu atom. Ar gyfer cyrrff gyda phapur pennawd dwyieithog, buasai iaith y llythyr yn pennu pa fersiwn o'r cyfeiriad y buasem yn ei ddefnyddio.

Mae'r sefyllfa ychydig yn anoddach wrth inni gychwyn gohebiaeth gyda nifer helaeth o gyrrff neu unigolion. Mae ymarferion ymgynghori'n enghraifft dda o hyn. Cyngor y Post Brenhinol yw y dylai cyfeiriadau fod yn Gymraeg neu yn Saesneg ond nid yn y ddwy iaith. O ganlyniad, o dan amgylchiadau felly, buasai'n rhaid i'r is-adran a oedd yn cynnal yr ymgynghoriad asesu a ddylid defnyddio cyfeiriadau Cymraeg neu Saesneg. Os oedd dewis iaith y sawl a oedd am dderbyn y deunydd yn hysbys, buasai'r is-adran, wrth reswm, yn parchu'r dewis hwnnw.

Welsh Language Communication

Alun Cairns: What is the Assembly's policy on using Welsh-language addresses in Welsh-language communication with individuals and organisations? (WAQ20901)

Jenny Randerson: There is no formal policy as such, but normal practice would be to use the Welsh-language version of addresses on communications in Welsh. In responding to correspondence, we would usually use the same version of the address as the correspondent. For organisations with bilingual headed paper, the language of the letter would determine which version of the address would be used.

The situation is slightly more difficult when we are initiating bilingual correspondence with a wide range of organisations or individuals. Consultation exercises would be a good example of this scenario. Royal Mail advises that addresses should either be in English or in Welsh but not in both languages. In these circumstances therefore, the division conducting the consultation would have to assess whether to use Welsh or English. If the division concerned was aware of the language preference of the recipients, it would obviously adhere to that preference.

Minority Sports

Peter Black: What is being done to help and promote minority sports? (WAQ20954)

Jenny Randerson: The Welsh Assembly Government continues to work closely with the Sports Council for Wales to help promote minority sports in Wales.

The Sports Council for Wales is funding 57 governing bodies this financial year, and encourages them to develop improved strategic plans and adopt more robust business programmes. Not only does this assist individual sports, but it also helps in developing links to local authorities and sports council strategies in guiding lottery panels on the strategic impact of Sportlot applications. A database has been established to support this work, which links the governing body targets with the Sports Council for Wales's strategic objectives on sport and participation.

Distribution of Lottery Funds

Janet Ryder: Will the Minister make a statement on what actions are being taken to give the Assembly a greater say in the distribution of lottery funds? (WAQ20955)

Jenny Randerson: I made a statement to Plenary on 13 November in which I set out my aim of ensuring that all main lottery funding streams in Wales have a clear Welsh direction. Responses to the review of lottery funding, as well as the Culture Committee and Assembly Members in Plenary, have all expressed broad agreement that the Assembly should have more influence over how lottery funding in Wales is distributed. Devolving responsibilities in this area would enable us to set the lottery directions generally across all distributors, thus ensuring that they are more sensitive to the needs of Wales, and that their funding complements that provided by the Assembly and other bodies in Wales.

Cynllun Gweithredu ar yr Iaith Gymraeg

Helen Mary Jones: A wnaiff y Gweinidog ddatganiad ar flaenoriaethau ei chynllun gweithredu ar yr iaith Gymraeg? (WAQ20958) [W]

Jenny Randerson: Fe'ch cyfeiriaf at fy natganiad yng Nghyfarfod Llawn y ddoe.

Welsh Language Action Plan

Helen Mary Jones: Will the Minister make a statement on the priorities of her Welsh-language action plan? (WAQ20958) [W]

Jenny Randerson: I refer you to the statement that I made in Plenary yesterday.

Memorial to the Merchant Navy

Nick Bourne: Does the Minister support the creation of a permanent memorial to the Merchant Navy? (WAQ20959)

Jenny Randerson: I believe that you are referring to the proposed memorial in Swansea. This is not eligible for funding from the Arts Council of Wales because the Merchant Navy Association, of Swansea, has not conducted an open competition to obtain the services of a sculptor. The arts council would be willing to consider an application if it met with the normal funding application conditions.

Cultural Events in Wales

Nick Bourne: Will the Minister make a statement on promoting cultural events in Wales? (WAQ20960)

Jenny Randerson: We have made a commitment in our 'Plan for Wales 2001' to develop a major events strategy for Wales. We are currently working on a scoping exercise, which will analyse the events that Wales is currently attracting, and those that Wales could feasibly attract in future. This exercise will inform the development of the overall strategy for the future.

A key element of the events strategy will be cultural events. We will therefore be looking to build on Wales's successes to date—the national and local eisteddfodau the Hay festival, Brecon Jazz Festival and so forth, to ensure that Wales becomes a destination for world-class cultural events. I have no doubt that a big factor in the future will be the completion of the Wales Millennium Centre, which will play a major role in putting Wales on the European and world cultural map.

Commonwealth Games in Wales

William Graham: Will the Minister make a statement on the progress of any feasible studies towards making a bid for staging the Commonwealth Games in Wales? (WAQ20961)

Jenny Randerson: The Assembly is currently commissioning a study, the results of which will inform the development of a major events strategy for Wales. The exercise will consider the types of events that Wales should seek to attract in future. Whilst this work is underway, my officials are collecting information on the process of bidding to host a Commonwealth Games.

Arts Centre in Newport

William Graham: Will the Minister make a statement on the progress in the construction of the new arts centre in Newport? (WAQ20962)

Jenny Randerson: I am pleased to be able to report that the medieval ship has now been safely removed from the site of the Newport Theatre and Arts Centre and has been stored in a water tank provided by Corus at Llanwern. Work has recommenced on the arts centre development and includes the construction of a basement beneath the foyer of the new theatre, where the ship will be displayed when it has been preserved and restored.

Sportsmatch Scheme

Brian Gibbons: Can the Minister make a statement on what measures the Welsh Assembly Government is taking to promote the Sportsmatch scheme? (WAQ20963)

Jenny Randerson: Sportsmatch, which was launched in 1992, is the Welsh Assembly Government's business incentive scheme, which is promoted through the Sports Council for Wales. It has achieved much success since its inception 10 years ago.

Over £6 million of investment has been generated from the private sector to support over 900 grassroots sports. I was able to increase the Welsh Assembly Government's contribution towards the scheme to £450,000 in 2002-03 to accommodate the high level of quality applications being submitted.

International Standard Sporting Facilities in Wales

Brian Gibbons: Can the Minister make a statement on the availability of international standard sporting facilities in Wales? (WAQ20964)

Jenny Randerson: Wales can boast a string of international standard sporting facilities. These include the Millennium Stadium, the new national swimming pool being constructed at Swansea, the National Indoor Athletics Centre in Cardiff as well as the Celtic Manor Resort and planned national cycling

velodrome at Newport. Water sport sites at Plas Menai, Pwllheli and Bala also play host to international competitions.

Moreover, the Welsh Institute of Sport in Cardiff is recognised as an international venue for sports such as table tennis, judo and badminton, and is the only centre in the UK with accreditation for three Olympic sports.

Specialist Mountain Weather Forecasts

Alun Pugh: What progress has been made in securing specialist mountain weather forecasts for farmers and recreational users without having to pay premium Meteorological Office rates? (WAQ20971)

Jenny Randerson: Discussions are taking place between members of the Outdoor Activities Awareness Forum and representatives from the Met Office about the provision of additional weather forecasts, which can be used for those who engage in outdoor activities. However, these discussions have not involved the provision of forecasts for farmers, which would be a matter for the Deputy First Minister and Minister for Rural Development and Wales Abroad

Health Service in the North

Dafydd Wigley: Subsequent to the appointment of Mr Derek Griffin as regional director for the health service in the north, will the Minister state where it is intended to locate the service so as to be generally accessible to all the region? (WAQ20973)

Jane Hutt: The north Wales NHS Wales department regional office will be situated in Bromfield House in Mold, Flintshire for the next two to three years. The property is currently leased by the Assembly on behalf of North Wales Health Authority. Arrangements thereafter remain under consideration.

Questions to the Minister for Economic Development

The Welsh Development Agency (Objective 1)

Huw Lewis: Will the Minister make a statement on the activities of the Welsh Development Agency for promoting Objective 1 projects in south-east Wales? (WAQ20436)

Substantive answer following holding reply issued on 20 November 2002.

The Minister for Economic Development (Andrew Davies): The agency is a key partner in the Objective 1 process and both run partnerships and administer projects. As a lead body, it is responsible for facilitating the development of project proposals through a number of regional partnerships and it promotes the projects that the agency itself manages.

Inactivity in Wales

Brian Gibbons: Can the Minister give an update on progress in tackling inactivity in Wales? (WAQ20438)

Substantive answer following holding reply issued on 20 November 2002.

Andrew Davies: The Assembly Government's strategies for tackling economic inactivity are set out in 'A Winning Wales' and the associated skills and employment action plan. A half-year progress report on 'A Winning Wales' was considered by the Economic Development Committee on 31 October and the first annual report will be published next summer. This will include a detailed review of the Welsh economy and economic trends.

Latest labour market data shows both inactivity and unemployment falling across Wales and the reductions in the Objective 1 area over the last year demonstrate that our policies are working.

Early this year, the Cabinet asked its strategic policy unit to look at the underlying causes of inactivity in Wales. This work led to an expert symposium held in Swansea in June, which identified areas of priority and the importance of giving focus to these issues within the European Objective funds. Following advice from the economic research panel, the Assembly Government has decided to undertake further research into the barriers to economic activity in Wales. This will improve our understanding of the characteristics of economically inactive people and allow us to develop and refine our policies in order to help even more people into employment and further reduce inactivity.

Objective 1 Programme

Lynne Neagle: Will the Minister make a statement regarding the benefits to Torfaen of the Objective 1 programme? (WAQ20500)

Andrew Davies: Torfaen benefits from the almost £400 million of grant approved in Objective 1, including major national projects such as Finance Wales and Opportunity Wales, which is helping to strengthen the economy of west Wales and the Valleys and to build its communities. In addition to these national and regional projects, the Welsh European Funding Office has approved 18 projects endorsed by the Torfaen local partnership for £3.9 million-worth of grant.

Broadband Areas

Alison Halford: What action is the Minister taking to ensure that the broadband areas that have yet to achieve the 400 registered members that is a prerequisite for BT to connect them to broadband is reached as soon as possible? (WAQ20850)

Andrew Davies: The Broadband Wales programme contains a range of activities designed to address market deficiencies by stimulating broadband demand. To date, they include broadband demonstration facilities in ICT support centres, an ICT demonstration trailer, which has broadband capabilities, discussions with economic fora about placing local broadband champions in the four areas of Wales, and the Assembly Government's investment into the health and education sectors on broadband. These and other demand side activities are vital to stimulating real demand, leading to a viable commercial market for suppliers. While it would be inappropriate for the Assembly Government to ask people to register particularly for the BT scheme—as this could be seen as recommending one telecommunications operator over another—we encourage people to register through any of the internet service providers that take part in the BT pre-registration scheme.

Questions to the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning

Adolygiad Polisi o'r Iaith Gymraeg

Owen John Thomas: Pa gamau y mae'r Gweinidog wedi eu cymryd ers cyhoeddi'r adolygiad polisi o'r iaith Gymraeg i roi cychwyn ar rai o argymhellion yr adolygiad? (WAQ20656) [W]

Y Gweinidog dros Addysg a Dysgu Gydol Oes (Jane Davidson): Mae'r camau gweithredu canlynol wedi'u cymryd, neu ar y gweill:

Cydlynu cynllunio	Rhoi canllawiau atodol anffurfiol ar sut i baratoi cynlluniau trefniadol ysgolion i awdurdodau addysg lleol.
Blynyddoedd cynnar	Grant o £35,000 i Fudiad Ysgolion Meithrin er mwyn ei alluogi i wella'r ddarpariaeth ar gyfer plant tair mlwydd oed.

	Cynigir y bydd yr archwiliad o'r ddarpariaeth blynnyddoedd cynnar cyfrwng Cymraeg wedi'i gwblhau erbyn 31 Mawrth 2003.
Anghenion addysgol arbennig	Cafodd Grŵp Ymgynghorol Cymru ar Anghenion Addysgol Arbennig (WAGSEN) gyflwyniad a oedd yn sôn am adroddiad Huw Roberts 'Cydnabod Angen—Acknowledging Need'. Bydd yn datblygu cynllun gweithredu i fynd i'r afael â'r anghenion iaith Gymraeg o ran anghenion addysgol arbennig; ac mae'r grŵp llywio cenedlaethol ar gyfer anghenion addysgol arbennig yn ystyried ystod o faterion yn ymwneud â'r Gymraeg.
Parhad, a chontinwmm ieithyddol	Mae trafodaethau eisoes wedi dechrau ag Awdurdod Cymwysterau, Cwricwlwm ac Asesu Cymru.
Ail borth i addysg cyfrwng Cymraeg	Mae cyngor y grŵp o arbenigwyr, a gomisiynwyd gennyf, yn cael ei ystyried ar hyn o bryd a byddaf yn cynnal rhagor o drafodaethau â Bwrdd yr Iaith Gymraeg yn ddiweddarach y mis hwn. Yr wyf yn parhau i fod wedi ymrwymo i sefydlu cynlluniau peilot mewn ysgolion cynradd.
Deunyddiau addysgu a dysgu ACCAC	Mae adolygiad o'r broses gomisiynu eisoes yn rhan o'i gynllun gweithredu ar gyfer 2002-03. Mae Awdurdod Cymwysterau, Cwricwlwm ac Asesu Cymru ar hyn o bryd yn ymgynghori ar ei strategaeth ar gyfer y cyfnod o 2003-04 i 2005-06.
Cyngor Addysgu Cyffredinol Cymru yn cynnal archwiliad o athrawon	Mae'r Cyngor Addysgu Cyffredinol Cymru eisoes wedi lansio arolwg ar faterion recriwtio a chadw staff iaith Gymraeg a chyfrwng Cymraeg, a chynhelir cynhadledd ym mis Rhagfyr.
Addysg a hyfforddiant ôl-16	Mae Addysgu a Dysgu Cymru wedi sefydlu tîm dysgu dwyieithog i ddatblygu a hybu addysg a hyfforddiant dwyieithog yn y sector ôl-16.
Cymraeg i oedolion	Bydd y cyngor cenedlaethol yn adolygu'r broses o gynllunio a chyflwyno Cymraeg i oedolion. Y nod fydd ei gynnwys mewn cynllunio prif ffrwd, codi proffil Cymraeg i oedolion a gwella safonau. Mae tîm dwyieithog y cyngor cenedlaethol yn bwriadu cydweithio â FENTO i ddatblygu rhaglen hyfforddiant i diwtoriaid iaith Gymraeg yn y sector addysg i oedolion ac addysg bellach, i'w mabwysiadu wedyn gan sefydliadau addysg bellach a sefydliadau eraill sy'n ddarparwyr.
Addysg cyfrwng Cymraeg yn y sector addysg bellach	Mae Cyngor Cyllido Addysg Uwch Cymru wedi paratoi asesiad interim o'r galw a'r cyflenwad, a bydd yn cyflwyno adroddiad arall ym mis Ionawr 2003 ar y cynlluniau i gael strategaeth ar gyfer datblygu a recriwtio staff.
Gwyliau sabothol iaith	Mae arian yn parhau i fod ar gael o dan raglen grantiau cynnal addysg a hyfforddiant i athrawon, er mwyn galluogi iddynt wella eu sgiliau ieithyddol a throsglwyddo i addysg cyfrwng Cymraeg neu ddwyieithog.
Y cyd-destun rhyngwladol	Ers i'r Pwyllgor gyhoeddi ei adroddiad, euthum ar ymweliad â Gwlad y Basg a llofnodais femorandwm cyd-ddealltwriaeth. Yr wyf yn bwriadu mynd ar ymweliad arall i Wlad Belg ddechrau'r flwyddyn newydd.

Cymerwyd rhai o'r camau hyn cyn i'r Pwyllgor wneud ei argymhellion, ac yr oeddent ar y gweill cyn cyhoeddi'r adroddiad.

Bydd y Gweinidog dros Ddiwylliant, Chwaraeon a'r Gymraeg yn gwneud datganiad i'r Cyfarfod Llawn ar 27 Tachwedd yn nodi sut y mae Llywodraeth y Cynulliad yn bwriadu datblygu ei chynllun gweithredu ar gyfer yr iaith Gymraeg mewn ystod o bortffolios Gweinidogion, fel ag y nodwyd yn 'Dyfodol Dwyieithog: Bilingual Future'.

Welsh Language Policy Review

Owen John Thomas: What action has the Minister taken since the Welsh language policy review was published in order to proceed with some of the Review's recommendations? (WAQ20656) [W]

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning (Jane Davidson): The following actions have been taken or are in hand:

Coherence in planning	Informal supplementary guidance on the preparation of school organisation plans issued to local education authorities.
Early Years	A grant of £35,000 to Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin to provide it with greater capacity to enhance provision for three-year-olds. The audit of Welsh-medium early years provision is proposed for completion by 31 March 2003.
Special Educational Needs	The Welsh Advisory Group on Special Educational Needs has had a presentation of Huw Roberts' report 'Cydnabod Angen—Acknowledging Need' and will develop an action plan to address Welsh language special educational needs, and the national steering group for special educational needs is actively considering a range of related Welsh-language issues.
Continuity and a linguistic continuum	Discussions have already started with the Qualifications, Curriculum and Assessment Authority for Wales.
Second entry point into Welsh-medium education	The advice, which I commissioned from the group of experts, is under active consideration and I am to have further discussions with the Welsh Language Board later this month. I remain committed to setting up pilots in primary schools.
ACCAC teaching and learning materials	A review of the commissioning process is already provided for in its operational plan for 2002-03. The Qualifications, Curriculum and Assessment Authority for Wales is currently consulting on its strategy for the period 2003-04 to 2005-06.
GTCW audit of teachers	The General Teaching Council for Wales has already launched a survey of Welsh-language and Welsh-medium recruitment and retention issues, leading to a conference in December.
Post-16 education and training	Education and Learning Wales has established a bilingual learning team to develop and promote bilingual education and training in the post-16 sector.
Welsh for adults	The national council will review planning and delivery, to bring it into mainstream planning and raise the profile of Welsh for adults and improve standards. The national council's bilingual team intends to work with FENTO to develop a training programme for Welsh-language tutors in the adult learning and further education sectors, which might then be adopted by further education institutions and other provider organisations.
Welsh-medium teaching in HE	The Higher Education Funding Council for Wales has already prepared an interim assessment of supply and demand, and will be reporting further in January 2003 on plans for a strategy for staff development and recruitment.
Language sabbaticals	Funding continues to be available under the grants for education support and training programme, for teachers to improve their linguistic skills and to transfer into Welsh-medium or bilingual teaching.
International context	Since the Committee produced its report, I undertook a visit to the Basque country and signed a memorandum of understanding. I am planning to undertake a further one to Belgium early in the new year.

Some of these actions anticipated the Committee's recommendations and were underway before the report was published.

My ministerial colleague, the Minister for Culture, Sport and the Welsh Language, will be making a statement to Plenary on 27 November, setting out how the Welsh Assembly Government proposes to take

forward its action plan for the Welsh language across a range of ministerial portfolios, as signalled in ‘Dyfodol Dwyieithog: Bilingual Future’.

Funding Formula for Schools

Jonathan Morgan: What advice or guidance has been issued to local education authorities this year regarding their funding formula for schools? (WAQ20691)

Jane Davidson: The Welsh Assembly Government has not issued advice or guidance to local education authorities this year in connection with their schools’ funding formulae.

Top-up Fees for Higher Education

Mick Bates: Has the Welsh Assembly Government formed any policies on the desirability or otherwise of top-up fees for higher education? (WAQ20698)

Jane Davidson: My views on the undesirability of top-up fees in relation to the current framework of student support and higher education funding have been made plain in the Assembly Chamber.

Detrimental Effects of Top-up Fees

Mick Bates: Has the Minister had discussions with vice chancellors about possible detrimental effects that selective top-up fees have on some Welsh universities? (WAQ20699)

Jane Davidson: I am in the process of meeting all vice chancellors, chief executives, and principals, together with others with leadership responsibility in each higher education institution in Wales, to discuss a range of issues that may have implications for the higher education sector overall, taking full account of the strategy set out in ‘Reaching Higher’.

Take-up of Higher Education

Mick Bates: Has the Minister asked officials for any analysis of the effects that the introduction of top-up fees might have on the take-up of higher education places by Welsh students? (WAQ20700)

Jane Davidson: Our assessment, based substantially on the findings of the Rees report, suggests that up-front tuition and top-up fees cannot but be inimical to access to, and participation in, higher education.

Top-up Fees for Higher Education

Mick Bates: Has the Minister had any discussions with her UK counterpart about the desirability of introducing top-up fees for higher education? (WAQ20701)

Jane Davidson: I have already given Charles Clarke an indication of my views.

Welsh Universities

Mick Bates: Can the Minister give an indication of the level of any underfunding affecting Welsh universities? (WAQ20702)

Jane Davidson: I recently published the Assembly Government’s strategy for higher education in Wales, ‘Reaching Higher’. In that document, I set out the challenges facing the sector and our strategy for equipping the sector to confront those challenges. There are a number of different sources of funding for higher education and everything turns on the sector’s performance in making the best of the very large sums available. Indeed, the investment planned by the Assembly Government alone represents a 20 per

cent increase over the three years of the forward budget for the sector, which itself covers the early years of the strategy.

Top-Up Fees

Mick Bates: What discussions has the Minister had with her UK counterpart about which Welsh universities might benefit from top-up fees? (WAQ20703)

Jane Davidson: Thus far no Welsh higher education institution has told me that a benefit would result from top-up fees within the current context.

Top-Up Fees

Mick Bates: Has the Minister had any discussions with vice chancellors about how Welsh universities might benefit from top-up fees? (WAQ20704)

Jane Davidson: I refer you to my answers to previous questions WAQ20699 and WAQ20703.

University of Wales

Mick Bates: Has the Minister given any consideration to a system that gives higher status and higher funding to some parts of the University of Wales, in preference to others? (WAQ20705)

Jane Davidson: In ‘Reaching Higher’, I set out the Assembly Government’s vision for the future of the higher education sector in Wales. Status is a function of performance in relation to distinctive institutional purposes—not of funding. I am committed to seeing a world-renowned and inclusive sector, and ‘Reaching Higher’ sets out the steps for achieving this in Wales.

Funding Crisis in Higher Education

Mick Bates: Has the Minister had any discussions with her UK counterpart about measures that could be taken to remedy the ‘funding crisis’ in higher education? (WAQ20706)

Jane Davidson: The future of higher education does not turn on funding alone, but rather on making the most of the very considerable additional resources being made available, not least by the Assembly Government. I have made this something-for-something approach very clear, and I shall continue to do so in my contact with Charles Clarke in the run-up to the publication of his own strategic document.

The Dearing Report

Mick Bates: Has the Minister had any discussions with her UK counterpart about the desirability of implementing the findings of the Dearing report on higher education funding? (WAQ20707)

Jane Davidson: The Dearing report pre-dates the creation of the National Assembly. It remains an important reference point, though my discussions with UK Government colleagues about higher education matters naturally attend primarily to ‘Reaching Higher’ and the Rees report.

Higher Education

Mick Bates: Can the Minister confirm what powers she has to decide on how higher education is funded in Wales? (WAQ20708)

Jane Davidson: The Assembly’s powers relating to funding higher education are covered by the Further and Higher Education Act 1992. The Higher Education Funding Council for Wales is responsible for administering funds made available by the Assembly. It is therefore HEFCW that determines funding

allocations to individual institutions in Wales, in line with the terms and conditions imposed by the Assembly in the annual remit letter.

Funding Higher Education

Mick Bates: Does the Minister have any plans to seek further powers to enable her to decide on how higher education can best be funded to meet the needs of institutions and students in Wales? (WAQ20709)

Jane Davidson: Our intentions were outlined in 'Reaching Higher'.

Trade and Investment Offices

Nicholas Bourne: What plans does the Minister have to visit the proposed trade and investment offices when established? (WAQ20732)

Jane Davidson: I have no such plans.

Dysgu ac Addysgu Cymru

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: A oes polisi gan Dysgu ac Addysgu Cymru ar gyfer defnyddio deunyddiau ac adnoddau dysgu o Gymru? (WAQ20752) [W]

Jane Davidson: Nid yw cynghorau ELWa—Cyngor Addysg a Hyfforddiant Cenedlaethol Cymru a Chyngor Cyllido Addysg Uwch Cymru—yn gysylltiedig yn uniongyrchol â darparu dysgu neu yn sgîl hynny, y broses o gaffael deunydd addysgu ac adnoddau addysgu. Mae mwyafrif llethol y darparwyr dysgu yn cael eu cyllido gan y ddau gyngor sydd wedi'u lleoli yng Nghymru, ac mae penderfyniadau caffael o'r fath yn fater iddynt hwy.

Education and Learning Wales

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: Does Education and Learning Wales have a policy for using teaching materials and resources from Wales? (WAQ20752) [W]

Jane Davidson: Neither of the councils of ELWa—the National Council for Education and Training for Wales and the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales—are directly involved in the delivery of learning or, consequently, the procurement of teaching materials and teaching resources. The vast majority of learning providers funded by the two councils are based in Wales and such procurement decisions are matters for them.

Deunyddiau Dysgu ACCAC

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: A yw ceisiadau dros y ffôn am ddeunyddiau dysgu Awdurdod Cymwysterau, Cwricwlwm ac Asesu Cymru yn cael eu derbyn gan ganolfannau galw yng Nghymru? (WAQ20753) [W]

Jane Davidson: Dyfarnwyd contract Awdurdod Cymwysterau, Cwricwlwm ac Asesu Cymru ar gyfer gwasanaethau storffeydd a chyflenwi archebion i gwmi sydd wedi'i leoli yn Birmingham yn dilyn proses dendro Ewropeaidd lawn ac agored fis Tachwedd 2000. Cychwynnodd y contract fis Ionawr 2001. Yr oedd y cylch gwaith yn cynnwys darparu gwasanaeth archebu cyfrwng Saesneg ar gyfer cyhoeddiadau ACCAC ac ymdrin ag anfonebau a thaliadau. Mae'r gwasanaeth archebu cyfrwng Cymraeg yn cael ei ddarparu yn swyddfeydd ACCAC yng Nghaerdydd.

Mae'r aelod staff dwyieithog parhaol ar gael i ateb galwadau i'r llinell cyfrwng Cymraeg yn swyddfa Caerdydd yn ystod oriau swyddfa arferol. Os anfonir gwybodaeth gyffredinol drwy'r post, bydd y fersiwn Saesneg yn nodi rhif Birmingham ar gyfer archebu rhagor o gopïau a bydd y fersiwn Cymraeg yn

nodi rhif y llinell Gymraeg yng Nghaerdydd. Bydd galwyr hefyd yn defnyddio rhif cyffredinol ACCAC ac yn cael eu trosglwyddo i'r tîm cyhoeddiadau.

Mae tair llinell gymorth ddwyieithog hefyd ar gael i ysgolion gael archebu copïau ychwanegol o ddeunydd asesu statudol, ac ar gyfer ymholiadau gweinyddol cyffredinol. Mae'r rhain wedi'u lleoli yn swyddfa Caerdydd, ac aelodau staff dwyieithog fydd yn ateb y galwadau yn ystod cyfnodau'r profion.

ACCAC Teaching Materials

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: Are telephone requests for the Qualifications, Curriculum and Assessment Authority for Wales's teaching materials taken by call centres in Wales? (WAQ20753) [W]

Jane Davidson: The Qualifications, Curriculum and Assessment Authority for Wales's contract for warehousing and order fulfilment was awarded to a supplier based in Birmingham, following a full and open European tendering exercise in November 2000. The contract commenced in January 2001. The remit included providing an English language ordering service for ACCAC publications, and dealing with invoices and payments. The Welsh-language ordering service is provided from ACCAC's offices in Cardiff.

The dedicated Welsh-language line in the Cardiff office is staffed by a permanent bilingual member of staff during normal office hours. When a general mailshot is undertaken, English-language users are provided with the Birmingham number to order further copies, and Welsh-language users are provided with the Cardiff Welsh-language line number. Callers also use the general ACCAC number and are then forwarded to the publications team.

Three freephone bilingual helplines are also available for schools to order further copies of statutory assessment materials, and for general administrative queries. These are based in the Cardiff office and are staffed by bilingual members of staff during the tests period.

ELWa

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: A wnaiff y Gweinidog ddatganiad ar y ffordd y mae ELWa yn defnyddio adnoddau o Gymru yn ei gwaith o hyrwyddo a marchnata dysgu yng Nghymru? (WAQ20754) [W]

Jane Davidson: Defnyddiwyd yr adnoddau sydd ar gael i gynorthwyo ELWa i hybu a marchnata dysgu i gynnal nifer o ymgyrchoedd yn ogystal â nifer o gynadleddau, sefydlu gwefan a chynhyrchu llawer o wybodaeth ar gopi caled. Mae ELWa wedi sefydlu rhwydwaith o grwpiau cydlynu marchnata er mwyn sicrhau bod ei weithgareddau marchnata, a gweithgareddau ei bartneriaid yn cydweddu pan fo'n bosibl. Mae'r holl gontractau hyrwyddo/marchnata a osodwyd gan gynghorau ELWa yn destun rheolau caffael y sector cyhoeddus er mwyn sicrhau'r gwerth gorau am arian.

ELWa

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: Will the Minister make a statement on how ELWa uses resources from Wales in its work of promoting and marketing learning in Wales? (WAQ20754) [W]

Jane Davidson: The resources available to ELWa for the promotion and marketing of learning have been used to support a number of campaigns as well as various conferences, the establishment of a website and the production of a substantial volume of information material in hard copy. ELWa has established a network of marketing co-ordinating groups to ensure that its marketing activities, and those of its many partner organisations, are conducted, as far as possible, to complement each other. All promotional/marketing contracts let by the ELWa councils are subject to public sector procurement rules in order to ensure best value for money.

Awdurdod Cymwysterau, Cwricwlwm ac Asesu Cymru

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: Sut y mae Awdurdod Cymwysterau, Cwricwlwm ac Asesu Cymru yn dosbarthu ei ddeunyddiau: (a) drwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg a (b) drwy gyfrwng y Saesneg? (WAQ20755) [W]

Jane Davidson: Fel yr amlinellwyd yn ei gynllun iaith Gymraeg, bydd dogfennau ACCAC fel arfer yn ddwyieithog, mewn un ddogfen. Fodd bynnag, bydd fersiynau Cymraeg a Saesneg yn cael eu cynhyrchu ar wahân pan fydd:

- y cyhoeddiad yn fwy na hyd penodol, sy'n ei gwneud yn anodd trin y ddogfen;
- fersiynau Cymraeg a Saesneg yn cael eu datblygu ar y cyd (e.e. deunydd profion statudol a deunydd asesiadau dewisol); a'r
- deunydd yn briodol mewn un iaith yn unig (e.e. deunydd Cymraeg a Saesneg y pynciau craidd).

Pan na gynhyrchir fersiwn dwyieithog, mae'r dogfennau ar wahân ar gael ar sail gyfartal, a chant eu dosbarthu gyda'i gilydd. Bydd pris fersiwn Cymraeg y ddogfen yr un peth â'r fersiwn Saesneg.

Pan gynhyrchir deunydd ar y cyd ag awdurdodau yn yr Alban, Lloegr a Gogledd Iwerddon, mae ACCAC yn ceisio sicrhau bod fersiynau Cymraeg/dwyieithog ar gael ar yr un pryd â'r fersiwn Saesneg yn y gwledydd hynny.

Os caiff deunydd ei gynhyrchu mewn fersiynau ar wahân, deunydd Saesneg yn unig sy'n cael ei ddosbarthu i ysgolion cyfrwng Saesneg. Dosbarthir deunydd Cymraeg i ysgolion cyfrwng Cymraeg, gyda chopi o'r fersiwn Saesneg er gwybodaeth. Bydd ysgolion sy'n addysgu drwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg a'r Saesneg yn derbyn deunydd yn y ddwy iaith.

Qualifications, Curriculum and Assessment Authority for Wales

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: How does the Qualifications, Curriculum and Assessment Authority for Wales issue its materials: (a) through the medium of Welsh and (b) through the medium of English? (WAQ20755) [W]

Jane Davidson: As set out in its Welsh Language scheme, ACCAC's publications will usually be bilingual in a single document. However, separate Welsh and English versions will be produced when:

- the publication exceeds a certain length, making the document difficult to handle;
- Welsh and English-medium versions are developed in parallel (e.g. statutory test materials and optional assessment materials); and
- the material is only appropriate in one language (e.g. Welsh and English core subject material).

When a bilingual version is not produced, separate documents are equally available and distributed together. The Welsh-language version of a document will be priced the same as the English-language version.

When materials are produced in conjunction with authorities in Scotland, England and Northern Ireland ACCAC endeavours to ensure that Welsh/bilingual versions are available at the same time as the English-medium versions in those countries.

If materials are produced in separate language versions, only English-language materials are distributed to English-medium schools and Welsh-language materials to Welsh-medium schools with a copy of the English for information. Schools teaching through the medium of Welsh and English will receive materials in both languages.

Questions to the Minister for Environment

Trade and Investment Offices

Nick Bourne: What plans does the Minister have to visit the proposed trade and investment offices when established? (WAQ20734)

The Minister for the Environment (Sue Essex): I have no such plans.

Waste Minimisation and Recycling Businesses

Janet Davies: Will the Minister make a statement on what is being done to support new waste minimisation and recycling businesses? (WAQ20760)

Sue Essex: The Welsh Assembly Government is supporting increased recycling via several routes. We have given local authorities substantial extra resources totalling some £69 million for sustainable waste management, over the period 2001-02 to 2004-05. Local authorities will be using this in part to issue new waste management contracts that reflect the emphasis on recycling and composting.

The Assembly Government is also funding (together with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, the Department of Trade and Industry, Scotland and Northern Ireland) the waste and resources action programme. WRAP has been established to remove the barriers to the greater use of recycled materials and can give financial assistance and advice to businesses seeking to recycle materials or to use recycled materials.

The Assembly Government is also supporting the Creating Welsh Markets for Recyclate programme, run by the Wales Environment Trust, which is running a similar, compatible programme specifically within Wales. The Assembly Government has other industry support schemes, which are not specific to recycling businesses but can be used by them.

Waste minimisation is central to the Wales waste strategy and the Assembly Government is considering appropriate measures within Wales. However, to be most effective, waste minimisation measures will need to be introduced across the UK. The Assembly Government will work with the other administrations in the UK to promote waste minimisation.

Landfill Tax

Janet Davies: What discussions has the Minister had with the UK Government to consider transferring funds from landfill tax for Wales to the Assembly budget? (WAQ20761)

Sue Essex: Responsibility for introducing and modifying fiscal instruments lies with the UK Government. I discussed this issue at my last meeting with Michael Meacher MP, Minister of State for Environment at the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, on 26 September, and I have also written to Her Majesty's Treasury. I have supported allowing devolved administrations to decide how to distribute their allocation of funding from landfill tax.

Strategic Rail Authority

Janet Davies: Has the Minister had any recent discussions regarding the power of the Assembly to appoint a representative to the Strategic Rail Authority? (WAQ20762)

Sue Essex: I indicated in my statement in Plenary on 2 July that I would seek this power together with other transport measures. The Department for Transport is aware of our wish, and I have included it in my evidence to the Richard commission.

Rail Franchise Tenders

Janet Davies: Will the Minister make a statement on guidelines that have been set for all rail franchise tenders? (WAQ20763)

Sue Essex: The Strategic Rail Authority has recently issued the bidding guidance for the next stage in the process. The guidance continues to emphasise the need for bidders to submit proposals to address a range of passenger requirements.

Wales and Border Franchise

Janet Davies: Will the Minister make a statement on the Wales and Border franchise progress to date? (WAQ20764)

Sue Essex: The Strategic Rail Authority has recently issued the bidding guidance for the next stage of the process. The authority's intention is to announce a preferred bidder in the spring and for the franchise to commence in the autumn.

Public Transport Unit

Janet Davies: Will the Minister make a statement on the kind of role that the public transport unit will have and in what way it will work with regional bodies? (WAQ20765)

Sue Essex: A public transport unit has been established within the transport directorate to drive forward policy and technical work needed to implement our commitments. I have also announced my intention to establish an advisory non-executive body to keep an overview of public transport activity, and to provide expertise to this unit. That body will include representatives of the key stakeholders and experts, who will work in collaboration with the Assembly to get the best from public transport resources.

Community Transport

Janet Davies: Will the Minister make a statement on the provision of community transport and long-distance bus and coach services? (WAQ20766)

Sue Essex: Community transport already plays an important role in the transport network, but I want that to grow, and for it to be increasingly mainstreamed alongside other modes. I launched the report of the community transport review group on 21 October and am establishing a stakeholders group to take forward and implement its recommendations. I look forward to receiving the report of the long-distance bus and coach group, which is investigating the provision of services throughout Wales early next year.

Sand-dredging and Aggregates Policy

Alun Cairns: What is the Minister's latest timescale on announcing her sand-dredging and aggregates policy? (WAQ20900)

Sue Essex: I intend to issue a position statement before Christmas.

Questions to the Finance Minister

Homeless Families

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: How many homeless families are there in Wales? (WAQ20695)

The Finance Minister (Edwina Hart): During the 2001-02 financial year, of the 14,000 households on which homelessness decisions were made by local authorities in Wales, a total of 5,300 or 1.8 per cent were classed as eligible, unintentionally homeless and in priority need. Five hundred and eleven households were deemed to be intentionally homeless.

Further information on homelessness in Wales is available in chapter 7 of the publication 'Welsh Housing Statistics'.

Unoccupied Local Authority Domestic Properties

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: How many unoccupied local authority domestic properties are there in Wales? (WAQ20696)

Edwina Hart: As at 31 March 2001 there were 8,400 vacant local authority dwellings in Wales, which represents 4.5 per cent of the total local authority stock of 187,700.

More information on local authority vacant dwellings is available in chapter 6 of the publication 'Welsh Housing Statistics'.

Unoccupied Domestic Properties

Rhodri Glyn Thomas: How many unoccupied domestic properties are there in Wales? (WAQ20697)

Edwina Hart: There is no information currently available on the number of private sector vacant dwellings. I am therefore unable to provide a total figure for the number of vacant domestic properties in Wales.

Trade and Investment Offices

Nick Bourne: What plans does the Minister have to visit the proposed trade and investment offices when established? (WAQ20735)

Edwina Hart: I have no such plans.

Questions to the Minister for Health and Social Services

Access to Primary Care

Alun Cairns: What action is the Minister taking to ensure all people in Wales have access to primary care? (WAQ20661)

The Minister for Health and Social Services (Jane Hutt): I am committed to high-quality NHS primary care services for all those patients wishing to use it, wherever in Wales they live. This commitment has been reinforced in the primary care strategy 'Improving Health in Wales: The Future of Primary Care' and the primary care action plan. Assembly officials and I are constantly working with health authorities and local health groups to ensure that access to primary care is ensured and any difficulties addressed.

The legal position is contained within the National Health Service Act 1977, which places a duty upon health authorities to make arrangements for the provision of primary care services (general practitioner services, dentistry, optometry and pharmacy) for their population.

For GPs, this is achieved through placing patients upon a GP's list. This system of registration is one that serves the population well, and approximately 98 per cent of the population are registered with a GP.

However, there can be occasions when GPs will close their lists—these are usually associated with periods when there is a long-standing vacancy within the practice or a partner is on long-term sick leave. In this case, the health authority will assign patients to practices. The health authority also has powers under the 1977 and 1992 Acts to ensure the temporary continuation of services in the event of sudden and unforeseen circumstances such as the death of a GP. The Assembly is required to approve such arrangements as quickly as possible.

For access to GP services out of hours, it is the individual GPs' responsibility to ensure that 24-hour care is available for those registered with them. A number of arrangements have been put in place, using commercial deputising services, co-operatives of GPs, or through GPs doing their own calls. These arrangements have ensured access for all to out-of-hours services while reducing the burden upon GPs. My officials will be working with local health boards to strengthen these arrangements.

I will continue to assist the health authorities to meet that demand through the Welsh dental initiative, which has proved to be very successful in attracting dentists into those areas where they are needed most, and thereby into Wales as a whole, since its launch in 1995. I am also very pleased that development of the Wales eye care initiative has greatly improved access to optometry services in the primary care setting.

Our consultation document 'Remedies for Success: A Strategy for Pharmacy in Wales' recognises that appropriate emergency pharmaceutical care should be available in every locality in Wales, 24 hours a day.

Gwasanaeth Deintyddol yng Ngheredigion

Elin Jones: A wnaiff y Gweinidog ddatganiad ar y gwasanaeth deintyddol yng Ngheredigion? (WAQ20663) [W]

Jane Hutt: Yn fy ymateb i'ch cwestiwn llafar (OAQ17367) ym mis Mai, a'r ddadl fer a ddilynodd ynghylch gwasanaethau iechyd mewn ardaloedd gwledig, dywedais fod fy swyddogion yn cwrdd â chynrychiolwyr Awdurdod Iechyd Dyfed Powys ynghylch y ddarpariaeth o wasanaethau deintyddol y GIG yn ardal Ceredigion. Er bod yr ardal hon yn cael trafferth ers peth amser i ddiwallu'r galw am wasanaethau deintyddol y GIG, cafwyd problemau penodol eleni yn dilyn marwolaeth drist un o ddeintyddion GIG yn Aberystwyth a chau practis deintyddol yn sydyn yn Aberteifi.

O ganlyniad i ymdrechion y staff yn yr awdurdod iechyd a chymhellion a gynigiwyd o ganlyniad i gynllun deintyddiaeth Cymru yr wyf yn falch iawn bod practis deintyddol GIG newydd wedi agor yn Aberystwyth dros yr haf. Yn ogystal, agorwyd practis deintyddol GIG newydd ym Machynlleth, a deallaf y bydd yn denu cleifion o Geredigion hefyd.

Yn ogystal, yr wyf wedi neilltuo £158,000 dros gyfnod o ddwy flynedd i Awdurdod Iechyd Dyfed Powys ar gyfer prynu sesiynau ychwanegol oddi wrth ymarferwyr deintyddol cyffredinol sy'n barod i gynnig triniaeth i gleifion nad ydynt wedi'u cofrestru, drwy gynnal sesiynau achlysurol.

Mae'r awdurdodau iechyd wedi gofyn i'r ymddiriedolaethau GIG lunio cynigion ar gyfer cynyddu darpariaeth ddeintyddol y GIG drwy ddefnyddio'r model gwasanaethau deintyddol cymunedol/gwasanaethau deintyddol cyffredinol, sydd wedi bodloni'r galw yn llwyddiannus mewn ardaloedd eraill yng Nghymru ers ei gyflwyno yn 1995. Mae'n galluogi'r gwasanaethau deintyddol cymunedol i gyflogi deintyddion ychwanegol o dan drefniadau'r gwasanaethau deintyddol cyffredinol, ac yn golygu bod y ffioedd a'r costau a fyddai fel arfer yn cael eu talu i ymarferydd deintyddol cyffredinol yn cael eu trosglwyddo i'r ymddiriedolaeth er mwyn gwneud iawn am y gost o ddarparu'r gwasanaeth.

Dental Services in Ceredigion

Elin Jones: Will the Minister make a statement on the dental service in Ceredigion? (WAQ20663) [W]

Jane Hutt: In my reply to your oral question (OAQ17367) in May, and the subsequent short debate about health services in rural areas, I reported that my officials were meeting with representatives of the Dyfed Powys Health Authority about the provision of NHS dental services in the Ceredigion area. Although this area has for some time been subject to unmet demand for NHS dentistry, the particular difficulties earlier this year had arisen following the tragic death of a long-standing NHS dentist in Aberystwyth, and the sudden closure of a practice in Cardigan.

I am pleased that as the direct result of the efforts of the staff in the health authority and incentives on offer through the Welsh dental initiative, a new NHS dental practice opened in Aberystwyth during the summer. A further NHS practice has opened in Machynlleth, which I understand will also attract some patients from neighbouring Ceredigion.

Additionally, I have allocated £158,000 over two years to Dyfed Powys Health Authority for the purchase of additional access sessions from general dental practitioners prepared to offer treatment through access sessions to unregistered patients on an occasional basis.

The health authority has asked NHS trusts to develop proposals for increasing NHS dental provision using the community dental service/general dental service model, which has been successful in meeting demand in other areas across Wales since its introduction in 1995. This enables the community dental service to employ additional dentists to provide dental treatment under general dental service arrangements, and for the fees and patient charges which would normally be payable to a general dental practitioner to be assigned to the trust to offset the cost of the providing the service.

Young Adult Autism Sufferers

Owen John Thomas: What discussions has the Minister held with local authorities regarding social services provision for young adult autism sufferers and their families? (WAQ20664)

Jane Hutt: I am aware of the difficulties faced by people with autistic spectrum disorders and their families and the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning and I have asked Assembly officials to work with Autism Cymru and the National Autistic Society to see if a more strategic approach across education, health and social care can be developed in Wales to address the needs of people with such disorders. We hope to receive an interim report by the end of the year and that, in the light of that, we can develop this agenda further by bringing in other partners, including local authorities.

Tŷ Hafan

Huw Lewis: Will the Minister make a statement on the support that the Assembly Government provides to Tŷ Hafan? (WAQ20676)

Jane Hutt: The Assembly provided a one-off payment of £250,000 to Tŷ Hafan Children's Hospice in 1999 to help the hospice establish itself in the crucial first year. We made it clear that it was a one-off payment and that future funding for both Tŷ Hafan and other hospices must be secured from the commissioning bodies direct.

In July 2001 the Assembly provided a one-off payment of £100,000 to Tŷ Hafan when it asked for help in training nurses to become specialist children's nurses. The request was aimed at retraining six registered general nurses, so that they were qualified to work as specialist children's nurses and would enable the hospice to open seven days a week by October 2002.

There is no core funding available for hospices from central resources. The provision of palliative care services across the whole of Wales is currently the responsibility of the health authorities.

Business Services Centre

David Lloyd: How many information and information technology staff currently working for health authorities will transfer to the Business Services Centre? (WAQ20678) [R]

David Lloyd: How many staff currently working for health authorities will transfer to the Business Services Centre? (WAQ20679) [R]

David Lloyd: How many information and IT staff currently working for health authorities will transfer to the national public health service for Wales? (WAQ20686) [R]

David Lloyd: How many staff currently working for health authorities will transfer to the national public health service? (WAQ20687) [R]

Jane Hutt: The roles and functions to be carried out in the Business Services Centre and national public health service were consulted on during October. Responses to that consultation are currently being considered. I expect that the outcome of the consultation and guidance on identifying staff to be transferred will be sent to health authority chief executives in early December for implementation. It is intended to complete the exercise of identifying staff to be transferred into the BSC and national public health service by Christmas. Only then will we know to which organisation individual staff are transferring and in what volume.

NHS Wales

David Lloyd: Will the Minister make a statement on the future co-ordination of national information and IT services for NHS Wales? (WAQ20680) [R]

David Lloyd: Which organisations will be responsible for the provision of national information and IT services for NHS Wales following the proposed restructuring? (WAQ20681) [R]

Jane Hutt: Proposals for a new information strategy for the NHS in Wales were published as 'Informing Healthcare' at the beginning of October. These closely followed the report of the information task and finish group, and included consideration of national information and IT services. We are currently in the final stages of a targeted consultation, and I therefore expect to be in a position to make a statement on these matters early in the new year.

Ysbyty Bronglais

Elin Jones: Beth yw'r cynnydd ar gael ymgynghorydd cardiolegol yn Ysbyty Bronglais? (WAQ20682) [W]

Jane Hutt: Mae cydymffurfio â'r safonau gofal a bennwyd yn fframwaith gwasanaeth cenedlaethol clefyd coronaidd y galon, megis cael gwasanaeth cardiolegydd yn Ysbyty Bronglais, yn fater i Awdurdod Iechyd Dyfed Powys ac Ymddiriedolaeth GIG Ceredigion a Chanolbarth Cymru. Mae'r ddau yn gweithio'n agos gyda rhwydwaith y galon yng Nghanolbarth a De Orllewin Cymru i fynd i'r afael â'r mater hwn.

Bronglais Hospital

Elin Jones: What progress has been made to appoint a cardiology consultant at Bronglais Hospital? (WAQ20682) [W]

Jane Hutt: Meeting the standards of care set out in the coronary heart disease national service framework, such as access to a cardiologist at Bronglais Hospital, is a matter for Dyfed Powys Health Authority and Ceredigion and Mid Wales NHS Trust. They are both working very closely with mid and south-west Wales cardiac network to address this issue.

Wales Centre for Health

David Lloyd: How many staff currently working for health authorities will transfer to the Wales Centre for Health? (WAQ20683) [R]

David Lloyd: How many information and IT staff currently working for health authorities will transfer to the Wales Centre for Health? (WAQ20685) [R]

Jane Hutt: The proposals to create the Wales Centre for Health are contained within the Health (Wales) Bill. Once the Bill has been passed the centre will be established as an independent NHS body. In the interim the centre has been established in shadow form within Velindre NHS Trust. The centre has no direct claim on existing health service employees and will recruit its own staff by open competition.

Business Services Centre (Service Level Agreement)

David Lloyd: Will a service level agreement be established between the Welsh Assembly Government and the Business Services Centre in respect of the national services referred to in the NHS structural change programme progress report of 15 October 2002? (WAQ20684) [R]

Jane Hutt: I can confirm that a service level agreement will be established for the Business Service Centre for these national services i.e. financial services; contractor services; human resources; and IT and information management. In the first year the SLA will be developed from the present service and any initial developments needed to service the new organisations. There will be an annual review of the SLA, to reflect any additional needs or services change.

NHS Wales (Service Level Agreements)

David Lloyd: Will the Minister publish a list detailing the service level agreements that are in place between the Welsh Assembly Government and organisations within NHS Wales in respect of services that are provided on an all-Wales basis? (WAQ20688) [R]

Jane Hutt: The service level agreements which are in place between the Welsh Assembly Government and organisations within NHS Wales in respect of services that are provided on an all-Wales basis are as follows:

Health Solutions Wales

Variety of corporate information services including prescription pricing, national databases, telecommunication services, provision of quarterly waiting times information service and many others.

Swansea NHS Trust

Congenital Anomaly Register and Information Service (CARIS).

Welsh Health Estates

Provision of core professional and technical estate management expertise for the Welsh Assembly Government and the Welsh NHS. Its role is to support the Assembly in all health estate issues and to assist NHS trusts in developing and maintaining their estate.

Welsh Health Supplies

Advice on corporate procurement and legal issues, procurement of a range of corporate services for NHS organisations.

Training of Clinical Scientists or Scientific Technicians for NHS Wales

There are 13 service level agreements in force with NHS organisations all of which cover:

Cardiff and Vale NHS Trust	Audiological Scientist Biochemist Cytogeneticist Medical Physicist Medical Radiation Technicians Molecular Geneticist Clinical Neurophysiology
Conwy and Denbighshire NHS Trust	Audiological Scientist Medical Physicist
North East Wales NHS Trust	Audiological Scientist
Swansea NHS Trust	Audiological Scientist Medical Physicist
Welsh Blood Service	Tissue Typing Scientist

University of Wales College of Medicine

Provision of the all-Wales perinatal survey.

Velindre NHS Trust

Provide personnel and specific financial support to the coronary heart disease services co-ordinating group.

Gwent Health Authority

Provision of accommodation and employment of the NHS counter fraud team for Wales who are based at their premises in Mamhilad.

Private Sector Management Consultancy Companies

David Lloyd: Which private sector management consultancy companies have been used to provide services in respect of the work programmes of the health information management technology and estates division of NHS Wales and what is the scope and value of the individual contracts with each company? (WAQ20689) [R]

Jane Hutt: A list is below.

Health Information Management Technology and Estates Division			
Private sector management consultancy companies used to provide services in respect of the work programme for HIMTE			
1 April 1999 to 22 November 2002			
Company name	Scope of work	Value	
4C Strategies	The analysis of voice communications across NHS Wales, the subsequent development of a strategy for voice communications, with the migration of voice from the DAWN core as a key deliverable.	£70,000	
Cap Gemini	Consultancy services for Health of Wales Information Service.	£15,000	

Draxmont Management Consultancy Ltd.	Provision of consultancy support for the primary care information and communications technology project.	£42,000	
DMW	Review of NHS data and voice telecommunications, prior to the development of the telecommunications migration programme.	£30,000	
Healthcare Alliances	Development of telemedicine strategy for Wales.	£45,000	
Hyder Consulting	Programme management of the telecommunications migration programme.	£45,000	To be paid annually for up to three years
Indigo Consulting	Provision of a strategic outline case for a single integrated electronic health record for healthcare in Wales.	£165,000	
IHG healthcare consultancy	Review of data management processes at all Welsh NHS trusts.	£95,000	
	Commissioned the external assessors on behalf of HIMTE.		
IHG healthcare consultancy	Internal review of data outputs at all Welsh NHS trusts.	£150,000	
PA Consulting Group	Scoping study undertaken to see if/how Wales could join with the data dictionary redevelopment being undertaken in England.	£37,500	
Strategem Ltd	Rhondda Cynon Taff general practitioner surveys and the development of an estate strategy for the RCT local health group.	£29,500	
Vega Group	Review of NHS information requirements undertaken.	£35,000	

Private Sector Management Consultancy Companies

David Lloyd: What costs have been incurred by the use of private sector management consultancy companies to provide advice and services in respect of the NHS Wales structural reforms? (WAQ20690) [R]

Jane Hutt: As at 22 November 2002 the following private sector management consultancy costs have been incurred in respect of the NHS Wales structural change programme:

Nature of consultancy	£000
Recruitment and development of local health board chief executives and recruitment of NHS Wales department regional directors	121
Project management of the information management and technology migration project	80
Appraisal of options for the delivery of financial services to support local health boards	48
Total	249

Terrorist Attack

David Melding: What contingency plans are in place in acute hospitals to deal with a major incident resulting from a terrorist attack? (WAQ20692)

Jane Hutt: All acute hospitals in Wales have robust major incident plans that are kept under regular review and which have been tried and tested in emergency and exercise situations. These plans provide

the basis for how hospitals would respond to any major incident, whatever their cause. Since 11 September, the NHS department has worked closely with acute hospitals, as well as other parts of the NHS, to examine health resilience and capabilities for responding to the new threats posed by terrorism. A number of measures have been taken to inform and improve our contingency arrangements for such events, including the provision of guidance information to assist and inform NHS emergency plans, establishing a range of antidotes, vaccines and equipment to assist the NHS response to chemical, biological or nuclear incidents and improvements to the personal protection equipment available to NHS staff in dealing with such incidents.

Delayed Discharges

David Melding: Will the Minister provide the latest figures for delayed discharges in the NHS? (WAQ20693)

Jane Hutt: In Wales, delayed transfers of care are counted using a definition and reporting system that includes eight main categories and 45 reasons for delay. These reasons cover delays in the acute and non-acute sectors for health, social care and family/patient-related reasons, allowing the local partners to identify and address blockages throughout the whole system.

The following is a breakdown of the figures at the October 2002 census point, by the eight major categories in the Welsh system:

Social Care Reasons	
1. Awaiting Community Care Assessment	54
2. Awaiting Community Care Arrangements	393
Health Care Reasons	
3. Awaiting Healthcare Assessments	74
4. Awaiting Healthcare Arrangements	198
Patient/Carer/ Family-Related Reasons	
5. Legal/Financial	13
6. Disagreements e.g. between relatives	28
7. Other *	288
Other	
8. Principal reason not agreed	4

*this includes delays due to patients waiting for a place to become available in the care home of their choice.

The system operating in England at present only reports delayed discharges into the community and only from acute health settings. On a comparable basis, the count in Wales at the October 2002 census point was 231 delays.

Nursing Home Places

David Melding: How many nursing home places have been lost since 1999? (WAQ20694)

Jane Hutt: Our information shows that between 1 January 1999 and the beginning of August 2002 there was a net reduction of 1,850 places.

Trade and Investment Offices

Nick Bourne: What plans does the Minister have to visit the proposed trade and investment offices when established? (WAQ20736)

Jane Hutt: I have no such plans.

All-Wales Diabetic Eye-screening Scheme

David Ian Jones: On an individual health authority basis, when will digital eye-screening be available under the all-Wales diabetic eye screening scheme? (WAQ20756)

Jane Hutt: The aim is to have the first services offered through the all-Wales diabetic retinopathy screening service available to patients in some areas early next year, and across the whole of Wales early in 2004.

It is difficult at this stage of the service development to determine precisely when screening will commence in specific areas of Wales. My officials are in the process of concluding service level agreement negotiations with a NHS trust prepared to undertake the management of the service. Once agreement is reached, a steering committee will be convened to develop a programme for rolling out the service across Wales.

Child Abuse

Nick Bourne: How much money has the Assembly Government awarded to charities in order to fight child abuse? (WAQ20937)

Jane Hutt: The Assembly Government has allocated, through the child and families organisation grant, core funding for 2002-03 totalling £323,222 to Barnardo's Cymru, NCH Cymru, the National Youth Advocacy Service—the young persons safety net and Childline. This will enable them to take forward child protection objectives.

The Assembly Government has provided funding during 2001-02 and 2002-03 of £113,000 to the child safe in sport Wales partnership to cover the production and distribution costs of an information pack to parents and organisations involved in young people's sporting activities. The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children was represented in the partnership.

British Medical Association Report

Alun Pugh: What action does the Minister intend to take on environmental tobacco smoke, following the publication of the BMA report: 'Towards Smoke-free Public Places'? (WAQ20969)

Alun Pugh: What action does the Minister intend to take following the publication of the BMA report 'Tobacco under the Microscope: the Doctors' Manifesto for Global Control'? (WAQ20970)

Jane Hutt: I welcome these reports from the British Medical Association, which emphasise the extent of the risks to health from smoking, both within the UK, and on a global basis.

Legislation to ban smoking in public places is a matter for the UK Government and has not been devolved to the Assembly. I have indicated our support for the proposal from the Health and Safety Commission for an approved code of practice on workplace smoking to the UK Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Public Health.

I took action to raise public awareness of the risks of passive smoking in October, when I launched a campaign to provide mothers and mothers-to-be in Wales with information about the risks of passive smoking in the home and help in giving up smoking. This campaign is supported by the Royal College of Midwives (Welsh board), the Community Practitioners and Health Visitors Association, and the Royal College of Nursing.

The BMA report 'Tobacco under the Microscope' calls for a range of measures to be covered in the framework convention on tobacco control. The convention, initiated by the World Health Organisation, aims to be the first international legal instrument designed to limit the global spread of tobacco and tobacco products. It is a matter for the UK Government and has not been devolved to the Assembly. I have written to the UK Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Public Health indicating the importance that the Assembly attaches to making progress in taking forward the convention.

Questions to the Business Minister

Trade and Investment Offices

Nick Bourne: What plans does the Minister have to visit the proposed trade and investment offices when established? (WAQ20737)

The Business Minister (Carwyn Jones): I have no such plans.