

Answers issued to Members on 2 November 2007

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

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

Contents

- 2 Questions to the Minister for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills
- 2 Questions to the Minister for Rural Affairs

Questions to the Minister for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills

Nicholas Bourne (Mid and West Wales): Will the Minister make a statement on the funding available from a) the Welsh Assembly Government, and b) businesses, for students studying a science subject at a Welsh university at undergraduate and postgraduate levels? (WAQ50567)

The Minister for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (Jane Hutt): Welsh Assembly Government support for science at higher education level comes through 2 major strands. First, the support through the Higher Education Funding Council grant—allocations in respect of science and engineering provision in HEIs in Wales in this financial year totalled almost £100 million in support of teaching and over £28m for research. Support for students at undergraduate level includes the package of support under the student loan and grant regulations and, for Welsh domiciled students studying in Wales, the non-repayable tuition fee grant of £1845 per annum. Support for postgraduate study is delivered through the relevant UK wide research councils. There is no central register of support from businesses for students of science subjects, although businesses and relevant royal societies and other charities offer a range of bursaries for students studying science as do some higher education institutions.

Nicholas Bourne (Mid and West Wales): What plans does the Minister have to increase the connections between science students and businesses, allowing businesses to benefit from the skills and knowledge possessed by these students? (WAQ50571)

Jane Hutt: The Welsh Assembly Government fund, through HEFCW, a programme called GO Wales (Graduate Opportunity Wales) that enables graduates and undergraduates to carry out a project up to 6 months in a company. Under the existing scheme, this can be for any subject, including science. In the proposal for support under convergence funding for a new phase of this programme, HEFCW will be looking to reflect the direction set out in our Science Policy and the need to align students undertaking science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) courses in particular with opportunities under GO Wales to work with a range of employers.

The Welsh Assembly also supports the Knowledge Transfer Partnership with a grant of £1.2 million. The programmes can run between 12 and 36 months and can accommodate graduates from many fields.

Questions to the Minister for Rural Affairs

Brynle Williams (Mid and West Wales): What discussions has the Minister had with the Treasury regarding a compensation package for Wales following the recent Foot and Mouth disease outbreak? (WAQ50577)

The Minister for Rural Affairs (Elin Jones): The Welsh Assembly Government has already put in place a support package for Welsh livestock producers as a consequence to animal disease in England. Over £1 million is available to promote and market Welsh meat. In addition, a £6.75m scheme to address potential animal welfare issues for lambs from Wales that ordinarily are destined for the EU export market is being fully funded by the Assembly Government. I and the Minister for Finance and Public Service Delivery will continue to press the UK Government for further support for Welsh farmers.

Across the UK, only farmers who have lost animals as a direct result of Foot and Mouth Disease will receive compensation and this budget is held by the UK Government. There have been no cases of Foot and Mouth Disease in Wales.