

## **Answers issued to Members on 16 June 2008**

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

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

### **Contents**

- 2 Questions to the First Minister
- 2 Questions to the Minister for Finance and Public Service Delivery
- 3 Questions to the Minister for Health and Social Services

### Questions to the First Minister

**Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales):** Has the First Minister had any specific discussions with the Prime Minister concerning the state of the Welsh economy in 2008, and if so will he give details of these meetings? (WAQ51833)

**Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales):** Has the First Minister had any specific discussions with the Chancellor of the Exchequer concerning the state of the Welsh economy in 2008, and if so will he give details of these meetings? (WAQ51834)

**Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales):** Has the First Minister had any specific discussions with the Prime Minister concerning changes to the 10p tax rate and its impact in Wales, and if so will he give details of these discussions? (WAQ51835)

**Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales):** Has the First Minister had any specific discussions with the Chancellor of the Exchequer concerning changes to the 10p tax rate and its impact in Wales, and if so will he give details of these meetings? (WAQ51836)

**Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales):** Has the First Minister had any specific discussions about the cost of fuel in Wales with the Prime Minister, and if so will he give details of these discussions? (WAQ51837)

**Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales):** Has the First Minister had any specific discussions about the price of energy in Wales with the Prime Minister, and if so will he give details of these discussions? (WAQ51838)

**Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales):** Has the First Minister had any specific discussions about the cost of fuel in Wales with the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and if so will he give details of these discussions? (WAQ51839)

**Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales):** Has the First Minister had any specific discussions about the price of energy in Wales with the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and if so will he give details of these discussions? (WAQ51840)

**The First Minister (Rhodri Morgan):** My Cabinet and I maintain excellent working relationships with the UK Government on a range of topics of interest and/or concern to the people of Wales including some of the subjects referred to in your questions. Fiscal policy is clearly the responsibility of the Chancellor; our priority is to use our devolved powers in the field of economic development, which are the responsibility of the Deputy First Minister, and in other fields to deliver sustainable growth for the Welsh economy responding to today's global challenges and those anticipated for the future.

### Questions to the Minister for Finance and Public Service Delivery

**Darren Millar:** Will the First Minister list what was the average amount of vacant space and total area, in square meters, recorded on the Electronic Property Information Mapping Service (e-PIMS) database for Government Departments and executive agencies for which information was held, in each year since the database was created? (WAQ51846) *Transferred for answer by the First Minister.*

**The First Minister (Rhodri Morgan):** The e-PIMS database was developed by the Office of Government Commerce (OGC) to provide a central database of all Government property holdings and to facilitate improved asset management across the civil estate. The system links into a Register of Surplus Land which records civil land and buildings deemed surplus to requirements.

The Assembly Government began actively using e-PIMS to record and manage its administrative estate in 2005. Since that time, officials have been working with the OGC to further develop the system to meet our specific requirements.

Vacant space identified on the Assembly Government administrative estate is 1,984sq m. This equates to approximately 1.9% of the portfolio and affects four properties, including Ty'r Afon, Bedwas where 1,224sq m is currently vacant. Environmental issues within the building are being addressed in order to facilitate full occupation.

Whilst data held relating to the Assembly Government administrative estate is comprehensive, historic information relating to the wider civil estate in Wales is protected by access restrictions.

The OGC have confirmed that they have responsibility for the historic data referred to in your question and that a formal request to them for this information will be required for its release.

### **Questions to the Minister for Health and Social Services**

**Kirsty Williams (Brecon and Radnorshire):** Will the Minister make a statement on the discrepancies in the prescribing and funding of Sutent in different LHB's in Wales? (WAQ51848)

**The Minister for Health and Social Services (Edwina Hart):** There are no discrepancies between different Local Health Boards (LHBs) in Wales. Sunitinib (Sutent) is licensed for use in the United Kingdom (including Wales) for the treatment of treating patients whose condition falls within specific clinical criteria. Responsibility for decisions about funding treatments such as sunitinib lies with LHBs in Wales.

The All Wales Medicines Strategy Group (AWMSG) has decided that sunitinib should not be recommended within NHS Wales for advanced renal cell carcinoma on the basis of a lack of robust clinical and cost-effectiveness data. This decision was not taken lightly and I endorse this recommendation. NICE are at a very early stage of their appraisal of sunitinib for the treatment of renal cell carcinoma and their guidance is expected 2009. The current AWMSG guidance does not override the individual responsibility of clinicians to make appropriate decisions in individual circumstances and, from time to time, patients will be prescribed and funded this drug based on their specific clinical condition. These decisions are not taken lightly and in these cases the responsible LHB will hear and assess all the relevant evidence, including the extant guidance.

**Jonathan Morgan (Cardiff North):** Will the Minister detail the budget surplus or deficits currently being reported by LHBs and NHS Trusts in this financial year? (WAQ51851)

**Edwina Hart:** The first 2008-09 financial monitoring reports are due to be submitted by LHBs and NHS Trusts this week. These reports will be scrutinised by my officials.

The details you are seeking may be already in the public domain as NHS bodies are required to report their financial position when their bodies meet in public.

**Jonathan Morgan (Cardiff North):** Will the Minister make a statement on efforts to improve hospital cleanliness since June 2007? (WAQ51852)

**Edwina Hart:** I am determined to improve the situation and have set high standards for cleanliness in our hospitals and will ensure those standards are implemented by individual NHS Trusts.

In October I sent Hygiene Inspection Teams into two hospitals, Nevill Hall and Morrision, and the programme of unannounced spot checks will continue throughout 2008.

I also established a Task and Finish group to look at re-empowering ward sisters within the NHS in Wales and consider responsibility and accountability for cleaning ward areas. The group's report will be published later this month.

**Jonathan Morgan (Cardiff North):** How many patients have had revision knee surgery following their primary surgery as part of the Weston-super-mare contract, and how many others are either under continuing review or listed for revision surgery? (WAQ51853)

**Edwina Hart:** 22 patients have had revision knee surgery following their primary surgery at Weston. A further 27 patients have been reviewed under a continuing review programme. One patient is currently awaiting revision surgery.

**Jonathan Morgan (Cardiff North):** What safeguards have been put in place to prevent a repeat occurrence of the problems with the Weston contract as part of the second offer scheme where Welsh patients reported knee replacement problems? (WAQ51854)

**Edwina Hart:** The contract with Weston was terminated in September 2006. No further knee patients were sent to Weston after June 2006 when it became apparent that the number of complications being reported was giving cause for concern.

As part of the Second Offer Framework Agreement Procedures, under OJEU procurement in October 2006, there is a contractual requirement for Second Offer Providers to submit monthly performance data that includes data on clinical complications arising from surgery. The Second Offer Team follows up on all such cases, and reports them to the Second Offer Clinical Governance Committee, where each case is duly considered. There is a clinical input into this Committee to ensure appropriate governance.

There have been no incidents reported since September 2006 of patients requiring revision surgery as a result of complications from their primary surgery. The Second Offer Clinical Governance Committee has been kept advised on the outcomes of the clinical reviews undertaken by Cardiff and Vale and Gwent Trusts as a result of the recall of patients treated at Weston.

**Jonathan Morgan (Cardiff North):** What has been the cost to NHS Wales of resolving the problems caused by the Weston contract where Welsh patients reported problems with their knee replacements? (WAQ51855)

**Edwina Hart:** This information is not held centrally.