

Answers issued to Members on 12 March 2009

[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 Minister for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills

Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales): What powers are available to the Minister in the event of a local education authority not providing the national syllabus within their areas? (WAQ53678)

The Minister for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (Jane Hutt): By 'National Syllabus' I have assumed you are referring to the Curriculum in Wales as set out in Part 7 of the Education Act 2002. The Welsh Ministers have default powers in the Education Act 1996:

S.496: power to prevent unreasonable exercise of functions

This allows the Welsh Ministers to issue a direction to a local education authority or governing body if they consider that they are, or proposing to exercise their education functions unreasonably.

S.497 and 497A: General default powers

This allows the Welsh Ministers to issue a direction to a local education authority or governing body if they consider that have failed to exercise their education functions.

Questions to the Minister for Environment, Sustainability and Housing

Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales): Will the Minister give the figures for the postal deliver service used by NDPBs for which she is responsible, by value and volume for every year since 1999? (WAQ53653)

The Minister for Environment, Sustainability and Housing (Jane Davidson): The table below details the value of postal services used by the Environment Agency and the Countryside Council for Wales. Figures by volume are not available.

| | |
|------------------|-------------------|
| 1999/2000 | £46 926 |
| 2000/2001 | £47,215 |
| 2001/2002 | £50,962 |
| 2002/2003 | £73,226 |
| 2003/2004 | £200,053 |
| 2004/2005 | £202,826 |
| 2005/2006 | £196,604 |
| 2006/2007 | £107,143 |
| 2007/2008 | £123,650 |
| 2008/2009 | £129,146 |
| Total | £1,177,751 |

NB. Figures from 1999/2000 to 2002/2003 represents expenditure by the Countryside Council for Wales only. The statute of limitation for record retention provides for organisations to only maintain data for a six year period which is why the Environment Agency's data are unavailable.

Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales): What services are provided in the areas for which you are responsible through the Post Office network? (WAQ53654)

Jane Davidson: As Sponsorship Minister for the Environment Agency I am aware that rod licences can be purchased from post offices throughout England and Wales. My Department has also in the past supported post office services through the Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund for Wales.

Nick Ramsay (Monmouth): How many on and offshore wind farm developments have been built in Wales in each year since 1999? (WAQ53698)

Jane Davidson: The Welsh Assembly Government monitors progress towards meeting its targets for onshore wind development established in 2005 in Technical Advice Note 8, but there are no such targets for offshore developments.

The most recent data were compiled in April 2008 and this reveals that between 2005 and 2008, 4 onshore windfarms have been constructed, together with 21 pre-2005 operational schemes.

Only one offshore scheme has been constructed and is operational.

Nick Ramsay (Monmouth): How many on and offshore wind farm developments have been built in Monmouth in each year since 1999? (WAQ53699)

Jane Davidson: The Welsh Assembly Government monitors progress towards meeting its targets for onshore wind development established in 2005 in Technical Advice Note 8, but there are no such targets for offshore developments. The most recent data was compiled in April 2008. From the information available no onshore or offshore wind farm developments have been built in Monmouth since 2005.

Questions to the Minister for Health and Social Services

Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales): Will the Minister give the figures for the postal deliver service used by NDPBs for which he is responsible, by value and volume for every year since 1999? (WAQ53662)

The Minister for Health and Social Services (Edwina Hart): My Department is responsible for one Assembly Government Sponsored Body—the Wales Centre for Health (WCfH) established on 1 April 2005. WCfH has not routinely kept records in relation to postal delivery services used and it would be cost prohibitive to collate this information in retrospect.

Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales): What services are provided in the areas for which you are responsible through the Post Office network? (WAQ53663)

Edwina Hart: This information is not held centrally by my Department.

Alun Cairns (South Wales West): Will the Minister make a statement on antimicrobial panel boards and the impact these have on reducing MRSA and other hospital acquired infections? (WAQ53686)

Edwina Hart: I am aware of the existence of antimicrobial wallboards developed by the company AgTech and of the company's claims of their potential for use in reducing the spread of infection in the hospital environment. In my response to the letter received from Alun Cairns AM on 1 October 2008, I gave details of the Rapid Review Panel which provides an assessment of new and novel equipment, material and other products that may be of value to the NHS in improving hospital infection control and

reducing healthcare associated infection. I understand my officials will be making contact with AgTech to discuss the product and its potential application in more detail.

Alun Cairns (South Wales West): Will the Minister make a statement on the latest building and construction technology being developed to combat MRSA and other hospital acquired infections? (WAQ53687)

Edwina Hart: Guidance on how to 'design-in' infection control at the various stages of healthcare capital build projects is provided to NHS trusts in Wales in the document 'Infection Control in the Built Environment: Design and Planning'. This guidance details the various stages of a capital build project from initial concept through to post-project evaluation, and highlights the major infection control issues and risks that need to be addressed at each particular stage to achieve designed-in infection control. The guidance is currently under review.

The report 'Free to Lead, Free to Care' published in June 2008, recommended that a national advisory forum, hosted by Welsh Health Supplies in association with Welsh Health Estates, is established to look at standardising products for cleaning and infection control across the NHS in Wales. This forum will review new technologies for cleaning and infection control and will advise the NHS accordingly.

Discussions are taking place between my officials and the project lead at the Department of Health around the Healthcare Associated Infection Technology and Innovation programme, and how this could potentially be expanded to have relevance in Wales. This programme, supported by the Department of Health and the Purchasing and Supply Agency, aims to speed up the development and adoption of technologies, including building materials, that can help to combat HCAs (especially MRSA and C.difficile) and to identify which new technologies provide the best value and which will have the most impact.

Dai Lloyd (South Wales West): Will the Minister make a statement on the timescale for allocating funding to local cardiac rehabilitation services? (WAQ53691)

Edwina Hart: Cardiac rehabilitation must form an integral part of the overall package of care that cardiac patients receive. I have protected a minimum level of investment by Local Health Boards by ring fencing funding in the annual funding allocations. I have also said that cardiac rehabilitation would continue to be eligible for funding under the Inequalities in Health Fund (IIHF) for one further year in 2008-09. In line with bids received from the Service in conjunction with Cardiac Networks, I have approved additional support from the IIHF totalling £832k. This has now been released to Local Health Boards.

Darren Millar (Clwyd West): How many (a) men and (b) women were diagnosed with bowel cancer in each calendar year since 1997, broke down (i) by region and (ii) by those aged (A) under 30, (B) 30 to 40, (C) 41 to 50, (D) 51 to 60, (E) 61 to 70 and (F) 71 to 80 years? (WAQ53694)

Edwina Hart: This information can be obtained from the Welsh Cancer Intelligence and Surveillance Unit website, through the following link: <http://www.wales.nhs.uk/sites3/page.cfm?orgid=242&pid=33893>

Questions to the Minister for Heritage

Kirsty Williams (Brecon and Radnorshire): Will the Minister make a statement on the steps he is taking to develop the market for Welsh Arts and Crafts? (WAQ53688)

The Minister for Heritage (Alun Ffred Jones): Working through the Arts Council of Wales, the Welsh Assembly Government is supporting capital developments in galleries across Wales. These developments enable the continued promotion of Welsh artists and crafts people, through exhibitions and through retail areas developed in those galleries. The Arts Council of Wales is working with the UK Crafts Council to develop other market opportunities for Wales-based makers in prestigious international arenas. It also provides support to galleries and craft centres such as Glynn Vivian, and Mission in Swansea, Oriol Myrddin in Carmarthen, Llantarnam Grange in Cwmbran, Craft in the Bay in Cardiff and the Ruthin Craft Centre, in order to enable such locations to feature the work of Welsh crafts people and artists. The Arts Council of Wales also supports AXIS which acts as a web-based directory to promote the work of contemporary artists.

Nick Ramsay (Monmouth): What funding is being allocated to Visit Wales specifically to encourage tourism linked to the 2010 Ryder Cup? (WAQ53689)

Nick Ramsay (Monmouth): What funding is being allocated to Visit Wales specifically to encourage tourism linked to the 2012 London Olympics? (WAQ53690)

Alun Ffred Jones. No funds are specifically allocated for these events within Visit Wales. However, we will be using our hosting of the Ryder Cup in 2010 and the London Olympics in 2012 to maximise our marketing and promotional material and activities.

Visit Wales is working with VisitBritain to encourage visitors to London in 2012 to visit Wales also, but in reality we do not expect a great influx. We expect the Ryder Cup to be are own Olympics and our success as hosting that event should position us better to receive 2012 visitors.

In 2008-09 Visit Wales spent £800,000 on its 'Golf as it should be' Campaign which benefits strongly from association with the Ryder Cup. Since 2003 that campaign has helped to boost the number of dedicated golf visitors from around 30,000 to around 87,000 in 2007. Visit Wales ran the 'Cart across Wales' campaign to coincide with the 2008 Ryder Cup in Kentucky. That campaign generated over 400,000 unique visitors to the dedicated Campaign site.

The Welsh Assembly Government provides funding of £3.5 million annually to Ryder Cup 2010 Wales Ltd to fulfill Wales's commitments to the successful bid to host the event. A proportion of that funding is used in marketing and PR related activity.

Visit Wales has appointed a lead creative agency to create a branding strategy for the Ryder Cup. The aim to build a reputation of Wales, to create a sense of place for Wales surrounding the Ryder Cup—both on and off the course, for spectators at the event and to those watching on the TV. It should also create a sense of occasion for the people of Wales that a major golf tournament is taking place in Wales.

Nick Ramsay (Monmouth): How much funding is the Arts Council for Wales predicted to lose as a result of lottery money being diverted to the 2012 Olympic games? (WAQ53692)

Alun Ffred Jones: The Arts Council of Wales, based on currently available information provided by the Dept of Culture, Media and Sport, has estimated that the diversion of lottery funds to the 2012 Olympics will result in a reduction of £8,060,660 in the amount available to the arts in Wales.

Nick Ramsay (Monmouth): What financial support is the Welsh Assembly Government making available for pensioners who will have to upgrade their signal from analogue to digital before the switchovers in 2009/2010? (WAQ53697)

Alun Ffred Jones: The Digital Switchover Help Scheme has been established. The Help Scheme is run by the BBC under agreement with the UK Government. More details about the scheme is available on the attached website: www.helpscheme.co.uk

Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales): Will the Minister give the figures for the postal deliver service used by NDPBs for which he is responsible, by value and volume for every year since 1999? (WAQ53671)

Alun Ffred Jones: I have been able to obtain the following figures to date:

Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales

| FINANCIAL YEAR | POSTAGE £ | BUSINESS COLLECTION FEE £ | RESPONSE MAIL COSTS £ | TOTAL EXPENDITURE £ |
|-----------------------|----------------------|------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1999 - 00 | Unknown | 420 | 0 | Unknown |
| 2000 - 01 | 6,113 | 420 | 0 | 6,533 |
| 2001 - 02 | 3,606 | 420 | 0 | 4,026 |
| 2002 - 03 | 2,050 | 460 | 0 | 2,510 |
| 2003 - 04 | 3,523 | 460 | 115 | 4,098 |
| 2004 - 05 | 2,015 | 460 | 80 | 2,555 |
| 2005 - 06 | 3,030 | 460 | 85 | 3,575 |
| 2006 - 07 | 2,579 | 460 | 86 | 3,125 |
| 2007 - 08 | 3,580 | 480 | 90 | 4,150 |
| 2008 -09 to date | 3,794 | 450 | 100 | 4,344 |

There are no figures available for the volume of delivery for the years prior to 2008. During the calendar year 2008, 5,860 items were recorded.

In addition there is daily usage of the Internal Delivery service between Plascrug, Aberystwyth and Cathays Park, Cardiff and Cadw, Nantgarw. No usage figures are available.

Arts Council of Wales

| Financial Year | Postage costs |
|-----------------------|----------------------|
| 1998-1999 | 42,240.03 |
| 1999-2000 | 32,450.19 |
| 2000-2001 | 43,113.40 |
| 2001-2002 | 41,552.67 |
| 2002-2003 | 39,159.65 |
| 2003-2004 | 29,008.97 |
| 2004-2005 | 36,219.71 |
| 2005-2006 | 38,447.42 |
| 2006-2007 | 23,318.41 |
| 2007-2008 | 26,059.29 |
| 2008-2009 (to date) | 9,220.44 |

Figures cover both GiA & Lottery costs

There are no figures available for the volume of delivery.

National Library of Wales

| Financial Year | Postage costs (approximate) |
|-----------------------|------------------------------------|
|-----------------------|------------------------------------|

| | |
|---------------------|----------|
| 2006-2007 | £18,000 |
| 2007-2008 | £24,017 |
| 2008-2009 (to date) | £10, 773 |

There are no figures available for the volume of delivery nor for postage costs prior to 2006-2007.

Amgueddfa Cymru - National Museum Wales

| Financial Year | Postage costs (estimated and rounded to the nearest £500) |
|-----------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2003-2004 | £47,000 |
| 2004-2005 | £44,500 |
| 2005-2006 | £50,000 |
| 2006-2007 | £44,500 |
| 2007-2008 | £39,500 |

There are no figures available for the volume of delivery nor for postage costs prior to 2003-2004.

Sports Council for Wales and Welsh Language Board

I will write to you as soon as possible to provide any figures held and a copy of my letter will be published on the Internet.

Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales): What services are provided in the areas for which you are responsible through the Post Office network? (WAQ53672)

Alun Ffred Jones: There is no direct link between the services delivered within my portfolio and the Post Office network.

However, Visit Wales has fed in its views to the Welsh Assembly Government consultation exercise for a refocused Post Office Development Fund—and supported the eligibility of Tourist Information Centre provision for grant assistance. Visit Wales has also encouraged the Charter Group which oversees the operation of networked Tourist Information Centres in Wales to respond to the consultation exercise.

I can also advise that Cadw’s sales team offers guidebooks for re-sale to post offices/local businesses that are located close to a Cadw monument (and where guidebooks for the relevant sites are available). There is scope to market the guidebooks in some areas, particularly where the local monument is unstaffed and therefore more difficult to make the guidebooks available to visitors.

Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales): What is the Welsh Assembly Government’s policy in relation to ensuring that all people have access to swimming facilities in their area? (WAQ53679)

Alun Ffred Jones: The provision of swimming facilities is a matter for local authorities and or commercial companies. The Welsh Assembly Government cannot influence local decisions regarding the development of swimming facilities but through its delivery partner, the Sports Council for Wales, it aims to help support local authorities in providing better services for people who wish to swim.

Since 2006-2007 the Welsh Assembly Government has invested an additional £4.2m to support a range of improvements to existing pools through upgrading changing facilities, improving pool environments and providing equipment such as aqua gyms. More swim teachers have also received training so that people are able to enjoy better quality lessons.

The Welsh Assembly Government's current investment in swimming focuses on the Free Swimming Initiative which offers the opportunity for people to benefit from aquatic opportunities where local authority swimming pools exist.

Nick Bourne (Mid and West Wales): Will the Minister disclose any correspondence he has had in relation to swimming facilities in Harlech since 2005? (WAQ53710)

Alun Ffred Jones: Your request for information is being responded to under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Officials will respond to you directly in that respect.

Questions to the Minister for Rural Affairs

Brynle Williams (North Wales): What precautions has the Welsh Assembly Government taken to ensure sufficient capacity will be in place for the removal of fallen stock in the event of high mortality due to bluetongue disease? (WAQ53602)

The Minister for Rural Affairs (Elin Jones): No account is taken of disposal due to high mortality as a result of Bluetongue. Disposal as a consequence of this disease is a matter for the farmer to consider. Government would only dispose of carcasses required to be culled for disease control purposes. It is not current policy to kill animals infected with Bluetongue BTV 8, with the possible exception of cases imported from Europe. There is sufficient GB disposal capacity by means of incineration, rendering or land fill. Farmers are encouraged to vaccinate their animals against Bluetongue BTV 8 which would reduce the possibility of their animals dying of the disease.

Brynle Williams (North Wales): What plans does the Welsh Assembly Government have to pursue renewable energy generation through the Farming Connect programme? (WAQ53617)

Elin Jones: Farmers are able to access mentoring support on Alternative Energy under the Whole Farm Plan element of the Farming Connect Programme. Sector specific advice is also available through the existing four Farming Connect sector specific development programmes, Red Meat, Organic, Land Management and Dairy.

Farming Connect will be launching a new climate change development programme this summer which will raise awareness of the issues (risks, responsibilities and opportunities) and work with partners to develop practical and sustainable options to help land managers to address climate change. The programme will support the industry through a range of knowledge transfer and training services, ensuring information is available to help land managers adopt new approaches, demonstrate best practice and new technologies on farm, share ideas and encourage innovation.

Questions to the Minister for Social Justice and Local Government

Nick Ramsay (Monmouth): What is the Minister doing for parents of 'impoverished' children? (WAQ53619)

The Minister for Social Justice and Local Government (Brian Gibbons): Tackling child poverty is a top priority for this third Assembly Government term and we are committed to using every policy lever available to us as we work towards reaching our challenging child poverty targets. Our proposed child poverty legislation laid last week will add considerable impetus to our efforts.

The proposed Children and Families (Wales) Measure demonstrates the Welsh Assembly Government's commitment to improve the lives of vulnerable children and families in Wales and the lives of those disadvantaged by child poverty. It will enable us to provide support to those families and children in greatest need, who without additional support would be unfairly disadvantaged within our society.

The Children and Families (Wales) Measure makes statutory provision, through a legislative framework, to take forward the Welsh Assembly Government's commitment in terms of child poverty and the early development of its strategy for vulnerable children. This is achieved by bringing forward legislation to provide greater support to families where children may be at risk and strengthening regulatory enforcement in children settings.

This is in addition to the wide range of Assembly Government policies and programmes operating across Wales aimed at tackling child poverty. These include employment support programmes, childcare initiatives, education and health programmes, Communities First interventions and income maximisation initiatives. The Assembly Government's policy response to child poverty includes a mix of universal and targeted provision all of which are designed to complement and add value to UK Government interventions through the tax and benefits system

Significant funding and support for parents is also being made available through a wide range of our policies and initiatives that contribute towards tackling child poverty, such as the Flying Start and Cymorth.

Flying Start provides support to parents through the requirement that parenting courses must be available to each family accessing the scheme. Families within Flying Start areas are also entitled to additional Health Visiting support, free-part time quality childcare for 2 to 3 year olds and language and play courses through the Basic Skills programme. This package of support benefits the whole family.

Flying Start requires that the bulk of the parenting courses offered should have been evaluated to demonstrate their effectiveness. Guidance has been provided by the Assembly Government as to which parenting programmes can be offered as part of Flying Start.

One of the themes with in Cymorth, the Children and Youth Support Fund, is Family Support. This aims to ensure that families have access to support that will foster positive relationships between parents and children. Parenting Programmes are also funded through this strand.

Through our Parenting Action Plan published in November 2005, we have increased the support and information available to all parents in Wales, from early years provision through to the teenage years. Support to parents is embedded across a number of portfolios and parenting is being mainstreamed across a range of policies and programmes. The Parenting Action Plan has been a catalyst for this.

In 2008-9 we have given £266k through direct grants to organisations to fund the training of trainers in parenting programmes, and to provide funding for the evaluation of parenting programmes. This evaluation is important in that it builds an evidence base which can inform future policy direction.

Nick Ramsay (Monmouth): What assessment has the Minister made of the contribution of family breakdown to child poverty in Wales? (WAQ53622)

Brian Gibbons: We know from research sources that family structure during early childhood and primary school years appears to have strong effects on educational attainment, economic inactivity and early childbearing all of which are important determinants of child poverty. Therefore, it is essential that the Assembly Government's policy response includes measures to respond to these issues. The Assembly Government has a very wide range of policies and programmes operating across Wales aimed at tackling child poverty and the causes of poverty. These include employment support programmes, childcare initiatives, education and health programmes, Communities First interventions and income maximisation

initiatives. The Assembly Government's policy response to child poverty includes a mix of universal and targeted provision all of which are designed to complement and add value to UK Government interventions through the tax and benefits system.

We know from analysis of the Labour Force Survey that around half of the children in Wales living in low income households are in lone parent households. We also know from the latest 'Monitoring Poverty and Social Exclusion report' (Palmer et al, 2006), that lone parent families have a high risk of poverty and that worklessness puts those families at a particularly risk. For that reason the Assembly Government is making significant investments in programmes like Want to work2, Genesis 2, Cymorth and the Flying Start initiative.

One of the main ways that Genesis 2 supports the child poverty agenda is by improving the prospects of increased income into the family by moving people closer and/or into work, and also providing free childcare for parents who wish to access learning, training etc where no other funds are available.

Genesis 2 targets give priority to women/lone parents that have been economically inactive or unemployed for a considerable amount of time; helping them move closer to the labour market by providing childcare where that is identified as being a barrier for participants.

Through our Parenting Action Plan published in November 2005, we have increased the support and information available to all parents in Wales, from early years provision through to the teenage years. Support to parents is embedded across a number of portfolios and parenting is being mainstreamed across a range of policies and programmes. The Parenting Action Plan has been a catalyst for this.

Since 2007 we have also funded research through Cardiff University that focuses on the effects of inter-parental conflict on children, a grant for £136,021 has been provided over the three years. This research aims to highlight how inter-parental and parent-child relationships affect children's emotional, behavioural and academic development.

Tackling child poverty is a top priority for this third Assembly Government term and we are committed to using every policy lever available to us as we work towards reaching our challenging child poverty targets. Our proposed child poverty legislation laid last week will add considerable impetus to our efforts.

The proposed Children and Families (Wales) Measure demonstrates the Welsh Assembly Government's commitment to improve the lives of vulnerable children and families in Wales, and the lives of those disadvantaged by child poverty. It will enable us to provide support to those families and children in greatest need who without additional support would be unfairly disadvantaged within our society.