

# Written Questions answered between 30 November and 7 December 2006

[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

**Owen John Thomas:** What recent discussions has the Minister had with the Department for Work and Pensions regarding restoring in full the pension entitlements of the former Allied Steel and Wire workers? (WAQ48674) *Transferred for answer by the Minister for Enterprise, Innovation and Networks.*

**The Minister for Enterprise, Innovation and Networks (Andrew Davies):** The First Minister and I are in regular communication with the Department for Work and Pensions on behalf of all ASW pension scheme members.

The First Minister last wrote to John Hutton, Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, on 1 November and raised a number of issues pertaining to the financial assistance scheme.

## Questions to the Minister for Enterprise, Innovation and Networks

**Kirsty Williams:** What discussions has the Minister had with his colleagues in Westminster

regarding HM Revenue and Customs job losses in Wales? (WAQ48653)

**The Minister for Enterprise, Innovation and Networks (Andrew Davies):** The Westminster Government is wholly aware that we are trying to maximise the transfer of public sector jobs to Wales in line with the recommendations of the Lyons review. The Assembly Government policy is to transfer jobs into the Objective 1 areas of Wales, with the office at Merthyr already open, and our plans for Llandudno Junction and Aberystwyth.

In respect of the HMRC announcement, it is important to keep in view that this is the start of a consultation exercise. No job losses have been announced.

**Alun Cairns:** Will the Minister provide a breakdown of forecast and actual jobs created so far by non-local partnerships, funded by European structural funds, covering the whole of the Objective 1 area? (WAQ48673)

**Andrew Davies:** The attached table shows the 'forecast' and latest figures for the 'actual' jobs created by Objective 1 non-local partnership projects, by local partnership area.

**Forecast and actual output data(1) from non-local partnership projects, by local authority area**

| <b>Jobs created(2)</b> |                  |       |
|------------------------|------------------|-------|
| <b>Forecast(3)</b>     | <b>Actual(4)</b> |       |
| Anglesey               | 2,800            | 1,700 |
| Blaenau Gwent          | 2,800            | 1,800 |
| Bridgend               | 3,300            | 1,900 |
| Caerphilly             | 3,500            | 2,800 |
| Carmarthenshire        | 3,800            | 3,300 |
| Ceredigion             | 3,100            | 2,000 |
| Conwy                  | 3,100            | 1,400 |
| Denbighshire           | 2,900            | 1,600 |
| Gwynedd                | 3,500            | 2,400 |

|                   |               |               |
|-------------------|---------------|---------------|
| Merthyr Tydfil    | 2,600         | 800           |
| Neath Port Talbot | 3,000         | 1,900         |
| Pembrokeshire     | 3,600         | 2,900         |
| Rhondda Cynon Taf | 3,900         | 3,600         |
| Swansea           | 4,500         | 4,900         |
| Torfaen           | 2,900         | 1,900         |
| <b>Toral</b>      | <b>49,200</b> | <b>35,100</b> |

**Source:** European Fund Management System, Welsh European Funding Office, 31/10/06

(1) Figures rounded to nearest 100.

(2) The Objective 1 mid-term evaluation update suggests that aggregate data should be treated with caution as the figures contain an element of double counting.

(3) The forecast figure is what projects estimate they will achieve.

(4) The actual figure is what projects have achieved to date.

**William Graham:** Will the Minister outline how 'walking to school initiatives' are promoted in Wales? (WAQ48679)

**Andrew Davies:** We support and encourage walk to school initiatives by investing in major Safe Routes to School projects. To date, our Safe Routes to School initiative has allocated £22 million to local authorities across Wales. These safe and sustainable routes have provided the infrastructure for local authorities to promote initiatives such as walk to school week and walking buses.

**Laura Anne Jones:** Will the Minister explain what funding the Welsh Assembly Government is providing Wales in Bloom for 2007? (WAQ48694)

**Andrew Davies:** The Assembly Government has provided funding of £10,000 via Visit Wales, which is within my department, for the financial year 2006-07. No further decisions on the Assembly Government's future funding support for the Wales in Bloom initiative have been taken. These are

matters to be determined by ongoing business planning processes.

**William Graham:** Will the Minister make a statement on the future of the motor vehicle components industry in Wales? (WAQ48711)

**Andrew Davies:** Globalisation has undoubtedly created challenging times for the sector. However, Wales is well blessed with a major components sector that does not rely exclusively on the car market. Team Wales continues to match Wales's strengths to the needs of the sector. As a key part of this package of support, the Assembly Government-funded Accelerate Wales programme has made a significant contribution to helping Welsh companies in this sector to compete more robustly.

Elsewhere, International Business Wales, which is within my department, is actively engaging with key original equipment manufacturers to promote the effectiveness of Wales as a key components supplier to the automotive industry.

**Ann Jones:** What progress has been made in reducing the number of alcohol-related road traffic fatalities in Wales since 2003? (WAQ48713)

**Andrew Davies:** The available information shows the proportion of drivers involved in road traffic accidents that were positive in a breathalyser test or refused the test. This was 2.4 per cent of all drivers in 2003 and 2.3 per cent of drivers in 2005.

As only six out of 10 drivers involved in accidents were breathalysed in each year, this is not a useful guide to the links between drinking alcohol and traffic accidents. For this reason, from 2005 onwards, the Assembly Government has started to collect data on the views of the police about the factors which they believe to have contributed to the accident. These 'contributory factors' include an assessment of whether the driver, or drivers, involved in the accident were subject to impairment by alcohol.

It is too early to say whether or not this information will provide a reliable indicator of change over time. However, preliminary figures for 2005 suggest that one in 10 of fatal accidents involved drivers who were impaired by alcohol (15 out of 154 fatal accidents). Approximately one in four of adult pedestrian fatal accidents saw the pedestrian impaired by alcohol (seven out of 29 fatal accidents).

**Nick Bourne:** Will the Minister make a statement on attracting more jobs into the Welsh economy? (WAQ48714)

**Andrew Davies:** This is a key priority of our economic development agenda. Successful implementation is enabling Wales to maintain an employment rate well above its historical average,

with the level up over 120,000 since the start of the Assembly, and employment in Wales has increased by 10 per cent since devolution, compared with an overall UK increase of 7 per cent over the same period.

**John Griffiths:** Will the Minister make a statement on Welsh Assembly Government strategy to further develop rail services in Wales? (WAQ48718)

**Andrew Davies:** I am funding a rail investment programme across Wales with the four regional transport consortia in line with the Assembly Government's strategic Wales transport strategy document, which is currently at the consultation stage of delivery. This will group all future rail developments under three elements of sustainability: social, economic and environmental.

**Karen Sinclair:** Will the Minister make a statement on the progress of the creative industries in Wales? (WAQ48719)

**Andrew Davies:** The creation of Creative Business Wales and the re-appointment of the creative business panel, both of which will provide greater focus and cohesion, together with the creation of the film agency and the restructuring of the Wales Screen Commission, means that Wales is well placed to build on the success of the sector and to implement the creative industries strategy. In recent years, we have seen direct economic benefits from filming in Wales increase from £8 million in 2003-04 to just over £18 million last year. I am confident that our coordinated approach will see these strides forward replicated elsewhere in the sector.

**Nick Bourne:** Will the Minister detail any correspondence he has received regarding the tendering process for the Bluestone project? (WAQ48734)

**Andrew Davies:** You wrote to me on 28 November 2005 and 3 January 2006 on this subject. I have nothing further to add to my responses to you. (Reference AD/01653/05 and AD/00001/06)

**Nick Bourne:** Will the Minister detail any correspondence with regard to financial assistance for the Bluestone project? (WAQ48735)

**Andrew Davies:** A substantial amount of financial information is contained on the Bluestone files within the Assembly Government. This covers financial due diligence, commercial and visitor number evaluations and construction cost analysis undertaken by both Finance Wales and the Welsh Assembly Government. These papers cover regional selective assistance, tourism section 4 and

property support grant.

**Nick Bourne:** Has the Minister received any representations from local businesses and/or local residents regarding the roadworks on the A470 at Blaenau Ffestiniog and, if so, will he detail them? (WAQ48736)

**Andrew Davies:** To date, no representations have been received from local businesses and/or local residents regarding the resurfacing roadworks on the A470 between Manod and Blaenau Ffestiniog.

**Nick Bourne:** How long are the roadworks on the A470 at Blaenau Ffestiniog scheduled to last? (WAQ48738)

**Andrew Davies:** The roadworks currently on the A470 between Manod and Blaenau Ffestiniog started on Monday 20 November and are scheduled for four weeks, finishing before the Christmas period.

### **Questions to the Minister for Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills**

**Elin Jones:** What new initiatives does the Minister have to deal with economic inactivity in Ceredigion? (WAQ48667)

**The Minister for Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (Jane Davidson):** The Welsh Assembly Government's framework for action to raise economic activity rates is set out in 'Wales: A Better Country', 'Wales: A Vibrant Economy' and the skills and employment action plan for Wales 2005. Complementary measures fall within the UK Government's welfare to work agenda, and the Assembly Government works closely with the Department for Work and Pensions and Jobcentre Plus to ensure that programmes are tailored to meet the needs of people and communities across Wales.

Initiatives that have recently commenced in Ceredigion include the Pathways to Work programme, which focuses on helping people claiming incapacity benefit to overcome barriers to employment and make the transition into work, and our step up project, which provides access to free training for people in employment, to assist them in enhancing their skills (up to NVQ level 3), thereby reducing the potential for them to become economically inactive.

**Alun Ffred Jones:** What new initiatives does the Minister have to deal with economic inactivity in Caernarfon? (WAQ48668)

**Jane Davidson:** The Welsh Assembly Government's framework for action to raise economic activity rates is set out in 'Wales: A Better Country', 'Wales: A Vibrant Economy', and the skills and employment action plan for Wales 2005. Complementary measures fall within the UK Government's welfare to work agenda, and the Assembly Government works closely with the Department for Work and Pensions and Jobcentre Plus to ensure that programmes are tailored to meet the needs of people and communities across Wales.

We are continually seeking to develop the support for economically inactive people, and one of the main new initiatives to be introduced in Caernarfon during 2007 is the Pathways to Work programme, which focuses on helping people claiming incapacity benefit to overcome barriers and make the transition into work. The Assembly Government is working closely with the DWP on the design of this further phase of the programme, the delivery of which will be led by the private and voluntary sectors.

**Eleanor Burnham:** Will the Minister make a statement on the current status of proposals to amalgamate North East Wales Institute of Higher Education and the Welsh College of Horticulture at Northop, and detail what part she has played to date in any negotiations? (WAQ48670)

**Jane Davidson:** The governing body of the Welsh College of Horticulture recognised the need to merge with a larger institution and, with this in mind, was factored into a merger feasibility study commissioned and funded by Education and Learning Wales—delivered by an independent consultant in March 2006. The aims and the objectives of the report included:

examination of educational benefits to merger for post-16 students;

impact of merger on alternative providers;

financial benefits of merger and viability of proposed merged institutions.

The outcome of this review proposed that a merger with Deeside College offers the best opportunity for learners.

However, the Welsh college expressed a desire to merge with the North East Wales Institute of Higher Education and the governing body is now preparing to present an alternative proposal formally supporting the merger with NEWI at its next meeting in January 2007.

Until any formal merger proposal has been presented and agreed with the department, the regional office will continue to explore all merger options to ensure a comprehensive further education provision for Flintshire.

To date, it has not been appropriate for there to be any direct ministerial involvement in the discussions.

## **Questions to the Minister for Environment, Planning and Countryside**

**Elin Jones:** What consideration has the Minister given to Countryside Council for Wales's response to the appropriate assessment of the twenty-fourth oil and gas licensing round? (WAQ48690)

**The Minister for Environment, Planning and Countryside (Carwyn Jones):** The Assembly Government does not have a general power to ensure compliance with the habitats directive over all activities. In this case, the power lies with the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry. I understand that Countryside Council for Wales commented on the appropriate assessment, and that the Department of Trade and Industry is currently ensuring that the potential environmental effects are fully addressed.

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

**Jenny Randerson (Cardiff Central):** Does the Minister intend to change procedures for WAG accountability for NHS finances? (WAQ48680)

**The Minister for Health and Social Services (Brian Gibbons):** No.

**Jenny Randerson:** Does the Minister intend to take personal responsibility for NHS debts in the same way that the Secretary of State in England has announced that she will? (WAQ48681)

**Brian Gibbons:** NHS organisations are statutorily responsible for ensuring that they operate within their funding, and I hold boards accountable for ensuring this. If an organisation is not able to live within its means, then it will need to borrow funding from the Welsh Assembly Government to ensure that it can continue to meet its ongoing financial commitments. To ensure that the discipline of keeping within budgets is emphasised, the Assembly Government expects the repayment of any borrowed funds.

It is within the Assembly Government's discretion to determine the timing of any repayment, and we will ensure that patient care is not compromised when NHS organisations repay debt to the Assembly Government.

**Kirsty Williams:** Will the Minister make a statement on the number of junior physiotherapist posts available in Wales? (WAQ48684)



**Kirsty Williams:** Will the Minister make a statement on the number of the physiotherapists who graduated in Wales this year who are currently employed in the field of physiotherapy? (WAQ48642)

**Brian Gibbons:** In May 2006, there was a total of 224.56 whole-time equivalent junior physiotherapist posts in Wales. Of these, only 76 posts were known to be vacant and thus available for newly qualified physiotherapists. This was lower than might be expected from the vacancy trend over previous years, which shows a rise year on year from 67 in 1999 to 90 in 2004. In 2005, however, the number of new graduated employed rose significantly to 117. This level of employment, combined with the workforce stability resulting from 'Agenda for Change', is being cited by the all-Wales physiotherapy managers as the main reason for the lower number of posts available early in 2006.

One hundred and seventeen physiotherapists graduated in July 2006, and latest information suggests that fewer than 40 graduates have not been successful in securing a first destination post.

The all-Wales physiotherapy managers continue to review the position across Wales regularly and regional workshops are being planned to support innovative approaches to recruitment.

**Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** Will the Minister confirm whether the directive on epilepsy services is the action plan in response to the audit on epilepsy deaths? (WAQ48695)

**Brian Gibbons:** The service development and commissioning directives for epilepsy will include a number of key actions to help improve the health and quality of life of people living with epilepsy. The work was initiated in response to a number of issues including the growing pressures on services and the national sentinel clinical audit of epilepsy-related death. Prior to 'Designed for Life', this work was referred to as a policy and action plan, but it has developed into commissioning directives taking account of the growing agenda to tackle chronic conditions in Wales.

**Helen Mary Jones:** How is the Minister ensuring that patients exhibiting the symptoms of ME are able to be seen within Wales rather than having to attend clinics outside Wales? (WAQ48696)

**Brian Gibbons:** We are developing an integrated chronic disease framework that will help to deliver across Wales an effective and consistent approach to managing chronic conditions, including chronic fatigue syndrome and myalgic encephalomyelitis. A key feature will be the provision of services across primary, secondary and social care by integrated multidisciplinary and multi-agency teams. Individuals will be supported to understand more about their condition, and given increasing confidence to self-manage wherever appropriate. The commissioning and development of specialist multidisciplinary services, supported by integrated care pathways, is needed to effectively support and care for people with chronic conditions. This will also need to be further strengthened by partnerships with the voluntary sector and carers.

The Assembly and the Department of Health have commissioned the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence to develop clinical guidelines for the diagnosis and management of CFS and ME. This advice is due for publication in April 2007.

Further information can be found on the NICE website at:

<http://www.nice.org.uk/page.aspx?o=guidelines.inprogress.cfsme>

**David Lloyd:** For each local health board area will the Minister detail the numbers of young people who contracted sexually transmitted diseases in Wales for each year since 1999? (WAQ48697)

**Brian Gibbons:** The sexually transmitted infection surveillance system does not provide information by local health board area. In addition, as LHBs in Wales were established in April 2003, comparable statistics are not available for the period since 1999.

While information on the age range of patients attending genito-urinary medicine appointments is also not available, the table below shows the number of new and total attendances for genito-urinary medicine appointments by region of Wales since 2000-01.

#### **Genito-urinary medicine out-patient attendances by NHS region**

| Year                      |                   | 2000-01 | 2001-02 | 2002-03 | 2003-04 | 2004-05 | 2005-06 |
|---------------------------|-------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Organisation              |                   |         |         |         |         |         |         |
| North Wales Region        | New attendances   | 5,122   | 5,824   | 6,297   | 6,864   | 7,532   | 8,258   |
|                           | Total attendances | 12,281  | 12,841  | 13,878  | 14,617  | 15,738  | 17,088  |
| Mid and West Wales Region | New attendances   | 5,855   | 6,339   | 6,584   | 5,857   | 5,495   | 5,573   |
|                           | Total attendances | 12,492  | 13,702  | 13,806  | 12,945  | 12,062  | 10,882  |
| South East Wales Region   | New attendances   | 13,443  | 14,217  | 16,226  | 16,559  | 17,750  | 18,244  |
|                           | Total attendances | 33,348  | 33,362  | 35,508  | 35,795  | 34,752  | 31,756  |

The issue of STI surveillance in Wales is presently being addressed in order to provide more timely data which will allow breakdown of information to LHB level.

**Nick Bourne:** Will the Minister detail any correspondence he has received relating to Powys Local Health Board's proposal of 12 September to the reconfiguration of hospital services in Powys? (WAQ48728)

**Brian Gibbons:** I have received over 1,000 items of correspondence from members of the public and elected representatives about the proposal.

**Kirsty Williams:** Will the Minister make a statement on the use of brachytherapy for the treatment of prostate cancer in Wales? (WAQ48737)

**Brian Gibbons:** Brachytherapy is one form of treatment for localised prostate cancer, and responsibility for commissioning it rests with Health Commission Wales as it is considered a specialised service. However, this treatment is not being commissioned for new patients during the current financial year, as HCW has not identified it as a priority for investment during 2006-07. Other alternative forms of treatment, such as radiotherapy and surgery, commissioned by local health boards, mean that no patient is denied access to effective treatment for prostate cancer.

With regard to the future commissioning of brachytherapy services, HCW is discussing with local health boards and with Velindre NHS Trust the potential for developing a co-ordinated approach to the commissioning of services for localised prostate cancer.

**Ann Jones:** How many people a) were waiting over 18 months for in-patient treatment in 1999: and b) are currently waiting over 18 months for in-patient treatment in the Conwy and Denbighshire NHS Trust? (WAQ48778)

**Brian Gibbons:** At 31 October 1999, there were 56 patients waiting over 18 months for in-patient/day-case treatment at Conwy and Denbighshire NHS Trust. At 31 October 2006, there were no patients waiting over 12 months for in-patient/day-case treatment, and only 207 waiting over eight months, which is the target to be achieved by 31 March 2007.

### **Questions to the Minister for Social Justice and Regeneration**

**Eleanor Burnham:** Will the Minister make a statement on the right-to-buy scheme in Wales? (WAQ48699)

**The Minister for Social Justice and Regeneration (Edwina Hart):** Since 1980, secure tenants of local authorities and some other social landlords have had the right to purchase their home under the right-to-buy scheme.

**Carl Sargeant:** Will the Minister make a statement on how the Welsh Assembly Government is supporting the work of the fire and rescue service in Wales? (WAQ48700)

**Edwina Hart:** Since devolution of the fire and rescue service in Wales in November 2004, the Assembly Government has put in place policies, initiatives and appropriate funding aimed at protecting all people, not only from fire, but also from other emergency incidents.

The fire and rescue national framework for Wales was published in March 2005 and forms our strategy for delivering the service, setting out our expectations of the service and what support it in turn can expect from us. The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 requires the Welsh Assembly Government to report to the National Assembly, within two years of the framework being published, on the extent to which fire and rescue authorities are acting in accordance with the framework, and we are currently in the process of compiling the report.

**Carl Sargeant:** Will the Minister make a statement on support for male victims of domestic abuse? (WAQ48701)

**Edwina Hart:** The Assembly Government has developed a national strategy to address domestic abuse in Wales. The strategy encourages all agencies to work together and provide support and protection to all victims who encounter domestic abuse, including male victims. Support is being developed for male victims including Project Dyn in Cardiff and a safe house near Newtown.

**John Griffiths:** Will the Minister make a statement on progress with Welsh Assembly Government policies to tackle domestic abuse in Wales? (WAQ48702)

**Edwina Hart:** Good progress is being made in delivering our national domestic abuse strategy and I provide regular updates to the Social Justice and Regeneration Committee. Community safety partnerships are responsible for co-ordinating the delivery of the strategy, and each one of them receives funding for a domestic abuse co-ordinator.

**John Griffiths:** Will the Minister make a statement on progress with Welsh Assembly Government policies to tackle alcohol abuse in Wales? (WAQ48703)

**Edwina Hart:** The fourth substance misuse annual report, which I provided for the Social Justice and Regeneration Committee on 21 September, included an update on progress on our policies to tackle alcohol misuse. This can be found on the intranet.

**Karen Sinclair:** Will the Minister outline the Welsh Assembly Government's main achievements in the field of social justice and regeneration in Wrexham? (WAQ48704)

**Edwina Hart:** Since 1999, more than £2 million has been awarded to the community safety partnership in Wrexham to support the reduction of crime and substance misuse. Since 2002, £1.5 million has been awarded through the communities facilities and activities programme for community regeneration including projects such as the Llay Miners' Welfare one-stop shop and Overton pre-school playgroup. In addition, over £2.1 million has been awarded from the physical regeneration fund since 2002 for projects including the comprehensive renovation and restoration of key buildings in the centre of Cefn Mawr and the re-building of the multi use Gwersyllt community resource centre. Finally, more than £8 million since the start of the Communities First programme in 2001 will have been awarded to support the development of the programme in the Wrexham area up until 2008.

**Karen Sinclair:** Will the Minister make a statement on the Welsh Assembly Government's home energy efficiency scheme? (WAQ48705)

**Edwina Hart:** The home energy efficiency scheme has assisted over 64,000 vulnerable households since 2000. For the years 2006-08, an additional £5 million per year is available to assist pensioner households bringing the total HEES budget to £19.6 million in each year. Recent increases to the level of grant available under the scheme will ensure households receive the full range of heating and energy efficiency measures at little or no cost to them.

**Owen John Thomas:** What discussions has the Minister had with the Minister for Enterprise, Innovation and Networks regarding the regeneration of Cardiff South and Penarth? (WAQ48706)

**Edwina Hart:** My officials have consulted with his officials in relation to a number of applications for funding under the final bidding round of the physical regeneration fund. These discussions included applications relating to Clifton Street and Cowbridge Road East in Cardiff, and Penarth town centre. The outcome of these bids will be known shortly.

**Ann Jones:** Will the Minister make a statement on the progress that has been made in tackling fuel poverty in Wales since 2003? (WAQ48709)

**Edwina Hart:** The living in Wales survey showed that around 130,000 households were living in fuel poverty in 2004 which represents 11 per cent of Welsh households. Our previous estimate

published in the fuel poverty commitment for Wales was that in 1998 220,000 households were in fuel poverty. This estimate was based on the proxy of eligibility for the Assembly Government's home energy efficiency scheme being an indicator for fuel poverty. Analysis of the previous survey (1998 Welsh House Condition Survey) from which this proxy estimate was made, suggested that the figure may have been closer to 360,000, or 31 per cent of Welsh households.

**Ann Jones:** Will the Minister make a statement on the Welsh Assembly Government's policies to improve the life chances of children from low-income families in Denbighshire? (WAQ48710)

**Edwina Hart:** Increasing family income is an important element of our strategy to eradicate child poverty in Wales. Work is currently underway to increase the role of Communities First partnerships in income maximisation and I have recently approved support for a pilot project to increase the investment rate of child trust fund vouchers in local credit unions. In Denbighshire, the impressive 'Getting Paid Right' programme has generated over £6 million in unclaimed benefit in the last financial year alone and I am keen to encourage such good practice to spread across Wales.

**Nick Bourne:** Will the Minister make a statement on the state of the Welsh post office network? (WAQ48721)

**Edwina Hart:** Post offices are a non-devolved responsibility. I understand that the UK Government will shortly be consulting on its proposals for the future of the post office network in Wales.

I and my officials continue to make representations to the UK Government to ensure that the interests of Wales are taken into account in the decision-making process in Whitehall.

### **Questions to the Business Minister**

**John Griffiths:** Will the Minister make a statement on progress in taking forward equal opportunities in Wales? (WAQ48676)

**The Business Minister (Jane Hutt):** The Welsh Assembly Government is committed to promoting equality of opportunity for the people of Wales regardless of race, age, faith/belief, disability, gender or sexual orientation. We are working to mainstream equality throughout all policy areas. We have set out our commitment and our pathway to mainstreaming in our mainstreaming equality strategy.

We also have a fully compliant race equality scheme. We have developed the Assembly Government's disability equality scheme, which will be launched on 14 December 2006. We are also working to produce a gender equality scheme, which will be launched in March 2007. From March

2008, we aim to have a scheme which will address all equality areas.