

Answers issued to Members on 30 June 2008

[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

Darren Millar (Clwyd West): Further to the First Minister's answer to WAQ51846 will the Minister provide the information asked for regarding the years 2006/06, 2006/07 and 2007/08 and also the Departments/Agencies who are responsible for the vacant space and where the space is located? (WAQ51894)

The First Minister (Rhodri Morgan): In July 2005 central government departments and agencies were mandated to use e-PIMS.

'Departments' include non-ministerial departments and their executive agencies, arm's length bodies and non-departmental public bodies. Each mandated department is responsible for recording its own information.

The mandating does not apply to local authorities, the NHS (except for Special Health Authorities), public corporations, privatised railway undertaking, the Crown Estate or the Defence Estate (subject to some exceptions). The mandating applies to all property held by the relevant department, both in the UK and (if appropriate) overseas.

Local authorities, the Scottish Government and the Welsh Assembly Government are not mandated, but can and do use e-PIMS on a voluntary basis, as a property database.

Mandated departments control the quality and frequency of data input and any information extracted from e-PIMS is reliant on the accuracy of that data. Only figures from mandated departments are routinely used in compiling figures for release and whilst average figures are not collected (they change daily), the following are based on a snapshot at the end of each year and provide a good picture of the position. In terms of the years raised in your supplementary question, these figures are:

2005/2006	255,347 sq.m
2006/2007	163,157 sq.m
2007/2008 (to date)	194,773 sq.m

The current figure for vacant space represents approximately 1.4% of the total recorded estate.

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

Andrew R.T. Davies (South Wales Central): Would the Minister provide a breakdown of the number of sick days taken by teachers for each Local Authority in Wales for each year between 1999 and 2007? (WAQ51920)

The Minister for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (Jane Hutt): Consistent data on teacher sick leave are only available from 2002. The number of sick days taken by teachers for each Local Authority are shown in the following table:

Days of sickness absence

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Isle of Anglesey	4,292	4,326	4,348	4,451	4,401	4,567
Gwynedd	8,641	8,135	8,422	8,553	8,757	8,641
Conwy	8,419	8,273	6,567	7,905	6,629	6,779
Denbighshire	6,624	6,950	4,964	7,548	8,163	7,778
Flintshire	12,707	15,557	11,844	9,126	10,983	12,017

Wrexham	4,872	5,933	5,308	4,461	2,416	2,775
Powys	2,063	2,095	2,080	2,060	2,141	5,342
Ceredigion	6,100	5,978	5,315	5,315	4,754	4,005
Pembrokeshire	14,783	14,711	18,667	15,090	12,912	12,871
Carmarthenshire	15,180	11,345	14,428	11,688	13,625	12,738
Swansea	18,657	20,447	18,546	18,132	19,632	18,974
Neath Port Talbot	13,417	14,980	14,247	12,326	14,795	12,986
Bridgend	9,888	9,732	19,737	11,369	19,748	19,817
The Vale of Glamorgan	8,936	11,756	7,059	7,147	4,526	7,169
Rhondda Cynon Taff	15,651	19,416	16,678	16,192	22,311	29,232
Merthyr Tydfil	3,262	5,766	5,264	4,049	2,958	3,918
Caerphilly	17,412	16,369	13,493	14,130	13,072	15,134
Blaenau Gwent	5,827	6,213	7,298	6,856	6,743	8,173
Torfaen	8,384	7,481	5,762	6,668	4,606	6,703
Monmouthshire	6,091	6,722	4,140	6,389	5,626	6,741
Newport	15,930	20,805	16,092	21,289	8,785	11,044
Cardiff	23,455	25,552	23,112	22,465	29,906	27,307
Wales	230,590	248,541	233,371	223,209	227,490	244,711

Source: STATS3

Note: Where figures have been rounded to the nearest final digit there may be an apparent discrepancy between the sum of the Local Authorities and Wales total.

Questions to the Minister for Environment, Sustainability and Housing

Kirsty Williams (Brecon and Radnorshire): Will the Minister make a statement on the progress of considering the responses to the consultation on private sewers and lateral drains to the ownership of public water and sewerage companies? (WAQ51918)

The Minister for Environment, Sustainability and Housing (Jane Davidson): My officials continue to work closely with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) in considering the detailed technical and legal issues raised in the responses to the Private Sewers Transfer—Implementation Options consultation paper which closed on 19 October.

The Private Sewers Steering Group, which includes representation from Water UK, the drainage industry, the Environment Agency, the Water Services Regulation Authority (Ofwat) and the Consumer Council for Water is working with the Welsh Assembly Government and Defra to help find a way through these complex issues and develop a way forward.

The Assembly Government continues to attach considerable priority to keeping water and sewerage bills affordable, including for those on low incomes; minimising the burden on water and sewerage charges is therefore an important factor in our consideration of how best to take forward the transfer of private sewers.

The joint summary of responses to the consultation can be viewed on the Welsh Assembly Government website at:

<http://new.wales.gov.uk/consultations/closed/envandcouncilscons/privatesewers/?lang=en>

Questions to the Minister for Health and Social Services

Kirsty Williams (Brecon and Radnorshire): Will the Minister make a statement on her policy on Mitochondrial Function testing? (WAQ51922)

The Minister for Health and Social Services (Edwina Hart): My policy is that clinicians follow NICE guidance. The guidance does not refer to mitochondrial function testing in chronic fatigue syndrome but leaves it open to local clinicians to consider further tests they consider appropriate to investigate underlying causes.

Jonathan Morgan (Cardiff North): When will the Minister announce her decision, in line with the procedures set out in the Dispute Resolution Procedure of the General Medical Services contract with regard to the lack of progress in rebuilding the North Cardiff Medical Centre? (WAQ51928)

Edwina Hart: This is a contractual matter between Cardiff LHB and North Cardiff Medical Centre. Both parties have submitted a GMS Contract dispute to Welsh Ministers for determination after failing to reach local resolution. The dispute is being processed and we are waiting for representations from both parties. Cardiff LHB and North Cardiff Medical Centre will be informed of the decision once all representations have been fully considered.

Kirsty Williams (Brecon and Radnorshire): Will the Minister make a statement on the withdrawal of funding from the GP referral scheme to participate in regular planned and managed exercise? (WAQ51933)

Edwina Hart: The Welsh Assembly Government is funding all areas of Wales to deliver the National Exercise Referral Scheme. Exercise referral projects which have previously been funded by other sources, such as the Health Inequalities Fund or the Big Lottery, have been incorporated into the national scheme. In Powys, the Local Authority has just accepted a grant award that will support the delivery of the scheme until April 2011.