

Answers to Questions not reached in Plenary 6 October 2004

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

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

Contents

- 1 Questions to the Minister for Health and Social Services
- 3 Questions to the Minister for Culture, Welsh Language and Sport

Questions to the Minister for Health and Social Services

The New Llwynypia Hospital

Q7 Leighton Andrews: Will the Minister make a statement on progress with the development of the new Llwynypia Hospital? (OAQ38019)

The Minister for Health and Social Services (Jane Hutt): I am pleased to be able to tell you that infrastructure work on the new hospital development commenced on site on 20 September. Construction of the main scheme is currently planned to start on site in late spring to early summer next year, with completion anticipated towards the end of 2007.

Photodynamic Therapy Treatment

Q8 Gwenda Thomas: Will the Minister make a statement on the provision of photodynamic therapy treatment for wet age-related macular degeneration in Wales? (OAQ38046)

Jane Hutt: The recommendations of the National Institute for Clinical Excellence for photodynamic therapy for age-related macular degeneration are currently being taken forward in Wales at three sites: HM Stanley Hospital in north Wales, Singleton Hospital in Swansea and the University Hospital of Wales, Cardiff.

Health Challenge Wales

Q9 Jeff Cuthbert: Will the Minister make a statement on Health Challenge Wales? (OAQ38044)

Jane Hutt: Health Challenge Wales is the new national focus for improving health in Wales. It is something behind which everyone in Wales—government at all levels, organisations in all sectors, communities and individuals—can unite for an even more co-ordinated and sustained effort to reduce ill health. Health Challenge Wales will recognise what many people and organisations are already doing to improve health, and will stimulate more action.

Health Gain Targets

Q10 Denise Idris Jones: Would the Minister give an update on the Welsh Assembly Government's health gain targets? (WAQ38036)

Jane Hutt: The new national health targets and indicators for coronary heart disease, cancer, mental health, the health of children and older people were published earlier this year, providing a long-term measure of health outcome and health inequalities. They will be underpinned by indicators covering the wider determinants of health to provide a short to medium-term measure of progress.

Ysbyty Gymunedol Gogledd Meirionnydd a Dwyfor

C11 Alun Ffred Jones: A wnaiff y Gweinidog ddatganiad ar y datblygiadau diweddaraf i sefydlu ysbyty gymunedol gogledd Meirionnydd a Dwyfor? (OAQ38000) [W]

Jane Hutt: Mae'n bleser gennyf gyhoeddi bod Ymddiriedolaeth GIG Gogledd Orllewin Cymru a Bwrdd Iechyd Lleol Gwynedd wedi gwneud cytundebau gyda fy swyddogion. Erbyn hyn, mae'r ymddiriedolaeth a'r BILI mewn sefyllfa i osod y contractau drwy dendr a bwrw ymlaen â datblygiad y prosiect.

The North Meirionnydd and Dwyfor Community Hospital

Q11 Alun Ffred Jones: Will the Minister make a statement on the latest developments to establish the north Meirionnydd and Dwyfor community hospital? (OAQ38000) [W]

Jane Hutt: I am pleased to confirm that the North West Wales NHS Trust and Gwynedd Local Health Board have concluded agreements with my officials. The trust and the LHB are now in a position to tender the contracts and proceed with the development of the project.

General Practitioners' Services

Q12 David Davies: What is being done to improve GP services in Wales? (OAQ38008)

Jane Hutt: The new general medical services contract, accompanied by the unprecedented levels of investment, will bring real improvements to GMS throughout Wales. These include modernisation of premises and IT systems and higher quality services via the quality and outcomes framework. In addition, the enhanced services package, with funding of £21.9 million this year will provide patients with better access to a wider range of local services.

MRSA

Q13 Brynle Williams: Will the Minister make a statement on MRSA in hospitals in north Wales? (OAQ38015)

Jane Hutt: Since 2001, a mandatory staphylococcus aureus bacteraemia reporting scheme has been in place in Welsh acute hospitals, including hospitals in north Wales, co-ordinated by the National Public Health Service. The NPHS publishes the results in anonymous format. I am reassured that the figures for Welsh trusts are in the lower half of the graphs when compared with English trusts and that the Welsh mean is also lower than the other UK countries.

Paediatric Neurosurgery

Q14 Peter Black: What plans does the Minister have for consultation on proposals by Health Commission Wales on paediatric neurosurgery? (OAQ38041)

Jane Hutt: The commissioning of paediatric neurosurgery services is a matter for Health Commission Wales. A public consultation was undertaken in 2002 on a proposal to transfer paediatric neurosurgery from Swansea to Cardiff. Two community health councils were unable at that time to support the proposal, but are now considering the outcome of the full independent clinical audit and option appraisal. Health Commission Wales will report the situation back to the next available national commissioning advisory board.

Digital Hearing Aids

Q15 Ann Jones: Will the Minister give an update on the provision of digital hearing aids through the NHS in Wales? (OAQ38027)

Jane Hutt: In 2003-04, I allocated £1.8 million to local health boards primarily to enable trusts to purchase digital hearing aids for their patients, and this has now been incorporated within future allocations to local health boards with an expectation that the modernisation of audiology services in Wales's funded service improvements will be maintained. Between August 2002 and March 2004, some 35,241 digital hearing aids were fitted in Wales. We now lead the UK in being able to offer this service nationwide.

Questions to the Minister for Culture, Welsh Language and Sport

Encouraging Exercise

Q13 Jeff Cuthbert: What is the Welsh Assembly Government doing to encourage individuals to exercise? (OAQ38130)

The Minister for Culture, Welsh Language and Sport (Alun Pugh): My sport and physical activity strategy 'Climbing Higher' aims to actively promote physical activity and participation across all age, gender and social groups. As part of the strategy we are investing £11 million into the free swimming initiative for children of school age and older people over the next three years.

Culture Policy in North Wales

Q14 Denise Idris Jones: Will the Minister give a progress report on Welsh Assembly Government culture policy in north Wales? (OAQ38118)

Alun Pugh: My policies are set out in the three key Welsh Assembly Government strategies, 'Creative Future: Cymru Greadigol', 'Iaith Pawb' and 'Climbing Higher'. As for north Wales, I am pleased to report that the Arts Council of Wales has awarded over £4 million of grants to projects in north Wales in the current financial year. Local museums, archives and libraries in north Wales are benefiting from CyMAL grants totalling £1.5 million.

Owain Glyndŵr Celebrations

Q15 Leanne Wood: Will the Minister make a statement on recent Owain Glyndŵr celebrations? (OAQ38083)

Alun Pugh: Celebrations marking Owain Glyndŵr's proclamation as Prince of Wales on 16 September 1400 were recently held throughout Wales. The National Museums and Galleries of Wales held lectures on the significance of Owain Glyndŵr in today's Wales and flew his standard at their major sites, as did the National Assembly building in Cardiff Bay.