

## Answers to Questions not reached in Plenary 14 July 2004

[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 Health and Social Services

*Question 6, (OAQ37008), withdrawn.*

#### Assembly Sponsored Public Bodies

**Q7 Ieuan Wyn Jones:** Will the Minister make a statement on the total number of members of Assembly sponsored public bodies in the field of health? (OAQ37021)

**The Minister for Health and Social Services (Jane Hutt):** Health Professions Wales is the only executive ASPB in the health field in Wales. It will have 12 members, including the chair. There are a number of advisory bodies, such as the Welsh Nursing and Midwifery Committee. When operating at full strength, they have a maximum of 240 members, generally drawn from the relevant professions.

#### Llwynypia Hospital

**Q8 Leighton Andrews:** When does the Minister expect the new Llwynypia hospital to be finished? (OAQ36977)

**Jane Hutt:** I understand from the Pontypridd and Rhondda NHS Trust that completion is anticipated towards the end of 2007.

#### Kidney Dialysis Facilities in Gwynedd

**Q9 Lisa Francis:** Will the Minister make a statement on kidney dialysis facilities in Gwynedd? (OAQ36967)

**Jane Hutt:** Health Commission Wales is working to formulate a strategic plan for north Wales. In developing the plan, the potential for additional satellite facilities will be considered to increase capacity and bring facilities closer to patients.

#### Waiting Time Targets

**Q10 Helen Mary Jones:** Does the Minister have any intention to review her waiting time targets? (OAQ37022)

**Jane Hutt:** Tackling waiting times remains a priority for the Welsh Assembly Government. Targets for the NHS are set during the service and financial framework negotiations. However, in my speech during the debate on the 'Review of Health and Social Care' on 30 June, I announced the next phase in the second offer guarantee scheme. By 31 March 2005, no patient in Wales will be waiting over 12 months for in-patient or day case treatment without having been given a second offer of treatment elsewhere.

## Free Prescriptions

**Q11 Glyn Davies:** Will the Minister make a statement on how her policy of free prescriptions for all will be implemented? (OAQ36994)

**Jane Hutt:** We will abolish all prescription charges in Wales during this Welsh Assembly term, as promised in our manifesto. The first reduction in the charge will come into force on 1 October 2004, meaning that the charge will change from £6 to £5 per item. Further measures will follow and will be considered by the Assembly in due course.

## Stroke Services in South Wales Central

**Q12 David Melding:** Will the Minister make a statement on stroke services in South Wales Central? (OAQ36965)

**Jane Hutt:** In Wales, we are currently in the process of developing a national service framework for older people, of which, stroke will have its own standard.

Work that will contribute to the development of the stroke standard is underway. Local health boards have been asked to develop integrated care pathways for stroke to help ensure that the treatment and care of stroke patients is effective, appropriate and timely. Additionally, as part of the Service and financial framework for 2004-05, local health boards have been asked, in partnership with trusts and other agencies, to undertake a review of stroke services as the first step in the review of current stroke services in Wales.

We have also encouraged local health boards to support the work of the Clinical Effectiveness and Evaluation Unit of the Royal College of Physicians of London, which is currently undertaking the national sentinel audit of stroke in Wales. The purpose of this audit is to inform clinicians and those involved in organising stroke services of how they are performing, set against predetermined standards. The results of this audit will influence the stroke standard of the NSF for older people in Wales.

## Heart Disease

**Q13 Val Lloyd:** What is the Minister doing to combat the prevalence of heart disease? (OAQ36968)

**Jane Hutt:** Smoking, unhealthy diet and physical inactivity are major risk factors for heart disease. The Assembly Government is implementing a comprehensive smoking prevention and cessation programme and has strategies in place to address nutrition and physical activity. A number of projects funded through the inequalities in health fund include a focus on coronary heart disease prevention.

## Membership of Local Health Boards

**Q14 Janet Ryder:** Will the Minister make a statement on the membership of local health boards? (OAQ37027)

**Jane Hutt:** Each local health board has a publicly appointed chair, a management team of four officer members, up to 17 non-officer members and four associates.

The management team comprises:

- a chief executive
- a medical director
- a finance director, and
- a nurse director.

Non-officer members are as follows:

- up to three general medical practitioners
- one pharmacist
- one dental practitioner
- one optometrist
- one representative from nursing, midwifery or health visiting
- one therapist
- one specialist in public health
- up to four local government nominees, one of whom should be an elected member, and one a senior social services officer
- two nominees of local voluntary organisations
- two lay/community members, one of whom must be a carer.

In addition, boards also include four associates who have speaking rights but no voting rights:

- one community health council nominee
- one NHS trust nominee
- one NHS trust consultant nominee
- one Wales TUC affiliated trade union nominee.

Associates are expected to contribute to the quality of the debate at the board through their individual knowledge and expertise. They are not invited to the board as representatives of their nominating organisation, although they may bring the perspectives of that organisation to relevant board discussion. Associates may not vote on matters before the board.

All non-officer members must be able to demonstrate the seven principles of public life.

### **The Health and Wellbeing of Young People**

**Q15 Jeff Cuthbert:** Will the Minister make a statement on what she is doing to help young people in Wales to protect and improve their health and well being? (OAQ36945)

**Jane Hutt:** Over 900 schools are involved in the Welsh network of healthy school schemes, which could include involvement in national initiatives such as fruit tuck shops, water coolers, healthy vending or breakfasts, SmokeBugs!, the Smokefree Class competition, and physical activity programmes such as the Class Moves! or Dragon Sport.

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

#### **Sixth-form Attainment and Retention Levels**

**Q7 Leighton Andrews:** Will the Minister make a statement on sixth-form attainment and retention levels in the Rhondda? (OAQ36939)

**The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning (Jane Davidson):** The number of learners within the Rhondda Cynon Taf area entering two or more A and AS-levels has increased, from 909 in 2001-02 to 965 in 2002-03. Across Wales, 400 more learners registered for two or more A and AS-levels in 2002-03 as compared with 2001-02—RCT accounted for nearly an eighth of this increase.

#### **Civic Engagement**

**Q8 Jeff Cuthbert:** What action is the Minister taking to encourage children and young people toward civic engagement? (OAQ36962)

**Jane Davidson:** Civic engagement is encouraged generally through the curriculum and, in particular, through personal and social education, which I made a statutory part of the basic curriculum from September 2003. It is also a strong element of the 14-19 learning pathways, which we are currently developing and a theme running through ‘Extending Entitlement’, in which youth fora play an important role.

### **Choice in Education**

**Q9 Alun Cairns:** Will the Minister make a statement on the choice offered to parents in the education of their children? (OAQ37087)

**Jane Davidson:** Parents have a right to express a preference for the school they wish their child to attend. In Wales, most such preferences are met by children going to their local school. There is, however, no absolute right to a place in the first choice school, because it may be oversubscribed. Post-16 education is entirely a matter of choice.

### **Assembly Sponsored Public Bodies (Membership and Remuneration)**

**Q10 Ieuan Wyn Jones:** Will the Minister give the total number of members of Assembly sponsored public bodies in the field of education and the total value of remuneration paid to them? (OAQ37040)

**Jane Davidson:** There are currently 38 members in total of the three ASPBs in the field of education, i.e. the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales, Qualifications, Curriculum and Assessment Authority for Wales and the National Council—ELWa. The total annual remuneration is £265,800. This figure excludes the salaries of chief executives where they are board members.

### **Higher Education**

**Q11 Nick Bourne:** Will the Minister make a statement on her policies for improving higher education? (OAQ36935)

**Jane Davidson:** I reaffirmed on 9 June my strategy for improving higher education, which is set out in ‘Reaching Higher’. It is essential that we have a thriving and competitive higher education sector in Wales, and I am convinced by the evidence that, in order to achieve this, the sector needs to reconfigure. We are actively supporting the sector in meeting its competitive challenges and have put in place significant ‘Reaching Higher’ resources.

There has already been substantial progress and success—notably the merger between the University of Wales College of Medicine and University of Wales Cardiff. Other, smaller scale collaborations are also being taken forward and the sector is ensuring that it is putting in place the foundations to operate from a position of strength in the future.

### **Banning Unhealthy Foods in Schools**

**Q12 Tamsin Dunwoody-Kneafsey:** Does the Minister have any proposals to ban unhealthy foods in schools in Preseli Pembrokeshire? (OAQ36944)

**Jane Davidson:** No. Responsibility for food available in schools rests with local education authorities and governing bodies.

The Welsh Assembly Government is promoting a range of initiatives, including free school breakfasts in primary schools, regulations on nutritional standards for school meals, and whole-school approaches to healthy eating.

Under the Welsh network of healthy schools scheme, a healthy vending machine pilot began in three Pembrokeshire secondary schools in February.

### **Cyrsiau Galwedigaethol drwy Gyfrwng y Gymraeg**

**C13 David Lloyd:** A wnaiff y Gweinidog ddatganiad am y ddarpariaeth o gyrsiau galwedigaethol drwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg yng Nghymru? (OAQ37039) [W]

**Jane Davidson:** Mae Dysgu ac Addysgu Cymru yn cydnabod bod y ddarpariaeth hon yn bwysig. Mae ei uned dysgu dwyieithog yn datblygu cynigion ar gyfer cyfleoedd hyfforddiant galwedigaethol cyfrwng Cymraeg fel rhan o'i strategaeth dysgu dwyieithog. Bydd ELWa yn canolbwyntio i ddechrau ar y sectorau lle mae galw neu angen posibl am y gallu i siarad Cymraeg, megis gofal, twristiaeth, blynyddoedd cynnar, y cyfryngau a thechnoleg gwybodaeth busnes. Mae ELWa wedi penodi rheolwr cwricwlwm a fydd yn gyfrifol am ddatblygu'r agenda hon.

### **Vocational Courses through the Medium of Welsh**

**Q13 David Lloyd:** Will the Minister make a statement about the provision of vocational courses through the medium of Welsh in Wales? (OAQ37039) [W]

**Jane Davidson:** Education and Learning Wales recognises that this is an important area of provision. Its bilingual learning unit is developing proposals for Welsh medium vocational training opportunities as part of its bilingual learning strategy. ELWa will focus initial efforts on sectors where there is a potential need or demand for Welsh language skills, such as care, tourism, early years, media and business information technology. ELWa has appointed a curriculum manager who will be responsible for developing this agenda.

### **Cyrsiau Cymraeg**

**C14 Janet Ryder:** Pa ddatblygiad sydd wedi'i wneud i gynyddu nifer y cyrsiau Cymraeg sydd ar gael i fyfyrwyr addysg uwch ers cyhoeddi 'Iaith Pawb'? (OAQ37053) [W]

**Jane Davidson:** Mae sawl datblygiad ar y gweill ar gyfer cynyddu'r ddarpariaeth cyfrwng Cymraeg yn y sector addysg uwch. Yn benodol, sefydlwyd grŵp llywio cenedlaethol o dan arweiniad y cadeirydd, Andrew Green, a fydd yn darparu strategaeth gynaliadwy ac ymarferol ar gyfer datblygu'r ddarpariaeth cyfrwng Cymraeg yn y tymor canol i'r tymor hir. Bydd y grŵp llywio yn ymgynghori ar ei strategaeth dros yr haf.

Yn y tymor byr, mae Cyngor Cyllido Addysg Uwch Cymru wedi gwahodd hyd at chwe chymrodoriaeth addysgu ychwanegol ar gyfer 2004-05 er mwyn ymestyn y ddarpariaeth fodiwlaid ar lefel pwnc. Mae hyn yn adeiladu ar lwyddiant y ddwy gymrodoriaeth addysgu yn Ffrangeg a seicoleg a sefydlwyd yn ddiweddar.

### **Welsh-language Courses**

**Q14 Janet Ryder:** What developments have been made to increase the number of Welsh language courses available higher education college students since the publication of 'Iaith Pawb'? (OAQ37053) [W]

**Jane Davidson:** There are several developments being taken forward to increase the provision of Welsh medium in the higher education sector. In particular, the establishment of a national steering group under

the chairmanship of Andrew Green will provide a sustainable and workable strategy for the development of Welsh-medium provision in the medium to long term. The steering group will be consulting on its emerging strategy over the summer.

In the short term, the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales has invited up to a further six teaching fellowships for 2004-05 to extend modular provision at subject level. This builds on the success of the two recent teaching fellowships in French and psychology.

### **Cross-border Educational Delivery**

**Q15 Mark Isherwood:** Would the Minister make a statement on cross-border educational delivery? (OAQ36930)

**Jane Davidson:** Pupils who live in England and attend schools in Wales are required to follow the national curriculum for Wales, and vice versa. Schools on both sides of the border are free to choose examinations and qualifications from any of the awarding bodies, irrespective of where those bodies are located.