

Answers to Questions not reached in Plenary 27 April 2004

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

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

Questions to the First Minister

Post-16 Education

Q10 Janice Gregory: What action is the Assembly Government taking to encourage more young people to continue in post-16 education? (OAQ34225)

The First Minister (Rhodri Morgan): The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning will be informing the Education and Lifelong Learning Committee tomorrow of planned financial support for young people to continue in post-16 education. In addition, we are seeking to ensure, through Careers Wales, that all young people are aware of the learning opportunities and access arrangements available in their area and, for those in employment, of their right to time off to study or train.

Diogelwch Cymunedol

C11 Alun Ffred Jones: A wnaiff y Prif Weinidog ddatganiad am ddiogelwch cymunedol? (OAQ34221)
[W]

Y Prif Weinidog: Un o amcanion allweddol 'Cymru: Gwlad Well' yw datblygu cymunedau cryf a diogel. Mae Llywodraeth y Cynulliad yn cydweithio'n agos â'r partneriaethau diogelwch cymunedol ac asiantaethau allweddol eraill i ddatblygu a rhoi strategaethau lleol ar waith sy'n lleihau trosedd, ymddygiad gwrthgymdeithasol a chamddefnyddio sylweddau.

Community Safety

Q11 Alun Ffred Jones: Will the First Minister make a statement on community safety? (OAQ34221)
[W]

The First Minister: One of the key aims of 'Wales: A Better Country' is to develop strong and safe communities. The Assembly Government is working closely with community safety partnerships and other key agencies to develop and deliver local strategies that reduce crime, anti-social behaviour and substance misuse.

Proposed Changes to Pension Plans

Q12 Rhodri Glyn Thomas: Will the First Minister make a statement on the impact on Wales of the proposed changes to the self-invested personal pensions and self-administered pensions plans? (OAQ34236)

The First Minister: Pensions are a non-devolved matter. The Department for Work and Pensions has advised that the majority of pension savers—over 14 million—are members of schemes currently free to invest in residential property. The new rules will provide a level playing field by allowing some specialised pension funds, such as SIPPS and SAPPS, which are held by around 200,000 people, to invest in property for the first time. However, for the vast majority of these people, investing in property will have little or no attraction because all rental income must go into the pension fund and the property must be sold before the pension can be drawn. Neither do the proposed changes present a 40 per cent tax break, as some have suggested, as any use of the property for personal use will incur a tax charge.

The Status of Wales in Europe

Q13 Ieuan Wyn Jones: Will the First Minister make a statement on the status of Wales in Europe? (OAQ34230)

The First Minister: Wales is a devolved constituent part of the United Kingdom, and the United Kingdom is one of the major member states of the European Union. Wales is represented at the heart of the European Union through having a Welsh Assembly Government representative office in Brussels.

Registration of Multiple Sclerosis Therapy Centres

Q14 Mark Isherwood: Will the First Minister make a statement on the registration of multiple sclerosis therapy centres with the Care Standards Inspectorate for Wales? (OAQ34245)

The First Minister: The Private and Voluntary Health Care (Wales) Regulations came into force on 1 April 2002. The registration of a multiple sclerosis therapy centre would be required to adhere to the PVHC regulations, which apply in relation to establishments such as a therapy centre, as defined in regulation 2(1) of the regulations, in Wales.

These regulations are made under the Care Standards Act 2000 and apply to independent hospitals and independent clinics in Wales. The Act provides, in relation to Wales, for the registration and inspection of these establishments.

Date Rape

Q15 Sandy Mewies: Will the First Minister make a statement on what action the Government has undertaken to tackle date rape in Wales? (OAQ34247)

The First Minister: Date rape normally occurs as a result of drinks being spiked. The Welsh Assembly Government supports the Welsh police forces' annual 'Spiked' campaign, because it regards the threat of date rape through spiked drinks as a very serious matter.

Education is also key, and one of our aims is to ensure that all children and young people have access to substance misuse education programmes.