

## **Information Further to Ministerial Answers**

### **Information further to OAQ1456(FM) issued by Rhodri Morgan, the First Minister**

#### **To Glyn Davies:**

In my Oral Question session of 4th April, I undertook to provide you with facts and figures in relation to the cut in prescription charges.

Currently exempt prescriptions account for some 88% of the total prescriptions dispensed [93% if pre-payment certificates are included]. Some 50% of the population is exempt from charges, on grounds of age, medical condition or income.

Revenue from prescription charges covers less than 5% of the total cost of prescribed drugs. As a point of comparison, the increase in the drugs bill overall this year is twice as great as that.

For 2006-07 lost income from the cuts in prescription charges is estimated to be £16.1 million.

Over time we expect to see improvements in the health of people who no longer have to pick and choose their medication according to what they can afford to have dispensed.

I trust that the above explanation provides you with the material you were looking for.

### **Information further to OAQ1442(FM) issued by Rhodri Morgan, the First Minister**

#### **To Mick Bates:**

During First Minister's questions on 4 April you raised a question about action to be taken to ensure that Wales gets its fair share of the Low Carbon Building Programme (LCBP) to help improve micro-generation and energy efficiency throughout Wales.

The DTI have recently announced the Low Carbon Building Programme will operate over three years with grant funding of £80 million available. It is a UK-programme not an England-only programme. The Barnett formula does not apply to UK-wide programmes.

Encouraging greater development and uptake of micro-generation in Wales is a key feature of the Energy Route Map document. This is supplemented by the recent publication of the draft Micro-generation Action Plan for Wales consultation document, which highlights the opportunities offered by micro-generation and identifies, the Low Carbon Building Programme as one means of assistance that is available.

Homeowners and organisations in Wales will be eligible to apply for these funds and officials and key organisations in Wales have already begun discussions concerning potential projects. We want to encourage good quality applications going forward from Wales and officials will be monitoring the situation carefully. We will help disseminate details of the application process and criteria as soon as these have been finalised by DTI.

I have written in similar terms to Janet Davies.

**Information further to OAQ1442(FM) issued by Rhodri Morgan, the First Minister**

**To Janet Davies:**

During First Minister's questions on 4 April you raised a question about action to be taken to ensure that Wales gets its fair share of the Low Carbon Building Programme (LCBP) to help improve micro-generation and energy efficiency throughout Wales.

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I have written in similar terms to Mick Bates.

**Information further to OAQ1442(FM), issued by Rhodri Morgan, the First Minister, on 11 May 2006**

**To Brynle Williams:**

During First Minister's Questions on Tuesday 4 April I said that I would make enquiries regarding Conwy Borough Council's introduction of a council tax rebate for householders who improved their energy efficiency.

I am pleased to see that Conwy County Council are working to promote energy efficiency in the County Borough and that they have been successful in securing funding from British Gas through their Energy Efficiency Commitment (EEC) Programme. I understand that the Council Tax rebate is only available to households who take up discounted cavity wall insulation from a British Gas EEC scheme and as such the scheme seems to be aimed predominantly at those who are 'able to pay'.

The Assembly Government's priority, however, is to assist those who are in fuel poverty. Households falling into this category are often some of the most vulnerable members of our communities. These households are able to access energy efficiency measures for free through Assembly Government programmes such as the Home Energy Efficiency Scheme or, in fact, any energy supplier's EEC scheme. Council tax rebates are not relevant to these schemes as qualifying applicants will not have had to pay or contribute towards the costs of the measures.

Nonetheless any initiative that stimulates demand and encourages the take-up of energy efficiency measures is to be welcomed.