

Answers to Questions not reached in Plenary 2 February 2005

[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

The Direct Payments Scheme

Q11 Karen Sinclair: Will the Minister provide an update on the Assembly Government's direct payments scheme? OAQ0003(HSS)

The Minister for Health and Social Services (Brian Gibbons): From 1 November 2004, local authorities have been required to offer direct payments to all eligible people. From 1 March 2005, all people aged 65 or over who meet the eligibility criteria must also be offered direct payments.

At August 2004, some 563 people were receiving direct payments compared to 359 people in August 2003.

New Initiatives

Q12 Ieuan Wyn Jones: What new initiatives has the Minister prioritised for the next 12 months with regard to the delivery of NHS services? OAQ0053(HSS)

Brian Gibbons: We will continue to build on the progress that has already been made.

Hospital Waiting Times

Q13 Mark Isherwood: Will the Minister make a statement on hospital waiting times? OAQ0009(HSS)

Brian Gibbons: Reducing waiting times and, especially, eliminating long waiting times is one of the Assembly Government's priorities. New targets for 2005-06 are for NHS Wales to ensure that, by March 2006, no patient will be waiting longer than 12 months for either an out-patient or an in-patient appointment.

Question 14, OAQ0023(HSS), withdrawn.

Dentistry

Q15 Laura Anne Jones: Will the Minister make a statement on dentistry in Wales? OAQ0019(HSS)

Brian Gibbons: The Assembly Government is to introduce a new dental contract that will help to improve access to, and the lives of, dentists. In the short term, we continue to encourage dentists to set up or expand practices through the Welsh dental initiative. Longer term, the Assembly Government is providing more training.

Questions to the Minister for Culture, Welsh Language and Sport

Clybiau Cymraeg

Q5 David Davies: Will the Minister make a statement on funding for *clybiau Cymraeg*? OAQ0018(CWS) *Transferred for answer by the Minister for Health and Social Services.*

The Minister for Health and Social Services (Brian Gibbons): I understand the Member is referring to Clybiau Plant Cymru Kid's Clubs. I refer him to the written answer to WAQ41170 given by the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning on 26 January 2005.

Question 6, OAQ0025(CWS), was answered in Plenary.

Rugby Facilities in North Wales

Q7 Ann Jones: Will the Minister make a statement on rugby facilities in north Wales? OAQ0067(CWS) *Transferred for written answer.*

The Minister for Culture, Welsh Language and Sport (Alun Pugh): The Sports Council for Wales, via the Sportlot capital investment programme, has supported several rugby clubs in north Wales by improving their facilities. These include pitch improvements and training and floodlight facilities in Caernarfon, an all weather training ground in Mold and new changing rooms installed at Llandudno and Bethesda.

Questions 8 to 15 were answered in Plenary.