

Answers to Questions not reached in Plenary 26/01/2011

[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 Social Justice and Local Government

Business Rates

8. William Graham: *Will the Minister outline Welsh Assembly Government actions to rectify the imbalance of business rates levied against companies operating in ports in Wales with those in England. OAQ(3)1491(SJL)*

The Minister for Social Justice and Local Government (Carl Sargeant): The Assembly Government has decided not to replicate the decision in England to cancel ports' backdated rates liabilities but to accept a consequential payment of over £10 million to partially offset the impact on jobs and services resulting from the UK Government's public spending cuts announced last October.

Communities First

9. Darren Millar: *Will the Minister make a statement on future funding for Communities First. OAQ(3)1509(SJL)*

Carl Sargeant: Funding for the Communities First programme is in place until March 2012. I am committed to supporting Wales's most disadvantaged communities after this date and am therefore currently considering how this will be done.

Priorities for Local Government

10. Veronica German: *What are the Minister's priorities for local government in the next 12 months. OAQ(3)1475(SJL)*

Carl Sargeant: My priorities are to work with partners and stakeholders to support local authorities in the delivery of front-line services during these financially challenging times and to strengthen the structures and operation of local government in Wales through the implementation of the proposed local government Measure.

Question 11, OAQ(3)1502(SLJ), was withdrawn.

Statutory Equality Duties

12. Val Lloyd: *Will the Minister provide an update on the recent public consultation into introducing statutory equality duties on public authorities in Wales. OAQ(3)1471(SJL)*

Carl Sargeant: The consultation on statutory equality duties for Wales closed on 17

December 2010. Eighty responses were received from public and third sector organisations across Wales. We are currently considering these responses and will be looking to publish a summary of the responses in the near future.

Questions 13 and 14, OAQ(3)1481(SJL) and OAQ(3)1492(SJL), were withdrawn

Social Justice and Local Government Portfolio

15. Nerys Evans: *Will the Minister make a statement regarding the Welsh Assembly Government's priorities for the Social Justice and Local Government portfolio for the remainder of this Assembly term. OAQ(3)1506(SJL)*

Carl Sargeant: We will promote safe, sustainable and fair communities while protecting core services and the most vulnerable people in our society. We will ensure delivery of our 'One Wales' commitments. A review of local authority services is under way and the Proposed Local Government (Wales) Measure will strengthen the operation of local government.

Questions to the Minister for Children, Education and Lifelong Learning

Practical Lessons in School

11. Leanne Wood: *Will the Minister make a statement on the importance of incorporating practical lessons in a school. OAQ(3)1613(CEL)*

The Minister for Children, Education and Lifelong Learning (Leighton Andrews): While delivery of the curriculum is a matter for schools, it is recognised that practical activities can play an important role in learning. We have, therefore, provided schools with guidance that identifies how the delivery of each subject can be enhanced through the use of practical activities.

Gluten-free Foods in Schools

12. Dai Lloyd: *Will the Minister make a statement on providing gluten free foods in schools. OAQ(3)1628(CEL).*

Leighton Andrews: To provide school meals for pupils requiring a gluten-free diet, school caterers need to work in partnership with a number of people, including medical professionals, to ensure that the needs of the individual pupil are met. Our 'Appetite for Life' guidelines include advice on this issue.

Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol

13. Nerys Evans: *A wnaiff y Gweinidog ddatganiad am y Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol. OAQ(3)1651(CEL) W*

Leighton Andrews: Mae'r trefniadau ar gyfer y Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol yn mynd rhagddynt ers amser, a chafodd cynllun ysgoloriaeth cyfrwng Cymraeg newydd ei lansio ym mis Tachwedd. Bydd y coleg yn cael ei lansio ar 1 Ebrill, yn unol â'r bwriad, o dan arweiniad ei gadeirydd newydd, Merfyn Jones, a bydd yn dod yn weithredol

Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol

13. Nerys Evans: *Will the Minister make a statement on the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol (Welsh Medium National College). OAQ(3)1651(CEL) W*

Leighton Andrews: Arrangements for the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol are well-advanced, and a new Welsh-medium scholarship scheme was launched in November. The *coleg* is on track to launch on 1 April, under the leadership of its new chair, Merfyn Jones, and will become operational this autumn.

yn yr hydref.

Training and Employment

14. Alun Davies: Will the Minister make a statement on Welsh Assembly Government programmes to support training and employment opportunities for young people. OAQ(3)1608(CEL)

Leighton Andrews: We are committed to ensuring that young people are equipped with the skills they need to secure satisfying careers. Through the youth engagement and employment action plan, we are working to ensure young people remain connected to the labour market via a broad range of learning, education and work experience.

Part-time Students

15. David Melding: What measures are in place to support students studying part-time. OAQ(3)1641(CEL)

Leighton Andrews: The Welsh Assembly Government provides a generous package of support to eligible part-time higher education students in the 2010-11 academic year, including non-repayable tuition fee and course grants and support for learners with specific needs. Support is also provided to eligible further education students studying part-time.