

## **Answers issued to Members on 17 July 2007**

[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 the Economy and Transport

**Andrew R.T. Davies (South Wales Central):** How is the Minister encouraging young people to set up their own business? (WAQ50202)

**The Minister for the Economy and Transport (Brian Gibbons):** A commitment to improving levels of entrepreneurship is being realised through the Youth Enterprise and Entrepreneurship Strategy (YES) launched in 2004. This delivers a programme of activity aimed at increasing awareness of entrepreneurship, providing opportunities to learn and ensure that appropriate support is available to assist them realise their ideas.

The Knowledge Exploitation Fund (KEF) supports a network of entrepreneurship champions in Further and Higher Education Institutions across Wales to promote entrepreneurship and encourage and support young people to start up in business. A programme of financial bursaries, one to one mentoring sessions and workshops support young people with the finance, advice and guidance they require to set up in business. In 2006/7 this programme supported students to set up 321 businesses, creating 395 jobs.

As winners of the 2006 Global Enterprise Challenge, Wales was delighted to host the Global Competition in June 2007. Teams from 12 countries from across the globe, including USA, Japan, Australia and New Zealand competed in a 24 hour challenge to design a game on the theme of global citizenship. A team of six students from Coleg Meirion Dwyfor were chosen to represent Wales, after beating off stiff competition from 3000 students from across Wales.

**Andrew R.T. Davies (South Wales Central):** Would the Minister make a statement on the dualling of the A465? (WAQ50228)

**Brian Gibbons:** Following the completion in November 2004 of the dualling between Tredegar and Dowlais Top (Section 4), the dualling between Abergavenny and Gilwern (Section 1) is expected to be open to traffic this Autumn.

The programming of the remaining sections to complete the 40km dualling between Abergavenny and Hirwaun is set out in the 2004 Supplement to the Trunk Road Forward Programme. This is subject to the completion of statutory procedures and the availability of finance. Details are as follows:

Section 2—Gilwern to Brynmawr—Phase 2—could be ready to start by April 2010.

Section 3—Brynmawr to Tredegar—Phase 2—could be ready to start by April 2010.

Section 5—Dowlais Top to A470—Phase 3—Unlikely to start before April 2010.

Section 6—A470 to Hirwaun—Phase 3—Unlikely to start before April 2010.

**Andrew R.T. Davies (South Wales Central):** What action is the Minister taking to relieve traffic congestion in Hirwaun? (WAQ50230)

**Brian Gibbons:** It is for Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council, as the responsible Highway Authority for roads in Hirwaun, to tackle traffic congestion issues in the town.

## Questions to the Minister for Health and Social Services

**Jenny Randerson (Cardiff Central):** Is the Welsh Assembly Government looking at extending the upper age limit for breast cancer screening and, if so, what stage is this process at? (WAQ50227)

**The Minister for Health and Social Services (Edwina Hart):** Although women over the age of 70 are not routinely invited for breast screening, Breast Test Wales (BTW) actively encourages self-referral for this age group. In 2006-7, BTW screened 4,291 women aged 70 or over.

Statistical modelling has been commissioned nationally to establish the estimated cost effectiveness of extending the age of routine invitation. Research has also been proposed to establish the uptake in older women if the age for routine invitation were extended to 75.

**Helen Mary Jones (Llanelli):** Will the Minister detail the range of available treatments in Wales for osteoporosis, and will she make particular reference to alternative treatments for those who find alendronate unsuitable? (WAQ50239)

**Edwina Hart:** Detailed intervention depends on the individual patient's circumstances, but in general the following treatment options are available to clinicians for the treatment of osteoporosis:

- Hormone replacement therapy (HRT)—which replaces oestrogen and so reduces the rate of bone loss;
- Bisphosphonates—a group of medicines that slows the rate at which bone is dissolved;
- Strontium ranelate—a dual action of increasing bone formation as well as decreasing bone breakdown;
- Raloxifene—a selective oestrogen receptor modulator.

Other less commonly-used treatment options include:

- Calcitonin—a hormone involved in the regulation of bone turnover;
- Calcitriol—a vitamin D-like compound that can be used in osteoporosis following the menopause or in situations where osteoporosis has been caused by steroid drugs;
- Teriparatide—works by increasing the formation of bone;
- Hip protectors—shock-absorbing pads that can be worn to cushion the impact over the hip bone, should a person fall down.

NICE's draft guidance recommends the use of alendronate for primary and secondary prevention for patients who meet a number of criteria that vary according to the patient's age. NICE's Appraisal Committee considered that, whilst all the other treatments have demonstrated efficacy, alendronate was the most clinically and cost effective of the treatments being appraised. If alendronate is not appropriate for certain patients, then that would be a matter for the clinical judgment of the health professional concerned.

This is not NICE's final guidance to the NHS and stakeholders had until 9 July 2007 to appeal against the recommendations. NICE guidance does not override the individual responsibility of healthcare professionals to make appropriate decisions in the circumstances of the individual patient. If a clinician feels a licensed drug is appropriate for their patient, they can ask for their local health board to commission it before NICE has issued its final decision on the use of a drug on the NHS.

## Questions to the Minister for Social Justice and Public Service Delivery

**Irene James (Islwyn):** Can the Minister provide a timeline of activity to the £25 million investment in the Sirhowy Valley? (WAQ50235)

**The Minister for Social Justice and Public Service Delivery (Andrew Davies):** I believe this investment forms part of the local action plan which has been compiled by the Upper Sirhowy Valley Communities First Partnership. This is a local initiative and is not directed by the Assembly Government.

The Partnership was formed with the aim of regenerating the Upper Sirhowy Valley communities.

The Plan was produced after five years of research and consultation by the Partnership; it identifies the needs and priorities in the area and the roles and contributions anticipated of each of the partners. The Partnership anticipates that the implementation of the objectives contained in the Plan will take place over the next ten years. The Plan is a statement of aspiration—but will be a key tool to help inform and influence partner agencies in the delivery of services.

The £25million to which you refer appears to be an amalgamation of funding from of a variety of funding sources from which the Partnership intends, as part of its Plan, to draw down moneys to assist its regeneration aims. The Plan can be accessed at:  
[www.uppersirhowyvalley.org.uk](http://www.uppersirhowyvalley.org.uk)