

MINUTES

Date: 12 February 2004
Time: 9.30am to 11.40am
Venue: Committee Rooms 3 & 4, National Assembly for Wales,
 Cardiff Bay

Members

Janet Davies (Chair)
 Leighton Andrews
 Mick Bates
 Alun Cairns
 Jocelyn Davies
 Christine Gwyther
 Denise Idris-Jones
 Mark Isherwood
 Val Lloyd
 Carl Sargeant

Attendance

South Wales West
 Rhondda
 Montgomeryshire (items 1&2)
 South Wales West
 South Wales East
 Carmarthen West and South Pembrokeshire
 Conwy
 North Wales
 Swansea East
 Alyn and Deeside (items 1&2)

Witnesses

Ann Lloyd
 Director, NHS Directorate, National assembly for Wales
 (item 2)
 Steven Redmond
 Human Resources Director, NHS Wales (item 2)

Officials

Sir John Bourn
 Auditor General for Wales
 Lew Hughes
 Deputy Auditor General for Wales
 Gillian Body
 National Audit Office
 Mike Usher
 National Audit Office
 Ian Summers
 National Audit Office
 Ceri Thomas
 Assembly Compliance Office

Secretariat

Adrian Crompton
 Committee Clerk
 Liz Wilkinson
 Deputy Committee Clerk

Item 1: Introductions, apologies, substitutions and declarations of interest.

1.1 The Chair welcomed visitors from The Northern Ireland Audit Office.

Item 2: Management of Sickness Absence by NHS Trusts in Wales

2.1 The Committee took evidence from Ann Lloyd, Director of the NHS Directorate in the National Assembly and Steven Redmond, Human Resources Director, NHS Wales in the National Assembly in connection with the report by the National Audit Office on behalf of the Auditor General for Wales on 'The Management of Sickness Absence by NHS Trusts in Wales'

2.2 A verbatim transcript will be attached as Annex 1 to these minutes.

Action

The Director of NHS Wales agreed to provide the Committee with a note on national Assembly health promotion funding for programmes or workplace health campaigns targeted at NHS Wales staff.

The Committee adjourned from 11:05 until 11:22.

Item 3: Welsh Assembly Government's response to the Audit Committee report on 'National Council for Education and Training for Wales – Financial Management of Partnership and Innovation & Development Projects/ Welsh Assembly Government Sponsorship of ASPBs

3.1 The Auditor General for Wales said that he would monitor the implementation of the Committee's recommendations and report back to the Committee in due course 12 months.

3.2 The Committee agreed to accept the Welsh Assembly Government response to its report.

Item 4: Welsh Assembly Government's response to the Audit Committee report on 'The Management and Delivery of Hospital Cleaning Services in Wales'

4.1 The Chair indicated her concern that many of the Committee's recommendations reflected existing requirements. The Auditor General for Wales assured the Committee that he would monitor the implementation of the Committee's recommendations and report back in due course.

4.2 The Committee agreed to accept the Welsh Assembly Government response to its report.

Item 5: Correspondence from the Chair of the House of Commons Regulatory Reform Committee relating to the NHS Charitable Trust accounts and Audit Order 2004

5.1 The Auditor General for Wales said that the NHS Charitable Trust Accounts and Audit Order 2004 represented a useful simplification of the accounting requirements on NHS charities in Wales, but did not reduce his powers to access and inspect their accounts.

5.2 The Committee agreed that the Chair should reply to the Chair of the House of Commons Regulatory Reform Committee to thank him for bringing the matter to the Committee's attention. The reply would indicate that the Committee was satisfied that Order did not remove any necessary protection or impair the Assembly's financial scrutiny.

Action

Chair to reply to the Chair of the House of Commons Regulatory Reform Committee

Item 6: Final Programme of Value for Money examinations

6.1 The Auditor General said that the use of NHS resources for private work, which had been raised by the Committee during its consideration of the draft programme, would be considered as part of the ongoing study of waiting times in the NHS.

6.2 The proposed study into the National Botanic Gardens would encompass the origin, funding, management and outcome of the scheme. It was unlikely to commence until the later part of the financial year.

6.3 The Auditor General for Wales agreed to provide the Committee with a note on the proposed timing of the studies included in the final programme of value for money examinations for 2004-05.

Action

The Auditor General for Wales agreed to provide the Committee with a note on the proposed timing of the studies included in the final programme of value for money examinations for 2004-05.

Item 7: Minutes of the previous meeting

7.1 The Committee approved the minutes of the previous meeting.

Item 8: PRIVATE SESSION - Audit Committee's draft report on matters arising from the disposal of the Mid Wales Hospital

8.1 The Committee resolved to exclude the public from the remainder of the meeting in accordance with Standing Order 8.21(vi).

8.2 The Committee considered and approved the draft report.