

Information Further to Ministerial Answers

Information further to OAQ1303(FM), issued by Brian Gibbons, the Minister for Health and Social Services, on 12 March 2006

To Kirsty Williams:

The First Minister has asked me to respond to your supplementary question to OAQ1303(FM) on Tuesday 7 March regarding the performance of the Welsh Ambulance Service and the timing of the latest quarterly statistical release.

The publication dates for the release of quarterly performance statistics for the emergency ambulance service are determined in advance by the Welsh Assembly Government's Statistical Directorate. Advance notice of the 1 March release date was given on the previous quarter's release, published on 30 November 2005. There is no input from Ministers or advisers on the date of the statistical releases.

I want the best possible ambulance service for the people of Wales and it is clear that the service currently being provided needs to improve. Measures are being taken to make this happen, including addressing staffing difficulties in the Welsh Ambulance Trust.

Last week the Trust made two senior appointments to strengthen its management team. Roger Thayne, Chief Executive of Staffordshire Ambulance Service, was appointed to act as interim Chief Executive, on a part-time basis, to cover the current Chief Executive who is on long-term sick leave. Mr Thayne's deputy, Dr Anton Van Dellen, is assisting him, taking on the responsibility of Director of Operations, a post which became vacant following the retirement of the previous post holder. Dr Van Dellen's appointment is also on a part-time basis.

Roger Thayne has been Chief Executive at Staffordshire Ambulance Service since 1992 and under his direction it has consistently been one of the highest performing ambulance trusts in England. I am sure his appointment will be welcomed by both the Welsh Ambulance Trust and the wider NHS community in Wales.