

Information Further to Ministerial Answers

Information further to OAQ1755(FM) issued by Edwina Hart, the Minister for Social Justice and Regeneration, in July 2006

To Peter Black:

During Assembly Questions on 11 July, the First Minister said that he would ask me to write and let you know whether the new national Respect Squad has any members from Wales and what input the Welsh Assembly Government has to the squad.

The Respect Squad is a Home Office initiative and the Welsh Assembly Government was not involved in its development. The Squad will operate throughout England and Wales and will only consider those requests to tackle anti-social behaviour incidents that are put forward by local authorities, Community Safety Partnerships in Wales, Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships in England, police chiefs, councillors and MPs. If the public contacts the Respect Squad they are advised to contact the local police and local authority helplines.

The Squad is made up of a team of 10 led by the assistant director of the Government's Respect Task Force, Alex Rhind. Members of the Squad are experienced frontline staff from police forces and local authorities. None are from Welsh police forces or local authorities. They will consider cases where communities are experiencing high incidents of anti-social behaviour and where they may not be strong co-ordination of agencies to drive an effective response. The Squad will only look at cases of anti-social behaviour, not criminal cases. They will not consider complaints that are within the Local Government Ombudsman system, child protection cases or cases already within the civil or criminal justice process.

Once the Squad has been tasked to look at a particular case a Mission Squad, made up of Squad members with experience appropriate to that case, be assembled. The Mission Squad will be assigned to make contact with those on the receiving end of the anti-social behaviour and with the local agencies that have a role in finding solutions. They will make an assessment, based on the facts of the case as can be established, of the strengths and weaknesses of the action being taken and any planned future interventions by local agencies, and make recommendations back to the Chair of the Community Safety Partnership in Wales, the Chair of the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships in England. The results of the case will be published on the Home Office website.