

## **Information Further to Ministerial Answers**

### **Information further to OAQ1573(FM) issued by Brian Gibbons, Minister for Health and Social Services on behalf of the First Minister**

#### **To David Lloyd:**

I am writing to you following OAQ1573 raised at First Minister's questions on 23 May. My apologies for the delay in replying.

The First Minister was correct. The estimate originally made in 2002-03 for the cost of out of hours in Wales was £28.5 million and this is reflected in current LHB financial allocations. The estimate was made using figures adjusted to likely costs for the 2004-05 year. However, the services that are now provided have in most cases been re-designed and in most cases include additional activity e.g. cover for community hospitals. There is no doubt that the cost has gone up and a significant element of the increase is due to higher GP pay rates. On the other hand substantial efficiencies have been achieved through closer working with other providers of out of hours care such as NHS Direct. We have also introduced new standards of service. It is therefore not possible to make meaningful comparisons between 2002-03 estimates and the new model, which will continue to evolve.