

**Edwina Hart AM MBE**

Minister for Health and Social Services  
Y Gweinidog dros Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol

Our ref:  
Your ref:

Mick Bates AM  
Chair, Sustainability Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1NA



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru  
Welsh Assembly Government

Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff CF99 1NA  
Switchboard: 029 2082 5111  
Fax: 029 2089 8131  
Email ps.minister.for.HSS@wales.gsi.gov.uk

Bae Caerdydd  
Caerdydd CF99 1NA  
Switsfwrdd: 029 2082 5111  
Ffacs: 029 2089 8131  
Epost ps.minister.for.HSS@wales.gsi.gov.uk

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*Deau Mick*

**MAINSTREAMING SUSTAINABILITY WITHIN HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES PORTFOLIO**

Thank you for your letter of 7 April 2009 relating to the evidence provided by my officials to your Committee in relation to your inquiry in this area. I am grateful for your comments and delighted that you believe that the Welsh Assembly Government might consider using the Health and Social Services department as an example of good practice for the mainstreaming of sustainability. I am now in a position to reply to the other points and requests mentioned in your letter, and in doing so will cover the two departments that report to me – DHSS and DPHHP.

You asked for further information on the all Wales guidance for the commissioning of contracts within Local Authorities. Officials are at present developing draft high-level Commissioning guidance to assist local authority social services departments in commissioning care services. This is likely to be issued for consultation, and if approved, to be followed by further more detailed guidance. In taking this work forward officials will identify opportunities for promotion sustainable development through the service commission process.

In relation to travel plans within the NHS, a Welsh Health Circular - *WHC (2008) 058* - sets out the requirement for NHS Trusts in Wales to develop and implement such plans for the 18 Major acute sites in Wales and requires that these travel plans are to be submitted to the Welsh Assembly Government by 30th April 2009.

After scrutiny, specific feedback will be given to each Trust regarding the acceptability and suitability of the targets and measures included within their Travel Plans.

Trusts are further required to produce site specific travel plans for their remaining sites by 31st March 2010.

Resources have also been made available for Trusts to obtain advice and guidance to develop their individual travel plans from several sources including Welsh Health Estates, the Welsh Health Environmental Forum transport and travel sub-group, the Welsh Assembly Government Regional Transport Consortia and other support agencies.

The services of a dedicated NHS Sustainable Travel Co-ordinator (employed by Sustrans and funded by WAG) have also been made available to Trusts.

Your Committee asked for further information on the incorporation of sustainability within the design of major new developments within the health estates. The NHS is aiming to fully integrate sustainability issues into the development and decision making processes for all major new developments in the NHS estate in Wales.

The core element of this approach is in line with WAG policy with the introduction of BREEAM Healthcare for all major projects from July 2008. BREEAM Healthcare superseded the NHS Environmental Assessment Tool (NEAT) and was specifically developed by the Building Research Establishment for healthcare developments in partnership with the Department of Health and Welsh Health Estates.

Welsh Health Estates in conjunction with the Framework partners of the *Designed for Life: Building for Wales* Framework has developed a Sustainable Development Roadmap to guide through the stages of the business case process to ensure that sustainability is a key consideration at all stages.

Some of the core principles from this roadmap system have also been adopted by the most recent *Health Technical Memorandum HTM 07-07- Sustainable Health and Social Care Buildings*, which provides advice and guidance on the key sustainability issues to address in new healthcare building developments and in refurbishments.

Additionally, the *Designed for Life: Building for Wales* programme has a number of performance indicators concerned with energy and waste intended to ensure that sustainability issues are addressed and targets met.

On greenhouse gas monitoring and reduction, the position is as follows.

Information with regard to the NHS estate in Wales's energy performance is collected annually using the NHS Wales Estate and Facilities Performance Management System (EFPMS), which is analysed and published as part of an

overall estates performance report by Welsh Health Estates in the form of an annual review.

This activity has been conducted over a number of years and will continue to set baselines and measure performance with regard to energy performance of NHS organisations in Wales.

The NHS in Wales however realises that energy consumption is only part of the overall carbon from NHS activities and is considering developing a carbon or ecological footprint for the NHS in Wales to focus action on the main points of emissions.

The recent consultation on the *WAG Climate Change Strategy – High Level Policy Statement*, however, advocates using a disaggregated greenhouse gas inventory as a main data source to set baselines and measure progress. How this is to be reconciled with energy performance and overall carbon emissions is yet to be announced by WAG; until this happens the NHS will continue to collect direct emissions data through the EFPMS system and consider developing carbon / ecological footprinting for NHS activities in Wales within the near future.

The new Sustainable Development Scheme contains two key actions within my portfolio:


- We will invest £190 million in public health and health improvement through the Public Health Strategic Framework for Wales, 'Our Healthy Future' which will improve the quality and length of life and improve equity in health.
- We will ensure that sustainable development will be made a core objective for the restructured NHS in all it does by giving clear duties to the new bodies to demonstrate best practice in planning and design, building, transport and waste management, and in use of energy and water.

Beyond this, my officials will also be working to link policies within my portfolio to the new Sustainable Development Scheme through:

- i. continuing to build on the process outlined above, working with the NHS and local government;
- ii. Looking for ways to embed sustainable development more explicitly and systematically in the way new policies are developed in the departments; in practical terms, officials are considering a departmental tool that might ensure that sustainable development principles are included as policies are developed and supporting this through a departmental training and education programme; the aspiration is that this is embedded within mainstream organisational development training within my departments.

Your final question relates to the percentage of policies from my departments that had received a fair or good rating with regards to "a sustainable environment" when assessed through the Policy Gateway Integration Tool.

We do not have a central logging arrangement for policies that have gone through the gateway but a brief survey has indicated that those that have been through it have been assessed as 'fair' or 'neutral'. It is partly for that reason that, as stated above, officials are looking at whether more needs to be done to reflect sustainable development within our policy development process.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to be the name 'Liam', written in black ink.