

Shan Morgan  
Permanent Secretary  
Welsh Government

31 March 2020

Dear Shan,

### **Ministerial Direction**

I refer to my earlier letter of 11 February and following the UK Government's Budget on 11 March, I am now able to share with you the Committee's observations.

We note that the Chancellor has included provision in his 2020–21 budget to increase the thresholds for the amounts high earners can pay into their pensions. Hopefully, this provision will remove the deterrent of senior clinical staff working extra hours. As I noted in my previous letter, the Committee will follow up on the practical effects on senior clinician shift patterns and the associated financial implications of the Direction in our scrutiny of the Welsh Government's 2019–20 Annual Report and Accounts. We do appreciate, however, that the response of clinicians across NHS Wales to the COVID–19 pandemic is a significant additional factor in all this, and one that could not reasonably have been contemplated in any detail by the Welsh Government at the time that the Direction was issued last December.

More generally, the Committee felt the procedure worked well and welcomed the opportunity to discuss the Ministerial Direction with you in public session in the interests of openness and transparency. We have established a constructive dialogue with the Welsh Government over recent times due to your willingness to share information with the Committee and our consideration of the Ministerial Direction was an example of this.



**Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru**  
Bae Caerdydd, Caerdydd, CF99 1NA

✉ [SeneddArchwilio@cynulliad.cymru](mailto:SeneddArchwilio@cynulliad.cymru)

☎ 0300 200 6565

**National Assembly for Wales**  
Cardiff Bay, Cardiff, CF99 1NA

✉ [SeneddPAC@assembly.wales](mailto:SeneddPAC@assembly.wales)

☎ 0300 200 6565

I am aware that the Public Accounts Committee Clerks have met recently with your officials alongside staff of the Wales Audit Office, to discuss procedures relating to Ministerial Directions, taking into account any lessons learned from this first experience. I understand that this will be reflected in revised guidance and protocol, including appropriate revisions to the requirements set out in 'Managing Welsh Public Money'.

I note that any future Ministerial Directions will be brought to my attention alongside timely advice from the Auditor General for Wales. I welcome this, as it will allow us as a Committee to determine how scrutiny might best be co-ordinated by the Assembly on a case by case basis.

In most instances, given the Public Accounts Committee's remit, we anticipate that the majority of any future Ministerial Directions will come to us for further examination with yourself as Principal Accounting Officer for the Welsh Government. Once this scrutiny has taken place, I would then write to you advising that the Ministerial Direction has been formally noted, together with any other observations we may have on the content/implications of the Direction. If the Public Accounts Committee opts not to consider a Ministerial Direction in detail, then I would write to the Chair of the relevant Assembly Committee(s) requesting that they do so instead.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nick Ramsay". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending from the end of the name.

**Nick Ramsay AM**  
**Chair**

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg / We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English

