



WALES AUDIT OFFICE  
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Wales Audit Office / Swyddfa Archwilio Cymru

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Mr Darren Millar AM  
Chair of the Public Accounts Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff CF99 1NA

*Dear Darren*

#### **HOSPITAL CATERING AND PATIENT NUTRITION**

In May of this year I provided the Committee with advice on the Welsh Government's response to the Committee's recommendations in its report on *Hospital Catering and Patient Nutrition*. This resulted in the Welsh Government providing further clarification on a number of specific queries, as set out in David Sissling's letter of 8<sup>th</sup> August.

I also understand that prior to that, in June, the Committee had received a detailed action plan from the Welsh Government setting out the progress it was making against the recommendations I had made on this on this topic in my March 2011 report. I have, however, only recently received sight of this action plan.

Having now reviewed the action plan and the more recent clarifications provided by the Welsh Government, I thought that it would be helpful if I shared my views with the Committee as to whether these constitute an adequate response to our respective recommendations on Hospital Catering and Patient Nutrition.

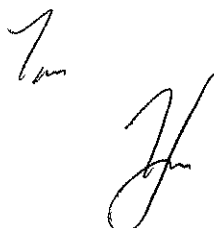
My overall view is that the Welsh Government is making good progress against the recommendations that it has direct responsibility for. It also reports good progress by NHS bodies in taking forward the recommendations that require more localised action. Many of the recommendations are recorded as already having been completed and those that aren't should largely be completed by the end of March 2013.

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I believe, therefore, that the Committee can take broad assurance from the information provided by Welsh Government that the necessary actions are being taken to improve the management and delivery of hospital catering and patient nutrition services. I would therefore suggest that the Committee does not need to take any more evidence from the Welsh Government or NHS bodies in the immediate future.

I would point out, however, that the progress outlined by the Welsh Government on many of the recommendations is reliant on self-reporting by NHS bodies, and does not appear to have been verified by any specific validation work or spot checking arrangements. I do not think the Committee need to be unduly concerned by this at this stage as intelligence gathered from my local audit work would suggest that the NHS bodies are making progress against the issues that have been identified. However, the Committee may wish to return to this topic again around the middle of 2013 to consider whether the necessary improvements have indeed been secured. By that time auditors will have completed local follow up work which will provide an independent view of progress, the findings from which can be shared with the Committee.

I trust that this is helpful.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Huw', followed by a larger, more stylized signature that appears to be 'Huw Vaughan Thomas'.

**HUW VAUGHAN THOMAS**  
**AUDITOR GENERAL FOR WALES**