



# **Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru** **The National Assembly for Wales**

## **Y Pwyllgor Cyfrifon Cyhoeddus** **The Public Accounts Committee**

**Dydd Mawrth, 29 Ebrill 2014**  
**Tuesday, 29 April 2014**

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Cofnodir y trafodion yn yr iaith y llefarwyd hwy ynddi yn y pwyllgor. Yn ogystal, cynhwysir trawsgrifiad o'r cyfieithu ar y pryd.

The proceedings are recorded in the language in which they were spoken in the committee. In addition, a transcription of the simultaneous interpretation is included.

### **Aelodau'r pwyllgor yn bresennol** **Committee members in attendance**

William Graham

Ceidwadwyr Cymreig

## Welsh Conservatives

Mike Hedges	Llafur Labour
Alun Ffred Jones	Plaid Cymru The Party of Wales
Sandy Mewies	Llafur Labour
Darren Millar	Ceidwadwyr Cymreig (Cadeirydd y Pwyllgor) Welsh Conservatives (Committee Chair)
Julie Morgan	Llafur Labour
Jenny Rathbone	Llafur Labour
Aled Roberts	Democratiaid Rhyddfrydol Cymru Welsh Liberal Democrats

**Eraill yn bresennol**  
**Others in attendance**

Paul Dimblebee	Swyddfa Archwilio Cymru Wales Audit Office
Huw Vaughan Thomas	Archwilydd Cyffredinol Cymru Auditor General for Wales

**Swyddogion Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru yn bresennol**  
**National Assembly for Wales officials in attendance**

Fay Buckle	Clerc Clerk
Claire Griffiths	Dirprwy Glerc Deputy Clerk
Joanest Jackson	Uwch-gynghorydd Cyfreithiol Senior Legal Adviser

*Dechreuodd y cyfarfod am 08:59.*  
*The meeting began at 08:59.*

**Cyflwyniadau, Ymddiheuriadau a Dirprwyon**  
**Introductions, Apologies and Substitutions**

[1] **Darren Millar:** Good morning, everybody. Welcome to today's meeting of the Public Accounts Committee. I will just give a few housekeeping notices. Obviously, the National Assembly for Wales is a bilingual institution; Members and witnesses should feel free to use either English or Welsh as they see fit. There are, of course, headsets available for translation and sound amplification. I encourage Members and everybody else in the room to turn off their mobile phones and other electronic equipment because, of course, they can interfere with the broadcasting equipment. This is a formal meeting for the first few items, and then we shall go into private session later on. In the event of an emergency, the fire alarms will sound and we should follow the instructions of the ushers. We have not received any apologies for absence today, so we shall go straight into the rest of our agenda.

**Papurau i'w Nodi  
Papers to Note**

[2] **Darren Millar:** We have the minutes of our meeting on 3 April. I take it that they are noted. We also have a paper from the director general for health and social services in respect of the valedictory session that we had. There is a little bit of information in the paper on mental health in particular that the committee asked for. I take it that that is noted as well.

09:00

**Fframwaith Cenedlaethol ar gyfer Gofal Iechyd Parhaus y GIG: Trafod y  
Wybodaeth Bellach gan Lywodraeth Cymru  
National Framework for Continuing NHS Healthcare: Consideration of Further  
Information from the Welsh Government**

[3] **Darren Millar:** We have received a letter from David Sissling in response to the further queries that Members had—actually, the letter is from Mark Drakeford, in response to the further queries that we had about the Welsh Government's response to the committee. I will take those items in turn and then, perhaps, we can ask the auditor general if he has a view on the response. We asked whether the new decision-support tool, which was being introduced to support decisions particularly in relation to dementia, would be applied retrospectively to old cases. We have had confirmation that it is not the intention to apply this decision-support tool retrospectively.

[4] We have also had a response regarding a new cut-off date and some further patient information that will be sent out. This is because there will be an opportunity on an annual basis with a cut-off date for any claims, if patients and their families are not happy. In addition to that, we have confirmation that our recommendations have been fully accepted in terms of reviewing claims that are outstanding, but they will not be regarded as completed until June. That is slightly different from our original understanding that all of these matters would be resolved by the end of April. Are there any questions on that particular response?

[5] **Mike Hedges:** May I make a comment? They use the term 'resolved' now to mean that the people have had the money. So, there is obviously a time-lag between their agreeing and resolving it and transferring the money. In that case, I do not see that there is a particular problem. When we talked about their being 'resolved', we meant that they had come to a resolution—that is what I thought they meant, anyway. However, they have taken 'resolved' to be the final point, at which people have had the money sent to them.

[6] **Darren Millar:** They are using three terms, are they not? They have said that everything will be 'reviewed' by April and will be 'completed' by the end of June in terms of arriving at a settlement figure, but not 'resolved' until they have been settled, effectively, which they expect to take until September. Are there any comments that you would like to make, auditor general?

[7] **Mr Thomas:** No, other than simply to point out exactly this point. That is, there have been three separate sets of definitions, now: 'reviewed', 'completed' and 'resolved'. When we started discussions on continuing healthcare and our report, there was the idea that everything would be settled. It is exactly as Mike Hedges indicated.

[8] **Sandy Mewies:** With regard to these three definitions, I do not think that you can argue that 'review' is similar to 'completed' or 'resolved'; the last two are similar. However, it is very clear now what each stage is and I am happy to have it clarified in this way.

[9] **Darren Millar:** It certainly is clearer, I will give it that, but it is not quite in line with what we were originally told. I call on Aled and then Alun Ffred.

[10] **Aled Roberts:** ‘Settled’ would always have meant resolved, in reality, when they said that it would have been ‘settled’ by April, and they now mean ‘settled’, using a different word, by September. That is five months, so as long as—

[11] **Sandy Mewies:** I believe that Mike recalled quite correctly when he said that what we were talking about was when the talks were over and an agreement was made. This is when they get the cheque.

[12] **Aled Roberts:** Yes, but the original wording was ‘settled’ by April; ‘settled’ means that you have paid the cheque.

[13] **Sandy Mewies:** That is your interpretation, is it not? I am glad that it has been clarified now, so that this argument does not have to go on.

[14] **Darren Millar:** We certainly have clarification. I call on Alun Ffred.

[15] **Alun Ffred Jones:** Hoffwn ofyn pa mor bell yn ôl mae'r achosion hyn yn mynd. Hynny yw, a ydym yn sôn am flynyddoedd?  
**Alun Ffred Jones:** I would like to ask how far back these cases go. That is, are we talking years?

[16] **Darren Millar:** Well, they have had lots of cases outstanding for a long time, I think it is fair to say. The scale of the backlog was much bigger than they had originally anticipated. In our report, we made the suggestion that they might want to continue the national programme—there is a national programme to clear the backlog on behalf of health boards—but in the response that we had to the report, the Welsh Government suggested that it was content to try to wind up the national programme and allow health boards to deal with them as they came into individual health boards, given the new arrangements. I think that it would perhaps be wise for the committee to revisit the matter for an update perhaps in October or November from the Welsh Government, given that it has given us these different time frames. Paul, did you want to comment?

[17] **Mr Dimblebee:** The Welsh Government has already agreed to provide an update on progress on clearing the backlog of claims—I think it will be in about June and then again in September. Its expectations according to the response are that everything will be done and dusted by September. The latest information that we have, which is based on the rate of clearing claims up to February and the number of outstanding claims at the end of February, suggests that it will have to accelerate the extent to which it is clearing these claims at a far greater rate than it has done so far, so it will be interesting to see what the September report shows us. I think the committee previously agreed that the auditor general should do some follow-up work in the autumn to look at the outcome report, if that is the final stage in September. Also by then, the revised guidance will have been issued in June, so there will be an option for us to provide an update on all aspects of the committee’s recommendations at that point.

[18] **Darren Millar:** Okay. If Members are content, we will receive an update from the Wales Audit Office and the auditor general towards the end of the year. Are Members content with that?

[19] **Sandy Mewies:** The Minister has offered to give updates in June and September, as you said, so that is what we are doing—that we are going to accept—or are we pursuing more?

[20] **Darren Millar:** I think that there are two issues here. If we ask for an update in June, the completed slab will not have been completed, will it? If we ask for an update in September, it will not have completed the fully resolved slab of claims. So, I think that it is wiser to wait a little bit longer and have a fuller understanding of—

[21] **Sandy Mewies:** I agree, but I do not think that there would be any harm in accepting those updates.

[22] **Darren Millar:** There is no problem. If the Minister said that he is going to give us those updates, we will get those updates, but I think that as far as this committee is concerned, it is wise for us to consider these things after all the dust has settled in September. Are Members content? I see that you are. We will move on.

09:07

**Cynnig o dan Reol Sefydlog 17.42 i Benderfynu Gwahardd y Cyhoedd o'r  
Cyfarfod  
Motion under Standing Order 17.42 to Resolve to Exclude the Public from the  
Meeting**

[23] **Darren Millar:** I move that

*the committee resolves to exclude the public from the remainder of the meeting in accordance with Standing Order 17.42(ix).*

[24] Does any Member object?

[25] **Jenny Rathbone:** Before we go into private session, I just wondered if I need to make a declaration of interest around a report that we are going to discuss around Welsh European Funding Office funding, because I am the chair of the programme monitoring committee. If it comes back to a public session, I can declare it then, but just for clarity I may need to record that.

[26] **Darren Millar:** No. We do not think that there is a pecuniary interest that—

[27] **Jenny Rathbone:** No, there is no pecuniary interest.

[28] **Darren Millar:** You have made note of it in the public part of the meeting. Okay, without further ado then, we will move into private session. Thank you.

*Derbyniwyd y cynnig.  
Motion agreed.*

*Daeth rhan gyhoeddus y cyfarfod i ben am 09:08.  
The public part of the meeting ended at 09:08.*