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Ein Cyfeirnod/Our Reference

Eich Cyfeirnod/Your Reference

Dyddiad/Date

26 October 2004

*Dear Siwan,*

**AUDIT COMMITTEE REPORT ON THE MANAGEMENT OF SICKNESS  
ABSENCE BY NHS TRUSTS IN WALES**

Your letter of 22 September 2004 requested the Auditor General's advice on the Welsh Assembly Government's response to the recommendations made by the Audit Committee in its report, *The Management of Sickness Absence by NHS Trusts in Wales*.

The Welsh Assembly Government has responded positively in agreeing all fourteen of the recommendations contained within the Audit Committee's report. In particular, the Health and Social Care Department have now established an all-Wales Sickness and Absence Management Steering Group which will play a key role in driving forward the recommendations of the Committee's report, and the previous report by the Auditor General. The Health and Social Care Department have undertaken to report back to the committee on the progress made by the Group, which is tasked with completing a detailed action plan by April 2005 (**recommendation vi**).

The National Audit Office Wales will continue to monitor the progress made by the NHS in Wales in implementing the Committee's recommendations and improving the management of sickness absence over the coming months and years. We will draw to the Committee's attention any areas where we consider that further action by the Committee is merited.

I trust that you find this response helpful.

**MARTIN PETERS**  
Private Secretary to the Auditor General for Wales