

**Jane Davidson AC/AM**

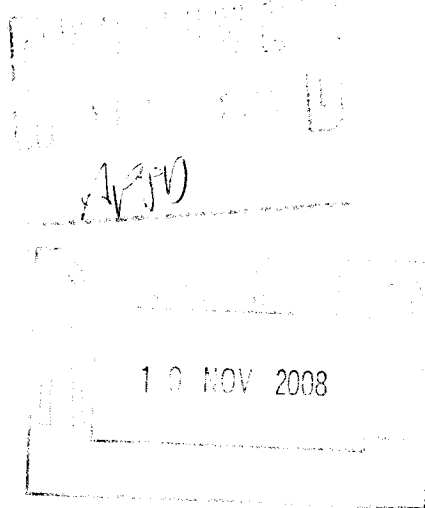
**Y Gweinidog dros yr Amgylchedd, Cynaliadwyedd a Thai  
Minister for Environment, Sustainability and Housing**



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru  
Welsh Assembly Government

Eich cyf/Your ref PET-03-061  
Ein cyf/Our ref JD/01392/08

Val Lloyd AM  
Petitions Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1NA



November 2008

*Dear Val,*

Thank you for your letter of 21 October about petition P-03-061 on the Coal MTAN.

Following the second consultation on the draft MTAN earlier this year, the issue of the size of the buffer zone has been given careful consideration to take account of the feelings of the residents of Merthyr Tydfil, as expressed in the three petitions presented to the Welsh Assembly in July 2007: P-03-060, 061 and 062.

The final MTAN is going to be presented to Cabinet on 24 November, and my officials will inform the Petitions Committee of the result of their deliberations.

*Yours,*

**Jane Davidson AM**

**Y Gweinidog dros yr Amgylchedd, Cynaliadwyedd a Thai  
Minister for Environment, Sustainability and Housing**

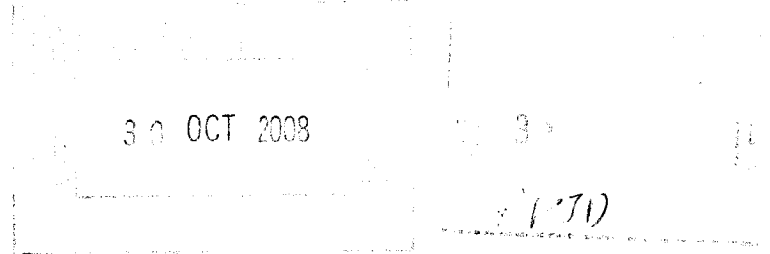
**Ieuan Wyn Jones AC/AM**  
Dirprwy Brif Weinidog /Deputy First Minister



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru  
Welsh Assembly Government

Eich cyf/Your ref PET-03-067  
Ein cyf/Our ref DFM/01899/08

Val Lloyd AM  
National Assembly For Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1NA



24 October 2008

*Deo Val*

**Petition: Miner's Welfare Ground, Ty Du, Nelson**

Thank you for your letter, dated 8<sup>th</sup> October regarding the above petition.

My officials met with the Community Council on 4<sup>th</sup> June 2008, which enabled an initial discussion to take place regarding the Assembly Government's plans for the redevelopment of the larger Ty Du site, in line with planning permission for the development of a high quality office/business park.

It was explained that there was no possibility to consider re-instating the Miners' Welfare ground as that area is required as part of the overall redevelopment for the business park. Officials have also offered to work with the Community Council to ensure that plans for bio-diversity, dog-walking and access to the site are considered.

My officials offered to keep the Community Council informed of any major decisions that will affect the site and to attend any future meetings if the Community Council were minded to invite them. I am informed that no request has been made by the Community Council to attend future meetings, to date.

**Ieuan Wyn Jones**  
Gweinidog dros yr Economi a Thrafnidiaeth  
Minister for the Economy and Transport



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru  
Welsh Assembly Government

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## **WRITTEN STATEMENT BY THE WELSH ASSEMBLY GOVERNMENT**

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**Title:** The Assembly Government's Policy Agenda for Disabled Children and Young People and the Disabled Children Matter Wales Campaign

**Date:** 3 November 2008

**By:** Jane Hutt, Minister for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills

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On 9<sup>th</sup> October 2008 the Welsh Assembly Government reaffirmed its commitment to disabled children, young people and their families with the announcement that an additional £2.75 million funding package had been identified in its draft budget settlement for 2009/10. The package includes money to raise awareness of benefit entitlement, provide more play opportunities for disabled children and offer short break services for children with complex disabilities.

In May 2008, I reported on the work that the Welsh Assembly Government is undertaking with the Disabled Children Matter Wales Campaign (the "DCMW Campaign"). This important work forms part of a wider Assembly policy agenda to improve services for disabled children, young people and their families. As such, it cuts across Ministerial Portfolios and as Minister for Children I have agreed to coordinate this work. In taking this agenda forward I have established a Ministerial Task Group "Rights into Action for Disabled Children and Young People," which comprises of campaign members and senior officials with whom I meet with regularly, to advise on policy initiatives.

The welfare and rights of disabled young people are our priority and we are working to improve the life chances of all disabled young people in Wales. The draft budget settlement aims to address a number of key areas to

improve services for disabled young people and their families in response to the DCMW campaign.

Income maximisation features as one of the five key themes of the proposed Financial Inclusion Strategy for Wales which is being developed over the course of this year. Responsibility for the welfare benefits system rests with the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP). We therefore work closely with our colleagues in DWP to ensure the benefits available are appropriate for the people of Wales.

The DCMW campaign suggested the need for a specific benefits take up campaign targeting the families of disabled children and young people followed by specialist benefits advice for those making claims. In response to this suggestion my colleague Dr Brian Gibbons, Minister for Social Justice and Local Government has recently announced that as part of the draft budget settlement he will make an extra £500,000 available over the next two years to raise awareness of benefits for the families of children with disabilities.

The DCMW campaign also called for sustained funding for short break services for children with complex difficulties. Regular short breaks are a lifeline to some disabled children and their families. They allow families to take time out to recharge their batteries and for the disabled child to have some fun and build their confidence and independence, providing opportunities for the young person to build relations and social networks beyond the immediate family.

We want local authorities to be innovative in the types of 'short breaks' this money is used for by listening to disabled children and their families and providing a range of short breaks to meet their needs. £1.54m was allocated for this purpose in 2008/09. Additional funding of £1.5 million is also included in the draft budget settlement for 2009/10.

We must ensure that barriers disabled young people face when attempting to access play and leisure facilities are removed. This may involve solutions as varied as providing transport to enable young disabled people to access leisure activities, support workers to accompany them as well as ensuring specific activities are available. £250,000 has been made available in the draft budget settlement for the next three years to help local authorities extend their play opportunities for disabled children. I will also be expecting local authorities to set aside a minimum of £250,000 from the financial resources that have already been allocated to them for this purpose to create a fund of £500,000. This is in addition to the £1 million already allocated to support play and leisure activities for disabled young people within Cymorth.

Earlier this month I was pleased to attend an event at the Senedd hosted by my colleague Gwenda Thomas AM, the Deputy Minister for Social Services, to celebrate the work of the Family Fund in Wales. The Family Fund is a UK charity which provides practical help to families with severely disabled and seriously ill children in the form of grants for things like household equipment transport, driving lessons, computers or holidays. In Wales the Family Fund

has been able to extend its criteria for help to include the families of young people up to and including the age of 17, with an annual income of up to £25,000. In other parts of the UK, the limit is age 16 or under with an annual income of up to £23,000. During the 2006-07 financial year, the Family Fund distributed £2.561m in grants to families in Wales helping 4,157 families. The charity is almost entirely funded by the UK Governments and Welsh Assembly Government. The Welsh Assembly Government provided the Family Fund with £2.649m for 2007/08, £2.652m for 2008/09 and has identified £2.739m for the Family Fund in the draft budget for 2009-2010.

I am pleased that we are now moving this agenda forward pro-actively across ministerial portfolios and steady progress is being made. The most recent funding announcements compliment existing funding announced to support the campaign in improving services for disabled young people.

In fact since the establishment of the Ministerial Task Group last year the Assembly Government has made substantial investments in the futures of disabled young people in Wales. These include:

- **£225,000** of funding for the provision of Changing Places to widen access to cultural venues.
- **£1m** for initial development of early support materials and over a period of three years to 2011/12 a further £1.2m to ensure the programme is fully embedded.
- **£1.5m** to support the work of key transition workers over three years.
- Launched the Action Plan for Autistic Spectrum disorders. Funding for the next two years has been identified with the first year's funding standing at **£1.8m**.
- A consultation on the proposal for 50 per cent rate relief for child care providers with property having a rateable value of up to £12,000 a year.
- Additional funding in 2008/09 of **£1.54m** for the funding of short breaks, a key recommendation of the DCMW campaign.

We have therefore made a commitment to improving services for disabled children and young people in Wales and will continue to work closely with the Disabled Children Matter Wales (DCMW) campaign to make a real difference.

Looking to the future, the United Nations has designated 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2008 as International Day of Persons with Disabilities. To mark this day, using the Assembly's seven core aims for all children and young people as a framework, I will set out our policy agenda for the delivery of services for disabled children and young people. Whilst we know that many of the things we want to change cannot happen overnight, we aim to achieve improved sustainable services to ensure disabled children and young people have equality of opportunity and access to services.

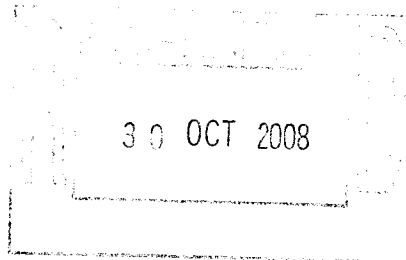
**Ieuan Wyn Jones AC/AM**  
**Dirprwy Brif Weinidog /Deputy First Minister**



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru  
Welsh Assembly Government

Eich cyf/Your ref PET-03-090  
Ein cyf/Our ref DFM/01898/08

Val Lloyd AM  
National Assembly For Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1NA



*[Handwritten signature]*  
24 October 2008

*Dea Val*

Thank you for your letter of 8 October 2008 about the Petitions Committee's consideration of a petition for better provision of wheelchair access on public service buses in Pembrokeshire (petition P-03-090).

This is not a devolved matter, so the Welsh Assembly Government has no scope to introduce further requirements relating to disabled access. However, all public authorities have a duty under the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 to have due regard to the needs of disabled people, and Pembrokeshire County Council is committed to improvements, set out in its Disability Equality Scheme 2006-2009. For example, the Town Rider service, which the Assembly Government funds, now provides wheelchair-accessible transport in five areas of Pembrokeshire.

Under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, regulations were made requiring all new public service buses to be accessible to disabled people. These regulations (Public Service Vehicle Accessibility Regulations 2000) apply to vehicles able to carry more than 22 passengers, used for services where a fare is charged. Free school services are not subject to the regulations. Vehicles introduced before the regulations came into force may continue to be used until 2020.

The regulations specify the dimensions of any spaces provided on buses for wheelchairs and the design of bus boarding ramps. Other regulations require bus drivers to provide reasonable assistance to disabled people to get on and off buses, and legislation regarding seatbelts allows disabled people to wear a belt designed to suit individual needs. Guidance from the Department for Transport published in 2005 ("Inclusive Mobility") addresses the needs of disabled people with regard to bus shelter design and timetable information.

*Ieuan Wyn Jones*

**Ieuan Wyn Jones**  
**Gweinidog dros yr Economi a Thrafnidiaeth**  
**Minister for the Economy and Transport**



driver of a regulated bus to ensure that reasonable assistance is provided for disabled people if requested. The driver will be expected to assist passengers, including wheelchair users, to board the bus, unless there is reason to believe that there will be a risk to their health, safety or security of the driver or that of the passengers. These Regulations came into effect on 1 October 2002.

In addition, my Department is currently working closely with industry and local authorities to improve the availability of information, bus shelters and accessible vehicles. The Department is also investigating the provision of travel training for those people who want to use public transport and to acquire the skills needed to confidently use the system. We will be taking this work forward over the coming months.

I hope this explains the position.

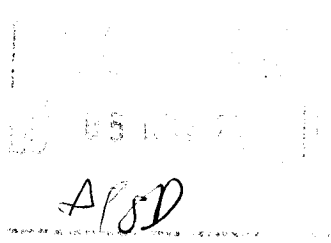
*Yours sincerely,*

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Paul Clark', with a horizontal line at the end.

**PAUL CLARK**



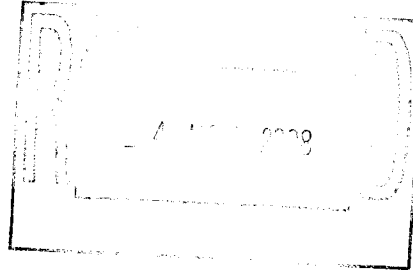
**Alun Ffred Jones AC/AM**  
Y Gweinidog dros Dreftadaeth  
Minister for Heritage



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru  
Welsh Assembly Government

Eich cyf/Your ref PET-03-124  
Ein cyf/Our ref AJ/00269/08

Val Lloyd AM  
Petitions Committee  
National Assembly For Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1NA



4 November 2008

*Dear Val,*

Thank you for your letter dated 14 October regarding funding Canolfan Bedwyr to produce a free version of Cysgliad. My officials are currently in discussions with Welsh Language Board colleagues, and I will report back to you in due course with any further update on this matter.

*Yours sincerely,*

**Alun Ffred Jones AC/AM**  
Y Gweinidog dros Dreftadaeth/Minister for Heritage

21/10/08

Head of Honours and Appointments Secretariat

35 Great Smith Street  
London  
SW1P 3BQ**Telephone** 020 7276 2770**Fax:** 020 7276 2766**Email** denis.brennan@cabinet-office.x.gsi.gov.uk**Web** www.honours.gov.uk

Val Lloyd AM  
Chair, Petitions Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff CF99 1NA

30 October 2008

*Dear Ms Lloyd,***PETITION: P- 03-134 WELSH HONOURS**

You wrote to the Minister for the Cabinet Office on 14 October about the above petition which calls on the National Assembly for Wales to introduce a Welsh honours system. I have been asked to reply because the Minister has no responsibilities for honours matters.

In your letter you asked the Honours and Appointments (formerly the Ceremonial) Secretariat to provide some statistical information on the Welsh people and honours. I fear that we do not hold the kind of data you are seeking. From the information provided to us we cannot determine exactly which nominees for honours are Welsh. The Ethnic Origin form that nominators are asked to complete does not have a category for Welsh as an ethnic background. The statistics, therefore, that we can provide relate to those cases where individuals have a home address in Wales. There will, of course, be a number of cases involving Welsh nationals who reside in other countries of the UK but who have not been identified as being Welsh.

With that caveat, the number of UK honours awarded to Wales was as follows:

- BD2003 57
- NY2004 62
- BD2004 51
- NY2005 53
- BD2005 56
- NY2006 51
- BD2006 63
- NY2007 61
- BD2007 47
- NY2008 50

The proportion of UK honours awarded to Wales consistently averages between 5% and 6%.

The First Minister of the Welsh Assembly Government has already provided you with details of the number of honours nominations dealt with by his Honours Unit. We do not hold any reliable information to add to this. Nominations are sent to all government departments and numbers are not centrally collated.

Finally, we cannot say how many Welsh people have refused an honour. We do not record refusals by nationality.

I hope you find this information helpful. Please let me know if you require anything further.

*Your sincerely,*

*Denis Brennan*

Denis Brennan  
Head of Honours and Appointments Secretariat

**Edwina Hart AM MBE**  
Y Gweinidog dros Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol  
Minister for Health and Social Services

Our ref: EH/05045/08  
Your ref: PET-03-137



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru  
Welsh Assembly Government

Val Lloyd AM  
Chair  
Petitions Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
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Ffacs: 029 2089 8131  
E-Bost: Correspondence.Edwina.Hart@Wales.gsi.gov.uk

31<sup>st</sup> October 2008

*Dear Val*

Thank you for your letter dated 28 October about the Welsh Assembly Government's policy on the treatment of hypothyroidism.

The Welsh Assembly Government does not provide clinical guidelines on individual conditions. Treatment for hypothyroidism, is a matter for individual professional judgement. We would expect that up to date evidence of effective management and treatment to be taken into account by the professionals concerned in dealing with individual cases.

I am aware that a few years ago the National Public Health Service undertook a review into the evidence of the benefit of treating sub-clinical hypothyroidism, and I attach a website address for your information

[http://www.attract.wales.nhs.uk/question\\_answers.cfm?question\\_id=1719](http://www.attract.wales.nhs.uk/question_answers.cfm?question_id=1719)

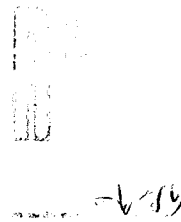
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4 OCT 2008

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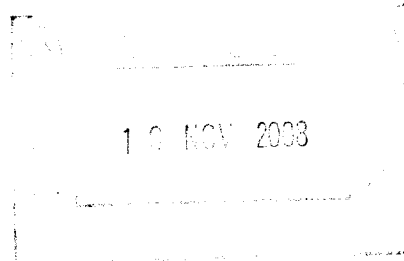
Ieuan Wyn Jones AC/AM  
Dirprwy Brif Weinidog /Deputy First Minister



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru  
Welsh Assembly Government

Eich cyf/Your ref PET-03-141/149  
Ein cyf/Our ref DFM/02015/08; DFM/01981/08

Val Lloyd AM  
National Assembly For Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1NA



06 November 2008

*Dee Val*

Thank you for your letters dated 16 and 21 October 2008. I have also seen your letter of 20 October 2008 addressed to my Cabinet colleague, Jane Davidson. As you are aware, this matter falls within my ministerial portfolio. I respond as follows to the points raised by the Petitions Committee.

Llanbedr Airfield has been operated as an airfield since it opened in June 1941. It ceased to be used by the Ministry of Defence in 2004 with the loss of 130 jobs. Prior to closure as a military airfield, the former Welsh Development Agency (WDA) and Gwynedd Council commissioned KPMG to undertake an economic impact study with the aim of identifying options to reduce the economic impact of closure. Snowdonia National Park Authority was a key consultee and partner in the process and the conclusion of the report was that the most viable and sustainable option for the site was a continuation of existing or similar activity. Both military and civil uses were listed as potential options.

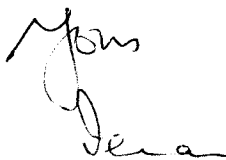
In response to the KPMG report, the WDA started to look at various options for the site and in March 2006 purchased the site with the aim of identifying a private-sector operator for the site which would re-open the Airfield in support of the Welsh Assembly Government's Aerospace Sector Strategy, which includes the promotion of the development of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles using the restricted air zone of Cardigan Bay, and to secure the maximum economic benefit for the local community.

When the WDA merged with the Welsh Assembly Government in April 2006, ownership of the Airfield transferred to the Welsh Assembly.

In September 2007, Llanbedr Airfield was widely marketed and as a result of a thorough two-stage assessment process, Kemble Air Services Limited was selected by officials as the preferred bidder, given their skills and experience, to operate the Airfield as a viable and sustainable business. They currently operate the former military airfield at Kemble, near Cirencester and they own and manage seven former Ministry of Defence properties accommodating more than 100 businesses. Their proposals for Llanbedr Airfield are to re-open the Airfield, initially as an unlicensed airfield to accommodate private flying and unmanned aerial vehicle flying (similar to the drones that the RAF flew from the site) and to let the many buildings on the site for business use, thus providing local employment opportunities. A number of businesses have already expressed interest in occupying premises.

As far as planning is concerned, it is proposed that granting of the lease will be conditional upon Kemble Air Services Limited first obtaining from the Local Planning authority all planning permissions, certificates and consents authorising the use permitted by the Lease. The exact details of the proposed lease have not been finalised, but the proposal is to grant a 125 year lease with use of the site being restricted to that of an aerodrome and uses identified by Classes B1, B2 & B8 of the Town & Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 which are, essentially, office and light industrial use, general industrial use and warehousing. It will then be for Kemble Air Services Limited, in consultation with the local planning authority, to assess as part of the planning process whether or not an environmental impact assessment will be necessary. The planning process will also consider the compatibility of the proposal with the Assembly Government's planning policies, which themselves reflect the Assembly Government's sustainability agenda.

I would emphasise that a full briefing on the proposals for Llanbedr Airfield has been prepared by officials for my consideration which, among other things, addresses the Welsh Assembly Government's compliance with its duty under Section 11A of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 (also known as the Section 62 duty). I have just received this briefing and am currently considering it. I anticipate making a decision as to the future of the Airfield in the near future.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ieuan Wyn Jones', written in a cursive style.

**Ieuan Wyn Jones**  
Gweinidog dros yr Economi a Thrafnidiaeth  
Minister for the Economy and Transport

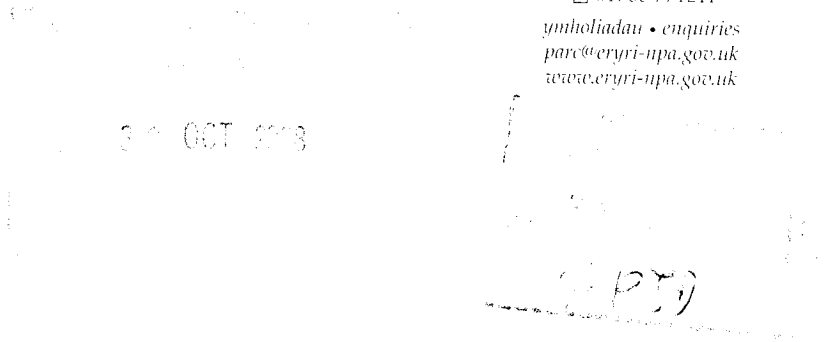


Cyswllt • Contact  
☎ Unïongyrchol • Direct  
Ein cyf • Our ref  
Eich cyf • Your ref  
Dyddiad • Date  
e-bost • e-mail

Aneurin Phillips  
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PET-03-141/9  
27<sup>th</sup> October, 2008  
[aneurin.phillips@eryri-npa.gov.uk](mailto:aneurin.phillips@eryri-npa.gov.uk)

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ymholiadau • enquiries  
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[www.eryri-npa.gov.uk](http://www.eryri-npa.gov.uk)

Val Lloyd  
Chair, Petitions Committee,  
National Assembly for Wales,  
Cardiff Bay,  
CARDIFF, CF99 1NA.



Dear Ms Lloyd,

### Petitions - For and Against Llanbedr Airfield

Thank you for your letter of the 20<sup>th</sup> October, 2008.

There are two outstanding issues concerning this site:

1. Whether the Welsh Assembly Government have had regard to the duty under Section 11A of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 (as inserted by Section 62 of the Environment Act 1995 and commonly known as the Section 62(2) duty), to have regard to the two statutory National Park purposes namely:
  - (a) of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the Park; and
  - (b) of promoting opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the Park by the public
2. Whether what is proposed by Kemble Air Services Ltd. requires planning permission.

I first became involved in May of this year. Previously Planning Officers had participated in a workshop in 2002 which sought to explore possible future uses for the site. Planning Officers met an Assembly Government Official in 2006.

Since my meeting in May with Directors' of Kemble Air Services Ltd. and Welsh Assembly Government officials I have had sight of drafts of a Section 62(2) Statement prepared by WAG in accordance with guidance on the Statutory Duties on Relevant Authorities issued in June 2005 by the then Minister, Carwyn Jones AM. I am awaiting the final version.

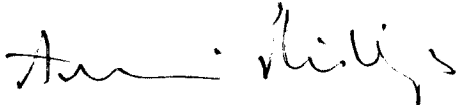
Because it is not clear what Kemble Air Services Ltd. propose as far as the overall use of this site is concerned there remains a possibility that the proposed use of the site as a commercial airfield will require planning permission.

Looking ahead I would like to see:

1. The completion and open disclosure of the final version of the Section 62(2) statement demonstrating how WAG has had regard to its duty to consider National Park purposes.
2. The planning position clarified by the submission of an application for Lawful Use Certificate or subject to legal advice received, the submission of a planning application to the National Park Authority for determination.

These steps would ensure that the decision making process leading up to the disposal and future use of the site is made transparent.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Aneurin Phillips". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the beginning and a distinct "Phillips" at the end.

**Aneurin Phillips.**  
**Chief Executive.**

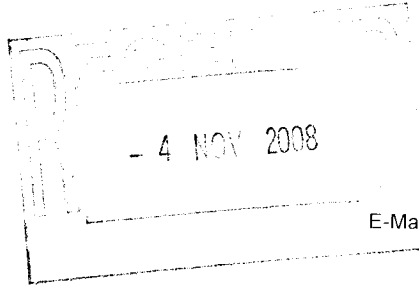


**Edwina Hart AM MBE**

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

Our ref: EH/05047/08  
Your ref: PET-03-166

Val Lloyd AM  
Chair  
Petitions Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
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Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru  
Welsh Assembly Government

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*Dear Val*

5<sup>th</sup> November 2008

Thank you for your letter of 28 October on behalf of the Petitions Committee about a petition opposing the closure of Abertillery and District Hospital.

Following the closure of this hospital, Gwent Healthcare NHS Trust proposes to sell the land and it will have no further use as a health facility.

The hospital building is not listed. However, CADW has indicated that it is considering listing the main building and entrance gates.

*Edwina*

EDWINA HART AM  
MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES  
CARDIFF BAY  
CARDIFF CF99 1NA  
CADW

**Edwina Hart AM MBE**

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

Our ref: EH/04482/08  
Your ref: PET-03-167

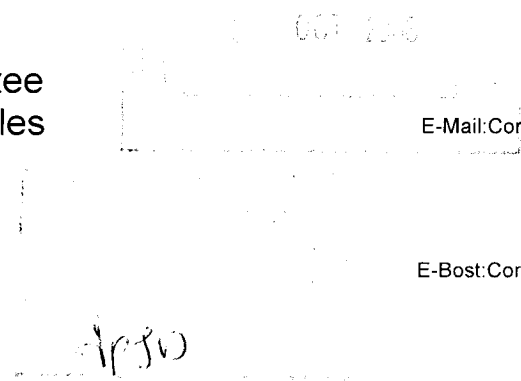


Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru  
Welsh Assembly Government

Val Lloyd AM  
Chair of Petitions Committee  
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23<sup>rd</sup> October 2008

*Dear Val*

Thank you for your letter dated 12 September asking me to clarify the Assembly Government's commitment to wet age related macular degeneration (Wet AMD). I made a statement on 24 June about Wet AMD and have attached a copy of this statement for ease of reference. I recognise the difficulty and upset that this condition can cause for people and am glad that in the autumn we should have treatments operating throughout Wales.

I stated that all NHS Trusts must treat Wet AMD in both eyes within a timetable that will allow them to resolve problems of staffing and of suitable premises. I expect these arrangements to be in place. There will initially be nine centres operating the policy across Wales. I will be shortly making a further statement regarding the proposed delivery of new services, including where the funding centres will be and the dates that first eye treatment will commence in full across Wales.

*Edwina Hart*



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru  
Welsh Assembly Government

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## **WRITTEN STATEMENT BY THE WELSH ASSEMBLY GOVERNMENT**

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**Title:** Treatment of wet age – related macular degeneration  
**Date:** 06 November 2008  
**By:** Edwina Hart, Minister for Health and Social Services

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Since my statement to the Senedd on 24 June 2008 my officials and advisers have carried out a far reaching review of current delivery arrangements for the treatment of "wet" AMD using the drug Lucentis.

The review has revealed differences in service delivery along with a variation in commissioning.

To take this forward I set out below the proposed arrangements for service delivery.

### **Proposed delivery**

In order to provide high standards in service delivery, addressing issues of access, whilst mindful of critical mass to sustain a quality service, it is proposed that nine (9) treatment centres should be provided, viz;

#### **North Wales**

Ysbyty Gwynedd;  
H M Stanley, St. Asaph;  
Wrexham Maelor

#### **West Wales**

Bronglais, Aberystwyth;  
Amman Valley, Ammanford;  
Singleton

## **South East Wales**

Royal Glamorgan;  
University Hospital, Cardiff;  
St. Woolos, Newport

With the exception of Amman Valley, which is a new treatment centre, all the other locations are hospital based and are already treating patients.

### **Staffing**

A new consultant is to take up post in S W Wales in November 2008 and this will ensure that the treatment for "Wet" AMD is a consultant led service.

The predicted treatment of "Wet" AMD will inevitably add pressures to ophthalmology services and I therefore propose to allow for the appointment of three staff ophthalmologists to assist in service delivery and avoid any detrimental effect upon outpatient waiting times for ophthalmology services.

### **Accommodation**

Instructions will be issued to provide the necessary "clean rooms", if not already in existence - which is the most cost effective way to deliver the service.

### **Funding and Service Delivery**

I have already announced that £5m has been made available, as additional funding to provide treatment for "first eye" "wet" AMD in this financial year. Additional funding for 2009/10 of £10m has been made available.

In order to expedite treatment, funding on a per case basis is proposed. This will avoid delays in submissions to treat, and allow the decision to treat to be made on clinical grounds by the consultant ophthalmologist.

Any patient who has self funded treatment for "wet" AMD will be allowed to transfer their treatment and the future costs will be met by the Welsh Assembly Government.

### **Service Roll Out**

Patients are already undergoing treatment for "wet" AMD in the second eye. The treatment for "first eye" will commence across Wales from the 20 November 2008.

## **Service Development**

A framework plan will be developed. It will set out:

1. A consistent fast track policy for delivery across Wales by February 2009
2. The formation of an ophthalmology commissioning task group by March 2009. The group will consider future developments in the treatment of "wet" and "dry" AMD
3. The development of an ophthalmology network across Wales. This will provide the vehicle for clinical training and expertise in the field of AMD treatment.

## **Appraisal**

An evaluation of the service will be undertaken by advisers to ensure that all the necessary criteria are met. This will afford the opportunity to consider any modifications to the infrastructure costs and the need to streamline the service.

I will inform members in due course about how this service develops over time.

## National Assembly for Wales

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# Treatment of wet age - related macular degeneration

24 June 2008

## Edwina Hart, Minister for Health and Social Services

On Friday of last week, 20<sup>th</sup> June, the latest meeting took place of the Welsh Retinal Group, established in order to engage with the Assembly Government on Wet age-related macular degeneration and allied conditions.

I set out below, in more detail, the history and purpose of the Group. Following last week's meeting, however, I am now in a position to act on the advice received and to inform Members of my decision to fund Lucentis treatment for first and second eye patients with Wet AMD in Wales for this financial year, to the tune of £5 million. This service will now be delivered from the autumn of 2008.

### Background

Following consultation on the National Institute for Clinical Excellence guidance for the funding of Wet AMD treatment in June 2007 I agreed that my officials should engage with the ophthalmologists in Wales currently undertaking treatment of Wet AMD through the All Wales Medical Strategy Group and the All Wales Retinal Group. I asked them to consider the implications of the NICE guidance for the treatment model and associated costs on an all Wales basis. The Group has met regularly since that time, coming together on six occasions between October and June.

In detail the purpose of these meetings was:

- to engage in the discussions about the development of a programme for delivery;
- to discuss the most effective use of manpower and which health professionals should be involved in the service;
- to address any outstanding issues with regard to primary care referral into the service and to reaffirm the agreed referral protocols with optometry;
- to consider capacity issues and the appropriate location of the service to provide equity of opportunity and access across Wales;
- to evaluate the most appropriate instrumentation currently available to meet with best practice; and
- to review the current research into the treatment of "wet" AMD and to review new treatments so that they can be introduced into the service as appropriate. This will ensure that best current practice will be delivered in Wales.

Discussions with the Welsh Retina Group have resulted in agreement in principle from the service to deliver:

1. Treatment of Wet AMD for both first and second eyes using the drug Lucentis;
2. Review of all drugs for the treatment of Wet AMD currently undergoing clinical trials so that they may be provided for treatment as soon as they are licensed;
3. Gradual phasing in of treatment centres across Wales to provide appropriate delivery meeting the prerequisites of best practice and equity of access;
4. Development of an electronic record system not just to accurately record data but to use as a teaching tool for ophthalmology;
5. Appraisal and reappraisal of the treatment protocols to ensure the service delivers the best outcomes for patients; and
6. Appropriate referrals from primary care optometrists - working to strict protocols - to ensure that patients are referred urgently in order to be assessed for treatment and to deliver the maximum visual benefit.

### Future Funding

It should be noted that my current commitment to funding Lucentis treatment for Wet AMD is not open ended.

While Lucentis is currently accepted as the most effective drug available in preventing further sight loss, it is not successful in all cases. Parallel to my current action, I will be seeking advice on best practice as the results of further clinical trials become available. Avastin, is currently being medically trialled with encouraging early results. If this drug receives approval, then the drug cost of Wet AMD treatment would reduce dramatically (by more than 85%).

Clearly this would have an immense impact on the medium term approach to funding Wet AMD treatment and for this reason I am yet to commit myself to future year's funding, though provision will be made in the Welsh Assembly Government's budget planning cycle for my chosen course of action.

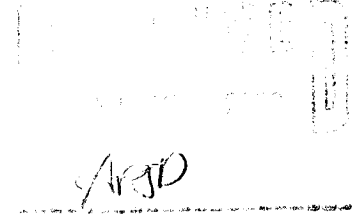
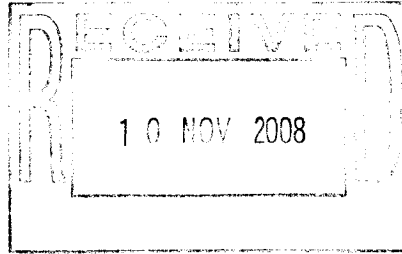
**Brian Gibbons AC/AM**  
**Y Gweinidog dros Gyfiawnder Cymdeithasol a Llywodraeth**  
**Leol**  
**Minister for Social Justice and Local Government**



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru  
Welsh Assembly Government

Eich cyf/Your ref PET-03-171  
Ein cyf/Our ref BG/00621/08

Val Lloyd AM  
Chair  
Petitions Committee  
National Assembly For Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1NA



6 November 2008

*Dear Val,*

Thank you for your letter of 28 October regarding the petition on standards of fire safety.

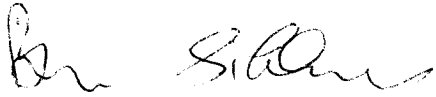
Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) have developed knowledge and expertise in managing risk in their areas over the course of many years. This has been achieved by developing professional and local knowledge in the discipline of fire management and augmenting this with new technology, allowing FRAs to model risk to life and property. This, coupled with an emphasis on preventative activity, which since 2004 has been a statutory duty for FRAs, has meant the number of primary fires (including all dwelling, industrial, retail, road and others) has reduced from over 10,000 in 2004 to 8,692 in 2006 (the latest year for which figures are available).

Building on this, the Assembly Government developed guidance for FRAs on Risk Reduction Planning (RRP) in March 2006. The production of RRP is the responsibility of each FRA, as the statutory body with the responsibility for the provision of fire cover in its area. Over the course of the summer, each FRA has consulted on their draft RRP proposals for 2009-10. Our RRP guidance states that proposals contained within RRP should be based on robust evidence and developed in consultation with the communities and others affected. The plans have, or are, in the process of being finalised, in line with RRP guidance and will be available from each FRA.

Linked to our RRP guidance the Assembly Government also published Service Standards to domestic fires. These set a 10 minute standard for the arrival of the first appliance, 5 minutes where life risk is estimated to be higher, to 80% of domestic fire incidents. Where it is estimated that an FRA will be unable to meet this target in an area, then they are expected to undertake increased levels of fire safety preventative activity. Our recently published Fire and Rescue National Framework for Wales 2008-2011, commits the Assembly Government to review the effectiveness of existing RRP guidance and Service Standards. We will also introduce new Standards (such as road Traffic collision and non domestic dwellings) to complement the existing activity.

Ministerial powers to intervene in FRA operational matters are limited by statute. No powers exist under the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 to require FRAs to seek Welsh Minister's approval to proposals contained within RRP's. The underlying purpose of the National Framework, as enabled by the 2004 Act, is to provide strategic direction from government, while ensuring that FRAs continue to make local decisions.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Brian Gibbons', written in a cursive style.

**Brian Gibbons AM**