



**JEREMY COLMAN, AUDITOR GENERAL FOR WALES / ARCHWILYDD CYFFREDINOL CYMRU**

Mrs Janet Davies AM  
Chair of the Audit Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff CF99 1NA

**Date** 9 February 2006  
**Our reference** JC/0188/fgb  
**Your reference**  
**Tel No** 029 2026 2641  
**Fax No** 029 2026 2631  
**E-mail** jeremy.colman@wao.gov.uk  
**Pages** 1 of 2

Dear Janet,

**Implementation of Audit Committee recommendations on hospital cleaning**

You asked me to consider how the recent initiative announced by the Assembly Government on hospital cleaning related to action previously recommended by the Audit Committee.

On January 11, the National Assembly voted to develop the secondary legislation needed to give effect to the proposal to "require all NHS Trusts in Wales to identify a senior director who will have responsibility for hospital cleanliness". The proposal was initially made, in September 2005, by Val Lloyd AM, a former member of the Audit Committee, under the Assembly's Standing Order 31 arrangements, equivalent to a Westminster private member's bill.

You rightly recalled that the Audit Committee had considered the senior level responsibility for hospital cleaning in its own report on *The management and delivery of hospital cleaning services in Wales* ((2) 06-03, 18 December 2003). Paragraph 26 of the Committee's report states that "we were assured that each trust board now has an executive board member who is designated as responsible for the ultimate ownership of this issue [hospital cleaning services], and who has to report on this area within the board itself." The evidence for this statement was provided by Ann Lloyd, in answer to question 89 of the relevant session (Audit Committee meeting 17 July 2003).

The point was reinforced by the Government response to the Committee's recommendations (recommendation x), which stated that "All trusts have a nominated Board Director responsible for cleaning".

However, Assembly Government officials have confirmed to my staff that these existing arrangements refer to the need for someone with senior operational responsibility for cleanliness at trusts. The effect of Val Lloyd's proposal, once implemented, will be to require all trusts to have a non-executive trust board member with similar responsibility. The feasibility report carried out under Standing Order 31 arrangements in the autumn, and accepted by the Assembly in January, states that the objective would be "to ensure that the public point of view is represented by a public champion on cleaning, hygiene and control of infection issues".

You may be interested to know that when the National Assembly first debated Val Lloyd's proposal in September 2005, Rhodri Glyn Thomas AM referred specifically to the Government response to the Audit Committee's report on cleaning, asking how the motion differed from what should already be in place in trusts. Val Lloyd explained then that she had in mind a non-executive board member, with public advocacy duties, and it is on this basis that the Assembly Government is taking forward her proposal.

I do hope that this explanation is helpful. Of course, as set out in my final programme of value for money examinations to start in 2006-07, I intend to include an examination of hospital-acquired infection. That study will consider not only the senior level governance arrangements in place to deal with cleaning and related issues, but also, crucially, what is being done in terms of day to day procedures in hospital wards to minimise the risk of infection.

Yours,  
Jeremy

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**Auditor General for Wales**