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Ms Janet Davies AM  
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Date 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2006  
Our reference JC0260/fgb  
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Dea Chair

### **AUDIT COMMITTEE REPORT ON THE CONTRACT FOR THE PROVISION OF OUT-OF-HOURS GP SERVICES IN CARDIFF**

The Clerk's letter of 24<sup>th</sup> April requested my advice on the Welsh Assembly Government's response to the recommendations made by the Audit Committee in its report *Contract for the provision of the out-of-hours GP service in Cardiff*.

The Welsh Assembly Government's response is positive and accepts all five of the Committee's recommendations. I should point out that the recommendations were directed at either local health boards or public sector bodies generally, and the Welsh Assembly Government's response demonstrates that it has been keen to ensure that the lessons learnt from the contract for the out-of-hours GP service in Cardiff are shared widely.

In particular, the Welsh Assembly Government has issued two Welsh Health Circulars specifically addressing the issues raised in both the Committee's report and my own report. It is also revising the Standing Orders for all Local Health Boards and Trusts, which, it says, will fully address the Committee's recommendations. The Welsh Assembly Government anticipates that the revised Standing Orders will be issued within the next three months. As an interim measure, *Welsh Health Circular (2006) 025*, asks Local Health Boards and NHS Trusts to amend their existing standing orders, procedures and processes to incorporate the Committee's recommendations.

Three of the Committee's recommendations were directed at all public sector bodies. The Welsh Assembly Government states, in response to Recommendation 2, that it will raise awareness of the Committee's report and recommendations amongst all public sector bodies. This is important, as the Committee emphasised that there are important lessons for all public sector bodies to learn from the shortcomings in the award and management of the contract for out-of-hours GP services in Cardiff. However, the Welsh Assembly Government's response does not specify how awareness amongst public sector bodies will be raised.

The Wales Audit Office will continue to monitor the progress made by the Welsh Assembly Government and other public sector bodies towards implementing the Committee's recommendations. In particular, we will examine the revised Standing Orders for Local Health Boards and NHS Trusts and the actions taken by the Welsh Assembly Government to raise awareness of the report and recommendations across the wider public sector. We will draw to the Committee's attention any areas where we consider that further action by the Committee is merited.

I hope that you find this helpful. I should be happy to discuss this matter further with you or the full Committee.

Yours sincerely,



**Jeremy Colman**  
**Auditor General for Wales**