



WALES AUDIT OFFICE
SWYDDFA ARCHWILIO CYMRU

Wales Audit Office / Swyddfa Archwilio Cymru
2-4 Park Grove
Cardiff / Caerdydd CF10 3PA
Direct Tel / Ffôn: 029 20 262 641
e-mail / e-bost: jeremy.colman@wao.gov.uk
PA / CP: Fiona Bashford, fiona.bashford@wao.gov.uk
www.wao.gov.uk

JEREMY COLMAN, AUDITOR GENERAL FOR WALES / ARCHWILYDD CYFFREDINOL CYMRU

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

Date 3rd October 2006
Our reference JC/0369/fgb
Your reference
Tel No 029 2026 2641
Fax No 029 2026 2631
E-mail jeremy.colman@wao.gov.uk
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Dear Chair,

AUDIT COMMITTEE SESSION ON DAY SURGERY

At the 21 September Audit Committee session on day surgery, the Committee noted that although a high percentage of patients were satisfied with the procedures for their discharge from hospitals, the discharge process measured by the Acute Hospital Portfolio did not score as highly in Wales as it did in England. As part of her reply, the Head of the Health and Social Services Department, Ann Lloyd, said that she could not quite reconcile the two issues and that page 33 of my report suggested that discharge in Wales was really not too bad at all (Paragraphs 180 to 185 of the draft transcript refer).

The purpose of this letter is to clarify the position. My report stated in paragraph 2.45 that the 2003-2004 Acute Hospital Portfolio scored discharge procedures in Wales (at 10.6 out of 12) less highly than in England (at 11.1 out of 12). The scores were given against a range of criteria, as noted in the footnote on page 37 of my report:

Discharge care scores were allocated on the basis of the frequency with which trusts complied with certain features of good practice. The scoring process considered if patients were discharged to protocol by nurses or non-medical staff, whether patients were given written information upon discharge and whether that information contained a discharge summary, details of what to expect following the procedure, advice on how to deal with post-operative problems and an out-of-hours contact phone number.

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Therefore, although England did score better than Wales, both scores were high, and consequently there is no inconsistency with Mrs Lloyd's interpretation of page 33 of my report, that performance in Wales with regard to discharge is "not too bad".

I hope that you find this clarification helpful.

Yours sincerely,



Jeremy Colman
Auditor General for Wales