

**Dame Gill Morgan DBE**  
Ysgrifennydd Parhaol • Permanent Secretary



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru  
Welsh Assembly Government

Mr Jonathan Morgan  
Chair, Public Accounts Committee  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
CF99 1NA

5 March 2010

*Dear Jonathan*

Thank you for your letter of 3 February arising from Paul Williams' oral evidence session before your Committee on 13 January.

At the outset can I say that I regret that you and your Committee found some aspects of the session not as helpful as you might wish. All the more so in the context of my remarks to the Committee in December when, as you rightly point out, I did express my ambition that, over time, I would expect my Director General colleagues to be able to address issues not necessarily directly in their specific command.

In that respect I should perhaps have qualified my views. What I was seeking to reflect was that the DG arrangements I have put in place were designed, in part, for my top team to work together more corporately and to take the Civil Service in WAG away from any inclination for work in a silo structure. My hope (which is being delivered) is that Director Generals would develop a greater understanding of activity (policy development/delivery) in their colleague's fields of activity. By such an approach I believe we can strengthen the organisation and that such collaborative working will improve our delivery.

I do hope the foregoing clarification is of help. I think, however, that the Committee's understanding that each DG might be fully qualified to answer detailed, specific, points in any area does not quite follow and would not serve the Committee as well as you and I would wish.

To take this specific case as an example, the Welsh Assembly Government's model for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, set out in the strategy document "Everybody's Business", is aimed not just at health services, managers of healthcare services at all levels and health professionals, but also at staff and management of social services, education, youth justice agencies and the voluntary sector. Policy development and delivery you will see cuts across Ministerial portfolio.



On receiving a first draft of the Wales Audit Office (WAO) report, Paul Williams wrote to Jeremy Colman expressing concern, for example, that the report did not recognise the One Wales commitment to mental health services, the funding identified for CAMHS and the more robust performance management system through the Annual Operating Framework for NHS CAMHS, or the progress made towards meeting those targets. Paul also noted the report contained significant references to the education service on which he was unable to comment. He suggested that the WAO open a dialog with the Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills so they could understand the division clearly and, it follows advise you and your Committee accordingly.

At the evidence session in January (and reflecting the pan- WAG DG role I mention above) I see the transcript shows that Paul did cover a range of education issues including schools counselling on which there has been cross Departmental collaboration. By the same token I am not surprised that he could not answer detailed questioning on, say initial teacher training.

I think you and your Committee know that my Director General colleagues and I are fully committed to working well with the Committee and being as helpful and as accountable as we can. In view of the strength of the concerns you expressed I reviewed the situation with my team on receipt of your letter. For the future (and so we deliver on what I say here) we have adopted a protocol to direct the way we respond to the Committee. In short, where an issue under review is exclusively within the domain of one DG that official would attend; where a matter touches on a second area, the DGs involved will decide on how the lead DG might be supported to assist the Committee as best we can; where a matter touches significantly on a second area (or even more) we would want both DGs to appear before you. Of course, in all this where it might be possible to have an indication of prospective lines of questioning this would enable us to do our very best to support the Committees work.

I hope you will agree this is a sensible way to proceed.

Turning to the specific issues on which you sought more detail, I can say that the education system in Wales recognises the importance of life skills to help young people develop into rounded individuals, through provision for initial teacher training, within the curriculum requirements and through various initiatives and channels of support. Taken together, these targets improved wellbeing of learners, recognising that self-esteem affects learners' confidence, ambition and ability to deal with life generally. Understanding and managing emotions improves mental health by increasing learners' ability to cope with conflict, stress, loss and change.

The Qualified Teachers Status standards required trainees to be aware of the potential impact of emotional development issues on learners. Trainees' knowledge is likely to be generalist, but their training should equip them with

the understanding and awareness to know where to find more detail, when they need it.

The curriculum provides many opportunities for learners to explore these issues. Individual schools and colleges, taking into account local needs, determine the detail of their provision. The Welsh Assembly Government has provided further support and guidance for this complex and challenging area through a number of initiatives. Estyn's revised Common Inspection Framework puts greater emphasis on what steps schools are taking to promote their pupils' emotional health and wellbeing.

I do hope you will see that I have taken most seriously the Committee's concerns and I hope we can agree this is an acceptable way forward. If you would wish to discuss I would be only too pleased to meet.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'gill'.

**GILL MORGAN**