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Mr Nick Ramsay AM
Chair of the Public Accounts Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
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Dear Nick

HOSPITAL CATERING AND PATIENT NUTRITION

Further to the email request from the Committee's Deputy Clerk on 11th May 2017, I am writing to provide advice regarding the Welsh Government's response to the recommendations set out in the Committee's recent report on Hospital Catering and Patient Nutrition.

I am pleased to see that the Welsh Government has accepted in full the ten recommendations made by the Committee. In overall terms, the Welsh Government's response is a reasonable one, although in a several places the detail and timescales of the actions could be clearer. I have set out some specific comments on the Welsh Government's response below.

Recommendation 1: It is not clear if the standing agenda item for patient feedback on meals applies to the All-Wales Menu Framework Strategic Monitoring and Evaluation Group or to the annual joint meeting with the Nutrition and Catering Group.

Recommendation 3: The response would indicate that the current nursing documentation includes appropriate assessment questions, although my Memorandum to the Committee highlighted continuing gaps in the information captured as part of the nutritional screening process while not all assessment documentation included prompts for the type of information recommended by the Committee. The Welsh Government's response may therefore not give assurance that the Committee's recommendation will be fully implemented.

Recommendation 4: The Welsh Government's response indicates that a stakeholder event was to be held on 19th May 2017 but no information has been provided as to its purpose.

Recommendation 5: Notwithstanding the fact that the “WIDI” initiative appears to be innovative, the Welsh Government’s response does not address the substantive point of the Committee’s recommendation which is to review workforce planning arrangements within NWIS.

Recommendation 6: The Welsh Government’s intention to work with health boards to examine compulsory training for nutrition is to be welcomed, however, no timescales are set out for undertaking and concluding this work.

Recommendation 9: It appears that little, if any, progress has been made on this issue since the inquiry last autumn. Given that the Committee requested that Welsh Government give this “utmost priority”, this will be of concern.

I trust this information is helpful, and I would be happy to expand further on any of the above points when the Committee considers the Welsh Government’s response on 5th June.

Yours sincerely



HUW VAUGHAN THOMAS
AUDITOR GENERAL FOR WALES