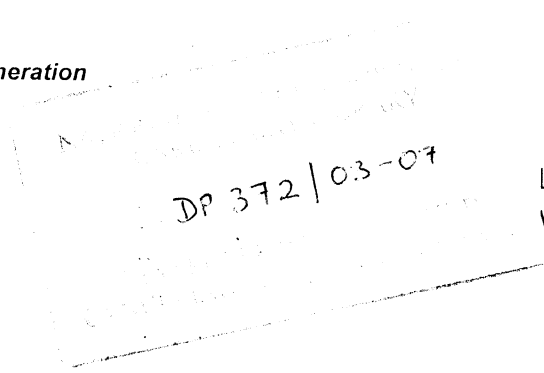


Edwina Hart AM MBE
Minister for Social Justice and Regeneration



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

Our ref: OAQ24352



Kirsty Williams AM
The National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

15 July 2003

Dear Kirsty

During the plenary session on Wednesday, 4 June 2003, I replied to an Oral Assembly Question from Janet Ryder about rural isolation (OAQ24352). In the exchange that followed, you asked me to look at instances where one aspect of poverty in an area may be masked by other factors, thereby hiding the true situation. You suggested that, as a result, such an area might be ineligible for funding under the Communities First programme.

As I indicated in my reply, eligible areas for the Communities First programme are the 100 most deprived electoral divisions as recognised by the current Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation. There are also 32 areas at sub ward level where pockets of deprivation have been identified and 10 communities of interest or imaginative proposals. Work is currently underway to update the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation. The first phase of this work, during 2003, will investigate options for updating and will include consideration of issues such as pockets of deprivation that, for various reasons, are not picked up by the current Index. The plan is to consult on the way forward before the second phase to update the Index that will be undertaken during 2004, subject to the availability of funding. A similar approach is being taken in England and Scotland.

Edwina Hart



BUDDSODDWR MEWN POBL
INVESTOR IN PEOPLE