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3 MARCH 2004

Edwina Hart AM MBE

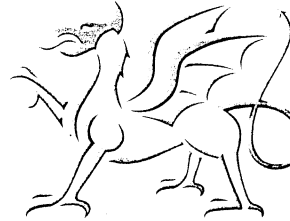
Minister for Social Justice and Regeneration

DP 610 103-07

Our ref:

Your ref:

Janet Davies AM
Member for South Wales West
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

Bae Caerdydd
Caerdydd CF99
Switsfwrdd: 029 2082 5111 GTN: 029 2082 5111
Ffacs: 029 2089 8000

Cardiff
Cardiff CF99
Switchboard: 029 2082 5111 GTN: 029 2082 5111
Fax: 029 2089 8000

17 March 2004

Dear Janet

At the plenary debate on the 3rd March I undertook to write to you on progress with the UK Government on abolition of the Single Room Rent restriction for Housing Benefit, which applies to those aged under 25.

The Department of Work and Pensions has noted my concerns on this issue, and I believe this has contributed to recent developments in this area.

In 2001 the rules on this restriction were relaxed to include shared use of a living room.

Under the current Housing Benefit reform proposals people aged under 25 will not be treated differently than those over 25. There is a Pathfinder programme to pilot these proposals in 9 local authorities in England, Wales and Scotland, and Conwy has been chosen in Wales.

In addition I have recently learned that DWP have commissioned a study to examine the ways in which SRR impacts on tenants/claimants and on how it affects the private rented market.

Officials continue to make representations for the abolition of the Single Room Rent.

I will keep the Social Justice and Regeneration Committee informed of future developments.

Edwina Hart

