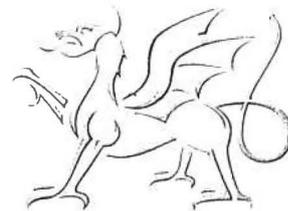


24 NOVEMBER 2004

Edwina Hart AM MBE

Minister for Social Justice and Regeneration

DP 725/03 - 07



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

Our ref: MB/EH/572/04

Janice Gregory AM
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

7 December 2004

Dear Janice

In Assembly Questions on 24 November you raised with me the issue of costs to voluntary groups of professional advice, with particular reference to architects' fees for community buildings. I agreed to examine the position and open discussions with professional bodies.

Recent grant applications to the Community Facilities and Activities Programme show a wide range of fees charged, varying according to the work required and the individuals appointed. Most professionals are not bound by standard fee scales, so there are opportunities for groups to shop around. Some will occasionally prepare drawings at risk ahead of funding being available or may act for free if they have a personal involvement. However, I recognise that most will need to charge for their work.

A number of options may be appropriate to help groups who have difficulties obtaining services at reasonable cost. These include ensuring groups have advice on how to appoint professionals, supporting community-enterprise provision, and offering funding to help groups develop their plans. Officials have made arrangements to discuss these matters with the Royal Society of Architects in Wales and the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors and I will report to the Committee in the new year.

Edwina Hart

