Request details
Please could you provide the following information:

a) The health board’s policy for reducing the number of patients on lengthy waiting lists / reducing waiting time
b) The process of removing patients from waiting lists

Response
Information can be accessed on the Cardiff and Vale University Health Board (UHB) web site in the Patient Access Policy. Please see link detailed here: http://www.cardiffandvaleuhb.wales.nhs.uk/opendoc/169596

a) Within this policy the UHB currently commits to the following

- Urgent patients are seen before routine patients
- Routine patients should have their care scheduled on the basis of the period they have actually waited, as opposed to the waiting adjusted to take into account Welsh Government rules, such as failure to keep a reasonable appointment. The policy recognises that this may not always be possible.

The UHB is committed to applying recognised service modernisation techniques to drive down waiting times – some examples include:

- Pooling i.e. evens out waiting times variation between consultants
- Rationalisation of skill mix i.e. patients seen, where clinically appropriate, by non-medically qualified staff under supervision of a consultant e.g. nurse led clinics
- Validation i.e. checking that patients still require care and circumstances have not changed (such as seeking private care) to ensure capacity not wasted by appointments not being kept
- Pre-operative assessment i.e. patients seen before admission for surgery to “screen out” any conditions that might prevent treatment (such as hypertension) thus preventing last minute cancellations, wasted capacity etc.
- Use of evidence based pathways

b) It has been presumed that “process” relates to the circumstances when patients are taken off waiting lists. Normally, this will be after a patient has received the care for which they were referred. If the patient needs to be followed up after that, the patient is not on a waiting list – the scheduling of this care is determined by whatever period the responsible consultant considers appropriate.

There are a small number of reasons why a patient could be removed from a waiting list prior to receiving the care for which they have been referred. The
precise circumstances are set out in Welsh Government’s “Unified Rules” – broadly the reasons are:

- It is not possible, after reasonable efforts over a reasonable period either to make contact with the patient and/or to agree an appointment with him/her
- The patient fails to attend a reasonable new appointment without giving prior notice, or cancels twice at the *same* pathway stage (e.g. outpatients – the patient would remain on the waiting list if they cancelled at *separate* pathway stages e.g. outpatients and surgery). The responsible consultant could override the offlisting if they considered it appropriate.
- The patient is unavailable for social reasons for over 8 weeks, either as a single period or in the aggregate whilst they are awaiting care
- Other circumstances which mean that the patient no longer wants or can’t have the treatment for which s/he has been referred