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2 December 2009

Mr D Jones

Dear Mr Jones

I am writing in response to your request of 6 November for an internal review of the Wales Office handling of your Freedom of Information (FOI) request of 30 September.

This review constitutes a full and independent reconsideration of the treatment of your request with particular consideration of the points raised in your email. In carrying out the review, I have looked at the way in which your request was handled, the information of relevance to your request held by the Wales Office, and the content of the substantive response sent to you on 22 October.

I have carefully reviewed the papers relating to this case and, as I only took up appointment as Director of the Wales Office on 1 October, I have also familiarised myself with the previous exchanges of FOI correspondence between you and the Wales Office relating to Wales Office staffing matters, starting with your request of 18 July.

I have concluded that the Wales Office did not fail to comply with its obligations under the Freedom of Information Act in properly handling and responding to your request of 30 September. I have, however, also concluded that – when viewed in the round – the responses you have received from us on these matters lacked clarity and supporting explanation in a number of places. Overall, I found the material to be difficult to follow and indeed confusing in parts. Please accept my apologies for this. You may be interested to know that I have instigated an urgent review of the guidance for Wales Office staff on good practice in dealing with FOI requests. In addition, our process for overseeing and quality assuring our handling of FOI requests is being strengthened.

You also asked for some further information. This is being treated as a separate Freedom of Information Act request, and you will be receiving a reply within the next few days.

Yours sincerely

(approved by Fiona Adams-Jones and signed in her absence)

Fiona Adams-Jones
Director

Cardiff Office / Swyddfa Caerdydd

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