

[REDACTED]

**Urgent**

16 March 2012

By Email

**Ms Julie Thompson**  
**Senior Finance & Personnel Director**  
**Resource Performance and Management Group**  
**Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety**  
**Belfast**

Dear Ms Thompson,

Your letter of 8 March 2012 refers.

You again seem to be suggesting that [REDACTED] liaise with the Trust and its legal advisers to resolve this matter.

For the record could I remind you that

- [REDACTED] has been attempting to liaise with the Trust and its legal advisers on this matter for **over 260 days**.
- The Trusts Legal Advisers initially took **172 days** to even acknowledge the initial late payment claim.
- Stephen McNally the Southern HSC Trust's Director of Finance acknowledged invoices had been paid late **240 days ago**
- The Minister has been aware of this issue for at least **220 days**
- It is **over 220 days** since the Minister's Special Adviser wrote acknowledging invoices had been late

In view of the Department's **failure** both to issue appropriate guidance and ensure appropriate policies are in place for dealing with such claims (as confirmed in the Ministers response to AQW 7816/11-15) can I invite you to suggest how a supplier can be expected to liaise with a Trust where invoices have been paid late in order to resolve

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

legitimate claims under the Late Payment of Commercial Debts (Interest) Act 1988 as amended especially where efforts to communicate are frustrated and delays as detailed are occurring?

In considering your response can I invite you to bear in mind a quote from a letter sent from the Office of the Minister for Finance and Personnel dated 25 October 2011 under reference COR/1327/2011 where it is stated, "*Each Minister in charge of a Department is responsible for its policies and business and is also responsible for ensuring the agencies and arms length bodies comply with any guidance and directions issued.*"

I await your further responses.

Yours etc

[REDACTED]

Cc Sammy Wilson MP MLA Minister of Finance and Personnel

[REDACTED]