



HOUSE OF COMMONS

Rt Hon Patricia Hewitt MP LONDON SW1A 0AA
Secretary of State for Health
Department of Health
Richmond House
79 Whitehall
London SW1A 2NS

FOI.
- Records
- Chris Gilson

14 December 2005

Our ref: CC/SM

Dear Patricia

Mr GRO-A

Following your recent letter concerning Mr GRO-A's request for information regarding the destruction of files held by the Department I have received my constituents comments, hereby enclosed.


You will see that Mr GRO-A raises a number of points and questions:

- Given that the files were sensitive and important, why was an inexperienced member of staff allowed to make the decision to destroy them?
- Why were the papers not archived and subsequently destroyed as stated?
- According to information contained in your last letter the documents perhaps ought to have been categorised under article 14.7.1 making them permanent and therefore not eligible for destruction.
- A certificate exists confirming destruction as part of the audit trail. May I request a copy of that certificate.

I would be grateful for a departmental response to the questions and comments made and look forward to hearing from you.

Yours

GRO-C

 Rt Hon Charles Clarke MP
Norwich South

Please reply to: Charles Clarke MP, Constituency Mail,
House of Commons, Westminster, London, SW1A 0AA
Constituency Telephone number: GRO-C Fax Number: GRO-C
maclaines@ GRO-C

PRIVATE OFFICE CC1
CORRESPONDENCE

16 DEC 2005

DEPT OF HEALTH
RECEIVED

MACLAINE, Sally

From: GRO-A [GRO-A]
Sent: 10 December 2005 14:29
To: Charles.Clarke2@[GRO-C]
Cc: MACLAINE, Sally
Subject: Patricia Hewitt and Sir Nigel Crisp letters

Dear Mr Clarke

Further to our meeting on 18.11.05.

Thank you for forwarding Patricia Hewitt's letter and enclosures dated 25/11.

I understand from Sally you have again written to the Lord Chancellor requesting further clarification of the FOI Act, in the light of Lord Jenkin's letter dated 1/11 which we discussed.

I am attaching a recent letter from Sir Nigel Crisp to Lord Jenkin, in which paragraphs 3 and 4 particularly are causing outrage.

Given the fact these files were sensitive and important, why was an inexperienced member of staff allowed to make the decision to destroy them?

And, why were our papers not adequately archived and subsequently destroyed as stated?

Although I am not versed in the workings of the DOH retention and disposition schedule, I would have thought these policy documents were categorised under article 14.7.1 which makes them "permanent" and therefore not eligible for destruction.

However, I see from the last line of Patricia Hewitt's letter a certificate exists, confirming destruction of material as part of the audit trail. Therefore I request copy of that certificate, please.

This latest information does little to relieve the anxiety, sorrow and grief felt by members of the haemophilia community who have been affected by such decisions, who have waited for years to understand how they became infected and now want to close their files. How are we to do this if the files have indeed been destroyed?

Lastly, I attach my colleague [GRO-A]'s recent letter to the DOH.
 I would be most grateful for your early advice as to how to proceed now.

Yours,

Most Sincerely,

GRO-A

12/12/2005

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