



"Re: Lord Archer Letter to SofS - Draft Reply"

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Jonathan Stopes-Roe

21/03/2007 17:10

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Subject: Re: Lord Archer

Letter to SofS - Draft Reply



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Liz

It would be helpful to know what further considerations weighed most heavily with Perm Sec, after he agreed the approach that William put forward. Without such a steer, it may be difficult to know how to advise further on handling.

Jonathan Stopes-Roe
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Jacky Buchan

Jacky Buchan
21/03/2007 16:48

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Subject: Re: Lord
Archer Letter to SofS - Draft Reply



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William,

MS(PH) has met with SofS to discuss our response to Lord Archer's request and SofS subsequently had a discussion with Hugh Taylor.

It has been agreed that the response needs to be more cooperative regarding the inquiry and officials should give evidence and papers should be made available.

Can you please redraft the reply taking this into account.

The redrafted reply need to be with me no later than midday Tuesday 27th please as that is our last box before Easter recess.

Many thanks

Jacky Buchan
Assistant Private Secretary
to Caroline Flint MP
Minister of State for Public Health

Tel: GRO-C

William Connon

William Connon
21/02/2007 12:14

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Subject: Lord Archer
Letter to SofS - Draft Reply



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Jacky,

As requested, I attach a draft letter for MS(PH) to send to Lord Archer following his letter to SofS regarding his inquiry. You asked for this by lunchtime today, hence this email cover note, rather than a formal submission.

The advice is that we should not become involved in Lord Archer's Inquiry at all. The attached draft, which has been cleared by Perm Sec and Sol, takes a fairly robust line.

Please see the final bullet concerning the need for a reply to Douglas Alexander. I have not seen Lord Archer's letter to Douglas Alexander but have suggested that he simply forward a copy of our letter with a brief cover note.

As I explained yesterday, we have very little information about the exact nature of the inquiry. I am concerned that if we enter into a dialogue about the details with either Lord Archer or the Haemophilia Society (HS) then we will simply become implicated in the inquiry, by association. I have therefore decided not to do this.

The main points are:

- It is recommended that no DH officials appear before this informal inquiry
- The Inquiry is being launched by Lords Archer, Morris and Turnburg.
- I am told that the inquiry is not directly linked to the Haemophilia Society, although Lord Morris is the President of the Society.
- I have no specific information about the terms of reference, location, funding or what form exactly the inquiry will take.
- I would not advise that we make any contact with those launching the inquiry to request further details.

- The draft does offer to provide Lord Archer with a copy of the report currently being compiled on all the documentation available to DH. You will be receiving a submission on this in the next few weeks. The report should be ready by the end of March
- I will continue to monitor the situation and keep everyone fully informed of any developments.
- I am copying this to the DA's for information, as I believe they will be taking a similar line.
- I am also copying this to Bushira Shafi and Michelle Lucas so that this reply can also be sent to Douglas Alexander, who has received a similar letter.

Happy to discuss

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