

Freedom of Information request 248/2011

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Information request

A copy of your departmental template/ instructions for putting together a ministerial submission or briefing

DWP response

The information you have requested is attached. Please note the reference to the Permanent Secretary relates to the Department's previous Permanent Secretary, Sir Leigh Lewis, rather than the current Permanent Secretary, Robert Devereux.

Annex A

Submissions Guidance

General

- The header should be adjusted to indicate the protection level.
- Remove the word '**Draft**' before the final submission goes forward. This is the Permanent Secretary's pet hate and he is utterly unforgiving on this issue. To do this go to the Format menu, then Background, and choose Printed Watermark option.
- The footer allows for version control.
- Boxes have been removed deliberately to allow for clearer Blackberry usage, so please do not add any.
- As a general rule, submissions should not be sent without first discussing them with the relevant private secretary.

Title

- The title should make it plain to any reader what the submission is about. Use simple plain English words.

Issue

- Briefly state the issue (100 words max - approx two paragraphs). This section should be short and to the point for quick reference.
- Summarise, concisely, what the Minister or senior official is being asked to decide or read and state the core issues involved.
- This section must reference financial impact (or the lack of it) – affordability is a prime concern in the current economic climate.

Recommendation

- State clearly and briefly what the Minister or senior official is being invited to do, for example approve, choose an option or read for information.
- If there is more than one recommendation, list all of them separately with cross-references to the relevant paragraphs in the text. [Generally: 1 - Agree that....; or 2 - Note that...].
- If there is a choice of options, offer a recommendation and state clearly why you have chosen this option. Include a 'Do Nothing' option if appropriate.

Timing

- Say whether the submission is urgent or routine, and give a deadline.
- If your deadline is extremely urgent, i.e. needing a next day response, explain why.
- Bear in mind that the advent of Coalition Government means that longer lead times will be required to meet formal clearance procedures in Home Affairs Committee, for example.

Discussion

Content

- This section should be no more than two A4 pages in normal spacing and type face so that the submission can be read in less than five minutes.
- Set out the background to the issue and highlight the main factual information relevant to the options and recommendation.
- Set out the arguments that the Minister or senior official should take into account, including reasons for options being discounted.
- Include other relevant considerations such as links/conflicts with other policies (including other departments).
- Where appropriate, outline advice from finance, analysts, legal, Parliamentary Relations Unit, Better Regulation Unit etc with further detail or background information attached in annexes as necessary. Consider each of the items below:

Impact: Where appropriate, summarise the impacts of the proposals, and the overall balance of costs and benefits, based on DWP's social cost-benefit analysis framework. Also consider to what extent the proposals will impact on business, customers, operational delivery, local authorities, devolved administrations, external lobby groups etc. If they impact on other government departments or EU business this should also be covered. If appropriate, include benefit simplification and sustainable development issues. [Teams that you may need to consult can be found here](#). But use your judgement on all this; cover these issues where, but only where, they are obviously relevant.

Summarise the regulatory and equality impact and include reference to the preparation of any impact assessments. Use your judgement on all this; cover these issues where, but only where, they are obviously relevant.

Financial Implications: Summarise the financial implications for DWP/Government more widely of your proposal. All submissions with significant financial impact must be agreed by Planning and Performance Management (PPM). Include, as appropriate, issues such as value for money; Spending Review implications; the cost of a "Do Nothing" option; the question of whether this involves new funds and whether they are sufficient to cover

both one-off, and recurrent, cost consequences; as well as headcount implications and other benefits.

Evidence: Ensure that the policy recommendation is backed by the relevant evidence or at least refers to it.

Risks: Consider the risks of any options, e.g. to corporate reputation.

Communications / Handling Issues: Seek advice from Press Office on the communications / handling implications of your recommendation. Make clear who in communications has contributed to the submission. Where there is likely to be significant media interest, agree timing and handling with Press Office. Depending on the issue, engage special advisers in advance of finalising the submission.

Coalition Considerations: Set out how the coalition has been taken into account in framing your advice. Where relevant, reference the Coalition Agreement and evaluate proposals against this (e.g. in accord with, at odds, not covered, covered in related area).

Parliamentary Implications / activity: Make clear what, if any, parliamentary handling is required or recommended and include timing information. Even fairly routine activities may require a Written Ministerial Statement. If in doubt check with the Parliamentary Relations Unit.

Legal Implications: Seek advice on any legal implications (including on any international/EU obligations) and ensure that the advice is accurately reflected.

Special Adviser Comments: This section should only include comments made directly by special advisers and will be inserted by the special advisers' office when it is necessary.

- Not all these items will be relevant to every submission. If so, the titles may be deleted.

Style

- Throughout the submission use simple, plain English. Do not believe that just because you understand the technical jargon everyone else will.
- Reference any previous submissions and clearly cross-reference annexes throughout. When referencing use the format "see Paragraph 2(b) **Annex Q**".
- Tables, graphs and diagrams can often replace lengthy written explanations.
- Avoid acronyms other than those in really common usage like the CBI or TUC.
- Number pages and paragraphs.

Clearance

- Include the name (and position) of the most senior official to have cleared the submission.
- Make clear where colleagues in relevant teams (e.g. Finance, Legal, Better Regulation Unit, Parliamentary Relations Unit, Diversity and Benefit Simplification Unit, Joint International Unit) have cleared the submission.
- If the submission needs to be cleared by the Permanent Secretary do not send it to Ministers until it has been cleared. Any comments from the Permanent Secretary will be fed back to the author directly.

List of Annexes

- Refer to the title and number of each Annex, in **BOLD**, in the main text.
- Attach to the main submission all annexes (except letters).
- Format correctly and attach, as a separate document, any letters to be signed.
- Where an annex is a lengthy document which the Minister must consider or approve, it should also be accompanied by a short summary.

Copy List

- Copy sparingly. Most copy lists are far too long. Copy submissions to the Secretary of State to the relevant junior Minister or Ministers and the Permanent Secretary using the **MINISTERS** distribution list. Thereafter use your discretion.

Security Markings

- Make sure you use them where appropriate. Do not over-classify. 'Protect' or 'Restricted' will cover the great majority of the Department's business. 'Confidential' is rarely necessary.

Annex B

Submission Template

From: **Name**
 Unit / Division

To: **Principal Recipient**

1. Submissions should be addressed only to the relevant minister or senior official. If several people need to consider the submission, discuss first with appropriate Private Office.

Date: Submitted

Title: Policy Area; Topic

Issue:

2. Briefly state the issue (100 words max - approx two paragraphs).

Recommendation:

3. State clearly and briefly what the Minister is being invited to do, e.g. approve, choose an option or read for information.

Timing:

4. ROUTINE (typically five working days) or URGENT.
5. State clearly by when a response is required and why, especially if urgent.

All of the above should fit on one page

Discussion

6. This section should be no more than two A4 pages in normal spacing and type face. Remember less is generally more.
7. The author and colleagues clearing the submission should consider in turn each of the items in the Guidance below. If the item is irrelevant, then simply delete.
8. Areas that **MUST** be considered are:
 - Impact
 - Financial implications
 - Evidence
 - Risks
 - Comms / Handling Issues
 - Coalition Considerations
 - Parliamentary Implications / Activity
 - Legal Implications
 - Special Adviser Comments

Clearance

9. Clearance may be required from more than one area. See Guidance.

Annexes

10. Include a full list of annexes. But remember that Ministers and the Permanent Secretary will rarely have the time to read long annexes so if it is not in the main submission it probably will not be read. Use annexes primarily to give Ministers the chance to delve more deeply into the issue if they want to.

Copy List

11. Copy sparingly (see Guidance).

Annex C

Briefing - Working with Ministers

To get the best outcome from your briefing, speak to the Private Office to understand what the Minister knows about a particular issue, and what his/her main concerns are. Some Ministers may have specific requirements for their briefing, such as structure of contents and layout, which can be accessed via the guidance link on Ministers' intranet pages.

Here are some general points you should consider.

Meetings

All briefings should be short and focused. Here are some guidelines:

Contents page	
Summary note	<p>Include a one page summary note setting out the key objectives of the meeting and, if appropriate, key points for the Minister to make.</p> <p>This must show clearly what decisions the Minister is being asked to make.</p>
Agenda	<p>A suggested agenda - this should be agreed with external organisations where appropriate.</p>
Map/directions	<p>For meetings outside the Department include the full address (including postcode), directions and, preferably, a map.</p>
Attendee details	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ a list of all attendees and their job titles○ brief pen-pictures of any external attendees and their organisation if they are likely to be unknown to the Minister
Issues for discussion	<p>Include the detail of any issues to be discussed. Consider including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ background○ current position○ future options○ arguments for and against○ costs and benefits○ presentational issues.○ elephant traps <p>If external organisations or departments are attending, you should also include lines to take and / or questions and</p>

	answers.
Background material	<p>Include any other background material that you think relevant. Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ previous submissions ○ facts, figures and costings ○ related correspondence. <p>Note: any data included in the briefing must be double-checked for accuracy by someone other than the drafter and checked for consistency throughout the briefing pack</p>

Attending meetings

The Ministers Private Office will be able to advise you on which officials should be attending the meeting, but as a general guide:

- officials should attend **all** meetings with external organisations;
- Keep the number of officials at a meeting with the Minister should be to a minimum. The lead official and the submission author should attend.

Minutes

The relevant Private Secretary or if previously agreed an official attending the meeting will take the minutes of the meeting and aim to send out within one week .

Visits

Planning a visit

- Please give the purpose, full itinerary, agenda and address to the Diary Manager and relevant Private Secretary as soon as possible.
- During a visit it is important that one person with good local knowledge takes full responsibility for organising the visit and liaising with the accompanying Private Secretary. Please make clear in the briefing who this will be.
- A member of the Minister's Private Office will always attend.
- Consult with the National Press Office to ensure that the visit is appropriately covered in the media.
- On occasions the Minister will want to include a political visit in the itinerary so check with the Private Office if time should be set aside.

Contents page	
Summary note	Include a one page summary note setting out the key objectives of the visit and, if appropriate, key points for the Minister to make.
Agenda	Include a full itinerary, including travel time.
Map/directions	Include full address (including postcode), directions and, preferably, a map.
Attendee details	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ a list of all attendees and their job titles and organisations ○ brief pen-pictures of any external attendees if they are likely to be unknown to the Minister ○ name and contact mobile phone number of the person coordinating the visit.
Issues for discussion	<p>Include the detail of any issues to be discussed. Consider including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ background ○ current position ○ future options ○ arguments for and against ○ costs and benefits ○ presentational issues ○ elephant traps <p>If external organisations or departments are attending, you should also include lines to take and / or questions and answers.</p>
Background material	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ core labour market information ○ local performance information, where available ○ any regional / local issues with lines to take, cleared through national and regional press office and policy officials ○ location maps ○ the name(s) of the local MP(s) and their political party (Private Office will write to the MP to inform them of the Ministers' visit) ○ Jobcentre Plus performance against targets ○ good news stories ○ significant milestones that the Minister could announce

