

MR. ADDISON

PROGRESS CHASING

I told you this morning that the Prime Minister would like a review of our arrangements throughout the office for progress chasing of outstanding letters, remits to departments, actions, etc.

I should be glad if you could carry out a review of our arrangements with a view to preparing a report which we could discuss with the Prime Minister.

I suggest that your review concentrates on the following:

- arrangements for picking up and identifying outstanding actions, etc. so that the office machine knows that there is an item to be chased;
- arrangements for chasing any item so identified;
- arrangements whereby the office judges whether progress on any particular action is adequate.

Your review should, in particular, identify the existing systems for progress chasing, should evaluate their effectiveness and make recommendations, where necessary, for their improvement.

Could you please aim to produce your report by, say, the first fortnight in 1986.

N.L.W.

N L WICKS

10 December 1985

SLH/16

MR SHERBOURNE ✓

MRS RICHARDS

MISS HOLT

MISS BRINE

PROGRESS CHASING

I have been charged by Nigel with the task of conducting a review of the office arrangements for progress chasing. A copy of his commissioning note is attached.

The review will need to cover the arrangements in Confidential Filing, the Garden Rooms, the Political Office and the Correspondence Section. As a first step, I should therefore be grateful for a note from each of you, by the end of next week at the latest, which explains the current procedures in your section, and which in particular identifies, as Nigel's note suggests:

- (i) the arrangements for identifying items which need to be followed up;
- (ii) methods of progress chasing those items;
- (iii) systems for assessing what further action may be necessary.

I should also be grateful for your assessment of the comprehensiveness and effectiveness of the existing procedures and to know whether, and if so how, they might be improved. I should like your reports to be kept as short as possible, and in any case to less than three sides.

When I have your responses, I shall put together a short draft report, which I will circulate to you for comment. I will be submitting a final report to Nigel by Friday 17 January.

Mark Addison

MARK ADDISON

12 December 1985

MR. ADDISON

Progress Chasing

Thank you for your minute of 12th December.

Progress Chasing in the Political Office takes the following forms for different items of work.

1. Draft Departmental Replies to Letters: when a request is made for a draft a specific deadline is set and a bring forward system operates.
2. Invitations to the Prime Minister: important requests are submitted for the next diary meeting and action is then promptly taken; all other requests are replied to within a few days.
3. Conservative Central Office: all requests to Central Office are replied to extremely fast by officials there; nevertheless a bring forward system operates though it rarely has to be implemented.

Overall I have always found that the best way to ensure that our correspondence is dealt with expeditiously is a comprehensive bring forward system so that you can follow up anything at the appropriate time. However, this does not mean that those you are chasing up will themselves deliver on time. Very occasionally we have a problem with Central Office officials but far more frequently departmental officials do not respond as quickly as they should to a specific deadline and subsequent nagging.

S.S.

STEPHEN SHERBOURNE

17.12.85