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Treasury Chambers, Parliament Street, SW1P 3AG
01-233 3000

25 February 1982

The Rt. Hon. Baroness Young
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sir Derek Rayner'.

REVIEW OF ADMINISTRATIVE FORMS

I am generally content with the draft White Paper enclosed with your letter of 27 January. I am pleased to note some favourable comments on my own Departments, but I would like to raise the following points:-

1. The Plain English Campaign Awards referred to at paragraph 3 were made for leaflets; a new leaflet in the case of the Customs award. In line 8 "redesigned forms" should read "new leaflets".
2. The draft refers in paragraph 14(e) to forms testing. I accept the general desirability of testing forms before they are introduced, but this will not always be possible because of time constraints, eg on the implementation of Budget changes. I would prefer the third sentence of this paragraph to read "Forms will be tested before they are introduced, wherever possible, to check"
3. At paragraph 10 of Annex 1 Sir Derek Rayner says that "Departmental teams could not find out how many forms their own Departments had in use or even the usage rates for those forms they examined." Appendix III of the Customs report gave details of the numbers of different types of forms used by the Department and the estimated annual consumption whilst Appendix I of the Revenue's report gave the number of different forms in the Department together with a classification, and the forms studied in the review were quantified in the text. Perhaps the remarks could be softened along the following lines:

"Some of the Departmental teams were not able to find out .."

4. In respect of Annex 2, Customs have suggested that the second paragraph of the summary of their report would be more accurate as follows:

/"Some



"Some proposals are still being considered but action is being taken on recommendations which will result in a saving of eight kinds of forms and have already led to about 1.5 million fewer forms being issued each year. Savings to the Department are estimated at £32,000 and, to businesses, at £2.5 million."

Customs and Excise and Inland Revenue will be making their reports available to the public and Parliament on the same basis as your own Department.

I am copying this letter to recipients of yours.

GEOFFREY HOWE

8 FEB 1982



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "John" or similar, with a horizontal line underneath.



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SECURITY
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Baroness Young
 Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster
 Management and Personnel Office
 Whitehall
 London
 SW1A 2AZ

12 February 1982

Dear Janet.

REVIEW OF ADMINISTRATIVE FORMS

Thank you for your letter of 27 January 1982 with which you sent a copy of the draft White Paper.

The review has shown clearly that improvements in forms design and production will not by themselves bring about the improvement in effectiveness of forms which is so obviously needed. The much more difficult task of changing attitudes and working practices at all levels within Departments must be given priority and tackled effectively. For that reason I welcome the emphasis the White Paper gives to bringing forms work squarely within the wider 'good management' programme for Government Departments.

I fully agree with the detailed proposals set out in paragraph 14 of the draft. Indeed I have already initiated action on the basis of the DHSS report, which will meet them in full. A new forms unit, using three of the four officials who carried out the DHSS review, has already started work and I expect professionally - trained and experienced forms designers to join the unit shortly. The new unit is drawing up plans for a review of major DHSS forms which will require policy and operational branches within the Department to re-appraise the need for the forms now used and to re-design those that we retained, to simplify them and suit them better to their purpose. The forms unit has been located within the DHSS Management Support Division as recommended and will be responsible to the Permanent Secretary through the Principal Establishment Officer. The forms unit will prepare progress reports at regular intervals.

I am arranging for copies of the DHSS study report to be placed in the Libraries of both Houses on 17 February and to be on sale to the public thereafter as indicated in Annex 3 of the draft White Paper.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, Cabinet colleagues, the Attorney General, the Lord Advocate, the Chief Whip, Sir Robert Armstrong, Sir Douglas Wass and Sir Derek Rayner.

Yours

Norman Fowler
 NORMAN FOWLER



WR
WZ

CABINET OFFICE

70 Whitehall, London SW1A 2AS Telephone 01-233 8224

9 February 1982

The Rt Hon The Baroness Young

Yes Janet.

REVIEW OF ADMINISTRATIVE FORMS

will request if requested

Thank you for my copy of your letter of 27 January to Willie Whitelaw.

The draft White Paper is a positive and comprehensive response to the problems which the review exposed. Provided Ministers and their departments make a reality of the good words it uses, it will do credit to both the Government and the Civil Service. Best wishes for the day of publication.

I had only a few minor suggestions to make on the draft and my office has passed these to your officials.

I am copying this only to Clive Whitmore, Robert Armstrong, Douglas Wass and John Cassels.

[Handwritten signature]

DEREK RAYNER

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MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FOOD
WHITEHALL PLACE, LONDON SW1A 2HH

From the Minister

Baroness Young
Chancellor of the
Duchy of Lancaster
Management and Personnel Office
Whitehall
London SW1A 2AZ

8 February 1982

REVIEW OF ADMINISTRATIVE FORMS

You sent me a copy of your letter to Willie Whitelaw of ~~27~~ January enclosing the draft White Paper on "Administrative Forms in Government". Subject to a very small factual amendment which my people are conveying separately to yours, I am content with the White Paper, and in particular with the programme of action set out in paragraph 14. My Department already has a Forms Unit, and work is already under way, in response to our own Departmental Report, to review all the forms presently in use in the light of the White Paper principles.

I am content for an edited version of the Departmental Report to be made available on the basis you suggest. It will be priced at £5.00 including postage; and a note of decisions taken will ... accompany the Report. A copy of this note is attached.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, other members of Cabinet, the Attorney General, the Lord Advocate, the Chief Whip (Commons), Sir Robert Armstrong, Sir Douglas Wass and Sir Derek Rayner.

PETER WALKER

RAYNER REVIEW OF ADMINISTRATIVE FORMS

Report on Forms in the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food

Note of Decisions Taken by the Ministry

1. The general thrust of the Report has been accepted by the Ministry, particularly the proposals that action should be taken to simplify and re-design forms to reduce error rates and checking problems. The Ministry has already started a review of all forms with this objective in mind, and improved departmental instructions will shortly be issued in the light of the Government's policy announced in the White Paper. These instructions will incorporate as appropriate the detailed recommendations of the MAFF Rayner Report.
2. The Ministry already has a Forms Unit, and its work will be extended as staff resources permit. It has been decided that the Unit should remain within Management Services Division, where the specialist expertise required for forms design work resides. As for the setting up of a data base of information at each Divisional Office, possibilities in this area will be receiving urgent study as part of the development of information technology generally within the Ministry.
3. Study of the possibility of using Census information for the hill livestock compensatory allowance and other similar purposes has revealed major obstacles to such a change, eg the need to enact main legislation and to re-negotiate schemes in Brussels: there could also be a commitment to higher public expenditure on the relevant allowances. The suggestion is not being adopted. However, the HCA 9 claim form examined in detail by the Rayner Scrutiny Officer has now been thoroughly revised, and a number of other livestock subsidy forms and leaflets are currently being revised with the objective of increasing comprehension, cutting down error rates and facilitating processing. The effectiveness of the revisions will be reviewed later this year.

4. All forms and leaflets in the investment grant series are being reviewed with the advice of HMSO, and will be issued in revised formats as soon as possible.

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES
AND FOOD

FEBRUARY 1982

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From The Secretary of State for Wales

The Rt Hon Nicholas Edwards MP

5 February 1982

Dear Sir

REVIEW OF ADMINISTRATIVE FORMS

Thank you for sending me a copy of your letter of 27 January to Willie Whitelaw, and for inviting my comments on the draft White Paper on Administrative Forms in Government.

I am generally content with the draft and I welcome the idea of an exhibition of forms. I hope to see the exhibition for myself, and my officials who are most concerned will also visit it. They welcome the promised guidance and help from your people.

You will be interested to know that my Department has been classifying the forms it uses and that during the course of this exercise, which is nearing its conclusion, more than 2,000 forms have been identified. This extraordinary number stems, of course, from the multi-functional role of my Department, and clearly indicates the scope for rationalisation and the magnitude of the task.

I am copying this letter to the recipients of yours.

[Handwritten signature]
N. Edwards

The Rt Hon the Baroness Young
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster
Management and Personnel Office
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FEB 8 1982

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