

Minister of Health

PF LAS



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Sir Gus O'Donnell KCB

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From the Private Secretary

Malcolm Alexander
Chair, Patients' Forum for the London Ambulance Service
30 Portland Rise
London N4 2PP

19 April 2007

Dear
Mr Alexander,

Thank you for your letter to Sir Gus O'Donnell dated 19 March 2007 and your letter to the Prime Minister dated 12 March 2007, in which you write about an alleged breach of the Ministerial Code by Patricia Hewitt relating to her decision regarding the closure of the Emergency Clinic at Maudsley Hospital.

I have looked through the correspondence you provided and have also seen the correspondence you have received from the Permanent Secretary, Hugh Taylor at the Department of Health. I am satisfied that the Department has responded to the concerns you raised about receiving a reply from the Department's Customer Service Centre.

Regarding an alleged breach of the Ministerial Code by Patricia Hewitt, as you are aware the *Ministerial Code* makes clear that Ministers are personally responsible for deciding how to act and conduct themselves in the light of the code and for justifying their actions to Parliament. It goes on to say that the code is not a rulebook and it is not the role of the Secretary of the Cabinet or other officials to enforce it or to investigate Ministers.

If you remain unhappy with the way in which your correspondence has been handled, the Parliamentary Ombudsman may be able to help you. The enclosed leaflet contains contact details for her office.

Yours

Paul Rennie
Private Secretary

