



HM TREASURY

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Dear Accounting Officer

PAC HEARINGS

This letter draws attention to how the PAC expects witnesses to respond to requests before and at its hearings. It is for the lead witness at each hearing to take responsibility for satisfying the PAC.

Summoning witnesses

2. The Public Accounts Committee (PAC) may choose to summon anyone as a witness to a PAC hearing if it believes that their evidence may help throw light on the enquiry in hand. The lead witness at the hearing, usually an Accounting Officer at the public sector organisation whose work is to be reviewed, should make every effort to meet the PAC's requests.

3. The lead witness is of course free to suggest additional or substitute witnesses if there is good reason to think that someone else could help the committee more effectively or appropriately.

Additional information

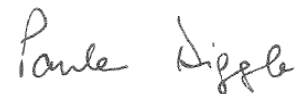
4. Sometimes witnesses to PAC hearings are unable to supply the committee with answers to all their questions on the day. It is then usual to offer to supply a written note. It is the responsibility of the lead witness to ensure that the supplementary evidence supplied is clear and adequate.

5. Witnesses should ensure that such follow up notes are sent to the PAC secretariat promptly. They should supply information readily available within a fortnight of the hearing. If supplementary evidence is likely to take longer, perhaps because research is required, it can follow up to a month after the hearing. However, witnesses should inform the PAC secretariat as soon as possible if they think the additional information may need to be sent later; and if any evidence has proved impossible to gather.



6. The PAC has recently criticised witnesses' performance in both these areas, in the debate of 19 April 2007. Witnesses can therefore be assured that the PAC will take note of any lapses from these standards, and could criticise the public sector organisations concerned.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Paula Diggle".

Paula Diggle
Treasury Officer of Accounts