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Dave Wright

Deputy Secretary General, EURIM

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5th March 2008

Dear Dave,

EURIM Position Paper on Information Sharing Protocols

Thank you for your letter of 19th February 2008 to Ed Miliband regarding your position paper on Information sharing. As Minister with responsibility for transformational government and information assurance I have been asked to reply.

Your position paper provides an interesting and useful contribution to the debate. My officials are discussing the paper with colleagues at the Ministry of Justice due to its relevance to the ongoing Walport Thomas Review on data sharing across government.


As your report rightly points out, information assurance is vital to maintaining public confidence in government's ability to share their information securely. Last June, the Cabinet Office published a National Information Assurance Strategy which sets the direction for the adoption of good information assurance practice across the whole of the UK. Since then, as you will be aware, there have been a number of data security incidents which have caused us to examine the processes and procedures which departments take to protect personal data and we have taken steps as necessary.



The Cabinet Office review of data handling is expected to report in the Spring. The review will make recommendations on what further steps should be taken in securing personal data on behalf of citizens and your paper will be considered alongside other contributions.

I am copying this letter to Michael Wills at the Ministry of Justice since his department has responsibility for the ongoing data handling review being conducted by Mark Walport and Richard Thomas.

Sincerely,



TOM WATSON