

09 May 2012

Martin Donnelly CMG
Permanent Secretary

Rt Hon Harriet Harman QC MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Dear Harriet Harman

Thank you for your letter of 3 May in which you asked whether specific arrangements had been made for contact between BIS and News Corporation during the period in which my Secretary of State was responsible for considering aspects of News Corporation proposed merger with BSkyB.

No specific, or separate, arrangements are made for contact between the Department and the parties to a merger following a public interest intervention by the Secretary of State. Of course, officials may need to have a proper working relationship with parties at appropriate stages of an intervention, for example, in circumstances where parties are considering offering statutory undertakings in lieu to remedy any adverse impact on plurality. Codes governing the behaviour of Ministers, civil servants and civil servants who are special advisers inform appropriate behaviour. Legal and policy advice informs each stage of a Minister's decision on an intervention.

Accordingly, all contacts are handled in accordance with these codes, and there were no specific arrangements for contact between my Department and News Corporation. Ministers, officials and special advisers were advised of the proper process to adopt around competition issues.

Yours sincerely



MARTIN DONNELLY