

3. All papers received in the Private Office were passed to the Minister via a Private Secretary either during the course of a working day or in an overnight Ministerial box. All papers were dealt with sensitively and urgently.
4. On considering papers, the Minister would approve or not approve recommendations suggested by officials. Before reaching a decision a Minister may have asked for additional information or clarification which was generally sought by a Private Secretary from the author of the submission either in writing or orally. On receipt of the Minister's comments, a Private Secretary would act on his instructions.
5. If a submission contained a letter for the Minister's signature and if he was content with the format and wording, he would sign it. If it contained a letter for a Private Secretary's signature, providing the Minister was content, a Private Secretary would sign it on his behalf.
6. My role was as a link between the Minister, the Northern Ireland Department for which he was responsible (then the Department of Economic Development) and, along with the Departmental Private Secretary, the relevant Divisions in the NIO.
7. As far as practical, I made every effort to see all paperwork received in Private Office, although due to the travelling nature of my role this was not always possible. I needed to have a broad understanding of the main issues within both departments but if additional information was required, as well as recourse to the Departmental Private Secretary, I had
✗ access to a network of ~~cont~~acts within both departments.
8. My role was concerned with process. Due to the wide range of current issues across both departments, I did not have (nor was I expected to have) a detailed knowledge of a specific policy. Further, due to the large volume of paperwork coming through Private Office I have very little recollection of individual submissions and letters. I therefore have no specific recollection of the submissions and correspondence which ^{could} ~~be~~ detailed below. I have commented on the basis of the documents having been shown to me prior