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3/2/02.



Department
of Health

Richmond House
79 Whitehall
London
SW1A 2NS

Tel: 020 7210 3000
Direct Line: 020 7210

PO1011801

Peter Walsh
Director
Association of Community Health Councils
Earlsmead House
30 Drayton Park
London
N5 1PB

27 JAN 2003

Dear Mr. Walsh,

With reference to the Minister's enclosed letter, I am writing to apologise on behalf of the Department for the very long delay in providing a response to your query.

Unfortunately, due partly to the increasing number of letters coming into the Department, a backlog developed. We have been making every effort to clear this backlog but it has meant delays in submitting cases to the Ministers.

We have already taken steps to improve the handling of correspondence in the Department and I regret that our performance on this occasion has fallen well below what Ministers and the public should expect from a Government Department.

I hope that you will accept this apology and I am sorry for any inconvenience that such a long delay may have caused.

Yours sincerely,
Olga Senior.

OLGA SENIOR
Head of Private Office