



Our ref: ATISN 14967  
Date: 8 April 2021

Dear ,

**ATISN 14967**

Thank you for your request which I received on 5 March 2021. You asked for:

*In respect of the process for handling the First Ministers correspondence:*

- 1) *Whether the distribution and deletion process is performed manually or automatically.*
- 2) *The rules used to perform this process showing exactly how individual emails are selected for onward forwarding to another mailbox, and how duplicate emails are identified. If the process is performed manually then I would hope that there would be a document that describes the process. If it is performed automatically then, presumably, this would be accomplished by defining rules in Outlook or elsewhere, of which even a partial screen shot, redacted if necessary, would suffice.*

To answer your questions:

- 1) The process is manual.
- 2) The First Minister receives correspondence on a wide range of subject matters, some of which does not fall within the remit of the Welsh Government, such as material related to his role as leader of the Labour Party in Wales. These would be re-directed appropriately and the Welsh Government cannot comment on the handling of correspondence that has been redirected.

As indicated previously correspondence the Welsh Government would process and answer could be sent to any department or division depending on the content of the query. This is a manual process and relies on individual judgement based on content of the e-mail, but will be handled in line with the information published here - <https://gov.wales/contacting-welsh-government-ministers>.

Duplicates are confirmed by a manual visual check of the e-mail, checking the mailboxes it has been addressed to and then by comparing it to any existing e-mails from that e-mail address. Again, due to the nature of the correspondence this process cannot be automated as not only may multiple e-mails from the same address not be duplicates, it may be beneficial to combine e-mails

that come in over a period of time (e.g. they are follow ups or provide additional information.) This also requires manual intervention.

If you are dissatisfied with the Welsh Government's handling of your request, you can ask for an internal review within 40 working days of the date of this response. Requests for an internal review should be addressed to the Welsh Government's Freedom of Information Officer at:

Information Rights Unit,  
Welsh Government,  
Cathays Park,  
Cardiff,  
CF10 3NQ

or Email: [Freedom.ofinformation@gov.wales](mailto:Freedom.ofinformation@gov.wales)

Please remember to quote the ATISN reference number above.

You also have the right to complain to the Information Commissioner. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office,  
Wycliffe House,  
Water Lane,  
Wilmslow,  
Cheshire,  
SK9 5AF.

However, please note that the Commissioner will not normally investigate a complaint until it has been through our own internal review process.

Yours sincerely