

From: [redacted]@education.gsi.gov.uk [redacted]

Sent: 20 August 2012 10:07

To: [redacted]

Cc: [redacted]

Subject: RE: Select Committee Response

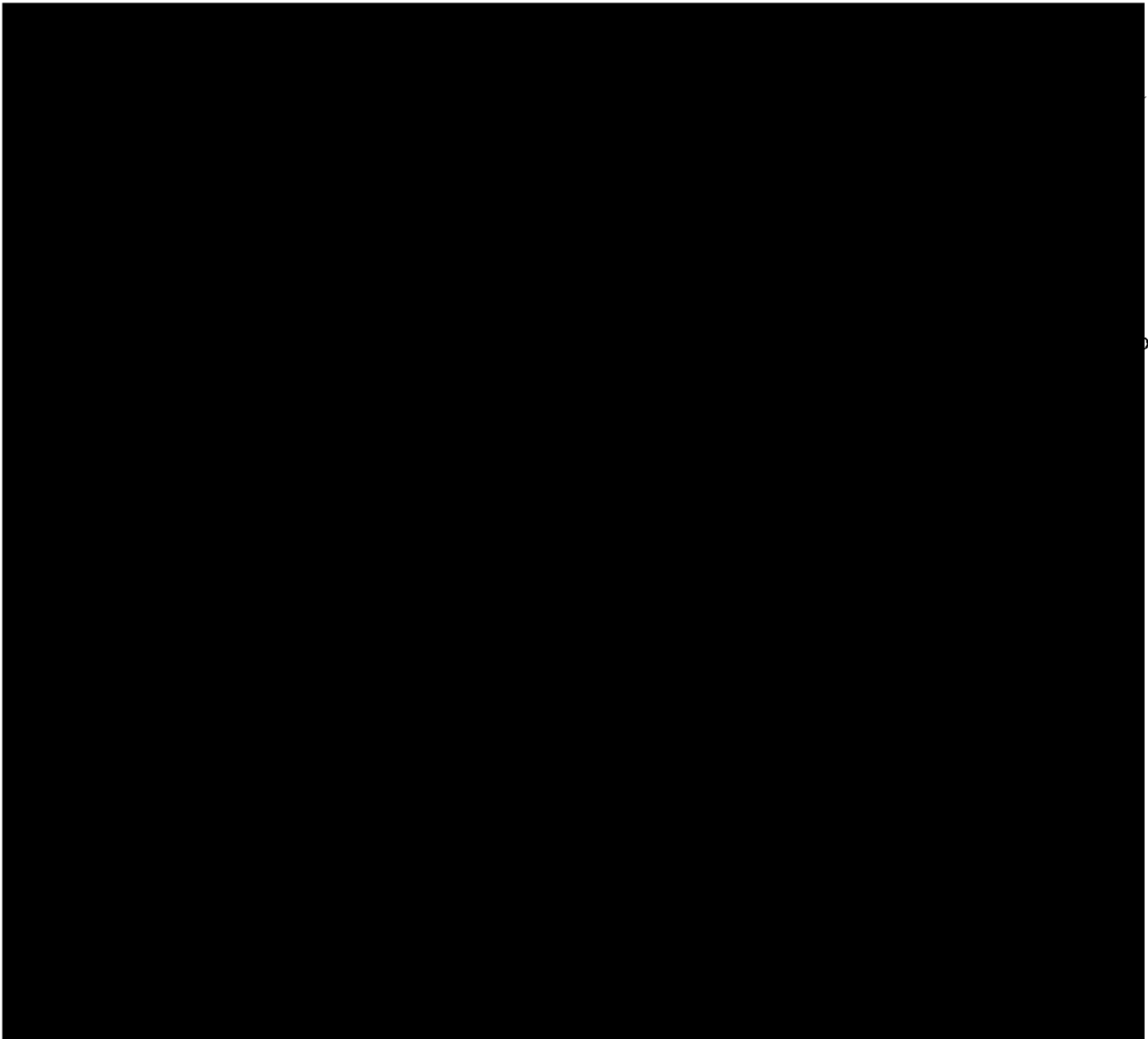


Just to respond on a couple of your comments:

- Nick Gibb has already agreed to meet John O'Dowd to discuss A levels, and we've put up a suggested response to the recent letter from him and Leighton Andrews proposing that meeting be extended to cover general three-country issues, involving the Welsh Minister too. The letter hasn't yet been sent, so there's nothing in diaries yet (and of course, if Ministers don't agree to the approach we're proposing this response will have to be changed!) but we'll let you know when anything firm is agreed. [redacted] is in the lead on this for us.

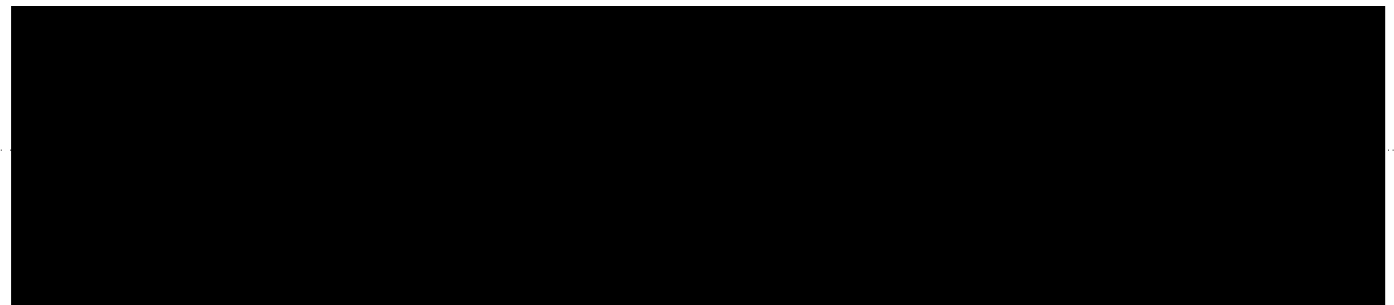
- [redacted]





From: [redacted]@education.gsi.gov.uk [redacted]
Sent: 03 August 2012 15:13
To: [redacted]
Cc: [redacted];
Subject: Select Committee Response

[redacted]



You'll note the reference to a Ministerial three-country meeting. This isn't in diaries or even agreed to yet, but we've had a letter from John O'Dowd and Leighton Andrews asking for a meeting and given that there doesn't seem to be

a particularly good reason not to meet it seemed to us to make sense to incorporate it here. ([REDACTED] will pick up with you/others separately.)



Department for Education

Tel: [REDACTED]

Mobile: [REDACTED]

www.education.gov.uk

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Cc: [REDACTED]

Subject: wales.docx

I attach a note of my meeting with [REDACTED] at Welsh Government yesterday. It was productive in terms of relationship building and mutual understanding and worth the five trains and six hours travelling for!

[REDACTED]

Meeting with [REDACTED] 21 August 2013

I met with [REDACTED] at the Welsh Government (WG). [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] made it clear that [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] was the decision maker in Wales within the framework set by the Minister. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

We agreed that the MoU was a good thing. I made it clear that we would want a reference to our legal differences. We also agreed that it would be for WG officials to send it to the Minister. I explained that we would need to refer to it in our response to the Select Committee. We agreed to share the words we would use on this.

[REDACTED]

Finally we talked about future meetings. I said we had been disappointed not to have been able to meet with Leighton Andrews last year and then to have been turned

down by [REDACTED] as well. I am not sure there will be any immediate change in this position but it may be that we should look for an opportunity to ask again. [REDACTED] however is keen to meet again and willing to come to Coventry. I will ask [REDACTED] for some dates.



From: [REDACTED]@Wales.GSI.Gov.UK]

Sent: 23 August 2012 13:31

To: [REDACTED]

Cc: [REDACTED]

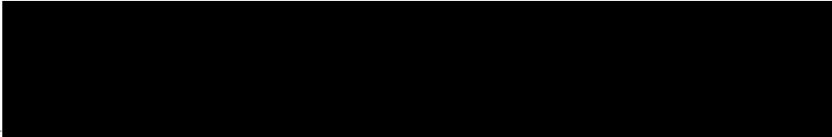
Subject: Statement - Leighton Andrews,AM

[REDACTED]
Here is the attached published statement but can I stress that Leighton Andrews is making this statement in his capacity as a politician rather than as a Minister . It has been drafted with assistance from his political advisers.

I am in a meeting this afternoon so can you copy [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] into any responses

Thanks

http://rhondda.typepad.com/leighton_andrews/2012/08/welsh-education-minister-concerns-on-methodology-were-raised-with-ofqual-.html



Department for Education and Skills (DfES) /yr Adran Dysgu a Sgiliau (AdAS)

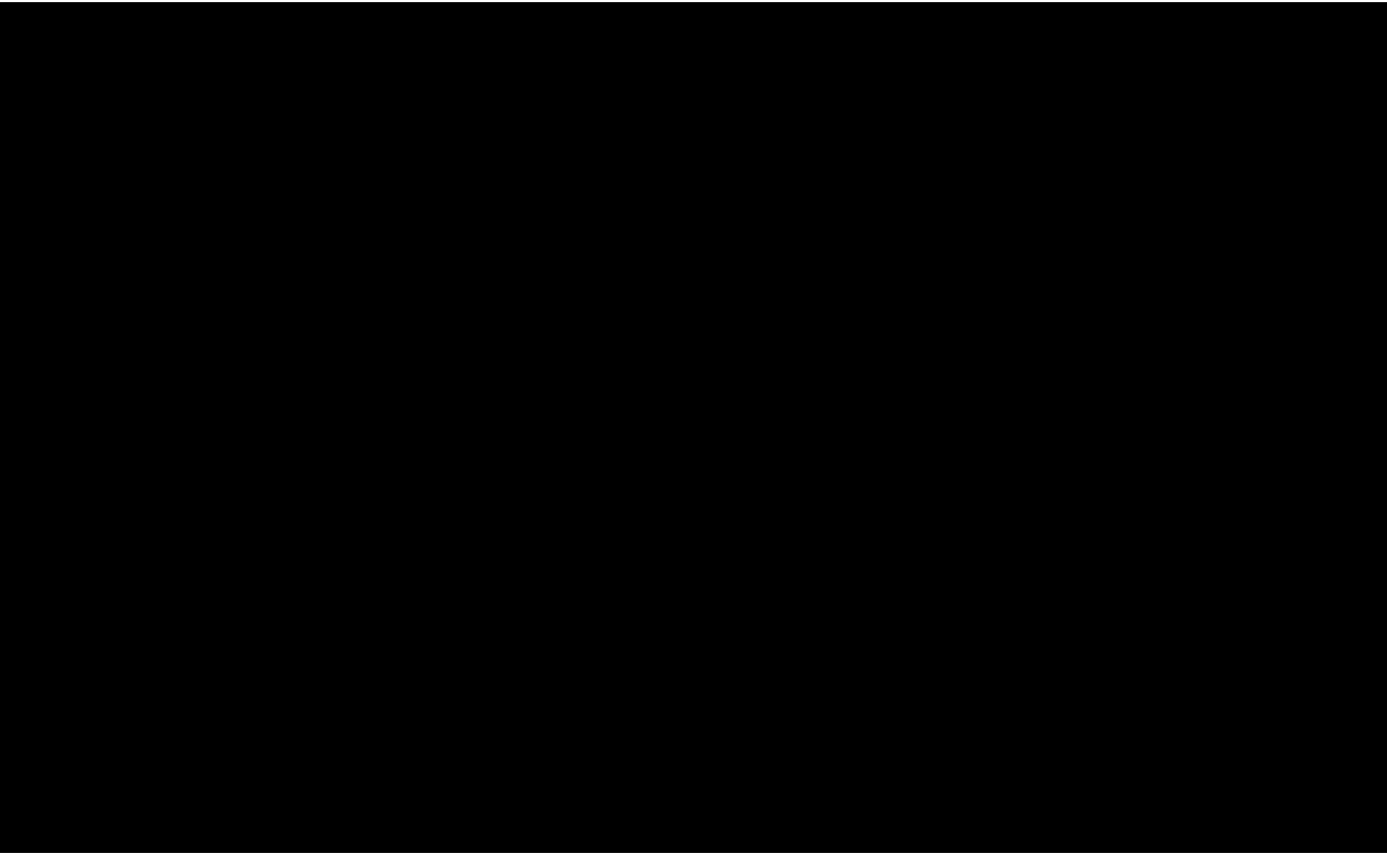
Welsh Government /Llywodraeth Cymru

Phone/Ffon [REDACTED]

Mobile/Symudof: [REDACTED]

Email/e-bost: [REDACTED]@cymru.gsi.gov.uk

Ty'r Afon , Bedwas Road , Bedwas , Caerphilly CF83 8WT

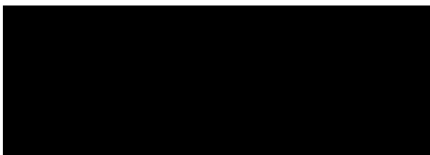


From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 24 August 2012 09:19
To: [REDACTED] CRC
Subject: RE: Leighton Andrews story

Dear all

I have now heard the Leighton Andrews pieces on the BBC. He says he is launching a review into the English results and I think the regulatory decisions. I am inclined to drop a line to [REDACTED] in very friendly and measured tones offering to discuss and explain where we are and noting that the comparable outcomes approach was a three country agreement.

Any problems with this?

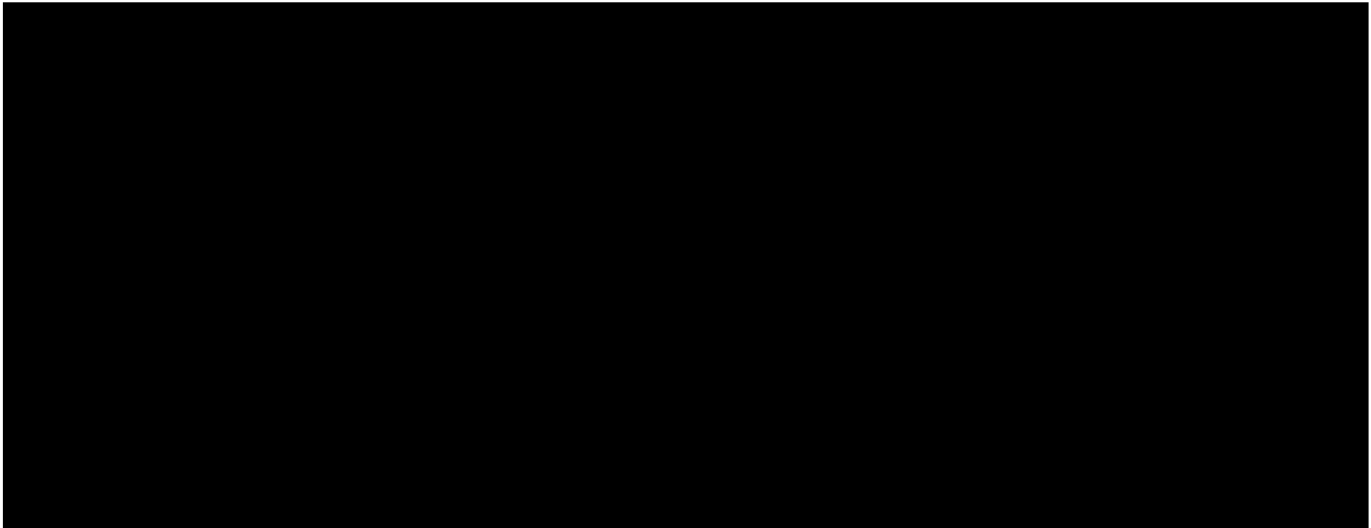


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From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, August 23, 2012 09:49 PM
To: - CRC
Subject: Leighton Andrews story

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-19360253>

Leighton Andrews' 'how high' tweet was not a one-off. It is quite shocking - highly inappropriate from a fellow regulator, hypocritical to accuse us of being political, and of course untrue. Am still not sure whether we should ignore - treat with the contempt it deserves - or respond. One option might be for Glenys to write to the PermSec of the Welsh Gvt, rather than a public protest. I suggest we consider next week.



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From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 24 August 2012 13:26
To: - CRC; [REDACTED]
Cc: - Media Relations
Subject: Leighton Andrews in the Guardian

http://www.guardian.co.uk/education/2012/aug/24/gcse-results-row-michael-gove-inquiry?CMP=tw_t_gu

GCSE results row piles pressure on Michael Gove to order inquiry

Michael Gove, the education secretary, is under pressure to order an inquiry into the way GCSE results fell following changes to the marking system that some have branded unfair.

The Welsh government has already launched its own inquiry into the English language results while the Association of School and College Lecturers (ASCL) has called for a wider investigation into the way English results went down following a decision to raise grade boundaries between exams taken in January and June.

Labour said the Commons education committee should hold an inquiry and Gove faced implicit criticism from his own party in the form of Tory backbencher John Redwood, who said he was "unsure of what is going on" and that it was "unfair" for exam criteria to change at the last moment.

Results published on Thursday showed the number of pupils getting A* to C grades fell for the first time in the GCSE system's 26-year history, with the proportion of English entries achieving a good pass dropping by 1.5 percentage points.

GCSE grades are essential for many pupils to secure a college place and are increasingly considered in university applications, meaning thousands of affected students are likely to appeal against their results. Good grades in English are also crucial for schools, which face being closed or converted into academies if results fall below government targets.

Brian Lightman, general secretary of the ASCL, accused the government of "tinkering" with the system and called for an inquiry.

"What has happened this year is not that the exams or standards have been made more rigorous in a way that young people and teachers can prepare for," he said. "What appears to have happened is that, halfway through the year, it was decided that too many students were going to get a C grade in English and the grade boundaries of the exam were pushed up very substantially.

"Standards in schools have not changed one iota. It is the grading that has changed ... It is morally wrong to manipulate exam grades in this way - you are playing with young people's futures."

Leighton Andrews, the education minister in the Labour-run Welsh administration, announced a review into the English language results and accused Gove of politicising the system. "It's a shame that we're seeing politics brought into the exam process by the secretary of state for education in England, Michael Gove," he told BBC Wales.

"When Michael Gove says jump, the head of Ofqual [the exam regulator] says 'how high?'."

David Reynolds, a professor of education at Southampton University and an adviser to the Welsh government, said: "It's difficult to avoid the assumption that there's an orchestrated campaign going on somewhere, and the issue is where is that being orchestrated from. Is it public opinion, is it the rightwing press or a Tory minister of education? We don't know but there's clearly something going on."

Stephen Twigg, the shadow education secretary, said there should be a Commons inquiry into what happened. "If pupils from the same year group have been marked more harshly if they were entered later, that is patently unfair. We need to understand why some pupils' grades have fallen so dramatically," he said.

"If we are to restore confidence in the exam system there needs to be a full inquiry into what happened by the education select committee."

In a post on his blog, Redwood, the Conservative MP for Wokingham, acknowledged there was confusion about what the examiners were trying to achieve.

"There seems to be some uncertainty about whether the current system is trying to establish an absolute standard of achievement which stays the same year after year, or whether they wish to have a similar proportion getting higher grades each year by fixing the pass mark through keeping the proportions of the different grades the same," he said.

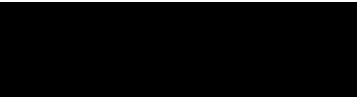
Accepting that it was "unfair" on pupils if they did not know what was expected, he went on: "I am myself now unsure of what is going on."

Gove has denied putting pressure on the examiners to bring down grades and, in comments on Thursday, he insisted the changes were comparable with what happened in previous years. "You cannot have a situation where exam passes continue rising forever and ever without there being in some subjects at some points grades either falling or steadying or changing – it's just in the nature of things that inevitably there will be alterations," Gove said.

Asked about concerns from English teachers that exams in their subject have been marked too harshly, he said: "Yes, the number of As and A*s has fallen, but the number of Bs has increased, the number of Cs has

fallen and the number of Ds has increased. That is a result of the independent judgments made by exam boards entirely free from any political pressure," he told the BBC.

Around 658,000 16-year-olds in England, Wales and Northern Ireland received their GCSE results on Thursday. They showed that in maths, 58.4% of entries got at least a C grade, down from 58.8% in 2011, and 15.4% got A*-A, compared with 16.5% last summer. In science, 60.7% got A*-C grades, down from 62.9%, and 9.8% got A*-A, down from 11.6% in 2011.

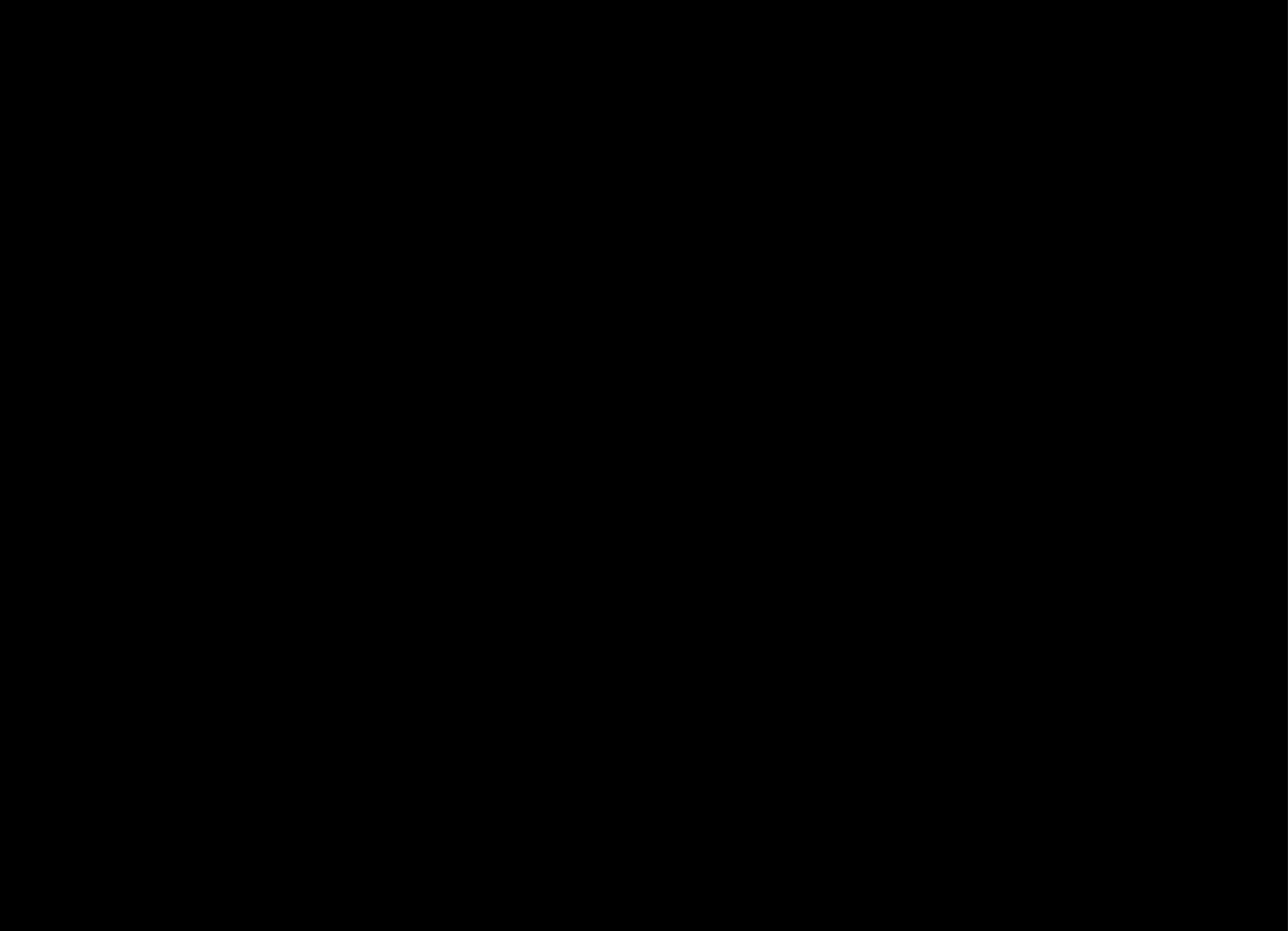


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From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 24 August 2012 18:09
To: - CRC; [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Welsh Government and GCSEs

After a couple of email exchanges with [REDACTED] this morning he rang to tell me the outcome of their deliberations at their end.

First they are not expecting Leighton Andrews to say anything more publicly and LA is about to go on holiday until 10 September.

Officials are proposing an internal enquiry in Wales into GCSE English results - to be led by [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

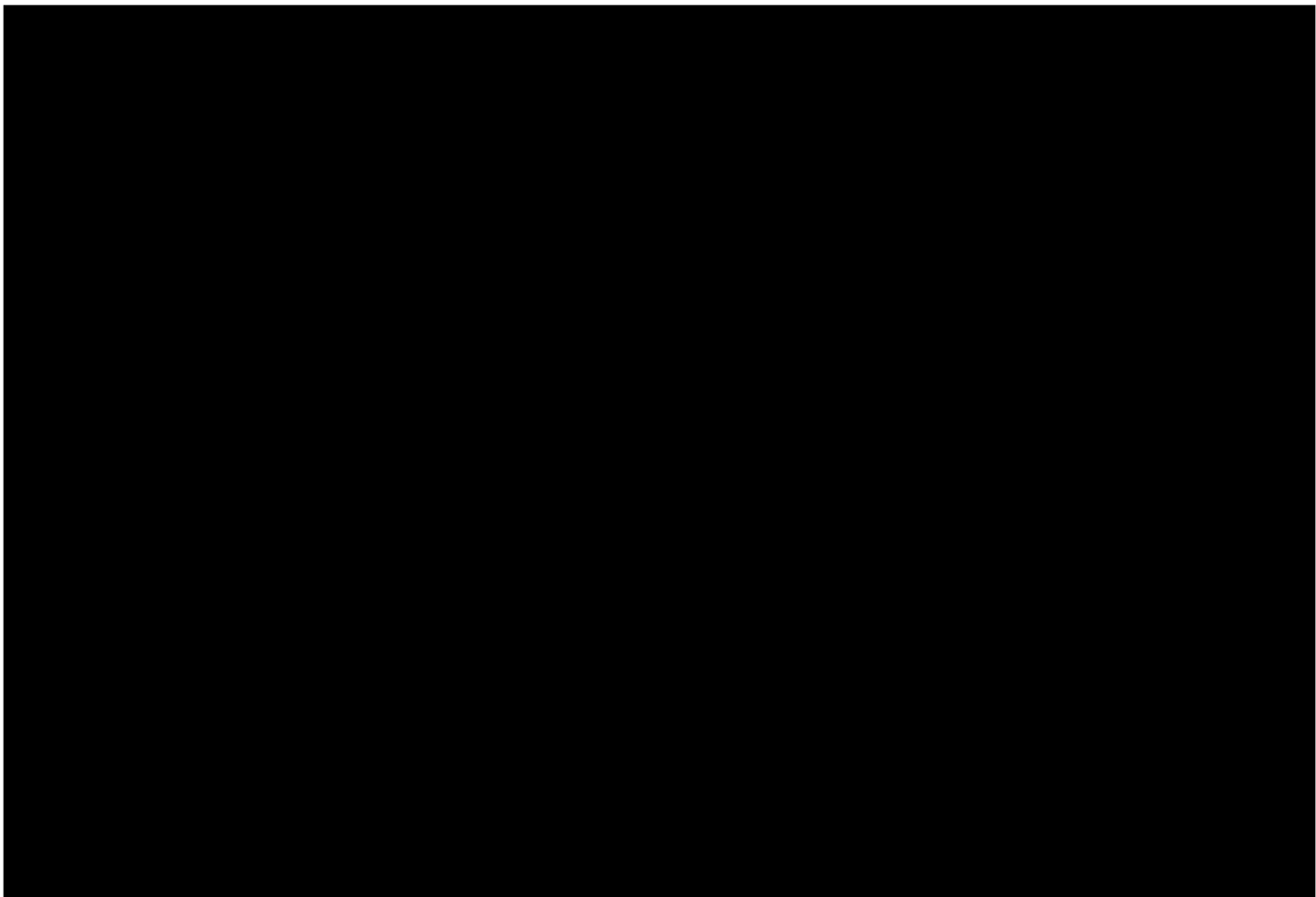
He recognises that we jointly regulate GCSEs.

The enquiry will look at

1. The process that got us to where we are today. He will want to find all the correspondence there is between us and Welsh Government on these matters, and any correspondence we have had with the SoS (this will not be an FOI request - not appropriate)
2. The implications of the results for "banding" of schools - the equivalent of league tables
3. The role of WJEC - I checked and [REDACTED] is aware of this enquiry
4. Lessons for future work as a joint regulator.

The timescale is unclear but they will need to have made some progress on this by the time the Minister is back on 10/9.

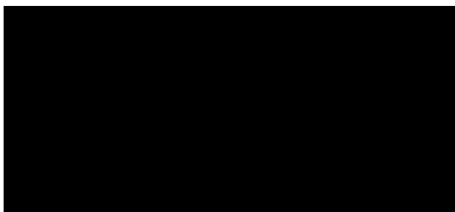
I said we would want to help them in any way we can. The ball is in their court to ask.



From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 11 September 2012 14:46
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: WJEC

[REDACTED] – thanks – I agree with all this.

However we do it, I think we need to get a stronger public position out very quickly – ideally before the SoS hearing tomorrow (he won't want to have to say 'Ofqual hasn't yet decided on its position' esp given that Leighton Andrews is on the offensive). As long as we don't say 'we will not allow regrading in England', we leave open the possibility that we will, which undermines our position.



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