



Mr. Wickes o.r.  
Re Address

JS10RI22

MR WICKS

DEPARTMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR TRIBUNALS

Your minute of 14 January asked for my views on the suggestion for a comparative study of Tribunal management. It may be possible to improve the speed with which cases are handled. The figures in the paper suggest that there is scope for improvement in the cost per case handled though the absolute level of savings will probably be small.

The practical question is the priority such a study should be given. My immediate concern is the current heavy demand on the very limited resources of the Efficiency Unit. In addition to a great deal of other work we are already engaged with the Lord Chancellor's Department on two much larger and politically sensitive topics on which scrutinies are just starting: escorting prisoners between prisons and courts, and what can be done to control the rapidly growing costs of legal aid. Until these are completed neither we, nor, I believe, they could find proper resources for a comparative study of Tribunal management.

I recommend that a decision on whether to mount such a study should be deferred until mid-year. In the meantime the Lord Chancellor's Department should arrange to set the management of the various Tribunals targets to get down the unit cost per case handled. This seems to me to be something they might do under normal management arrangements now that you have given them responsibility for the central co-ordination of Tribunals. The Efficiency Unit would be pleased to give some guidance on the setting of these targets.

I am sending a copy of this minute to Robert Armstrong.

ROBIN IBBS

30 January 1986



GOVT MACH: VAT Tribunds : April 85.



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