

05 February 2010

Dear Sir/Madam

Financial Stewardship

I am writing further to Carolyn Regan's letter of 17 December.

You will be aware that the Commission's annual accounts have been qualified by the National Audit Office. One of the prime reasons for this was that the accuracy of bills submitted by providers was not sufficient. Our work on contract compliance audits (CCA) is showing that this remains a significant issue.

We will be putting more of our resources into investigating and contract managing providers where the accuracy of bills is seen as an issue and I remind you that Clause 15.4 of the Unified Contract requires that "your claims must be true, accurate and reasonable".

You must ensure that you have controls in place within your organisation to ensure that you comply with this contractual requirement. This applies not only to individual bills submitted (such as crown court bills) but also fixed fee claims paid as part of your standard monthly payment. We will shortly be publishing further detailed guidance but, in the meantime, I would strongly recommend that you review and strengthen your internal control mechanisms.

- As part of our actions to address the issue for individual bills submitted – we will no longer telephone providers when the billing documentation is incomplete or incorrect but will return this to you for correction and resubmission.

If you have any queries regarding this letter, please contact your relationship manager.

Yours faithfully



Hugh Barrett
Executive Director, Commissioning



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