

## ANNEX A

### Code of Practice on Consultation

The code of practice applies to all UK national public consultation documents in electronic or printed form.

Though the criteria may have no legal force, and cannot prevail over statutory or other mandatory external requirements (e.g. under European Community Law), they should otherwise generally be regarded as binding on UK departments and their agencies, unless Ministers conclude that exceptional circumstances require a departure.

The criteria should be reproduced in consultation documents, with an explanation of any departure, and confirmation that they have otherwise been followed.

#### Consultation Criteria

- Consult widely throughout the process, allowing a minimum of 12 weeks for written consultation at least once during the development of the policy.
- Be clear about what your proposals are, who may be affected, what questions are being asked and the time scale for responses.
- Ensure that your consultation is clear, concise and widely accessible.
- Give feedback regarding the responses received and how the consultation process influenced the policy.
- Monitor your department's effectiveness at consultation, including through the use of a designated consultation coordinator.
- Ensure your consultation follows better regulation best practice, including carrying out a Regulatory Impact Assessment if appropriate.

More information about the code of practice is available on the Cabinet Office website:

<http://www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/regulation/consultation/code.asp>

If you have any complaints or comments about this **consultation process** please contact:

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