**Advocate General Preferences for letters**

When drafting a piece of correspondence please consider the following guidance.

The Advocate General likes letters to be written in clear, simple English. Please try to avoid technical jargon and Latinate forms of words. If technical language is unavoidable, please try to keep it as straightforward as possible. He also likes to use short sentences which avoid multiple clauses.

The Advocate General prefers letters to be about a single page in length. Private Office will prepare the final formatting of the letter, so please only send the draft text. We use Times New Roman Font at 12 point single spaced. Please take this into account when drafting.

The following is a checklist you should follow when drafting letters

* Consider an appropriate title for the letter.
* Typically it should begin "Thank you for your letter of (date)…".
* If it is late does it contain an apology and is the nature of the apology satisfactory? Did we send a holding reply, does the response refer back to it?
* Please do not repeat the details from the letter rather than provide answers.
* Please ensure that the letter answers or at least attempts to answer all the points raised. If it cannot answer all the points, i.e. where they are the responsibility of other departments, does it say so?
* Please don't do a ‘cut and paste job’ - i.e. have lots of standard paragraphs glued together.
* If the letter appears to be part of a campaign, please ensure that drafts are consistent but still moulded to fit the individual letter.
* Please ensure that the response is consistent with other answers on the same topic.
* Where appropriate, please express sympathy.
* Please ensure that you use technical or bureaucratic language, or jargon, sparingly.
* Have you spelt out acronyms before using them?
* Please check and double check the spelling and grammar - no aberrant apostrophes, no split infinitives, no mixing up of ‘effect’ and ‘affect’.
* Please do not add ‘dear’ or a signing off line (e.g. yours sincerely) as the Advocate General will write this in himself.
* All letters must be approved by the relevant manager.