

Ministry of Justice

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**Ministry
of Justice**

31 August 2017

Dear Ms L

MR MARK ALEXANDER

I am writing further to your request to have a filmed interview with Mr Mark Alexander of HMP Coldingley, Shaftesbury Road, Bisley, GU24 9EX. I am very sorry for the long delay in you receiving a response.

I can now inform you that a decision has been reached not to permit the interview to take place. I set out below the reasons for that decision.

Prison Service Instruction (PSI) 37/2010 – Access to the Media – sets out that visits by journalists are intended to be for research purposes only and that requests for interviews to be filmed or broadcast will normally be refused. It was not considered that Mr Alexander's case was such to justify a departure from the usual position.

Aside from the issue of filming and broadcast, face-to-face interviews of prisoners are only allowed in exceptional circumstances. Where the matter relates to an alleged miscarriage of justice, the expectation is that the prisoner will have exhausted all appeals and have no further access to publicly funded legal assistance. In correspondence from Mr Alexander, he explains that fresh samples had been taken from his father's burial site which he considered would provide his legal team with an opportunity to present an application for referral to the Court of Appeal before the Criminal Cases Review Commission (CCRC). You also indicated that the CCRC was willing to accept a second application from him. Although, exceptionally, an interview might be permitted where all appeals have not been exhausted, it was not evident why Mr Alexander's situation should be regarded as exceptional.

The PSI sets out that, other than to highlight an alleged miscarriage of justice, visits by journalists can be permitted in certain circumstances where there is sufficiently strong public interest in the issue to be raised and that the assistance of a journalist is needed to facilitate this. You considered that there was such public interest. Mr Alexander has, however, been represented fully by a legal and campaign team and has had significant public exposure to his case, including in national newspapers. Mr Alexander indicated that he had had to turn down a number of other expressions of interest from the media whilst he waited for the outcome of this request.

A further consideration given in the PSI is whether a prisoner has a website dedicated to their alleged miscarriage of justice, or matter of strong public interest, operated on their behalf which provides adequate public coverage and attention, and negates the need for the resources of the journalist. Mr Alexander has a campaign website and a Twitter feed operated on his behalf. In addition, he has high profile supporters to highlight his case.

For these reasons, the request for a face-to-face interview has been declined.

Once again, I am sorry for the delay in you and Mr Alexander being advised of this decision.

A copy of this letter is being sent to Mr Alexander.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'J. M. D.', written in a cursive style.

Head of News, External Communications

cc. Mark Alexander