Ross Anderson FRS FREng
Professor of Security Engineering

Sir Gus O'Donnell
Cabinet Secretary
Cabinet Office
70 Whitehall
London SW1A 2AS

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Computer Laboratory

February 25, 2010

Dear Cabinet Secretary,

Use of public funds for electioneering

I wish to protest at the Department of Health's action in rolling out the Summary Care Record in a number of regions including London.

This system is politically controversial. Labour is committed to introducing it despite scant evidence that such systems do any good; the Conservatives and Lib Dems are thinking of killing it on privacy and cost-effectiveness grounds. The BMA takes the view that it should be opt-in rather than opt-out. So public money is being used to leaflet all London homes, in the run-up to an election, on an issue that is likely to be part of the pre-election public debate.

Would you please review as a matter of urgency whether this is an appropriate use of public money?

My interest in the matter is (a) as a taxpayer (b) as the lead author of the *'Database State'* report published last March by the Joseph Rowntree Reform Trust, which highlighted ECHR concerns with a number of central systems including the SCR (c) as the chair of the Foundation for Information Policy Research.

I will be copying this letter to Edward Leigh, Andrew Lansley and Norman Lamb.

Yours sincerely,

Ross Anderson

Computer Laboratory
JJ Thomson Avenue
Cambridge   CB3 0FD
England

Tel: +44 1223 334733
Fax: +44 1223 334678
E-mail: Ross.Anderson@cl.cam.ac.uk