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Part 2

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HOME AFFAIRS

Renewing Values of Society and Family Policy.

Part 1: May 1982

Part 2: November 1982

Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date
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Home Affairs

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FPG

To: MR FLESHER

28 February 1983

From: G J WASSERMAN

c Mr Mount

FPG: Interdepartmental Liaison Arrangements

We spoke. As I told you, Mr Sparrow has asked me to have a word with you and Mr Mount about the inter-departmental network of "link persons" which has been established to service the FPG. Can I leave it to you to arrange for the three of us to meet for, say, 15 minutes within the next few days?

GJW

Mr. Fisher

v interesting
MCS

Home Affairs

Michael
Cabinet Office
circulated this

PRESENTATION OF SOCIAL SERVICE POLICIES

SECTION I - Importance and Public Perception

In this paper the term "social services" includes the social security system, the National Health Service and the personal social services administered by local government. Special attention is also paid to non-state provision by volunteers and families.

1. Although the most urgent political issues in the minds of the electorate are mainly in the economic field, the Conservative Party has traditionally recognised the importance of wider values. Conservative values include the cohesion and stability of our society; the establishment of good standards of learning and behaviour; freedom of choice for individuals and their families as well as the devolution of responsibility to them; and the humane and religious tradition of caring for those in real need.

2. These qualities are reflected in good family life where children are brought up with stability, security and love and are prepared for adult life as responsible citizens. Families also play a major role in caring for disabled relatives. There is no evidence that the modern family has given up its caring functions. Indeed, as pointed out in the White Paper "Growing Older" 1981, it is said that proportionally more elderly people are cared for by their families than at the beginning of this century.

3. Against this background, one of the main functions of the statutory services is to back-up the family and help to carry out its responsibilities.

4. Clearly these wervices also have a major pole to play where there is no family or where the family are unable to cope.

5. In the final analysis the statutory services act as a safety net. No-one is denied medical treatment because he cannot afford it and no-one need be reduced to real poverty, by unemployment, widowhood or old age. In a very real sense the social services in Britain re-inforce the claim that a free enterprise economy and a compassionate society go hand in hand. They are different sides of the same coin.

6. There is strong support in principle for the present system of social services. For example, a recent poll found that 71 per cent of those asked about the National Health Service, said that it gave value for money and 83 per cent would oppose replacing it by private medicine. (Marplan, December 1981). Popular support for a system which provides an income for old people is equally high. When given a list of seventeen things the 1981 budget should or should not have done, the one issue easily topping the list was raising pensions - which was favoured by 95 per cent of the respondents and was more popular than raising tax allowances (favoured by 73 per cent).

7. The elderly strongly identify with Conservative values and as a result about 30 per cent of those voting Conservative at the last General Election were over pensionable age.

8. The Government's overall record in the social services is a very creditable one. Unfortunately this is getting through to only a small section of the electorate, partly because of historic misconceptions about the role of the two major Parties, and partly because of the disproportionate attention given to problems by the media. It is likely that most of the public, if asked whether the Health Service was being expanded or reduced, would assume the latter. The fact that the real resources going into the NHS have never been higher is not yet fully understood.

9. For example, a Gallup survey in December 1981, before the recent industrial action, showed that only 28 per cent of respondents approved of the way the Government was handling the Health Service; that proportion has scarcely changed in more recent polls.

10. Other poll evidence sbows that in our first three budgets (but not the fourth) the majority of people felt that pensioners and families with children had actually been made worse off, whilst in all our budgets widows and the low-paid were seen as being the worst off.

11. In sum the social services are an essential element in our society and command widespread support; they are directly relied upon by large numbers of people; although the Conservative record is very creditable the majority of the electorate do not share this view.

SECTION II - The Record

1. The present Government has fully lived up to the tradition of the Conservative Party in protecting the old and recognising the special needs of the disabled; in safeguarding those who are most in need; and in improving the National Health Service.

2. The Elderly

- pensions have been fully protected against prices as we promised at the last General Election. Pensions are at their highest ever level in real terms. Following the November 1982 uprating they have been raised during our period of office slightly ahead of prices - by 68 per cent from £19.50 to £32.85 for a single person and from £31.20 to £52.55 for a married couple;

- the £10 Christmas Bonus - first introduced by a Conservative Government - has been paid each year - in contrast to the refusal of the last Labour Government to pay it in 1975 and 1976;

- poor pensioners on supplementary benefit receive more help with their heating costs than they received under Labour. Heating additions were increased by 15 per cent in November 1982. Since November 1980 the basic heating addition has been paid automatically to householders aged over 70. The total amount now spent on supplementary benefit heating additions is £325 million in the current financial year - far more than any previous Government.

- the number of sheltered housing places for the elderly, with a warden service, has been increased in England from 264,000 in March 1979 to 302,000 in March 1982.

- The Government's prime economic objective of reducing the rate of inflation is of great importance to the elderly, because inflation erodes the value of their savings as well as any fixed income they may have. The value of savings was more than halved under the last Labour Government. By contrast, the inflation rate is expected to have been reduced by this Government from an average of over 20 percent in the first half of 1980 to under 6 per cent by the end of 1982 and to 5 per cent in the middle of 1983.

3. The Disabled

- the attendance allowance paid to 300,000 handicapped people has been fully protected against prices;

- the mobility allowance has now been raised from £10 per week under Labour to £18.30 in November 1982. Its value will therefore have been increased by 83 per cent under the Conservatives. In addition, the mobility allowance has been made non-taxable. This will benefit some 40,000 disabled people, many of whom are in work and thus have other taxable income;

- in total, social security expenditures on the long-term sick and disabled has risen by 5 per cent in real terms between 1978-9 and 1981-2;

- Under the Companies Act 1980, company policy towards the disabled must be set out in the directors' report;

- measures taken by the Government in 1981 included doubling the tax allowance for the blind and the Education Act 1981, updating the law on the special education of handicapped children.

4. Low-income Groups

Supplementary benefits provide a minimum level of income for over 6 million people (including dependent wives and children) and the main categories are pensioners, the unemployed and single-parent families.

The Government has raised supplementary benefits fully in line with the increases in prices in the four years to November 1982.

This means that the very poorest in our society have had their living standards maintained. The idea that we are inviting the poor to bear the brunt of our economic strategy bears no relation to the truth.

5. The National Health Service

- In common with all other industrialised countries Britain is facing a period when demand for health care has been increasing and will continue to do so. At a time of low economic growth this raises inevitable problems

of resources. In these circumstances it is the clear duty of any responsible Government to mobilise all available resources for health care - private and voluntary as well as statutory - at the same time as ensuring maximum efficiency in the use of the considerable sums committed by the taxpayer to the Health Service. It is also important to define the essential priorities in spending - on the elderly in need of care, on the under-5s, on care in connection with childbirth, on care for mentally ill and mentally and physically handicapped people. That has been the Conservative policy. But the National Health Service will remain the central and preponderant element in Health Care; the Government has no plans to change the basis on which it is financed, largely through taxation, and is committed to its future development.

In 1979 the Conservative Party promised to increase the resources of the NHS. This commitment has been fulfilled, Health spending in Great Britain has risen from £73/4 billion in 1978-9 to £14½ billion in 1982-3. (Planned spending will rise to £15½ billion in 1983-4.) Spending is now at all-time record levels and has grown about 16 per cent faster than inflation; the growth in services for the NHS as a whole between 1978-9 and 1982-3 will be 5½ per cent or more. The proportion of GDP devoted to health care has risen from 4.8 per cent to 5.5 per cent. As a proportion of public expenditure health spending has risen from 11.8 per cent to 12.6 per cent.

- On all these measures Opposition charges of 'cuts' can be completely refuted. The latest November 1982 financial statement announced a further £80 billion increase in provision for the NHS in England above what had already been planned - making possible further new initiatives in health care - on drugs, on intermediate treatment, on primary care in the inner cities, for example.

- Capital spending has grown in real terms under this Government - provision in 1983-4 is likely to be some 13 per cent up in real terms on 1978-9. Labour by contrast cut capital programmes by 25 per cent between 1976 and 1978. At present over £1,100 million has been set aside for 136 important new hospital building schemes.

- One result of the increase in expenditure is that the NHS is now employing more staff in direct care for patients. In two years to September 1981 the number of nursing and midwifery staff in Britain (whole-time equivalents) rose by 9½ per cent, or over 41,000; the number of doctors and dentists directly employed in the NHS by 5 per cent (2,200); and the number of GPs and General Dental Practitioners by 5½ per cent (2,350). There are now more nurses, more doctors and dentists than ever before.

- Improvements in the Service can be jeopardised by excessive pay demands. The Government's recognition of this essential truth and its insistence on making spending on direct patient care its priority, dictated our policy in resisting firmly excessive wage claims in 1982.

- Before the damaging industrial dispute in the NHS last year waiting lists were being reduced and patients were being treated more quickly. The number of people waiting for admission to hospital fell, in England alone, from 752,000 in March 1979 to 619,000 in September 1981. It is estimated, however, that the effect of union action has been completely to undo this progress.

- Administration has been simplified in England by the removal of one administrative tier (the area health authority); decision-making will be nearer to the point where health care is actually delivered. Some £30 million will be saved on administration and transferred to patient care.

- New procedures have been established to ensure greater efficiency in the delivery of health care. There is a new system of annual regional reviews under ministerial scrutiny; performance indicators have been introduced to measure relative efficiency; manpower controls and manpower targets have been laid down; Rayner-type scrutinies are also being undertaken into specific areas of health service activity. Overall targets for efficiency savings in the health service have been set out.

- A period of stability is needed in the aftermath of industrial action. For nurses, we have offered a review body on pay, which should guarantee fairer treatment in the future. We have offered talks on pay determination and the avoidance of disputes to other health service staff. One of the advantages of a two-year pay offer to Spring 1984 should be to allow time in which these talks can be pressed to a successful conclusion.

- Mental health legislation has been up-dated and much more attention given to the needs of families with mentally infirm relatives. Special measures are also being taken to reduce the number of mentally handicapped children in large hospitals.

- Private medicine has been encouraged by abolishing Labour's legislation to phase out paybeds; easing restrictions on private hospitals and restoring tax relief on employer/employee medical schemes. These measures have increased total health care in the United Kingdom and relieved the strain on the NHS. Regrettably, the Labour Party has restated its commitment to end paybeds, and to "actively discourage" the private sector.

6. Personal Social Services and Voluntary Effort

- The resources going into the personal social services, run by local authorities, have also been increased in real terms by about 7 per cent between 1978-9 and 1981-2 and are therefore higher than when Labour was in office. Budgets for 1982-3 suggest that there will be a further 2 per cent overall real increase in expenditure in the current year.

- This extra money has resulted in an improvement in services. There have been increases in the number of home helps, as well as meals-on-wheels and other services, since 1978-9. These services, together with the financial support offered through the social security system, means that more disabled people are able to live in their own homes in the community, which is what they want to do in the first place.

- the amount of voluntary effort in the personal social services is actually greater than that provided by local government and budgetary concessions worth over £30 million per annum have been made by the Government to help charities. In addition, Central Government has maintained the value of its grants to voluntary organisations and made it easier for the unemployed to do voluntary work without losing entitlement to benefit.

SECTION III - Themes and Presentation

1. Improving the Social Services 1979-82

a. It must be accepted that the propaganda climate in recent years has been a difficult one. Some hard but necessary decisions have had to be taken in which certain benefits have been cut in real value (eg unemployment benefit, sickness benefit and child benefit) and earnings-related benefits abolished. This has been aggravated by press and TV comment about "the cuts" and rumours about further proposed public expenditure economies in the last two years. The end result has been to create a climate of opinion in which everything is seen to have been cut even if it is untrue. Many Conservatives appear to share these widespread misconceptions.

b. Fortunately we now have a good practical record in Government and we can claim to be judged on what we have done. Furthermore, on the assumption that the public expenditure programmes are established and will be adhered to, there will be a period of relative calm and consolidation. Now is a good time for a much more aggressive approach in selling our achievements.

c. Public opinion will, on all the policy evidence that is available, strongly support our positive actions in the social services and there is no reason to believe that the unfavourable attitude currently displayed by the electorat is somehow set or immovable. Interestingly, in the 1981 budget we were seen for the first time, by a small majority, as making the disabled better off and in the 1982 budget we were seen as making pensioners better-off (by 31 per cent to 19 per cent), also for the first time. This shows that with imaginative measures, like doubling the blind allowance, and good presentation it is possible to alter public perception of Government policies.

d. In the Health Service we should stress not only our excellent record but also the dedication shown by the nurses and others who refused to take industrial action. Damage is done to patients as well as to their own interests by health service workers going on strike. We should stress that what the Government wants is a period of stability in the Health Service in which the highest standards of patient care can again be the main priority. That underlines the proposal for a review body for nurses' pay and the talks offered to other staff on pay determination. Avoiding disputes like those in 1978-79 and 1982 should be crucial; unfortunately the Opposition has never condemned industrial action, implying that only a Conservative Government can make progress in this area.

e. Unemployment is the most important political issue at the present time and, although it is not a DHSS matter, the electorate may well see the Government's response as an important indication of its social attitudes. This suggests that our publicity in the social services field should be complemented by similar illustrations of what we are doing to help the unemployed (eg educational provisions, training and early retirement) whilst the economy is being put on a sounder footing.

f. We have done as much for the social services as any responsible Government could do and this is a point which we should aim to get across to the electorate. By contrast, the Labour Party proposals for massive extra public borrowing, in the social services as elsewhere, carry little conviction and highlighting them may help us to damage Labour's credibility. We should concentrate not only on the unrealistic scale of Labour's promises (£20 billion by the end of a Labour Government if all the Labour Programme 1982's policies on health and social security were implemented) but on the impact of those policies on inflation and taxation.

2. Paying for the Social Services

a. Although any Government would obviously like to improve the social services, the fact is that huge sums are already being spent and that extra expenditure has to be paid for by somebody.

b. In 1982-3 the personal social services will cost over £2,000 million; the NHS around £14,500 million and the social security programme over £32,000 million. This means that out of every £10 of public spending, more than £4 goes on the social services.

c. Emphasis must be constantly laid on the fact that expenditure on the social services is financed out of taxation and that the increases in expenditure since 1979 have had to be financed by increasing taxation. For example, the NI contribution paid by employees has risen from 6.5 per cent to 8.75 per cent mainly to finance expenditure on social security benefits and the NHS.

d. Any responsible Government must strike a balance if only because heavier taxation can damage the very groups which the social services are trying to help. Increases in personal taxation mean that people on low incomes are made worse-off whilst increases in business taxation simply result in higher unemployment.

e. In the longer term, the most important reason for controlling expenditure and taxation is that such restraint is vital to the Government's economic objectives and hence to a healthier and more productive economy. Unless we can achieve industrial recovery we will not create the wealth that is necessary to put into effect our plans and aspirations. People dependent upon the social services, including the unemployed, are among those who will gain most from the success of the Government's economic strategy.

3. Strengthening the Family

a. The family provides the framework in which almost all children are brought up and develop as individuals and as members of society. The quality of family life is therefore of fundamental importance to our country.

b. In the social services field the family is important not only because of its role in raising children but because of its functions in caring for disabled relatives. A survey by "Age Concern" confirms that very few elderly people are ever visited by a social worker or a voluntary worker

and that the bulk of supporting help for the elderly disabled is met by the family. ("Beyond Three Score and Ten", 1978). Of some 700,000 elderly people suffering from dementia, only 13,500 are being cared for in hospital and the vast majority are being looked after by their families.

c. It is totally in accord with Conservative values to help families who wish to look after their relatives. The social security system can help ease the financial strain on the family (eg the attendance allowance, introduced by the last Conservative Government, is especially helpful) and the personal social services are becoming more family orientated. For example, some local authorities take disabled people into residential accommodation for short periods so that families can be givem a break.

d. The removal of children in care from institutional homes and placing them with carefully chosen foster parents is a good example of family policy. It is in the interests of the children to be brought up in a family and they are most likely to accept social discipline in adulthood.

e. Conservatives have strengthened the family in other areas. The sale of council houses means that many working families can, for the first time, acquire their own home and a major financial asset, which they can leave to their children. The Education Act 1980 has established a Parents Charter in our schools and given parents more say in how their children are educated.

f. Families have duties as well as rights and in the past too little emphasis has been laid on parental responsibility. The Criminal Justice Act 1982 makes parents face up to their responsibilities by normally paying the fines imposed on their children or entering into recognisances to ensure their good behaviour.

g. However, stable family life has been increasingly threatened by the rising divorce rate. Divorce is generally devastating for children. There are important implications for public policy because of the heavy burdens that divorce places on the legal system, the social service

departments and social security benefits. It also seems probable that divorce leads to an increase in juvenile delinquency among the children involved. Calls have been made for more effective conciliation and reconciliation procedures and the Government is studying these recommendations.

4. Privatisation and Freedom of Choice

a. The Conservative Government has strongly encouraged the growth of the private sector in the social services.

b. About half of all earnings-related pensions are in the private sector and the reliance on state pensions provided after the war has been radically diminished. The introduction of the new sick pay scheme for the first eight weeks of illness has taken the state out of something which employers can manage perfectly well. In both these areas the role of the state is simply to supervise the arrangements and lay down certain minimum standards.

c. The private medical sector is also rapidly expanding. Over 4 million people including substantial numbers of trades unionists now have medical insurance with the provident associations.

d. Conservative policy is to encourage the private medical sector, thereby widening freedom of choice and easing the strain on the NHS. The policy is strongly supported by the electorate. A BUPA survey of September 1981 showed that 57 per cent of all union members would be in favour of accepting a wage deal which included private medical insurance (excluding the 6 per cent who already have this type of insurance) and only 24 per cent would not be in favour.

e. Conservatives also believe that, by encouraging statutory authorities to put contracts out to tender for private sector firms to compete with direct labour provision in seeking to supply services in the Health Service and elsewhere, greater value for money can be secured. This policy is also popular with the public. It is bitterly opposed by the Labour Party and many TUC interests.

f. Conservative policy is therefore going with the grain of public opinion, whereas the Labour Party - which has traditionally opposed private medicine - and the SDP/Liberal Alliance, which appears to favour restrictions on private medicine, are both in some difficulties. The Conservative Party could take a more aggressive approach in its publicity in this area in the light of the Labour Party's recent renewed endorsement of restrictive measures.

5. Encouraging the volunteers

a. The role of the volunteer is valued by the Conservative Party. Volunteers embody individual responsibility in a free society. They represent a personal response to social needs. The voluntary movement often does what the state cannot do. In addition, it is innovative, quick and flexible.

b. Some 1½ million people take part in voluntary work in the community every week. The amount of voluntary effort in the personal social services exceeds that provided by the statutory services. Many disabled people, especially those without families or friends to support them, are only able to live in their own homes because of voluntary workers.

c. The statutory services are being encouraged by the Government to work in partnership with voluntary workers. As a result many local authorities now provide basic services in conjunction with voluntary bodies.

d. The suggestion that charities should be helped by tax concessions is extremely popular. When, after the 1981 budget, people were given in a poll a list of seventeen measures which they would have liked to have seen in the budget, the third most popular proposal (after raising retirement pensions and tax allowances) was tax concessions for charities. In fact, the 1980 budget gave about £30 million in tax relief for charitable giving and that was the biggest incentive to charities for half a century.

February 1983

CONFIDENTIAL

AUF SW

bc Mount
Wasserman.

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

24 February, 1983

PERSONAL

Family Policy Group

As you know, the next meeting of the Family Policy Group is to take place at 0900 on 9 March. The Prime Minister has agreed that the following should be on the agenda for that meeting:

(a) Papers by the Secretary of State for Education and Science (already circulated) and by the Secretary of State for Social Services on preparation for parenthood; and

(b) Papers by the Secretaries of State for Education and Science and for the Environment on the use of local authority education and other facilities by the community as a whole.

I should be grateful if the Private Secretaries to the Secretaries of State for Social Services and for the Environment could arrange for the circulation of their papers as soon as possible and in any event by Friday, 4 March.

I am sending copies of this letter to John Kerr (H.M. Treasury), Imogen Wilde (Department of Education and Science), David Saunders (Department of Industry), Richard Bird (Department of Transport), David Clark (Department of Health and Social Security), Barnaby Shaw (Department of Employment), Mary Brown (Lord Privy Seal's Office), Alex Galloway (Office of the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster), David Edmonds (Department of the Environment), Pamela Hilton (Overseas Development Administration), Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office) and Gerry Spence (CPRS), and for information to Muir Russell (Scottish Office) and Adam Peat (Welsh Office).

TIM FLESHER

A. R. Rawsthorne, Esq.,
Home Office

CONFIDENTIAL

PRIME MINISTER

Family Policy Group

We have still to decide on the agenda of the meeting for the Group which is scheduled for 9 March. Candidates are the attached paper by Sir Keith Joseph, which he circulated sometime ago on preparation for parenthood, which was probably one of the papers leaked. DES tell me that Sir Keith is still keen that this should be discussed and I understand that DHSS have a paper in draft on a similar theme. In addition DES have a paper in preparation on the use of school facilities outside school hours and there is a DOE paper on the use of other council sports facilities.

Do you agree that we might put all four papers on the agenda for the next meeting?

Yes mt

TB.

22 February 1983

PRIME MINISTER

Prime Minister:

Sir Keith is an important but sensitive ground: Mr Mount will wish to comment on the handling of his paper. You have, for example, already agreed that the next meeting of the Group should concentrate on a programme of action.

FAMILY POLICY GROUP

As mentioned in the summary of proposals for action circulated after the meeting on 10 September, I have prepared a paper on the subject of preparation for parenthood asking ourselves first whether something could be done and secondly, if so, whether the Government should try directly or indirectly to do it or to see that it is done.

2 You may wish to have this put on the agenda for one of the meetings of the Group.

3 I am sending copies of this to members of the Group.

22 October 1982

PREPARATION FOR PARENTHOOD

1 Parents have a duty to provide a consistent framework of care and discipline for their children; but they sometimes fail to fulfil this duty. And the bad upbringing that results from such failure is, if not the only, at least a major cause of poor education and crime. For the broad question posed in this paper I am not distinguishing between having more children than can possibly be managed or unwanted children on the one hand and, on the other, learning how to be good parents to a small number of wanted children; nor am I meticulously involving fathers as well as mothers in the drafting as would be necessary in any policy proposals.

2 Of course there will always be irresponsible parents. But in recent years there seems to have been a sharply rising trend. Earlier generations assumed that education would solve the problems of upbringing. We have had no evidence that this is so. We have to ask ourselves whether potential parents could be helped towards "good-enough" parenting (to use the phrase of Mia Kellmer-Pringle).

3 In approaching this question there are two general points to be made:

i Most people do provide "good-enough" parenting if not better: they equip themselves with the relevant knowledge from their own parents and from books, magazines and advice.

ii Inasmuch as personal responsibility has been eroded by a shift of housing, health, education and welfare provision excessively to the state, we are trying to shift the balance - and this should be part of our answer.

4 It is probably true, however, that a proportion of young people do not equip themselves to be "good-enough" as parents: the young concerned tend to be the least mature from the least good homes. They embark upon parenthood casually. Many of the girls concerned do not have the awareness of the burdens and responsibilities of motherhood. In many cases they have had only a bad example at home. Indeed in some cases they see pregnancy as a means of escape - not realising the strains of bringing up children even in good conditions, let alone in poor. The research that mercifully

shows that "the cycle of deprivation" is not inescapable also shows that a bad upbringing all too often is part of "cycles of disadvantage". Many, in other words, escape from bad parenting and become themselves "good-enough" parents, but many do not.

5 Could anything be done? By hypothesis most of those who provide bad parenting tend to be the least self-disciplined and with short time-horizons. Those girls who are at most risk will tend neither to restrain themselves nor to insist on or use contraceptives nor to have sufficient grip even to consider abortion in sufficient time. Can their attitudes be changed? Can they be brought to realise the real implications of maternity - the burdens as well as the joys? Can they be brought to realise the needs of a child from the start for love and discipline?

a Can schools do the job? The most vulnerable young people will tend to be the least attentive in class and it will be difficult to find teachers to handle effectively so difficult a subject in relation to so difficult pupils. Moreover, the ambience is far from ideal for the few pupils who are or are about to become parents and a bit distant and meaningless for most of the majority who are not.

b Can a specialised health and welfare staff do the teaching? I remember from DHSS days that some local authorities/health authorities - Southampton was one - claimed success in lowering the birth rate in areas with large vulnerable populations by effective visiting. Perhaps we could enquire into the current position.

c What of television? Antony Jay is eager with commercial or charitable money to make television films but he says that they will not be likely to reach or persuade the most vulnerable young people.

6 One possibility - delicate and fraught with risks - would be to try to use, in connection with pregnancy, the approach used in connection with cigarette smoking - that is fear. It was I who for better or worse at DHSS approved the making by the Health Education Committee of four short films to scare young people off smoking. They were widely noticed. Some of the

most vulnerable may have been influenced because the films used hedonistic and short time-horizon arguments. We could therefore explore whether short scare films, suggesting that maternity is marvellous when the parents concerned are ready for it, might be practicable.

7 It is also worth asking how existing parents can most effectively be helped to recognise their responsibilities as parents. Some local education authorities have performed pioneering work in setting up parent support or "outreach" programmes as a means of transforming hostile or negative parental attitudes. Coventry, for example, has appointed suitable teachers as "education visitors" to bring parents of young children into contact with their local schools and to encourage them to help their children, for example by emphasising the importance of their talking and reading to their children. Such "outreach" programmes can serve both to improve parents' relationships with their children and to influence their attitudes to the upbringing of any further children they may have. It would be possible, by speeches, pamphlets etc, to seek to spread examples of good practice.

8 But the overriding question remains. Even if something could be done, should Government try directly or indirectly to do it or to see that it is done? If colleagues decide in favour of trying I would be glad to put to colleagues particularly concerned - the Home Secretary and the Secretary of State for Social Services as well as the Secretaries of State for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland - a paper for consideration.

FPG/83/9

FAMILY POLICY GROUP

PREPARATION FOR PARENTHOOD

Paper by the Secretary of State for Social Services

Poor parenting is more widespread than any of us would like. It can lead to poor educational attainment and to crime - although there is no automatic link - and certainly a great deal of unhappiness. However, as the Secretary of State for Education says, the crucial question is whether Government should try to improve the position and, if so, how? In reaching a conclusion on that we should at least take into account the following points:

(1) There is no single "right" kind of parenting and we know more about what can go wrong than ways of being right. There is still considerable uncertainty as to what is good practice in child rearing and parenthood.

(2) If we are to tackle the problem of poor parenting then we need to look at both preparation for parenthood <u>and</u> support for parents. When parents fail in their task it is not usually because they do not know what good parenting is but because they cannot cope with the many external pressures and demands on them. Ideally what is needed in that situation is a readily available informal support and advice system that parents can turn to when they need it.

(3) It is extremely difficult to generalise about "problem" groups. For example, we know that the divorce rate in 1961 was two per thousand married persons and that by 1980 this had increased to twelve per thousand. As many as one in three marriages today will probably end

E.R.

in divorce. 59 per cent of divorces involve dependant children and in 1980 40,000 of them were under five years old. But divorce in itself is not necessarily an accurate indicator of social handicap in children. Many single parents are extremely good parents while in any event something like 80 per cent of those divorcing under the age of thirty will remarry within five years.

(4) Not all the figures by any means support a conclusion that there has been an increase in poor parenting or a sharply rising trend of "irresponsible parents". For example, the proportion of children in care in the population appears to have held level from 1952 to 1970, then experienced an increase during the 1970s which tailed off towards the end of the decade with a fall in 1981. The annual number of admissions each year has fallen from 50,000 in 1973 to 43,000 in 1981. The number of children placed in care by parents has fallen from 40,000 in 1974 (82 per cent of admissions) to under 29,000 in 1981 (67 per cent of admissions). Two other interesting figures are that the rate of births per thousand women under the age of twenty has dropped from 42 in 1970 to 26 in 1980 (although there has been an increase in illegitimate births between 1979 and 1980). While the rate of births per thousand women under the age of sixteen has dropped from 2.2 in 1970 to 1.6 in 1980.

I would suggest that all this points to our adopting a cautious approach. We should develop existing successful schemes - rather than adopt dramatic (and highly controversial) new tactics like "scare" films on maternity. We should consider both preparation for parenthood and support for parents. In all our policies we should remember the contribution that can be made by voluntary organisations who are generally much freer than statutory organisations to pioneer new approaches and to try out new ideas. I would therefore suggest that our policy should include:

(i) The development of community based self-help family centres, as suggested by Mia Pringle. The centres would be multi-purpose: they would provide a meeting

E.R.

point for purely social and recreational purposes; they would enable parents to offer support to each other; and they would make available advice counselling and when need be referral to specialised agencies. In short they could be used as a source of help and support without automatically labelling parents as having failed in some way or as being problem cases. The establishment of such self-help centres would be a natural role for the voluntary sector.

(ii) We should concentrate on schemes likely to reach parents at risk because of their unsupported life, extreme youth, or history of poor success with previous children. Again the voluntary sector has an important part to play. The kinds of schemes to develop include:

Playgroups places increased from 263,000 in 1972 to 365,000 in 1981. Groups now total nearly 15,000. Through national associations the DHSS and DES have been working jointly to push the playgroup movement into the more deprived areas.

Home start schemes. These were started in Leicester in 1973. They consist of teams of trained volunteers, themselves mothers, who visit families with young children who are experiencing difficulties. Professional back-up is provided by the statutory services when required. There are currently something like twenty-five home start type schemes throughout the country.

Child minding. The number of registered child minders is almost 43,000 and the number of children minded is just over 100,000. We estimate that the number of children being minded by unregistered minders is a further 100,000. We aim here to improve the status, training and support of child minders by developing the work of the National Child Minding Association.

E.R.

Health visitors who have increased by 38 per cent between 1971 and 1979. The scheme mentioned by the Secretary of State for Education in Southampton was probably an early scheme of home visiting to help with family planning advice. 16,000 women were so visited in 1981.

Ante-natal classes and the involvement of both parents in such classes.

(iii) The Health Education Council - which now has a new Chairman and a new Director General - has a role in seeking to get a general message on preparation for parenthood across to both young people in schools and further education and the youth service and also parents and prospective parents.

There is one last point. Clearly there are difficulties in insisting that preparation for parenthood should be taught in schools if teachers are unenthusiastic and the children are inattentive. However, it was significant that the conference organised by the National Childrens Bureau on preparation for parenthood agreed that it was desirable that all children should receive education on this at some stage in their school career. It would be possible for teachers to be supported by health professionals including trained health education officers. The best approach would probably be to go for a wide objective: keeping yourself fit, being sensible about approaching parenthood, learning about children's development, and health education generally. It would seem a pity if the unique opportunities that schools have for influencing attitudes should not be taken.

7 March 1983

N F

FPG(83)10

FAMILY POLICY GROUP

SPORT AND RECREATION: PAPER BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

1. Participation in sport and recreation engenders positive attitudes, self-reliance, self-discipline and team spirit - especially amongst young people; it also fosters a sense of community identity in all age groups. On that premise, this paper considers current policy and provision for sport and recreation in the local community. The Annex gives details of current funding.

Provision of Facilities

2. We have all seen a great increase in facilities, mainly for indoor sports, over the past 30 years. Most major towns now have a multi- purpose recreation centre. Valuable though these large centres are, high travel costs - and sometimes entrance fees - limit their accessibility and use. They need to be supplemented by more local, small-scale facilities, sufficient to accommodate a limited range of activities and to provide a community focus. The Sports Council, which we grant-aid, is therefore providing for needy areas, by 1987, 60 standardised, low cost (£0.5 million) sports halls, in partnership with local authorities, construction of the first one has now begun in Toxteth). Accelerating this programme would obviously be desirable but would require extra public resources; the proposed locations will not readily attract funds from the private sector. There may be scope for voluntary groups to help run the facilities, thus reducing revenue costs.

3. We have also started to provide small-scale facilities like kick-about areas and artificial pitches in Liverpool, under our Merseyside Sports Initiative. We launched a special £ for £ scheme to encourage donations from the private and voluntary sectors for sports facilities and equipment. The scheme looks a success; an initial allocation of £1 million had to be raised to £1.25 million to match the amount from the private and voluntary sector. Neil Macfarlane has asked the Sports Council to initiate similar schemes (each of £0.2 million) in Newcastle and Bristol. These are now getting underway and he is looking for similar schemes in other areas.

4. Through schemes of this kind we get substantial community benefits for a relatively low outlay. Any extra funding provided could be spent and would show an early return.

Existing Facilities - Intensification of Use

5. Many facilities in public and private ownership are under-used. Neil Macfarlane has begun a campaign, with CBI support, to persuade companies and organisations to allow community use (perhaps just at certain times, like weekends) of their halls and fields. The response from the public sector already looks encouraging; and Neil is now approaching the top 100 companies. Where community use looks feasible, voluntary sector clubs are put into direct contact with individual companies/organisations.

Dual-Use of Schools

6. Together with DES we have urged the 105 Local Education Authorities to arrange community access to school facilities. We have no power of direction but must continue to persuade those where progress is slow. A survey completed last year showed that most LEAs are in favour of dual-use; and we are now supporting a voluntary sector working group, which is trying to bring user pressure to bear at the local level. The group is assembling notes on best practice and ways to overcome management problems, which will be used to help and encourage the slower authorities.

Motivation

7. Motivation is also required. Whilst participation has grown markedly since the War, it is still somewhat less than 50% of the population that engages in active recreation. The proportion is much less amongst the elderly (see below), minority groups and the under-privileged. We are supporting Sports Council programmes in London and the West Midlands which train leaders and motivators to encourage greater involvement in sport and recreation, particularly by the young and in inner-city areas. The programmes are going well. They are not expensive but we do not at present have the resources to extend them to other areas. The scope for voluntary agencies to provide leaders is being explored.

Children's Play

8. In the 5-16 age range, young people develop lasting attitudes and form social behaviour patterns. They are therefore a crucial target group for social and family policies. Organised children's play provides a training ground for leadership and organising skills. The voluntary sector, funded partly by central and local government, has traditionally taken the lead in establishing play schemes and training play leaders. Leading play organisations have been lobbying the Government to recognise the importance of children's play for some time. Early Day Motion 363, sponsored by the National Playing Fields Association and calling for a specific Ministerial focus, attracted more than 250 signatures. The Prime Minister has now agreed that this Department should take the lead, and I have asked Neil Macfarlane to take on this responsibility.

9. More than ever before there is a need for organised play facilities and for the committed individuals to create and run them. A substantial national effort is required, led if possible by the voluntary sector. Unfortunately, none of the existing voluntary organisations is sufficiently strong and vigorous to play the lead role required. They recognise this. With their support, consideration is being given to ways of establishing and funding a new voluntary body to meet this important need.

The Elderly

10. The elderly must also be an important target group for sport and recreation policies. They benefit of course from any increase

or improvement in facilities, especially in the local community. (Travel is a disincentive). There is special provision for the elderly in many sports centres, eg concessionary rates, activities like carpet bowls (which is booming) and movement and dance. For some sports like badminton special sessions for the elderly are available. We must look for more provision of this kind. We must also encourage the elderly to participate; the Sports Council (whose motto is "Sports for All") recently launched a successful scheme, called 50 Plus, designed to encourage those approaching and in retirement to take up new leisure activities.

CURRENT FUNDING FOR SPORT AND RECREATION

Government funding for sport and active recreation is available through the Sports Council and the Urban Programme. In total it amounted to something over £45m in 1982/83. This figure does not of course include local authority expenditure.

The Sports Council was established by Royal Charter in 1972 and its functions include encouraging participation in sport through the provision of facilities. The Council gives financial support to local authority and private and voluntary sector schemes designed to increase the opportunities for people to take part in sport.

The Sports Council receives annual grant-in-aid from the Government. This has been increased from £15.2m in 1978/9 to £22.8m in 1982/3. In addition an extra £1m was made available by the Government under the Merseyside £-for-£ scheme. An extra £4.25m has also been allocated in this financial year for the provision of, for example, kick-about areas, and multi-purpose artificial surfaces in urban areas. Provision of £27.03m has been made for the financial year 1983/4. This includes a further £1m for Merseyside and £400,000 for £-for-£ schemes in Bristol and Tyneside.

Local authority sport and recreation projects of all kinds are eligible for grant-aid under the various facets of DOE's Urban Programme. The attached table sets out, by region, the total value of schemes approved for funding in 1982/83. All UP schemes require the support of the relevant local authority to be eligible for assistance although many of them are actually implemented by voluntary groups. UP resources are limited and sports projects must compete with other economic and environmental proposals. Individual local authorities determine their own priorities in deciding which bids they will submit to the Department for approval. There is, therefore, only limited scope for an increase in support for sport related schemes from this source by central Government.

CONFIDENTIAL AND PERSONAL

FAMILY POLICY GROUP

PARENTHOOD

Note by the Central Policy Review Staff

Introduction

Both the paper by the Secretary of State for Education and the paper by the Secretary of State for Social Services cover two related issues :

- the quality of parenting
- the question of teenage pregnancies

2. The essential questions for Ministers are :

- what is the proper role of Government in both these areas?
- how should policy in these areas relate to the Government's central aims of increasing personal responsibility and the role of the family?

Preparation for Parenthood

3. There is certainly scope for improving the quality of parenting and Government has a role to play through the provision of education and training. But what is the evidence pointing to a "sharply rising trend" in irresponsible parents (para 2 of the Secretary of State for Education's paper)?

4. Can parenting be improved by training? There are many ways of bringing up children satisfactorily. Research suggests that success is based on certain common factors :

- affection
- stimulation, particularly direct conversation with the child
- consistency of discipline
- good supervision
- one good relationship with an adult, preferably a parent, at times of stress

5. Conversely there are factors which tend to carry a risk of adverse effects especially if several stresses are found together :

- apathy
- parental discord
- deprived social circumstances
- frequent hospital admissions
- large families
- parents' loneliness
- extremes of discipline

6. Not all of these factors are within the parents' control. There is a limit to what can be done in advance. But we believe that there is scope for preparing the ground for parenthood from school onwards.

7. Some possible approaches, in addition to those in the Secretary of State for Social Services' paper are :

- since most adults will spend more time with the family than elsewhere, Ministers might consider whether all school children should not spend some time learning about homemaking with some emphasis on caring for children - with practical experience - and about human relations. This would be as relevant to their future lives as, say, history.

- is there scope for more training in parenting with practical experience in the Youth Training Schemes for both boys and girls?

- could receipt of maternity benefits be conditional on one or both parents attending lessons on parenting (as at ante-natal classes in France)? Might preparation for parenthood be arranged for times when both future parents would be able to attend?

- could the voluntary movement encourage classes or self-help groups (with attendant creches) for new mothers?

Teenage pregnancies

8. Many teenagers make good parents but the papers by the two Secretaries of State imply that an essential component of better parenting is delayed

parenthood. Teenage pregnancies are associated with substantially increased risks for mother and child - an increased rate of physical, behavioural and educational problems. Teenagers may be physically capable of producing children but they may not be emotionally equipped to bring them up. Also many of the children conceived by teenagers are not actually wanted.

9. First some facts :

- the proportion of girls aged 15-19 becoming pregnant is lower than in the early 1970s (though the most recent trend is slightly upwards).
- the rate of pregnancies of girls under 16 shows a similar trend.
- the proportion of girls aged 15-19 actually having babies has dropped even further because of the number of abortions.
- 1 in 25 girls aged 15-19 conceive outside marriage of which nearly 40 per cent have abortions.
- 1 in 250 girls under 16 conceive, of which nearly 60 per cent have abortions.

10. Three factors leading to teenage pregnancies :

- earlier physical maturity means that a high proportion of teenagers now engage in premarital sexual activity. But the evidence suggests that the vast majority of the young continue to stress the traditional values of love and friendship.
- there is some evidence that girls from severely unhappy, stressful, poor quality homes see pregnancy as the only way of securing a home separate from their parents, or of obtaining an answer to a need for some emotional attachment.
- inadequate knowledge about birth control plus some recent worries about the Pill. The older middle class girls are the most likely to use contraceptives. Young working-class boys without stable relationships are the least likely; working-class children tend to learn what they know about contraception from their peers and not from parents or teachers.

11. Some adults consider teenage sexual activity as something undesirable in itself, quite apart from the undesirable consequence of unwanted pregnancies. Some adults believe that the availability of contraception and abortion through the National Health Service has itself been a spur to increased teenage sexual activity. In fact the evidence is patchy. The rate of premarital conceptions among teenagers did drop sharply after the introduction of the free NHS contraception service in 1974. Free abortions in 1967 reduced the rate of unwanted births although the rate of premarital conceptions continued to rise until the early 1970's. There is no present evidence of the effect of these developments on sexual activity.

12. Questions for Ministers fall into two groups representing two different views of the role of Government :-

(a) - should Government take a moral stance and try to change the moral climate and so reduce the level of teenage sexual activity?
- but would Ministers be concerned at the risk of more unwanted babies if this involved curtailing the availability of NHS contraceptives and abortions?
- instead, would it be better to seek to discourage sexual activity through e.g. the route advocated in the Health Education Council advertisement ("no" is still the most effective birth control technique)?

(b) - instead of taking a moral stance itself should Government seek to encourage young people through education (including education about the emotional as well as the physical aspects of sexual relationships) at home and at school to come to their own moral judgement based on a better informed assessment of their relationships and responsibilities?
- would such action reach the most vulnerable and disadvantaged sections of the population or would it be necessary also to embark on a more open promotion of birth control, even if this risked the impression that Government was condoning a greater degree of sexual activity?
- would more education about parenthood, for boys as well as girls, presenting a realistic (but perhaps not a "scaring") picture help to develop more responsible attitudes among the young (see paragraphs 6 and 7 above).

13. A more detailed point arising from para 10:

- could Local Authorities with surplus housing help reduce one type of unwanted pregnancy by providing young people from a bad family environment with housing without their having to produce a child first?

7 MARCH 1983

Home Affs

10 DOWNING STREET

BERNARD

Tim rang to say that

DHSS are seeking advice on whether

Norman Fowler should agree to

the many media requests to talk

about Family Policy Group stuff.

Michael
Yes.
17/2

Debbie Green
17/2

Bernard

After consulting PM I told DHSS not to agree - but to go if pressed on the line you took at Lobby & the line in the HoC

OK? MCS 17/2

MCS
Home Affairs

MR MOUNT

MR FLESHER

FAMILY POLICY

Line to be taken on Guardian leak

The existence of a Family Policy Group is well known; it is also known that Mr Mount has been closely involved.

Indeed, I have frequently told Lobby correspondents Mr Mount's arrival as Head of Policy Unit had given new impetus to this aspect of policy.

Having said that, we naturally deplore the leak of confidential papers which simply should not occur and is wrong. I assume inquiries will be made to see if source can be traced.

But it should not surprise anyone that the Government, especially at this stage of its life, is looking ahead to further developments of social policy.

Nor, given the last manifesto, should it come as any surprise to anyone that the Government is examining how people can be encouraged to make more private provision for themselves whether in the field of health, welfare, education etc.

Nor should it be any surprise that the Government is seeking to promote greater parental choice or higher standards in education.

Nor should it be any surprise that this Government is in the business of generating more individual responsibility.

Nor should it be any surprise that this Government is seeking to make the concept of wealth creation more acceptable; the only words I would quarrel with are more acceptable. The Government is in fact in the business of getting over how essential - indeed crucial - it is.

But what should come as a surprise is that the Government is in the business, as the Guardian asserts, of dismantling the welfare state. It isn't. And for anyone to suggest it is is simply indulging in party political clap-trap.

This Government is already responsible for spending 5% more in real terms on the health service.

It is not possible to argue that the Government is dismantling the welfare state by seeking better value for the consumer's money by encouraging, for example, the putting out of services to competitive tender.

Nor can it be argued that the Government is dismantling the welfare state by helping people to exercise their right to spend their money as they wish. We are not a Marxist state yet, you know.

I do not propose to go into details as revealed by the Guardian. Except to say this:

What permeates the Guardian's revelations is a concern for people.

It is not a State concern for people; but a people concern for people..

We all need to get out of our heads the view, apparently implicit in the Guardian assertion that all this adds up to a dismantling of the welfare state, that only the State, spending taxpayers' money, can show a proper concern for people.

Private people, spending their own private money, can, do and long have shown a deep concern for people.

Background

The membership of the FPG, as set out in the Guardian, is broadly correct, but incomplete. But they picture the "wrong" John Sparrow; its not the head of CPRS they show but the Warden of All Souls.

B. INGHAM

17 February 1983

SUBJECT

CONFIDENTIAL

MJ

cc Master

bc Wasserman
Mount

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

15 February 1983

Family Policy Group

The Prime Minister took a meeting of the Family Policy Group at 1700 today. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Secretaries of State for Education, Transport, Social Services, Industry and Employment, the Lord Privy Seal, the Minister for Overseas Development, the Minister for Housing and Construction, Sir Robert Armstrong, Mr. Sparrow, Mr. Mount and Mr. Wasserman were present.

Opening the discussion of assured tenancies and building society powers, the Minister for Housing and Construction said that assured tenancies were an important initiative which had encouraged new building for rent in the private sector. So far more than sixty bodies had been approved as landlords under the arrangements for assured tenancies with the promise of many more. It was important however that the scheme retained the acquiescence at least of the Labour Party; an undertaking by the Opposition to convert assured tenancies into fair rent tenancies would quickly end the supply of landlords. He proposed three ways for extending the assured tenancy scheme; first, the extension of the scope of the scheme from newly built homes to newly improved and converted ones; second, the extension of the powers of the building societies so that they could participate directly as landlords of assured tenancies; and third, the extension of the existing capital allowances to shared ownership schemes in the private sector.

There was general acceptance of the first of these proposals although it was noted that the definition of improvement and conversion would have to be drawn tightly to avoid any suspicion that the scheme was merely a vehicle for the conversion of fair rent tenancies to assured rent tenancies. The group also welcomed the second proposal and it was noted that this might be included in the bill on building society powers which the Treasury had sought for the next session. There was however more difficulty about the third proposal. Although on the one hand it would encourage more private sector finance into the house building

CONFIDENTIAL

/market

BrC

market, there were neverthless wider taxation implications. It was noted therefore that the Minister for Housing and Construction would pursue this matter further with the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

On council house sales, the Minister for Housing and Construction said that since the Government came to office the number of owner occupied dwellings had increased by a million, half council house sales and half from new building. By May 1984 there would have been the largest single increase in owner occupation in any Parliament since the war. From now on however new incentives would be needed to encourage those who had not already bought their houses to do so. He proposed therefore first a reduction in the three year qualification period for the right to buy; and second an extension of the 1 per cent discount for each year of tenancy scheme above the maximum of 50 per cent for tenants of more than 20 years standing.

In discussion of these proposals considerable doubt was expressed about the proposal to reduce the qualifying period. The concept of a qualification period during which rent had been paid was widely understood and accepted; to reduce it to one year might encourage people to rent houses simply in order to buy them when they could easily buy in the private sector. To give a 30 per cent discount to tenants from the start of their tenancies would be seen as over-generous and unfair.

On the proposal to extend the 1 per cent discount scheme to tenants of more than 20 years standing, it was argued that such an arrangement would be seen as unfair by those who had already bought at the maximum 50 per cent discount. There was also some doubt about the extent of the market; those who had not bought their houses already at the extremely generous discount offered under the present scheme might well not be tempted even by more generous terms. There was also a danger that children of elderly parents might take advantage of extremely low prices simply in order to make a capital gain on resale, though opinions were divided as to whether this was altogether undesirable. In favour of the scheme however it was argued that it constituted a way of extending council house sales at a time when their impetus was in danger of slowing. At its previous meeting the group was concerned with making it easier for the elderly to remain in their own homes. This proposal constituted a means of their doing so.

Summing up the discussion, the Prime Minister said that most members of the group were against a reduction in the qualifying period for the right to buy but in favour of an extension of the 1 per cent discount scheme. The Minister for Housing and Construction was therefore invited to explore the possibility that such a proposal might be added to the Housing and Building Control Bill, currently in progress through the House of Commons, with colleagues as appropriate.

/The group

The group noted that consideration was currently being given to the rising repayment mortgage scheme. It was agreed that the Government should await the response of the building societies to such schemes.

On the management of problem estates, the Minister for Housing and Construction said that the Department of the Environment were taking a range of measures to bring the private sector into estates which were difficult to manage and to give tenants greater control over their environment. Such measures were set out in the paper before the group. In discussion there was a general welcome for the approach set out in the paper. The possibility was raised that council house tenants should be given the right to manage the estates on which they lived and it was noted that similar schemes seemed to work in America. There was a possibility however that unrepresentative groups might exploit such a right, especially in estates where most tenants were inclined to apathy. The group however noted that the Department of the Environment already had powers to order councils to sell undeveloped land. There was a case for the use of that power and indeed for a power to direct councils to sell their empty housing. Summing up the discussion, the Prime Minister said that the group approved the approach set out in the paper by the Department of the Environment; it had clearly been something of a success story.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Tony Rawsthorne (Home Office) Imogen Wilde (Department of Education and Science), Jonathan Spencer (Department of Industry), Richard Bird (Department of Transport), David Clark (Department of Health and Social Security), Barnaby Shaw (Department of Employment), Mary Brown (Lord Privy Seal's Office), Alex Galloway (Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster's office), Pamela Hilton (Overseas Development Administration) David Edmonds (Department of the Environment), John Gieve (Chief Secretary's Office), John Henry (Mr. Stanley's office), Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office), Gerry Spence (CPRS), and for information to Muir Russell (Scottish Office), Adam Peat (Welsh Office), and Derek Hill (Northern Ireland Office).

John Kerr Esq
HM Treasury.

TIM FLESHER

Qa 06259

To: PRIME MINISTER

From: JOHN SPARROW

14 February 1983

Family Policy Group: Housing

1. At tomorrow's meeting of FPG we are due to discuss housing issues. The papers cover ways of developing assured tenancies in the private rented sector, further extensions of Council house sales, and approaches to tackle the severe problems of difficult-to-let estates.

2. These papers usefully focus on some important aspects of housing but I still believe that the Group should at an early opportunity address the problems of those who (over 80 per cent) are likely to remain Council tenants. Although the proposals on sales will enable one million to be completed by the end of next Parliament, there will still be well over 4 million families in England alone who will still be Council tenants by the end of the decade (only 300,000 of whom live on difficult-to-let estates).

3. Perhaps of all the areas of concern to FPG, Council housing is the one in which the public sector has most undermined the individual's sense of responsibility. The management of Council housing is often both paternalist and bureaucratic. Self-reliance by individual tenants tends to be discouraged, if not forbidden. Of course, not all local authorities are guilty but many are.

4. Changes are needed which will get away from the concept of the all-responsible and all-deciding local authority. The tenants' right to repair, and the encouragement of management co-operatives are steps in the right direction. But much more is needed. I would suggest that the Group might think that tenants should have a right to form tenants' management co-operatives. We might also examine the terms of Council tenancy agreements to see in which way tenants can be given more freedom to arrange their own affairs. The concept and operation of Council house waiting lists also need to be considered from an FPG

perspective - they are paternalist in intent and design. The same points often apply to the rent structure. Of course, any changes in this direction might encroach on the autonomy of local authorities (although no more than the right to buy). But the purpose of such changes would be to increase the autonomy of the family vis-a-vis the local authority.

5. I suggest that a further paper is needed for the Group which addresses this range of issues from the perspective of FPG. The CPRS would be happy to help in any way wanted.

6. I am sending a copy of this minute to Tom King.

B.

MR FLESHER

FAMILY POLICY GROUP - 15 FEBRUARY

There are three papers from DoE on housing. The following points might be worth raising.

Assured Tenancies and Building Societies' Powers

The private rented sector will disappear unless the Rent Acts can be reversed or evaded.

Para 4 Assured tenancies offer great prospects. And there is a lot to be said for widening the scope of the scheme to apply to newly improved or converted homes. But we must make it clear from the outset that these improvements and conversions must involve substantial work, otherwise Labour will threaten repeal instantly.

Para 5 The Building Societies ought to be given the power to own land in the forthcoming Building Societies Bill.

Para 6 Shared ownership must be made possible in the private sector too. Could we get this into the 1983 Finance Bill?

Council House Sales: The Next Half Million

The DoE puts forward two proposals:

(i) bringing down the three year qualifying period to one year. This would bring a considerable extra number of young couples into home ownership. But there is a parallel danger of attracting more young couples on to council waiting lists since they would have only a year to wait to "cash" their discounts. By contrast, our main aim is to liberate long-term council tenants.

(ii) raising the discount for tenants of more than 20 years standing is much more in tune with our aims. Why should there be a maximum discount at all? The cost-floor provision prevents complete giveaways, in any case. Could we squeeze this into the current Housing Bill?

Rising Repayment Mortgage

We are just as anxious as the DoE to avoid any increased incidence of default. If the Building Societies Association next month does recommend its members to include this type of mortgage, as we hope it will, then the Government certainly ought to consider requiring public landlords to offer purchasers the choice between low-start mortgages and conventional mortgages.

Tackling Problem Estates - Council HOusing Management

The DoE's initiatives mostly de-centralise or privatise the running of council estates. This is certainly likely to improve standards, but it would not give power to the people.

The only initiatives which do give a real say in estate management to tenants are the tenants' co-operatives. At present even these leave the initiative to the good will of the local authority. Should we consider offering Tenants' Associations the right to demand the setting up of a management co-operative - and not just on hard-to-let estates which are only a small minority? We could work towards a situation in which every council estate became in effect an independent housing association.

The fact that hard-to-let properties can be sold to private developers shows that there is a price which almost any council flat can be sold - and, if it is renovated and made vandal-proof, a price at which the seller can make a profit too.

Should we ask the DoE to produce another paper which outlines a policy for self-management for the entire council rented sector?

fm

FERDINAND MOUNT - 2 - 14 February 1983

PRIME MINISTER

FAMILY POLICY GROUP

As you know, I shall not be able to attend the meeting of the Family Policy Group which has been arranged for 15 February, but I should like to say how much I welcome Tom King's paper on "Tackling Problem Estates - Council House Management", (FPG(83)7), and the measures which he describes.

Improvements in the management of housing estates and sales to the private sector where practicable can make an important contribution not only to the self-respect of the local community but also to the reduction of crime. They can do this both directly by reducing the opportunities to commit offences and increasing the likelihood that offenders will be caught and - just as important - indirectly by tackling the apathy and demoralisation which so often results in crime going unchecked by the local residents. As Tom says in his paper, excellent links have already been developed between his Department and mine and I hope we can continue to develop this kind of approach - which involves other Departments and local authorities as well - during the next two or three years.

I am sending copies of this letter to the other members of the Family Policy Group, to George Younger and Nicholas Edwards and to Mr. Mount and Mr. Sparrow.

Leon

14 February 1983

PRIME MINISTER

FAMILY POLICY GROUP

Attached are your papers for the Family Policy Group meeting. These comprise three papers by the Department of the Environment on various aspects of housing policy:

(i) Paper on assured tenancies and building societies' powers (Flag A);

(ii) Paper on Council house sales and in particular ways of increasing their number (Flag B);

(iii) Note on tackling problem estates (Flag C).

(Flag D) Also attached is a note by the Home Secretary, who will not be able to attend the meeting, together with notes from
(Flag E) Mr. Mount which brings out the particular points which he thinks
(Flag F) ought to be stressed, and ~~one~~ by Mr. Sparrow which covers much the same ground. It suggests in particular a new paper on the four million families who will still be Council tenants by the end of the 1980s. These last two papers have not been copied to the other members of the Group.

TF.

Timothy Flesher

14 February 1983

Subject

CONFIDENTIAL

cc Mr Mates
file

RM

cc: G. Wasserman
Mr. Mount

10 DOWNING STREET

Extra copy made for Home Office 23/2.

From the Private Secretary

9 February, 1983

Dear John,

The Prime Minister took a meeting of the Family Policy Group at 0930 hrs today. The Home Secretary, the Lord Privy Seal, the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, the Secretaries of State for Industry, Employment, Environment, Education and Science, Transport and Social Services were also present as well as the Chief Secretary, the Minister for Overseas Development, Minister for Housing and Construction, Sir Robert Armstrong, Mr. Sparrow, Mr Mount and Mr Wasserman. The meeting had before it papers by the Secretaries of State for Social Services and Environment and by Mr Mount and the CPRS on various aspects of policy towards the elderly.

The Secretary of State for Social Services said that it clearly emerged from the papers before the meeting that the elderly could not be treated as a single group. The needs of the "young elderly" were very different from those of the "very elderly". The large majority of the former were active and independent and wished to remain so; it was the responsibility of Government to ensure that they could. There were, however, considerably increased numbers of the "very elderly"; for example, the number of over 85s was expected to increase by 0.5 million to 0.8 million by 2001. Inevitably many of the very elderly became infirm and needed considerable help. In extreme cases the state had to provide for them but for the large majority the objective should be to encourage families, friends and voluntary organisations to help. The proposals in his paper were aimed at that objective.

In discussion it was argued that the real problem lay in the care of the small but growing group of very elderly or infirm people to which the Secretary of State referred. For the most part the younger elderly neither wanted nor needed state help beyond that which was already available through the benefit system. There was nevertheless a real difficulty for families in coping with the very elderly who required constant attention. Any policy changes should, therefore, be designed with the care of that group in mind. It should also be the guiding principle of policy that encouragement should be given to families and friends to care for the very elderly. It was recognised, however, that in many cases of severe infirmity or where families lived away from their relatives the voluntary organisations still had an important role. Such was the scale of the problem that

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such organisations would still require Government assistance. There was, nevertheless, a danger that Government finance would turn voluntary organisations from their traditional role into protest groups run by "professional volunteers". Genuine voluntary effort did not always need state subsidy.

In discussion of the specific proposals in the paper by the Secretary of State for Social Services it was argued that an extension of the Invalid Care Allowance to married women looking after elderly relatives would target help where it was really needed, for example, to married women who had to give up their jobs in order to care for an elderly relative. This would also have the advantage that the married woman's national insurance contribution would be paid. Against such an extension however, it was argued that it was a step in the wrong direction; the real answer was to enable families to keep more of their own income through a reduction in the general level of taxation and an extension of tax relief. It encouraged dependence on the state rather than independence, and would inevitably create a much larger client group of claimants. There was moreover a considerable dead weight element for married women who were already caring for elderly relatives without an allowance. The argument was essentially one of equity rather than of extending the care of the very elderly in the home.

An alternative approach was, it was noted, set out in Mr. Mount's paper; that of extending the Dependent Relatives Allowance. Such an approach was in closer harmony with the Government's general policy of reducing the tax burden and extending individual choice. Against this, however, it was argued that an increased tax allowance would not reach those most in need of help, many of whom did not pay tax. Moreover, there was a far greater public knowledge of benefits than tax allowances. There would also be a similar dead weight effect since many of those caring for elderly relatives would not need a tax incentive to do so.

On this theme it was argued that another possibility was to get more money, for example, through increases in the attendance allowance into the hands of the elderly themselves; this would enable them to feel that they were making a contribution towards their care. However, this might pose problems in that their relatives might feel inhibited about seeking such a contribution: moreover, many of the most infirm were incapable of exercising financial judgement. It was far better to make it as easy as possible for families to cope with their own responsibilities and in this context it was suggested that consideration should be given to the possibility of exempting from VAT the services of professional people providing assistance to the elderly.

Summing up this part of the discussion, the Prime Minister said that the Group had agreed that assistance should be aimed principally at families caring for the very elderly and infirm. Such assistance should be compatible with a move in the direction of enabling families to cope from their own resources with their elderly members rather than towards greater reliance on the state. Accordingly, she invited the Secretary of State for Social Services to prepare a revised paper taking into account the points made in discussion.

/ Opening

Opening the discussion on housing, the Secretary of State for the Environment said that Government policy in this area was a success story. Over the last three years the Government entirely changed the possibilities open to elderly people in the ways set out in his paper. The Minister for Housing and Construction said that the many people who would otherwise have had to rely on public sheltered accommodation could now either remain in the private sector or in their own homes. A particularly encouraging development was the willingness of builders to provide small purpose-built units to provide for elderly people who wished to move from less convenient larger houses. The paper set out a number of further improvements; one possibility was the extension of the Home Improvement Scheme to include alarm systems which would enable many elderly people to remain in their own homes. This possibility was one which could be taken up in the current consideration of the Home Improvement Scheme. Many of the schemes set out in the paper were not widely known; some were not taken up because of the opposition of Labour councils which were biased against the private sector and owner occupation Similar considerations, it was noted, applied to self-help transport schemes which in many areas had replaced uneconomic bus routes.

Summing up the discussion, the Prime Minister said that the Department of Environment should take the proposals set out in its paper further. There was a good story to tell, and more thought should be given to ways in which public knowledge of Government policy in this area could be increased.

I am sending copies of this letter to John Kerr (HM Treasury), Imogen Wilde (Department of Education and Science), Jonathan Spencer (Department of Industry), Richard Bird (Department of Transport), David Clark (Department of Health and Social Security), Barnaby Shaw (Department of Employment), Mary Brown (Lord Privy Seal's Office), Alex Galloway (Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster's Office), Pamela Hilton (Overseas Development Administration), David Edmonds (Department of the Environment), John Gieve (Chief Secretary's Office), John Henry (Mr. Stanley's Office), Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office), Gerry Spence (CPRS), and for information to Muir Russell (Scottish Office), Adam Peat (Welsh Office), and Derek Hill (Northern Ireland Office).

Tim Flesher.

Timothy Flesher

John Halliday, Esq.,
Home Office.

bc. F. Mount
G. Wasserman, CPRS.

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

9 February, 1983.

Dear John,

Family Policy Group

I attach a further paper by the Secretary of State for the Environment on Tackling Problem Estates - Council Housing Management, for discussion at the Family Policy Group meeting on 15 February. The other items on the agenda for the meeting will be papers already circulated on Assured Tenancies and Building Societies Powers (FPG(83)4), and on Council House Sales: the Next Half Million (FPG(83)5).

The following meeting of the Group has provisionally been arranged for 0930 on Tuesday, 1 March. If this causes difficulties for any of the recipients of this note, perhaps they could get in touch with Caroline Stephens here.

I am sending copies of this letter to John Kerr (HM Treasury), Imogen Wilde (Department of Education and Science), David Edmonds (Department of the Environment), Jonathan Spencer (Department of Industry), Richard Bird (Department of Transport), David Clark (Department of Health and Social Security), Barnaby Shaw (Department of Employment), Mary Brown (Lord Privy Seal's Office), Alex Galloway (Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster's Office), Pamela Hilton (Overseas Development Administration), Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office), Gerry Spence (CPRS), and for information to Muir Russell (Scottish Office), and Adam Peat (Welsh Office).

Yours ever,

Tim Flesher

Timothy Flesher

John Halliday, Esq.,
Home Office.

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SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

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01-212 3434
My ref:

Your ref:

9 February 1983

Dear Tim

FAMILY POLICY GROUP

I enclose 20 copies of a further paper by my Secretary of State - Tackling Problem Estates: Council Housing Management - for discussion at the Group's meeting on 15 February.

Yours sincerely
Roger Bright

R BRIGHT
Private Secretary

Tim Flesher Esq

LW

FAMILY POLICY GROUP FPG(83)7

TACKLING PROBLEM ESTATES - COUNCIL HOUSING MANAGEMENT

Paper by the Secretary of State for the Environment

1. Even after more than ½ million sales during this Parliament just under 5 million families in England will remain as council tenants. The conditions on council estates bear directly on the quality of life of the families living there and on the stability of our inner city areas in particular.

2. Much council housing is of good quality, is adequately managed and is considered satisfactory by the tenants. Nevertheless on the difficult-to-let estates, covering nearly 300,000 houses and flats, living conditions are at best demoralising and at worst nightmarish. Difficult to let estates are all kinds from pre-war cottage housing to industralized building of the deck access and multi-storey type. Their chief problems are misconceived design, inefficient and remote management and quite inadequate attention to the physical security of the tenants, their homes and their possessions. The multiple failures combine together to produce a high incidence of vandalism and crime, a growing number of empty and boarded up dwellings, a massive backlog of repairs, litter and filth in the communal areas and a deep and justifiable sense of anxiety amongst the tenants - eg "My wife and I never go out together so that one of us is always in the flat".

3. These problems are deep seated, but they are not insoluble. At the beginning of this Parliament in 1979 we launched the Priority Estates Project to show how with radically different management methods and priorities these estates can be turned round. We are also pioneering the putting of existing council estates under private, non-profit making management, and out-right sales of entire vacant blocks to the private sector. These 3 lines of attack are described in more detail below.

a. The Priority Estates Project

This project (PEP), begun in 1979, consists of showing how 3 difficult to let estates in Bolton, Hackney and Lambeth can be successfully turned round. The key features are:-

- improved security, entry phones, community policing, caretakers patrols and security guards;
- physical improvement, private gardens, planting, restricting access ways, improved heating and kitchens in older houses;
- local lettings with flexible allocation rules, allowing students and single people to become tenants and avoiding any significant periods of vacancy.
- locally based management, ie. on the estate cutting across departmental divisions to deal quickly with repairs, security problems, lettings and liaison with tenants;
- tenant involvement in identifying and solving management problems.

More recently we have set up Community Refurbishment Schemes (CRS) on 9 Merseyside estates with the active support of the Manpower Services Commission. These embrace the same principles as PEP but also include the use of local people taken off the unemployment register to rehabilitate the estate on which they live. By April of this year we expect to have set up 16 to 18 CRS schemes covering some 10,000 houses. We have also encouraged through the Housing Act 1980 the development of tenants' management co-operatives in council-owned housing. There are currently 14 schemes operational in England and Wales and 6 in Scotland, the number of tenants involved ranging from 192 to 24.

b. Bringing in new management expertise: an attempt is now being made at Cantril Farm on Merseyside to rescue a difficult-to-let council estate by bringing in private management on a non-profit making basis. The estate consists of some 3,300 dwellings exhibiting all the worst features of post-war public sector housing. With the aid of private sector finance, a non-profit making Trust is being created to acquire the ownership of the estate. The Trust will comprise representatives of the financial backers (the Abbey National and Barclays) the local authority and the community; it will apply new management skills, involving the marketing expertise of Barratts and a newly formed housing association, to revitalise the estate through a programme of improvement for sale or continued renting, new build for sale and rent, and the provision of new community and shopping facilities.

Other rundown estates in the West Midlands and London are now being considered for similar treatment; financial institutions are being sounded out accordingly.

c. Sales to the Private Sector

A number of local authorities have marketed certain 'difficult-to-let' blocks of flats and houses to developers, or to private individuals, with considerable success. These include the sale of Myrtle Gardens in Liverpool to Barretts and a block of 96 flats in Calderdale to Benjamin Hooson who plan to let some on weekly tenancies and sell others on long leases.

4. We have made a 35 minute film 'Tackling Priority Estates' which illustrates what is being done and is aimed at councillors and officials, police, community workers and tenants. 50 showings with seminars conducted by DOE officials or consultants have been arranged across the country. (A showing for members of the Policy Group can be arranged if desired). The information pack accompanying this film is attached.

5. We are the first Government to have developed a positive, comprehensive and radical set of solutions to the problems of the difficult to let estates. The essence of the problem is not primarily one of finance but of management. Much remains to be done. Too much housing management is far too centralised and remote from the tenants. Far more attention needs to be given to providing for security. And the involvement of the private sector has only just begun. We want to carry these initiatives further.

(i) more use of consultants to assist authorities set up PEP type management systems;

(ii) more professional training for housing management staff (only 7% have professional qualification);

(iii) spread of CRS schemes nationwide with co-operation of Manpower Services Commission;

(iv) further encouragement of disposal of estates or blocks of dwellings to private developers for refurbishment; and to create additional trusts based on the Cantril Farm model to assume ownership and management of severely run-down estates.

6. A very helpful feature of the current scheme is the excellent links developed between my Department and the Home Office (in relation to crime prevention and vandalism) on the one hand and the Department of Employment (in relation to MSC support for CRS schemes) on the other. I would welcome suggestions from members of the Group as to how these links can be strengthened or other parallel links developed. I am convinced that the only approach which is going to work in these run-down areas is one which cuts across a lot of the old demarcation lines.

TACKLING PRIORITY ESTATES

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1 INTRODUCTION

In 1981/82 authorities in England reported in their HIP returns that they had 286,000 "difficult-to-let" dwellings; ie 5.5% of the total council stock. The definition suggested to local authorities in making their HIP returns was "Dwellings which are frequently rejected, or accepted very reluctantly even by applicants in urgent housing need." They include both occupied and vacant properties.

The large number of difficult-to-let dwellings represents a vast potential waste of public resources. At the same time neglected and declining estates are a serious hindrance to good family and community life.

Investigation

The Department carried out an investigation of difficult-to-let council housing and published the results (see items 1-3 in Sheet 10). The report describes the processes which lead sometimes even sound and modern housing to be caught in a downward spiral, and also recommends the steps which can be taken to arrest the decline and improve problem estates. A main finding of the study was that physical improvement was not enough: attention had also to be paid to improving management and maintenance, involving the tenants, revising allocation and transfer policies, developing the community, and ensuring the monitoring, feedback and follow up of measures taken. Housing management in particular was seen as a key and often badly neglected function.

Priority Estates Project

In 1979, as a practical follow up to the investigation, the present Government mounted the Priority Estates Project (PEP), to run until 1984. In addition three outside consultants were appointed to demonstrate on the ground – on the Wenlock Barn estate in **Hackney**, on the Willows estate in **Bolton**, and on the Tulse Hill estate in **Brixton**. In addition one of the consultants was given a national roving commission to learn from other local authorities' initiatives and to offer assistance to selected authorities' projects. Two key ingredients of PEP are tenants' involvement in and commitment to the improvement of an estate, and the establishment of estate-based management. Where there are empty dwellings to be filled, an estate-based team letting flats locally can soon more than pay for itself. PEP is developing methods of establishing estate budgets, localised lettings and repairs, training for tenants, monitoring of housing management performance, and so on (see Sheet 10 for PEP's published reports).

Community Refurbishment Schemes

As part of the DOE's initiative in Merseyside each of the five Boroughs (**Knowsley**, **Liverpool**, **St Helens**, **Sefton** and **Wirral**) has been invited to set up **Community Refurbishment Schemes** (CRS) on one or more of its difficult-to-let or problem estates. **Ellesmere Port and Neston** and **Halton** will set up similar schemes. The special features of CRS are (i) the use of local people taken off the employment register to rehabilitate the estate on which they live; (ii) having a site office and management presence on the estate itself; and (iii) giving local tenants the chance to become involved also in the future management of the estate. Funding is via the Manpower Services Commission and the Urban Programme. Some of the Merseyside teams began work early in 1982. DOE's **Housing Appraisal Kit** has been adapted for the initial survey of residents on CRS estates. Experience from PEP and other initiatives is being fed into these schemes.

This Folder

The Sheets in this folder are designed to accompany the DOE film "Tackling Priority Estates," and attempt to summarise activity in many local authorities under key headings. Not all the items mentioned in the Sheets could be accommodated in the film. Contacts for each item are listed on the reverse of each sheet, and references on Sheet 10.

Contacts listed overleaf

2 IMPROVING SECURITY

It is essential in difficult-to-let estates to improve security – from intruders, burglars, vandals etc. This is especially true of multi-storey estates where entrances and access ways are shared by many flats. Security can be improved by a combination of measures – increased management presence, caretakers' patrols, security guards, keeping dwellings let, entryphones on shared entrances, and liaison between locally-based management and a home-beat "community" policeman. Improved security has to be seen as part and parcel of upgrading an estate generally.

The measures described below can quickly more than pay for themselves in decreased repairs and increased revenue from faster letting of more secure and more popular flats. Tenants can be willing to pay a small extra rental for improved security.

Entryphones

Many authorities have begun to instal entryphone systems. It can be done even on pre-war balcony access blocks as on **Lambeth's** Tulse Hill estate. **Southampton** have adopted a policy of enclosing all communal entrances and installing entryphones. In both cases at least 70% of the tenants have to agree first. A small charge (40p or 50p) is added to the rent. Entryphones can be combined with the provision of door porters or "concierges" – see below.

In **Hammersmith** a previously vandal-prone high rise estate above a shopping centre (Charecroft estate) has had an entryphone system installed in which the caretakers and every tenant can see the visitor at the entrance on their home television screen. A similar system has been installed in **Wandsworth's** Arndale estate.

Blocks of 4-storey maisonettes in Yorke Drive estate, **Newark**, have had extra staircases installed and access balconies blocked-off so that only between 3 and 6 upper dwellings are served by each entrance. Entryphones are installed. The total cost was some £3,000 per dwelling, including the provision of private gardens.

Sheet 5 gives details of a scheme in **Dudley** where entryphone installation has been combined with a radical change in allocation policy.

Caretaker's Patrols

Some authorities still do not employ caretakers except in high rise blocks. Others say that the job has become unpopular and dangerous. But on **Lambeth's** Tulse Hill estate the 5 empty posts were filled after high standards for cleaning and patrolling had been re-established. Now caretakers patrol regularly in pairs and in uniform.

Concierges and Security Guards

Several tower blocks in **Liverpool** and **Wirral** have had door porters or concierges provided. In Liverpool it costs £19,000 pa for 3 porters to cover one block for 18 hours a day, 7 days a week. The 16 concierges provided on 8 blocks in Wirral cost a total of £91,000 pa. Vandal damage incurred before the provision was made had cost, on some of the Liverpool blocks involved, as much as £39,000, £51,000 and £100,000 in a year. The authorities are convinced that the measures more than pay for themselves, not only in decreased repairs, but also in increased revenue from faster lettings of more secure and more popular flats. Two patrol guards on the Ragworth estate in **Stockton-on-Tees** have reduced the annual repairs bill by £24,000. The guards cost £9,200 per annum. Stockton is to extend this approach to another estate.

Community Policing

On **Lambeth's** large Stockwell Park estate, which has deck access and underground garages, a policeman is permanently based alongside the estate management staff. On nearby Tulse Hill the estate shares a beat policeman with the surrounding area. He visits the estate office regularly. In **Bolton**, the Willows estate has its own policeman who has an office in the same house as the estate staff. Three policemen between them cover the period between 9am and 1am each day on the Springwell estate in **Gateshead**, and work from the estate office. It is difficult to assess the impact of these arrangements on crime figures – people may report more – but it does give tenants and staff more confidence. Other housing authorities should consider approaching the local police authority to negotiate similar arrangements.

Filling Empty Homes

Reducing voids and improving security go hand in hand. Allocation policies and lettings systems which militate against rapidly re-letting vacated dwellings help produce a rundown atmosphere of boarded-up properties, inviting neglect, vandalism and theft.

Contacts listed overleaf

TACKLING PRIORITY ESTATES

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3 PHYSICAL IMPROVEMENT

Many priority estates will need improvements to the dwellings, or to the blocks and the surrounding environment. But capital improvements can be wasted if they fail to reflect tenants' priorities, and tenants don't end up with a role in maintaining the improved condition of their own estate. Tenants' involvement; locally-based management; better cleaning, repairs and maintenance arrangements; and allocation and lettings all play an essential part in getting a permanent and not a transitory benefit from physical improvements.

Transforming the Environment

On the rural inter-war Priors estate in **St Edmundsbury**, alongside house modernisation and some new build to provide a better mix of dwelling sizes, the opportunity was taken to alter radically the layout, increasing privacy and reducing the uniformity of this previously very rundown estate. The total cost has ranged from about £9,000 to £12,500 per rehabilitated unit, including environmental works.

After a survey of the tenants carried out by Newcastle upon Tyne Polytechnic, **South Tyneside** began to improve the '50s and '60s Queens Road estate in Jarrow. 561 dwellings in 3 and 4 storey blocks of flats and maisonettes are being transformed, many into 2 and 3 storey houses. Private gardens are being provided and communal entrances abolished. At a total cost of £11,000 per resulting dwelling, a previously very hard-to-let estate now has people queuing to move in.

As part of a comprehensive strategy to upgrade the extensive North Kenton area in **Newcastle upon Tyne**, 27 five-storey point blocks – converted to single persons' accommodation – have benefitted from extensive surrounding landscaping, funded by the Partnership programme, which has greatly improved the appearance and acceptability of these blocks at a cost of £1,500 per flat. (Sheet 8 details the conversion to town houses of other blocks at Kenton Bar East on the same estate).

On **Hackney's** Wenlock Barn estate intensive planting around the blocks increased privacy and quickly brightened up the estate. This was planned by the **Landscape Design Group** who similarly transformed **Lewisham's** Milton Court estate.

On the North Braunstone estate in **Leicester** a concerted effort to deal with problems of condensation in the 1,800 inter-war houses has been combined with environmental improvements and additional social provision. Tenants' priorities have influenced spending decisions.

Providing Private Gardens

Many estates are planned with a lot of communal space, all of which has to be maintained by the council. Many residents, on the other hand, would like to have their own private garden or patio, adjoining and accessible from their home. Communal space has been converted into private gardens or patios on **Nottingham's** Crabtree Farm estate; **Newark's** Yorke Drive estate; and on the schemes in **South Tyneside**, **Hackney** and **Lewisham** mentioned above.

Entrances and Access Ways

In difficult-to-let blocks of flats and maisonettes entrances, stairways and access balconies are often dirty and thoroughly depressing places. In **Southampton** and **Dudley**, and on the Arndale estate in **Wandsworth**, the installation of entryphones offered an opportunity to transform such spaces with carpets, plants and better and brighter finishes.

Tenant Involvement in Physical Improvement

A radical way of involving tenants in dwelling modernisation is being tried in **Glasgow** and is now being adapted on the Willows estate in **Bolton** – the Tenants Grants Scheme. Instead of the local authority carrying out the internal improvements itself, it makes grants available to tenants who then appoint one of a number of approved small contractors to carry out the work. The total grant available in Glasgow – made up of elements for the kitchen, heating etc – amounts to some £2,000 per house. Tenants are free to top up with their own money and often do so, and contractors compete on what they can offer for the standard grant. The local authority remains responsible for external works. A main advantage is that tenants supervise the internal work themselves and can develop a sense of pride and a stake in the completed improvements. (See Sheet 7 for the use of the Scheme by a management co-operative.)

In **Bolton**, the residents of the Willows estate have worked with the local authority to bring areas of waste land into use as allotments, a children's playground and a site for a community centre. The tenants' board on **Hackney's** Wenlock Barn estate supervised a £60,000 landscaping contract paid for by Partnership. Local schoolchildren and tenants on **Lambeth's** Tulse Hill estate helped create a nature garden out of a patch of rubbish-strewn waste land. On several estates tenants have worked with council staff to clear accumulated rubbish so that a fresh start can be made.

Sometimes local authorities and architects want to impose plans on estates which fail to deal with tenants' priorities: for example, planting trees and building expensive hard landscaping while entrances remain insecure or rubbish accumulates around inadequate waste disposal systems. It is better – and in the long run cheaper – to consult tenants first and tailor improvements accordingly.

Contacts listed overleaf

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4 ALLOCATIONS AND LETTINGS

Lettings processes, whereby those at the top of the waiting list and the homeless are impersonally channelled through town hall and district office to dwellings often on estates that are uncared-for, and without local management, can result in a high refusal rate, a build-up of empty homes and resentful tenants waiting for a chance to move out. The psychology of this process can be changed by adopting locally-controlled lettings. Certain estates or blocks, whilst unpopular or unsuitable for families with children, can be much sought after by single people, students, or the elderly. A simple change of allocation policy will often need to be backed up by other arrangements, such as providing caretakers and security, some additional facilities, and upgrading communal areas.

Local Lettings

General waiting list and homeless applicants in **Lambeth** who are due for rehousing are given the address and phone numbers of the several Neighbourhood Management Offices (NMOs), each of which deals with an estate or local grouping of dwellings. This puts the onus on the applicants who then have to visit as many NMOs as they wish in order to register their names on the local lists. As vacancies arise the NMOs will notify the applicants. This results in giving the applicant a sense of initiative and choice, and in a very quick turnround of homes that were previously difficult to let. The central lettings section in **Bolton**, supplies the Willows estate office with names of applicants who have given the local area as their first choice. These applicants are then approached individually by the estate staff and "sold" the virtues of the estate. Here, as on the Springwell estate in **Gateshead**, applicants are encouraged by estate-based staff to feel that a tenancy there is an opportunity to be valued, rather than a last-ditch chance of a roof over their head. (See also Sheet 5)

Unconverted Family Units for Single People

Several authorities have used unconverted family-sized flats or maisonettes on difficult-to-let estates for single people sharing: examples include **Lewisham**, **Manchester** and many ex-GLC estates, now transferred to London boroughs, and the **Stafford** schemes described below.

Conversion for Single People

Newcastle upon Tyne has converted 27 five-storey point blocks on North Kenton estate into single persons' accommodation at a cost (at 1978 prices) of £5,760 per unit (see also Sheet 3); and **Reading** has made self-contained two person flats and bedsitters – the former available for single people sharing – out of an unpopular 1960s deck access block of maisonettes. The total cost of this scheme was some £10,000 per unit.

Furnished Accommodation

In **Blackburn** 3 and 4 bedroom flats on a deck access estate have been turned into furnished bedsitters with shared bathrooms and kitchens. The rent of about £10 per person includes a cleaning service for the shared facilities, and the scheme has attracted students and other single people. **Stafford** have furnished some previously difficult-to-let flats in 5-storey blocks and let them to two single people sharing with a rent per person of about £12 per week. The tenants are responsible for cleaning in this case. Entryphones have been installed.

Student Accommodation

In **Liverpool** 2 tower blocks, Crete and Candia, comprising 123 dwellings, have been made over to the Polytechnic who have undertaken improvements, furnished the flats, and provided caretaking, cleaning, launderettes and a 24-hour security guard. The students pay £14 per week each and usually share 3 to a flat. The scheme is highly successful and there are no empty units. In **Stafford** a tower block is leased to the County Council who use it to house over 200 students.

Older People in High Rise Blocks

Dudley, faced with several high rise blocks of flats that were unpopular with families and prone to vandalism, adopted a "mature persons' blocks" policy, entailing moving families out, installing entryphones, carpeting entrances and stairways, upgrading the landscaping, appointing a superintendent caretaker for each block, and reletting only to single people or couples over the age of 40. The cost of the improvements, including landscaping, for one of the blocks, was less than £600 per dwelling. The caretaker has the job of introducing each applicant to an existing tenant in order to encourage the take-up of tenancies in what is sometimes regarded as an unpopular building form. As a result, blocks that a few years ago had an unenviable reputation and a high incidence of voids, are now regarded as pleasant places to live, with no voids, and a list of people waiting to move in.

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5 LOCALLY-BASED MANAGEMENT

Many local authorities are establishing management teams on problem estates. Managing and maintaining estates of several hundred dwellings requires on-the-spot day-by-day attention. This cannot be given by staff in district offices or town halls. Local – or estate-based – management also helps gain the positive co-operation of tenants that is essential in the process of upgrading estates. Localised management makes possible local lettings (see Sheet 4). An efficient maintenance and repairs service is an essential part of management; and a locally-based repairs team can increase tenants satisfaction and ensure speedy attention to repairs and increased productivity.

Linking estate-based management with estate budgets (as in management co-operatives) could be a vital tool enabling estate managers to manage more effectively (see Sheet 6).

Spreading Initiatives

Before the rapid increase in the size of the public sector stock, estate-based management was often practised, and housing associations like the **Sutton Housing Trust** have always had estate-based management. In recent years some local authorities have again begun to devolve housing management functions from the centre to the local or estate level: early examples included **Islington**, **Newcastle upon Tyne**, **Lambeth**, **Gateshead** and **Liverpool**. The Priority Estates Project was set up to learn from, and extend, these initiatives, working with the local authorities in setting up estate-based teams on the Tulse Hill estate (ex **GLC**, now **Lambeth**), in **Hackney** and **Bolton**. More recently locally-based management teams have been established in **Walsall**, **Oldham**, **Rochdale**, **Wandsworth**, **Stockton-on-Tees**, **Tameside**, **Wakefield**, and on some of the **Community Refurbishment Schemes** (see Sheet 1) in the Merseyside boroughs.

Need for Local Base

Many large difficult-to-manage estates have to share the time of an estate officer who works from the District Office, sometimes a mile or more away. Lettings and repairs are organised centrally, or from different district bases. Chasing rent arrears might take up much of the estate officer's time leaving little opportunity to deal positively with the estate's problems. For example, on the Wenlock Barn estate in **Hackney**, a long-standing commercial refuse problem took over a year to sort out and involved negotiations with six local authority departments. This could not have been tackled without the detailed efforts of an estate-based team. Hackney is adopting the Wenlock Barn model, together with local budgets, in 25 new area bases each dealing with between 1,500 and 2,000 dwellings. In **Walsall**, 34 neighbourhood offices have been opened, providing a complete housing management service (including lettings, repairs, and an aid and advice service). Certain social service and education functions are to be added to them.

Local Lettings

Lambeth, **Bolton**, **Newcastle upon Tyne** and **Gateshead** have all linked local lettings to their estate-based neighbourhood management projects, reducing the number of empty units, cutting the cost of repairing vandalised empty homes, and enabling a more personal approach to applicants (see Sheet 4).

Local Repairs Teams

A repair team is attached to the Intensive Management Project on **Liverpool's** Netherfield estate; the city says it has increased productivity by 57%. **Walsall** claims a 130% productivity increase for its new mobile repairs teams linked to its neighbourhood management offices. On the Wenlock Barn estate in Hackney a repair team works alongside the estate management team and the Tenant Board. It is supported by the local unions. Local teams can save on travel time, liaise closely with management on priorities, sort out access problems more directly, and provide a more personal service. Concentrating on one estate they can more easily see the results of their work. Larger tasks of maintenance and structural repairs still need district or centrally-based teams.

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6 ESTATE BUDGETS

Estate or area budgets are a logical extension of local – or estate-based – management (see Sheet 5). They give tenants and estate staff alike the chance to see where the money goes and check value for money. Ideally such budgets should cover not only the housing department's own expenditure, but also related expenditure by other departments – parks, engineers, building works etc. Estate budgets can be an important tool enabling managers to manage.

Revenue budgets are planned for each of the 26 housing areas in **Hackney**. Experience of estate budgets in **Jersey City**, USA, is being fed into the Hackney scheme. Estate budgets or housing area revenue budgets are rare in Britain, other than in management co-operatives where in each case a proportion of the rent has to be set aside for management and maintenance.

On most estates it is difficult to disentangle the different amounts of expenditure by the numerous services involved. It would be difficult to work out the savings on lift repairs, for example, resulting from better security arrangements such as entryphones and caretakers. Even where there is an estate management team, without an estate budget the estate manager has difficulty in being an effective client for the various services when there is no way of knowing what expenditure is reasonable, of being able to check on value for money, or to balance one kind of expenditure against another within an agreed total. The existence of an estate budget also would allow – as in management co-operatives – tenants to develop a better awareness of expenditure priorities and to become involved more effectively in management.

The government's yardstick for housing associations' management and maintenance is about £5 per week per unit for new build schemes and £9 for rehabilitated property. Management co-operatives in London get aout £7 per week per unit. London boroughs spend on management and maintenance approximately £10-£13 per week per unit; Liverpool £5; Bolton £4.

PEP has produced the following hypothetical examples of estate budgets as starting points:

Estate A

Pre-war, cottage style, 300 houses.

Income

£4 (allowance) x 300 x 50	£60,000

Expenses

Estate office	£ 5,000
1 Officer	£ 7,000
1 Warden (caretaker)	£ 5,000
Estate equipment	£ 1,000
1 Repair (odd-job) worker plus costs	£10,000
Materials	£10,000
Contract maintenance and improvements	£20,000
	£58,000

Estate B

Late 1960's 1,000 units, mixed deck access flats and maisonettes, other multi-storey blocks and houses.

Income

£6 x 1,000 x 50	£300,000

Expenses

Estate office	£ 7,000
3 Estate officers	£ 30,000
1 Clerical worker	£ 6,000
5 Repairs workers	£ 50,000
Materials	£ 50,000
Contract and outside work	£100,000
10 Caretakers	£ 50,000
Contingencies	£ 5,000
	£298,000

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7 TENANT INVOLVEMENT IN MANAGEMENT

The management of rented housing should be a co-operative effort between landlord and tenant. On difficult-to-let estates tenants feel powerless to affect the environment outside their front door. Tenants blame the local authority for a poor service; and the local authority blames tenants. Local authorities trying to change this situation soon come up against the problem of their credibility with the tenants. The initial consultation process is thus a sensitive one, and it is important to be able to respond quickly to tenants' main priorities. In many cases there will be tenants associations or federations with whom the local authority can work. The aim might be simply better co-operation between tenants and management, or for the tenants to take on tasks, as in management co-operatives.

Initial Consultation

Public meetings of tenants can be acrimonious events in which only a few people get a say. The **National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders** (NACRO) adopted consultation of tenants in small face-to-face groups, using an independent chairman, on **Halton's** Cunningham Road estate. NACRO have since established a team working on estates in London, the Safe Neighbourhoods Unit, supported by the GLC, using the MSC Community Enterprise Programme to provide the labour for both consultation and environmental improvements. Similar projects have been developed throughout England and Wales. NACRO's approach to consultation was adapted by the Priority Estates Project (see item 4 on Sheet 10 for details). Several rounds of consultation may be needed, focusing on particular issues, or house-to-house surveys.

Getting Tenants Involved

Consultation carried out in a genuine spirit and with skill can have various spin-offs, notably tenant-led initiatives. In **Bolton's** Willows project, tenants and owner-occupiers combined forces to employ a neighbourhood worker, to open a cafe for tenants affected by dwelling improvement, to turn waste land into allotments, to run a community newspaper, to run a play scheme, to commission a community centre etc. This was in an area with no history of similar activity.

On the Stockwell Park estate in **Lambeth**, the tenants' association work closely with the estate management team, for example showing flats to prospective tenants at weekends and signing them on. The tenants on **Islington's** Hornsey Lane estate employed their own community worker and, with tenants on surrounding estates, helped construct and run a community garden.

One of the key features of the Merseyside **Community Refurbishment Schemes** (see Sheet 1) is that local people will be employed under an MSC scheme to catch up with repairs and improve the environment. Tenants are also helping carry out initial household surveys.

On the Bolton and Hackney PEP estates the residents have formed elected Boards specifically to work closely with management. The Tenant Board on Hackney's Wenlock Barn estate have registered as a Friendly Society as a first step towards taking on additional responsibilities. They have already managed some £83,000 worth of projects to improve the estate's environment, and employ two workers. On the other PEP estate – the **GLC's** (now **Lambeth's**) Tulse Hill – there is an elected Neighbourhood Management Committee under the umbrella of the Tenants' Association. They meet regularly with Council staff and check through a list of agreed actions on each side.

Management Co-operatives

Under the Housing Act 1980, Schedule 20, local authorities have powers to hand over management and maintenance responsibilities, subject to the approval of the Secretary of State, to tenants' management co-operatives. Sixteen management co-operatives have so far been approved on council estates in England. The **GLC's Stephen and Matilda Co-operative** and **Juniper Co-operative** in **Southwark** are examples of how a co-operative can improve a rundown council estate.

So far, in England, all existing management co-operatives on older council owned estates are made up of new groups of tenants who expressed an interest in developing or moving onto a co-operatively run estate. The **Speirs Co-operative** in **Glasgow** is an exception in that it comprises mainly the established residents of what once was a severely rundown estate. The co-operative manages 192 dwellings, built in 1938, and began by taking on collective responsibility for modernisation under Glasgow's Tenant's Grant Scheme (see Sheet 3). It is supported by a full-time Development Officer. As the modernisation is completed, the co-operative assumes responsibility for allocating tenancies, and managing the repairs and cyclical maintenance of the dwellings and common areas. The Council retains responsibility for rent collection, and dealing with arrears. The co-operative committee reports that many tenants sense that the improvements achieved on the estate come from their own efforts. For a description of this and other co-operatives at work see item 16 on Sheet 10.

Training and Development

Tenants need assistance and training if they are to come to grips with the complex problems of running housing and dealing with official bodies. The **Greater London Secondary Housing Association** (GLSHA) has helped with the development of management co-operatives and has worked with the Priority Estates Project in consulting and training tenants in **Hackney**, **Oldham** and **Rochdale**. The **Society for Co-operative Dwellings** (SCD) has offered its services, based on its own experience in running co-operatively managed housing association schemes, to local authorities wishing to develop tenant participation or tenants management co-operatives on existing estates.

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8 OPPORTUNITIES FOR SALES

Many local authorities and New Towns are finding there is a strong demand for difficult-to-let dwellings that are offered for sale. Sales help bring empty dwellings back into use and at the same time extend home ownership. In areas of predominantly council housing they improve the balance of the community. The improvement of houses and flats by local authorities under the Improvement for Sale scheme can be eligible for an Exchequer contribution. Discounts applied to sale prices increase opportunities for low cost home ownership. Sales of vacant difficult-to-let stock to builders for improvement and onward sale or letting bring additional capital receipts to a local authority and save it a substantial amount of improvement expenditure that it would otherwise have to incur itself.

Consents

The General Consent for local authorities dated 2 June 1981 (amended 10 November 1981), and the General Consent for New Towns dated 17 June 1981, set out the terms on which authorities may dispose of their stock. Vacant dwellings, whether or not improved for sale, may be sold at a discount of up to 30% to individual purchasers in priority categories including first-time buyers, job movers and the homeless. The General Consent also permits sales of vacant property to builders for improvement and subsequent disposal to individual purchasers at market values. Special consent is required where the ultimate result is not home ownership.

Homesteading

A local authority can sell homes for improvement by the purchaser – homesteading. Local authorities can sell these homes at discounts of up to 30 per cent to the priority categories of purchasers, can make home improvement grants available, offer improvement loans and give or guarantee mortgages. With the consent of the Secretary of State, they may waive interest payments on mortgages for homesteading for up to five years (under Section 110 of the 1980 Housing Act). Homesteading schemes can be designed to suit local conditions. Examples are given on Sheet 9.

Home Improvement Grants

Purchasers of difficult-to-let dwellings built before 2 October 1961 can apply for mandatory grants to install standard amenities or replace those which have been missing for more than a year. They can also apply for discretionary full improvement grants for more extensive improvements (for example to homes which have been left empty and vandalised).

Improvement for Sale Scheme

A local authority can improve for sale houses or flats which are unfit, lack basic amenities, have fallen into disrepair or need general improvement. The Improvement for Sale Scheme made under the 1980 Housing Act provides for an Exchequer contribution of up to £6,500 per dwelling in Greater London and £4,875 elsewhere. Similar grants are available for housing associations and New Towns.

Capital Receipts

Where homes are improved for sale by the authority, or sold in homesteading schemes where the purchaser has to execute works within a period specified by the authority, 100% of the proceeds of the sale count as a capital receipt and can immediately be used to supplement the authority's HIP allocation. In other cases of the sale of unimproved dwellings (without conditions for executing the work in a specified time) 50% of the capital receipts can be added to the HIP allocation. In this way the sale of difficult-to-let dwellings – especially where mortgages are arranged with banks or building societies – can provide additional resources for the improvement of dwellings that continue to be let.

9 OPPORTUNITIES FOR SALES-EXAMPLES

Homesteading

Telford New Town began selling empty, unimproved houses, with a 30% discount, in 1979. On one estate, with a 25% vacancy rate in 1979, over 40% of the late 1960s dwellings had been sold or were under active negotiation by early 1982. **Corby** has sold nearly 300 dwellings, some for as little as £2,200.

Skelmersdale has also adopted a policy for offering for sale at a 30% discount modern houses that had become extremely difficult to let and, in many cases, vandalised. Prices in Skelmersdale ranged from as little as £2,250 up to some £8,500 after discounts. By early 1982, the Corporation had sold about 650 vacant houses at a discount, potential purchasers having queued up to obtain them. On Castlehey estate only one third of the houses are still rented. Purchasers improve the homes themselves, often to a very high standard (despite the non-availability of improvement grants to these post-1961 homes).

In **Westminster**, the council introduced HOWS (Homes of Westminster) under which the freehold of large houses not suitable for single family units are sold to groups of purchasers selected from the waiting list. The council organises a financial package enabling each group to convert a house into flats, using private builders to carry out the work. When the work is finished, individual members of the group buy the lease of their flat with a mortgage which repays the original loan and the interest on it. The Woolwich and Halifax Building Societies have earmarked funds for purchasers under the scheme.

Out of 150 previously difficult-to-let purpose-built council dwellings previously scheduled for demolition, offered for homesteading in two streets in Easterhouse, **Glasgow**, 149 have already been either sold or are on offer. A further 66 dwellings will be added to the Scheme later in 1982. Prices were originally set at £3,000 per unit but are currently £6,000-£6,500. In return for 50% improvement grants, topping up loans towards internal improvements, with all principal and interest payments deferred for the first year, the purchaser undertakes to complete plumbing and rewiring within three months and to complete interior decorations and repairs within a year.

The first few purchasers were given local authority mortgages but these are being transferred to a Building Society. The West Scotland Trustee Savings Bank offers mortgages on the remaining properties, again with deferred payments. There has been a dramatic change in the environment of the streets involved.

Improvement for Sale by the Local Authority

Solihull has turned a four-storey block of 12 difficult-to-let maisonettes into starter homes. They were constructed in 1963 as part of the large Kingshurst estate, and have now been sold for £6,650 each including a 30% discount. The cost of the basic repairs needed to the maisonettes was only about £250 per unit, while landscaping improvements cost £50 per unit. The Housing Committee agreed to sell five to waiting list applicants, five to existing council tenants, and two to engaged couples. Over 200 enquiries were received even before the homes were advertised. Mortgages were mostly arranged through the Support Lending Scheme, though some purchasers went to their own Building Society.

At Kenton Bar East, **Newcastle upon Tyne** has converted extremely rundown three-storey blocks of flats and maisonettes into attractive town houses. Initially some were converted for rent, but 42 town houses have been created for sale, using the Department's Improvement for Sale contribution. The houses sell for £13,950 (2 bedrooms) and £15,950 (3 bedrooms). The Abbey National Building Society has arranged 95% mortgages and all are now sold. Including writing off the outstanding loan debt, the net capital outlay (before subsidy) of the local authority is £1,900 per unit. The conversion of these blocks for owner occupation, together with other works (see Sheet 3) carried out as part of a general strategy for the estate, has helped transform the environment of this estate.

Sales to Builders

Several authorities are negotiating sales of difficult-to-let blocks of flats or houses to builders who will improve them for resale. A much publicised case is the sale of three extremely vandalised 1960s slab blocks comprising 210 maisonettes in Everton, **Liverpool**, to **Marque Securities Limited**, who plan to improve and market them. **Barratt Northern Limited**, is purchasing a 1930s block comprising 220 flats in the same city, in Toxteth. In **Skelmersdale**, **Skelmersdale Investments Limited** has purchased 16 individual houses on the Digmoor estate for improvement and onward sale, together with a further group of 20 dwellings elsewhere in the New Town which have never been completed owing to disputes and vandalism. As part of a strategy to improve the Mixenden Valley development, **Calderdale** have obtained a special consent to sell a block of 96 flats to **Benjamin Hooson (Yorks) Limited** who plan to let a proportion on ordinary weekly tenancies and dispose of others on long leases.

Sales for Private Letting

Stoke-on-Trent sold 42 vandalised and extremely difficult-to-let deck access flats to **Brightaflats Limited**, a Manchester based company with 900 lettings. After renovation, all have been let on shorthold tenancies. There was no shortage of applicants and there is a waiting list.

A Marketing Approach

Several of the authorities mentioned in this sheet have adopted a highly professional approach to marketing their homes for sale. **Newcastle upon Tyne** advertised its newly converted town houses with a folder of information and, on its cover, a colour photograph of the pilot scheme. A feature article in the local newspaper and an advertisement with the slogan "Sale of the Century" helped **Solihull** market its starter home maisonettes. **Skelmersdale** sold its unimproved houses under the slogan "Cut the Red Tape" and has produced a colourful leaflet advertising previously difficult-to-let low rise blocks of flats and maisonettes at Tanhouse to developers, builders, housing associations and other organisations. The opportunity is taken in all cases to present the advantages of the location and to market the houses and flats professionally.

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10 REFERENCES

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HDD Occasional Paper 3/80,
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3 Department of the Environment,
HDD Occasional Paper 5/80,
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HMSO 1980, £4.80 net.

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HMSO 1982, £6.00 net.

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The residents as a resource: a public housing management demonstration in Jersey City.
New Jersey Department of Community Affairs, State of New Jersey 1982, $5.00 net.

The free publication on the **Priority Estates Project** (Item 5) can be obtained from DOE, Room N9/03, 2 Marsham Street, London SW1P 3EB.

Housing Services Advisory Group and **Housing Services Advisory Unit** publications can be obtained from DOE, Room N9/01, 2 Marsham Street, London SW1P 3EB. (Phone 01-212 8479 for information on postage and packing rates).

The City University publications are available from the Housing Research Group, The City University, St John Street, London EC1V 4PB. (Phone 01-253 4399 extension 4536).

The **Jersey City** publication is available from Bureau of Neighborhood Preservation, Department of Community Affairs, 363 West State Street, CN 804 Trenton, N J 08625, USA.

Items 4 and 5 contain lists of other references including Priority Estates Project Working Papers.

cc f.M.

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Qa 06253
Covering CONFIDENTIAL

8 February 1983

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Dear Tim

Family Policy Group

As I mentioned to you over the telephone earlier today, I enclose a note by the CPRS on the Elderly for discussion at the Family Policy Group meeting on Wednesday, 9 February.

I am sending copies of this letter and the enclosure to John Halliday (Home Office), John Kerr (HM Treasury), Imogen Wilde (DES), David Edmonds (DoE), Jonathan Spencer (DoI), Richard Bird (DTp), David Clark (DHSS), Barnaby Shaw (DEm), Mary Brown (Lord Privy Seal's Office), Alex Galloway (CDL), Pamela Hilton (ODA), Richard Hatfield (CO), and for information to Muir Russell (SO) and Adam Peat (WO).

Yours ever
Gerry

Gerry Spence

Enc

FAMILY POLICY GROUP: THE ELDERLY

1. The papers before the Group (FPG(83)1-3) make proposals in three policy areas:

a. Incentives for families to support their elderly relatives (papers 1 and 3);

b. Services for the elderly (paper 1);

c. Housing (papers 2 and 3).

Incentives

2. Mr Fowler and Mr Mount suggest alternative approaches. Mr Fowler suggests extending the invalid care allowance (ICA) to married women caring for elderly invalids, and paying for it by abolishing the dependent relatives tax allowance (DRTA). Mr Mount would prefer to improve the DRTA but to limit it to those caring for resident relatives who are very elderly (over 75) or infirm.

3. In considering these two approaches, the following points are important:

(a) The ICA currently applies to single people and married men caring for seriously disabled people of all ages, including children. An extension to include married women caring for the elderly would lead to overwhelming pressure to extend ICA to all married women caring for anyone in receipt of an attendance allowance. The additional cost would rise from £11m to £60m a year and the staff required would increase from 50 to 250.

(b) As Mr Mount implies, the ICA is the wrong way to give families money to get them to care for their elderly. The ICA was introduced to guarantee a minimum income to people who, because of their caring responsibilities, can neither work nor claim unemployment benefit.

So why extend it to married women, except where the husband has no job, pension or benefit which covers the wife's keep? Similarly, why should married men receive the benefit if their wives are earning significant amounts? This suggests that, if married people (both men and women) are to be eligible for ICA, they should be subject to a low limit on joint earnings.

(c) Providing through ICA an income safety net for poor people with caring responsibilities is not really enough. All families should be given a greater incentive to care for their elderly relatives. There are two possible approaches (not mutually exclusive) which would need to be costed:

(i) increase the DRTA for taxpayers supporting resident relatives over 75 whether frail or not. Of Mr Mount's two variants this would be the easier to administer. Mr Mount envisages abolishing the allowance for those supporting the under 75s; would the savings justify the opposition that this would arouse from the many losers? Freezing the allowance in respect of the under 75s might be a more attractive option.

(ii) if we are considering the benefit route, a new idea would be to improve the attendance allowance paid to the seriously disabled elderly. Families would more willingly take them on if they brought with them a contribution to the cost of care. The old/disabled person would feel less dependent. Help would be concentrated on those most in need of care, including those without any relatives.

Services

4. Mr Fowler proposes spending an additional £25m over three years to foster community and voluntary efforts to support frail old people living alone or with their families. The money would be used among other things to find volunteers to give periodic respite to caring families, practical help in coping with the incontinent, etc. Given the intense pressure on

institutions, and the prospect of one million extra very elderly by the end of the century, this effort should be at least as effective as financial assistance in making family care viable.

5. In the longer term, however, caring services for the elderly should to a large extent be provided through the market. Hence the importance of securing adequate incomes for the elderly themselves. A higher minimum pension for the over 75s may be worth examining.

Housing

6. Mr King's paper is a survey of achievement to date and of developments in train. Mr Mount proposes also that council houses should be given away to elderly tenants of long standing. The Group will be discussing housing at its next meeting, but the following points are particularly worth noting in relation to the elderly:

(a) As Mr King notes (paragraph 3(c)), the elderly have considerable income locked up in their houses. It is important to encourage the release of this income through home income plans, so that the old person's house is an asset and not a financial burden to them. Home income plans have been slow to develop. There are alleged practical difficulties, eg about ensuring adequate maintenance which building societies and others should be urged to resolve, eg through maintenance contracts;

(b) Mr Mount's proposal would have the advantage of giving council tenants access to home income plans too; if it is pursued the very elderly should be given priority.

(c) Even with the present 'right to buy' elderly tenants could be given improved access to their equity stake. They could be relieved of their obligation to repay the discount if they move within five years. This would enable them to sell up, move in with their family and take some capital with them, eg to help make adaptations in the family home.

General

7. There is a general point about the elderly that affects all the papers. It no longer makes much sense to think of all those over retirement age as a single 'client group' for policy purposes. The frailty that accompanies old age sets in much more obviously after 75 than after 60 or 65. Poverty, too, is increasingly becoming a problem of the very elderly rather than of the retired population as a whole: this is because more people are retiring with decent pensions, sometimes two pensions per couple, and with homes owned outright. This suggests that general concessions (eg age allowance, free prescriptions) for all pensioners, are becoming a less efficient and less equitable way of targeting spending on the poor or frail. It may be sensible, therefore, to think of either raising the age at which such concessions apply, or of helping needy pensioners through schemes targeted on the poor or infirm of all ages.

8. Finally, as Mr Mount's paper implies, we should change the way we look at the young elderly, including early retirers, seeing them not primarily as a group in need of help but as a group available to help others, eg through voluntary organisations.

8 February 1983

Home Affairs.

PRIME MINISTER

Family Policy Group

Attached are your papers for tomorrow's meeting. These comprise:

(i) a paper by the Secretary of State for Social Services on policy towards the elderly;

(ii) a paper by the Secretary of State for the Environment on housing for the elderly;

(iii) a paper by Ferdie Mount commenting on (i) and (ii).

iv) a paper by CPRS drawing all three papers together

Mr. Fowler's paper essentially proposes a package of three measures:

(a) spending £25 million more on services for the elderly and those who care for them;

(b) expanding the invalidity care allowance to married women looking after elderly relatives which would cost about £11 million extra per year;

(c) to pay for (a) and (b) abolishing the dependant relatives tax allowance, saving £20 million a year and 500 staff.

Ferdie Mount disagrees with this approach on the grounds that it re-enforces the welfare state rather than encouraging self-reliance. He would prefer not to abolish the dependant relatives allowance but to extend it although making it more discriminating. He also proposes a number of other ideas which are set out at paragraph 7 of his paper.

/ Mr. King's

Mr. King's paper sets out the Government's record on housing the elderly and a number of proposals for further action most of which involve developing existing policies. Ferdie Mount endorses this approach but suggests (paragraph 13 of his paper) that more effort should be made in the field of council house sales to the elderly, for example by offering extremely generous terms.

TH

8.2.83

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8 February 1983

FAMILY POLICY GROUP

COUNCIL HOUSE SALES: THE NEXT HALF MILLION

Paper by the Secretary of State for the Environment

1. Within the next few weeks the number of sales of council, new town and housing association houses in Britain since April 1979 will pass half a million. Applications under the right to buy have held up strongly during 1982: there were 140,000 during the first 9 months. Some 200,000 sales are currently in the pipeline. If this Parliament runs its full course we can expect a total of 650,000 to 700,000 sales over the 5 years from April 1979 to March 1984.

2. This is undoubtedly one of our major successes. Provisions in the current Housing and Building Control Bill to extend the right to buy to leasehold properties and to certain tenants of charitable housing associations will bring a further 120,000 families into the scheme, producing perhaps another 10,000 sales. In addition the right to a shared ownership purchase conferred in the Bill will make home-ownership a practical possibility for almost all tenants in full-time employment.

3. Given that 55% of all public sector tenants in England are on supplementary benefit or in receipt of rent rebates and taking account of sales already in the pipeline or foreseeable before the end of this Parliament we estimate that at the end of March 1984 there willbe about 1.8 to 1.85 million tenants in Great Britain in a financial position to buy with right to buy discounts of between one-third and one-half

of open market value. Of these about 1 million are unlikely to buy either because they consider their present house or flat would be a bad buy (one-third of all council tenants live in flats) or because they are too old. Thisleaves perhaps 800,000 to 850,000 potential sales to sitting tenants after March 1984. In addition to that our low-cost home-ownership programme (building for sale, improvement for sale, home-steading and shared-ownership) will enable many thousands of public tenants who don't want to buy their present houses or flats to vacate them and move into home-ownership through these various schemes. We must certainly do everything we can to build on our achievement so far and take the right to buy further. I have the following proposals.

4. Marketing

It is evident that there are wide differences between the level of applications in different authorities of similar type and geographical location. For example 20% of tenants have applied to buy in Scunthorpe but only 5% in Hull. Increased take-up of the right to buy has invariably occurred where our supporters have been active in promoting the right to buy locally, and where councils have changed control to one more sympathetic to the right to buy. Since the change of control in Birmingham last May there have been 8,000 new applications there alone. Further publicity of the right to buy by the Government is however necessary, and this will be taking place shortly.

5. Legislative changes

I have also been giving careful thought to possible changes in the statutory scheme which could give a further stimulus to sales. With so many people having bought on the present terms already and 200,000 sales going through we must accept that any radical departure from the current scheme would cause delay while some tenants waited for more advantageous terms to become available. There could also be some resentment from those who have just completed. Nevertheless there are two proposals which I believe we should consider and which could be seen as evolutionary in relation to the present scheme. They are as follows:-

(i) Three year rule. A considerable number of tenants who wish to buy their homes are at present prevented from doing so by the requirement that they must have completed three years' secure tenancy before they can exercise the right to buy. Though this provision was in our Manifesto, I consider that there are strong grounds for removing it or at least bringing it down to one year. The day that a tenant goes into a house or flat as a secure tenant, he has full security of tenure; on those grounds it seems perfectly justifiable that the right to a discount off vacant possession value should arise immediately. We have in fact already given councils the power to sell voluntarily to tenants at any time during their first three years of occupation, at discounts of up to 30%. By abolishing the three

year qualification we should simply be giving the right to buy at a 30% discount from the start of the secure tenancy. I estimate that this change would affect some 750,000 tenants and give rise to some 50,000 additional applications to buy in the first year. However we must also consider the presentation and the link in people's minds between rent contributions and entitlement to discount. On balance it may be best to come down from 3 to 1 year as a qualifying period.

(ii) Tenants of more than 20 years standing

The right to buy scheme provides for discount entitlement to increase from the basis 33%, by 1% for each year of tenancy over and above the basic three year qualification, up to a maximum discount of 50% in respect of twenty years. There are clear indications that there are significant numbers of tenants towards the end of their working lives, or in retirement, who would wish to buy their council homes if larger discounts were available to them in recognition of previous periods of tenancy stretching over more than twenty years. In the light of this it seems both logical and equitable to carry forward the present discount scheme by tenyears, providing for an additional 1% discount entitlement for each year of tenancy between years 20 and 30, taking the maximum discount (subject to the cost-floor) from 50% to 60%. I estimate that this would increase the financial attractiveness of purchase for about 400,000 of the existing eligible tenants (100,000 with thirty years' tenancy or more, and 300,000 with between twenty and thirty years' tenancy). If colleagues wished we could take the principle to its logical conclusion and simply allow the basic 33% discount to be increased by

1% a year depending on length of tenancy without imposing an artificial maximum of 20 or 30 years - subject again to the cost-floor provision, which ensure that the discounted price does not go below cost.

6. Rising repayment mortgage alternative

Detailed consideration is being given by the Treasury, my Department and the Building Societies Association to Mr Monckton's rising repayment mortgage scheme and other similar schemes. The BSA are likely to decide nextmonth whether or not they are willing to recommend to their members that societies should offer not merely conventional annuity mortgages but a family of mortgages including rising repayment mortgages. If the BSA do decide to go down this route I shall want to consider with colleagues whether under the 'right to a mortgage' Statutory Instrument that forms part of the right to buy scheme the Government should require public landlords to offer right to buy purchasers the choice between a rising repayment mortgage and an annuity mortgage. It is clear however that our opponents are seeking to discredit our low-cost home ownership and right to buy policies by pointing to the increase that has taken place in mortgage default - even though defaulters on building society mortgages only represent less than ½% of all mortgagors. We should need to take care to structure any statutory rising repayment mortgage in a way that would not create an increase incidence of default.

7. The right to buy, despite its considerable technical difficulty and the obstacles that some councils have tried to create, has already proved a major success. We are well on course to reach 1 million sales during the lifetime of the next Parliament. We can however take the right to buy further and faster, and I should be grateful for colleagues views on the proposals in this paper and on the timing of their implementation.

file

bc: F. Mount.
Mr. Wasserman (C.O.).
(NB. Encs.)

Bre.

10 DOWNING STREET

HOME AFFAIRS

From the Private Secretary

1 February 1983

As you know the meeting proposed for the Family Policy Group on 19 January was cancelled. The agenda for that meeting which included papers by the Secretaries of State for Social Services and the Environment, and by Mr. Mount on various aspects of policy towards the elderly, will now be taken at the meeting of the Group arranged for 0930 on 9 February. For the following meeting at 1700 on 15 February the Prime Minister has provisionally agreed that papers on assured tenancies and council house sales by the Secretary of State for the Environment should be discussed. I attach the first of these.

I am sending copies of this letter to John Kerr (HM Treasury), Imogen Wilde (Department of Education and Science), David Edmonds (Department of the Environment), Jonathan Spencer (Department of Industry), Richard Bird (Department of Transport), David Clark (Department of Health and Social Security), Barnaby Shaw (Department of Employment), Mary Brown (Lord Privy Seal's Office), Alex Galloway (Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster's Office), Pamela Hilton (Overseas Development Administration), Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office), Gerry Spence (CPRS), and for information to Muir Russell (Scottish Office) and Adam Peat (Welsh Office).

(Timothy Flesher)

John Halliday, Esq.,
Home Office

Spare.

FAMILY POLICY GROUP : A PAPER BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

ASSURED TENANCIES AND BUILDING SOCIETIES POWERS

1 The private rented sector now provides less than 14% of our housing, compared with about 90% in 1914, though this in part reflects the rise in home ownership from about 10% to 56% in the same period. The decline has been especially marked for families as opposed to single people. Fewer than 10% of all families now live in private rented homes. Those families that could not afford to buy, or did not choose to do so, have until recently been obliged to look almost entirely to the public sector for rented homes. By means of our low-cost home ownership programme (building for sale, improvement for sale, shared ownership and homesteading) we are giving the opportunity of home-ownership to at least some of those who thought they had no alternative but to rent. However, unless we can start recreating opportunities to rent in the private sector, we shall continue to make most of those for whom home-ownership is impractical (whether permanently or temporarily) wholly and unnecessarily dependent on the public sector for their accommodation.

2 The measures we took in the 1980 Housing Act - the introduction of shorthold, help for resident landlords and those letting their houses temporarily when they go abroad - have done something to release private accommodation for short term lettings. Where we need to make more progress is in providing more opportunities for long term renting from private landlords.

3 The basis for action lies in the assured tenancy scheme introduced by the 1980 Housing Act, under which landlords approved by me can let newly built homes at market rents wholly outside the fair rent legislation. The existing assured tenancy arrangements, described in more detail in the Annex, are beginning to show signs of success following the introduction of the crucially important provisions in the 1982 Finance Act under which landlords approved to let on assured tenancies are entitled to a 75% first year capital allowance. 57 companies and partnerships have been approved, or shortly will be when the necessary orders have come into effect, and 24 more are under consideration.

The Opposition have adopted a wait-and-see attitude, and have made no commitment or threat to repeal assured tenancies. Significantly the Select Committee on the Environment have unanimously suggested that there is scope for further development of assured tenancies. I propose we now expand the scheme as follows.

4 First we must widen the scope of the scheme so that it applies to newly improved and converted homes, as well as newly built ones. This would provide a substantial financial incentive for the upgrading of our rented stock - including rundown local authority estates, which could be bought and improved for letting as assured tenancies by the private sector. This would help us transfer some of the most problematic, and potentially expensive, local authority difficult-to-let blocks into the private sector as we are now successfully pioneering at Cantril Farm in Knowsley. To avoid an Opposition repeal threat which would wreck the scheme we would have to provide that existing fair rent tenancies could not be converted into assured tenancies, and we would have to define improvements and conversions so that the Rent Acts could not be evaded by trivial works. At the same time we would make some technical but neutral adjustments to the rent and security regime applying to assured tenancies, to make it better suited to widespread application among residential tenancies. (The present scheme is based on the 1954 Act business tenancy legislation.) All this would require primary housing legislation. We would also need a Finance Act provision to ensure that the extension of the scheme was matched by a similar extension of the existing capital allowances for assured tenancies.

5. Second, we must widen building societies powers so that they can hold land in their own right and therefore participate directly as landlords of assured tenancies. Building societies have the ~~necessary~~ resources, the public confidence and the political neutrality to make a major success of the scheme. The more progressive building societies should be receptive and the Building Societies Associations' own Report on the future of the building societies (the Spalding Report) proposes that societies should be permitted to own land. I have written to the Chancellor to emphasise the importance I attach to this. There would be an

opportunity to provide this power in the Building Society Bill which the Chancellor is already contemplating for the next session. This change will not only widen the impact of assured tenancies, but also help create a new image for the private landlord - a point to which the Centre for Policy Studies attached importance in a recent paper on private renting.

6 Third, we must encourage the development of private sector shared ownership through the assured tenancy scheme. Shared ownership is at present only viable if carried out through public bodies like local authorities and housing associations. Shared ownership is already possible under assured tenancies, but the capital allowance provisions do not at present apply to the rented element of shared ownership schemes. It would be most helpful if this extension could be made in the 1983 Finance Bill. Otherwise, shared ownership, which provides an excellent new means of bridging the gap between renting and owner-occupation, will remain available only in the public sector, thus requiring public expenditure to finance that portion of the dwelling not initially purchased by the shared owner.

7 These 3 changes are all perfectly feasible and will be profoundly helpful both to the furtherance of our housing policies and to getting a greater contribution from the private sector to the provision of both rented and shared ownership accommodation. I warmly commend them to colleagues for early introduction in the next Parliament with the extension of allowances to shared ownership dwellings being effected if at all possible in this year's Finance Bill.

ANNEX

ASSURED TENANCIES

1 The assured tenancy scheme in Sections 56 to 58 of the Housing Act 1980 permits bodies approved by the Secretary of State to let property at freely negotiated rents outside the provisions of the Rent Acts provided that building commenced on or after 8 August 1980 and it has not been previously occupied residentially except as an assured tenancy. Tenants of such properties receive a right to renew their lease on a similar basis to that currently afforded to business tenants under Part II of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1954.

2 Bodies seeking approval must satisfy the Secretary of State that the applicant is a reputable body who will manage homes for renting efficiently and with proper regard for the welfare of their tenants; and will also carry out satisfactorily their statutory and contractual obligations as a landlord. So far 57 bodies have been approved (or will be approved as soon as the necessary statutory instrument has come into effect). A further 24 applications are under consideration. The approved bodies consist of:

1	housing association sponsored by a building society
6	insurance companies (including subsidiaries)
22	builders (ranging from Barratt Developments PLC to small local concerns)
27	property development/investment companies
1	property development partnership

3 The great majority of the applications came after the Chancellor's budget statement in March 1982 announcing the introduction of capital allowances. The subsequent provisions in the 1982 Finance Act entitle approved landlords to first year allowances of 75%, and writing down allowances of 4%, on qualifying expenditure incurred between 9 March 1982 and 1 April 1987.

CONFIDENTIAL

2 MARSHAM STREET
LONDON SW1P 3EB
01-212 3434
My ref:

Your ref:

28 JAN 83

Dear Tim

FAMILY POLICY GROUP: ASSURED TENANCIES AND BUILDING SOCIETIES POWERS

I enclose a paper* by my Secretary of State on assured tenancies and building societies powers for discussion at the meeting of the Group on 15 February.

Yours sincerely

Roger Bright

R BRIGHT
Private Secretary

*20 copies enclosed.

Tim Flesher Esq

CONFIDENTIAL

PRIME MINISTER

Family Policy Group

We now have meetings arranged for 9 February and 15 February. The provisional agenda for 9 February is the one which was planned for the meeting cancelled last week and includes papers by Mr. Fowler and Mr. King on different aspects of policy towards the elderly and a commentary by Ferdie Mount on both. The provisional agenda which Ferdie and I have set up for the following meeting is based on papers on assured tenancies and council house sales by the DOE. Other possibilities include a paper by DES on wider use of school facilities and a report back by the Chancellor on the further research on husband and wife taxation commissioned at the last meeting of the Group. Ferdie is rather anxious that the DOE papers are taken during February in case amendments are needed to the Housing Bill; do you agree? If so, do you wish either of the other proposed papers also to be on the agenda? The Chancellor's paper might be a better candidate since that would enable the DES paper to be taken along with Sir Keith's other paper on planning for parent-hood at a later meeting.

TH

25 January, 1983.

Home Affairs

Home Affairs

Yes MT

10 DOWNING STREET

PRIME MINISTER

Family Policy Group

I assume that, following the recent Ministerial changes, Tom King will replace Michael Heseltine on the group. Tim Raison has asked if he can remain in the group which, since it is as much based on personal interest as on Ministerial responsibility, is in Ferdie's view reasonable. Are you content?

Mr King would like to bring Mr Stanley to the meeting on Wednesday. I assume this is acceptable since it will partly be about DOE issues.

TF.

14 January, 1983

No. 15

bc Ferdy Mount

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

14 January 1983

Dear John,

As promised in my letter of 12 January, I enclose a paper on Housing the Elderly which has been prepared by the Secretary of State for the Environment for discussion at the meeting of the Family Policy Group on Wednesday 19 January at 0930. Also attached is a paper by Mr. Mount for discussion at the same meeting.

I am copying this letter and enclosure to John Kerr (HM Treasury), Imogen Wilde (Department of Education & Science), David Edmonds (Department of the Environment), Jonathan Spencer (Department of Industry), Richard Bird (Department of Transport), David Clark (DHSS), Barnaby Shaw (Department of Employment), Mary Brown (Lord Privy Seal's Office), Alex Galloway (Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster's Office), Pamela Hilton (Overseas Development Administration), Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office), Gerry Spence (CPRS) and for information to Muir Russell (Scottish Office) and Adam Peat (Welsh Office).

Yours ever,

Tim Flesher

(TIMOTHY FLESHER)

John Halliday, Esq.,
Home Office.

15

FPG(83)3

14 January 1983

COPY NO:

FAMILY POLICY GROUP

POLICY FOR ELDERLY PEOPLE

Note by the
Prime Minister's Policy Unit

Dependant Relatives

1. Mr Fowler's paper offers an admirable survey of the tax and benefits arrangements relating to elderly people. But it is less clear that his proposal lies in a direction which would either be popular or would fit in with the objectives which have been discussed in the Family Policy Group.

2. Our prime aim is not surely to reinforce the Welfare State by introducing fresh benefits or extending existing ones. We want to strengthen self-reliance, wherever possible and sensible. In the case of families looking after an elderly relative at home, our supporters would prefer to leave them with more of their own money to meet the extra expenses. In other words, the inclination would be to extend the dependant relatives' allowance, rather than abolish it in favour of broadening the invalid care allowance.

3. The DHSS rightly argues (paragraph 25) that it would be expensive to make any real impact, unless we were to make the dependant relatives' allowance more discriminating - by limiting it (a) to taxpayers with a resident infirm relative; and/or (b) to taxpayers with a resident very elderly (over 75) relative.

4. Both these possibilities are surely worth examining. The DHSS points out the marked increase in the proportion of elderly people, living with a son or daughter, over the age of 75. It is surely the approach of true old age - and the fear of accompanying infirmity - which haunts both the elderly and their children. And a tax allowance which offered some way to relieve this prospect would surely correspond with popular feeling of what is right.

The Conservative Approach

5. More generally, it is doubtful whether "caring" for, or even "caring in the community" for, is the concept that should invariably accompany "the elderly". One of the most striking features of elderly people - no less than of their juniors - is a desire for independence and a dread of "becoming a burden".

6. In noting the steep rise in the numbers of elderly people in recent years, it is also important to note the considerable improvement in the health of the elderly. People not only live longer; they tend to keep their faculties longer. The percentage of elderly people living outside institutions has remained remarkably constant at about 95% over many years. And the proportion of elderly people living and looking after themselves on their own has increased. We must be wary of describing this as increased loneliness; it can be described also as increased independence. And we ought to be as keen to increase the range of choice open to the elderly as we are with other age-groups.

7. There are a variety of measures and projects which an imaginative government ought to be thinking about, if we are to make it easier for the elderly to lead interesting lives of their own without being treated as helpless patients by an army of well-intentioned helpers. For example:

(i) The University of the Third Age. The self-help universities for the over-60s, which have mushroomed in France and have now taken off in Britain in the last 2 years. Since both teachers and taught are unpaid, the U3As don't need or want large government grants. But they might appreciate encouragement, help with premises, etc.

(ii) A part to play for the fit elderly in looking after the old and infirm. Religious institutions and independent charities like the Cheshire Homes have always made full use of elderly volunteers. Why don't the NHS and other public agencies have the courage to overcome union opposition and do so too in a meaningful way beyond pushing round the book-trolley?

(iii) Allotments: many local authorities still think that these are an outmoded relic of wartime, when in fact they have a great part to play in meeting an ever-growing national enthusiasm for growing-your-own. And there is a lot to be said for putting the elderly (and the unemployed) at the head of the queue for them.

8. It is not suggested that the Family Policy Group should pursue ideas like these in detail. But those Departments which might have a contribution to make (DHSS, DES, DOE and perhaps Home Office) could assemble, with the aid of organisations such as the Centre for Policy on Ageing, a positive agenda for the elderly.

Housing the Elderly

9. Our record on making it easier for the elderly to live independently is first-class, and well worth highlighting in our Election material. Two points in particular are worth bringing out:

(i) We have made it easier for the elderly and the infirm to modernise their homes and keep them warm, well-repaired and well-decorated. This is an important counter to the general impression put about, say, in TV documentaries that old people today who stay in their own homes do so at the cost of living in damp and insanitary conditions.

(ii) We have made it much easier for the elderly to move to homes they can manage. After all, one of the inflexibilities of traditional housing was that it was designed for the standard family of four. For the elderly person living alone, the choice lay between the worry of lodging or taking in lodgers, and the indignity of the institution. The old people's bungalows are one of the great social innovations, perhaps the best in the field since the mediaeval invention of almshouses. The introduction of Home Income Plans, 3(e), and Leasehold Schemes for the elderly, 7(c), are also important extensions of choice.

10. These improvements in the quality of life of the elderly are at least as important as the increase in the value of the retirement pension (which in real terms has been only modest since 1979). They are our strongest card.

11. There is perhaps one weakness: we have not yet done enough to make the Right to Buy attractive to the over-60s. This would be an enormous advance, since the social impact would be felt not only by the elderly council tenants themselves, but by their children and grandchildren. We would be creating a new class of testators and legatees.

12. It was envisaged at the Group's meeting on 30 November that the Department of the Environment would produce a paper on proposals to encourage the sale of council houses.

13. It seems likely that such proposals would have to be extremely generous and imaginative if they are to induce a great number of tenants over 60 to take advantage of them. For example, a council tenant of 20 or 30 years' standing could be deemed to have bought his home outright - or alternatively, could be deemed to have done so on a mortgage which would be counted as having been repaid after a further 10 years of occupation involving repayments at the level of the prevailing council rent. Such generosity could, of course, be justified by pointing out that it would be going to a generation which had known hard times and for whom the accumulation of capital was difficult.

14. It would be valuable if the Family Policy Group could indicate its general views on the merits of offering generous inducements of this type to council tenants over 60. The Department of the Environment could then evaluate examples and costings in its forthcoming paper.

F.M.

FAMILY POLICY GROUP

HOUSING THE ELDERLY

PAPER BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

BACKGROUND

1. Most elderly people want, and are able, to live independently in the community with the support which may be available from family and friends. The encouragement of close family links has always been a cornerstone of our housing policy. For the elderly we therefore want policies to help them to be able to stay as long as possible in their present homes. But we also want policies that will help them to move into suitable newly built or existing homes that are near the relatives and close friends and that are also near to local amenities, such as post offices and shops.

2. I have set out below what we have done already and what more could be done to these ends.

HELPING THE ELDERLY STAY IN THEIR OWN HOMES

Action taken to date

3. We have already taken important steps to improve conditions at home for elderly people:-

(a) we have made the Home Improvement Grant system much more useable by the elderly, in the 1980 Housing Act, by allowing homes to be improved with grants in stages - say just putting in an inside WC or better heating - instead of the much more costly previous requirement of having to improve a house comprehensively if a grant was to be claimed. We have also introduced 90% intermediate and repairs grants which will be available up to the end of 1983-84.

(b) In December we announced the start of the National Enveloping Scheme which will help elderly people in Housing Action Areas to get the exterior of their homes repaired.

(c) Old age often brings some physical handicaps. In 1981 we made disabled people's house adaptations eligible for the priority levels of grant (up to 90% in hardship cases) and the priority eligible expense limits (up to £11,500 in London and £8,500 elsewhere).

(d) Warmth in the home is essential for elderly people. In 1981 we introduced 90% grants under the Home Insulation Scheme for loft insulation for elderly people on low incomes (normal grant is 66%). About one-third of the £30m spent on HIS grant goes to the elderly.

(e) To boost elderly people's incomes, in the 1980 Housing Act we extended Option Mortgage Subsidy to enable elderly owner occupiers on incomes below the tax threshold to derive from home income plans a comparable benefit to that enjoyed by taxpayers. Home income plans, which are operated by building societies and other financial institutions, enable elderly homeowners to realise a substantial proportion of the capital value of their homes by raising an annuity.

Further action

4. (a) Need to improve the take up of improvement grants by elderly people on low incomes. A keen need exists for Building Societies to get involved with the local authorities in providing integrated advice on grant/loan packages for Home Improvement. John Stanley has stressed this in response to the English House Condition Survey and will be speaking on this to the Building Societies

Association on 21 January. There is a pressing need for other societies to follow the lead given in Birmingham by Leeds Permanent and Halifax in providing such a service and in supporting it by offering maturity loans, which are particularly helpful for elderly people.

(b) Simplification of the improvement grant system and perhaps making more grants mandatory - eg. repair grants.

5. In the meantime, lines of action we are actively exploring are:-

(a) We have set up a Working Party with the Local Authority associations and expect to put policy proposals on home improvement legislation to colleagues in April.

(b) The possibility of providing means whereby elderly people could receive grant-aid for small scale repairs to their property to secure it for the time being (at present, in England and Wales, grant is only available for repairs which are substantial and structural).

(c) Two changes to DHSS regulations could also help those who were prevented by lack of funds from tackling minor repair work. A person on supplementary benefit may at present be given a lump sum payment of up to £225 which may be used to finance minor repair work. If this could be increased to £500 it would come closer to covering the work that is outside the present scope of the home improvement grant system. A second change would be to increase the limit on the savings applicants for a single payment may hold if they are to be eligible. It has stood for some years at £300. These points have been put to DHSS and are being considered.

(d) The scope for widening the present home insulation grant scheme. Mandatory grants could be extended in two ways under existing legislation: to cover work to improve existing inadequate insulation (at present only uninsulated lofts qualify); and to provide draught-proofing for doors and windows. Both these extensions would be of benefit to elderly people

(e) Widening the definition of improvement to include alarm systems. This would enable private sector elderly occupiers to be linked up to the public sector system and would avoid elderly owner-occupiers and private tenants having to be moved into sheltered accommodation.

HELPING THE ELDERLY TO MOVE TO NEW-BUILT HOUSING

6. I am very conscious of the continuing need to provide sensibly designed adequately heated and conveniently located new housing for the elderly so that as many as possible can remain in ordinary accommodation with the support of their families and the community at large. The private sector, ie. the private house building industry has made a vastly larger contribution to meeting the housing needs of the elderly than it has done hitherto.

Action taken to date

7. (a) For those who can afford outright ownership we are encouraging the private building industry to meet the large market for small dwellings suitable for sale to the elderly. Builders already active in this market include Rendell, a subsidiary of Lovell, New Ideal Homes and Barratt, the volume builders, whose retirement flats are to be launched at the Ideal Home Exhibition in March. The private building industry is also now providing leasehold sheltered accommodation for the elderly at no public

expense. In some cases they are privately managed, in others they are managed through a housing association but with no public funds involved (examples are New Ideal Homes at Woking and Ferndale Garden Homes at Birchington).

(b) We are also encouraging local authorities to build sheltered schemes for sale (the Conservative South Ribble Council has done so and we are encouraging others to follow.)

(c) We have put an increasing proportion of the Housing Association programme into low-cost home ownership, shared ownership and Leasehold Schemes for the Elderly, thus providing more low-cost home ownership opportunities for the elderly by that route. Local authorities and new towns can also enter into part-own/part-rent schemes with elderly people for both new and existing dwellings.

(d) We have asked local authorities to give priority to the elderly in their rented programmes.

(e) We are currently producing a DOE film on 'Housing for the Elderly' to stress the scope for more private sector provision in particular.

Further action

8. The main requirement is to build on the existing initiatives and to get much more sheltered and non-sheltered accommodation built by the private sector for purchase by the elderly.

HELPING THE ELDERLY MOVE TO MORE SUITABLE EXISTING HOUSING

Action taken to date

9. Two schemes have been developed to help people who need to move to public sector rented accommodation:

(a) The voluntary National Mobility Scheme, which is now operated by all but eight local authorities makes it

easier for elderly people to find rented accommodation near their families. In the first sixteen months of its operation about 1500 of those who moved under the scheme did so either because they were themselves elderly or handicapped or because they wished to support relatives in that situation. On present trends there are likely to be half as many again moving in the second year as in the first, and this is likely to increase as the scheme becomes more widely known.

(b) The Tenants' Exchange Scheme is a computerised information service to help public sector tenants find someone in another local authority's area willing to exchange homes. This benefits elderly people as well as younger tenants and 50,000 tenants have registered their housing exchange requirements already.

Further action

10. (a) The Tenants' Exchange Scheme already applies to England, Wales and Northern Ireland; Scottish Ministers are considering its extension there.

(b) We shall continue to look for every opportunity to encourage elderly people to live independently rather than in publicly provided sheltered accommodation.

(c) We shall encourage voluntary bodies, such as Age Concern and Help the Aged, to collaborate with statutory authorities and the Building Societies in giving advice on such matters as home improvement opportunities and the wide range of housing options now available.

2 MARSHAM STREET
LONDON SW1P 3EB

My ref:

Your ref:

14 January 1983

Dear Tim

FAMILY POLICY GROUP: HOUSING THE ELDERLY

As promised, I enclose 20 copies of my Secretary of State's paper on Housing the Elderly.

As I mentioned to you on the telephone, the Secretary of State would be grateful if Mr Stanley could accompany him to the meeting of the Group on 19 January.

Yours sincerely
Roger Bright

R BRIGHT
Private Secretary

Tim Flesher Esq - No 10

 FILE

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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

12 January 1983

Dear John,

As you know, there will be a meeting of the Family Policy Group on Wednesday 19 January at 0930. I attach a paper on policy towards the elderly which has been prepared by the Secretary of State for Social Services. A paper on housing for the elderly prepared by the Secretary of State for the Environment will follow shortly.

I am sending a copy of this letter and enclosure to John Kerr (HM Treasury), Imogen Wilde (Department of Education and Science), David Edmonds (Department of the Environment), Jonathan Spencer (Department of Industry), Richard Bird (Department of Transport), David Clark (DHSS), Barnaby Shaw (Department of Employment), Mary Brown (Lord Privy Seal's Office), Alex Galloway (Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster's Office), Pamela Hilton (Overseas Development Administration), Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office), Gerry Spence (CPRS) and Ferdinand Mount. Copies for information go to Muir Russell (Scottish Office) and Adam Peat (Welsh Office).

Yours ever,

Tim

Timothy Flesher

John Halliday, Esq.,
Home Office.

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JW

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BF 12/1

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & SOCIAL SECURITY

Alexander Fleming House, Elephant & Castle, London SE1 6BY

Telephone 01-407 5522

From the Joint Parliamentary Under Secretary of State

Tim Flesher Esq
Private Secretary
10 Downing Street
London SW1

10 January 1983

Dear Tim

I enclose twenty copies of our promised paper on the elderly for the Family Policy Group meeting on 19 January. In our Secretary of State's absence, Mr Newton has made the finishing touches to the paper.

Yours sincerely

Jonathan Stopes-Roe

J C STOPES-ROE
Private Secretary

Papers despatched 12/1/83

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CARE OF ELDERLY PEOPLE

PAPER BY SECRETARY OF STATE FOR SOCIAL SERVICES

1. At the meeting of the Family Policy Group on 10 September there was discussion about the case for assisting families who devote themselves to caring for elderly relatives at home who, it was felt, got very little help at present. It was agreed that it would be worth examining how they could be given more help, having regard particularly to the prospective growth in the numbers of very elderly people and the high cost of maintaining them in institutions. I was asked to prepare a paper examining the issues and making proposals for action.

THE PROBLEM

a. Numbers

2. The number of elderly people has risen steeply. There are now 8.1 million people aged 65 and over in Great Britain. This total will remain roughly stable to the end of the century but the numbers of people over 75 are expected to rise sharply. By 2001, the 75-84 age group is expected to increase by about one-quarter from 3.1 million to 3.8 million and the over 85 group by over one-half from 0.5 to 0.8 million.

b. Proportion Who Are Handicapped

3. Elderly people are more prone to infirmity than the rest of us. About 13 per cent of the over 65s are handicapped in that their living activities are severely restricted, 4.2 per cent are permanently housebound and 0.3 per cent are permanently bedfast. (See also Annex A). The incidence of severe disablement increases with age: after about age 75 many peoples' health appears to deteriorate rapidly and a lot of care may then be needed. About one-fifth of the over 85s are estimated to suffer from severe or moderate dementia and about half cannot get out of their house on their own. In spite of this 95 per cent of elderly people continue to live in the community - the remainder being in hospital or residential homes.

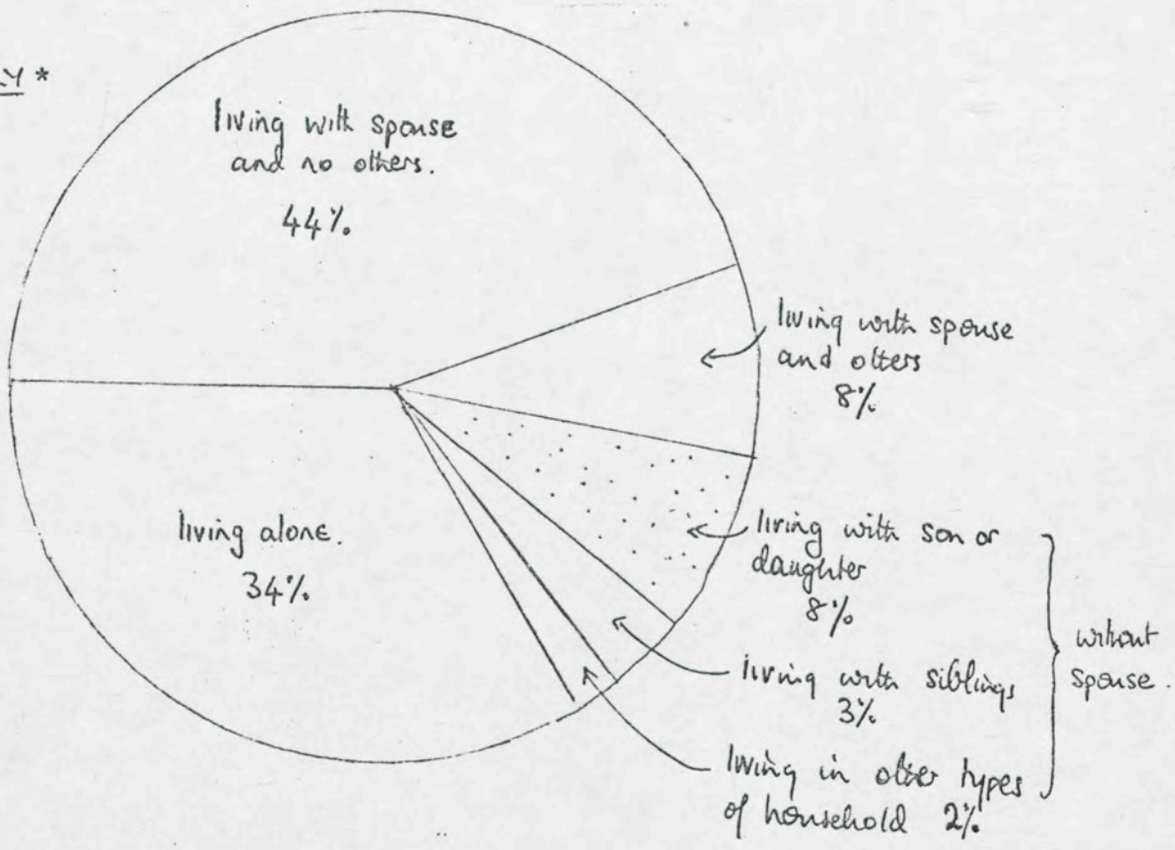
4. The increasing numbers of very elderly people, the high incidence of disability among them, and the fact that most are still looked after in the community poses some major problems - for the families who are looking after them; for the supporting health and social services, and for the provision of hospital and residential accommodation.

c. Household Circumstances

5. About 34 per cent (a rising proportion) of elderly people live alone and another 44 per cent with their spouses (most of whom are also elderly). Only about 20 per cent of elderly people - half of them single and half couples - live with others - usually a son or daughter, otherwise mainly with a sibling. However, a higher proportion of very elderly people live with their sons or daughters than younger elderly people - for example over half of women aged 75 and over and over half the permanently bedfast do so.

WHO THE ELDERLY* LIVE WITH.

1980



*Elderly persons aged 65 and over in private households in Gt Britain. Further details are given in Annex B.

6. The fact that there is an elderly person living in a household with relatives does not necessarily mena that a relative (usually famale) has given up work or not sought work in order to stay at home and look after the elderly person. The person providing the care may not have worked anyway or may have been over pension age themselves, or provided the care while continuing to work - or extensive care may not have been needed. On the other hand, in many such households the presence of an elderly relative undoubtedly creates a heavy burden of care.

7. The relatively small proportion of elderly people who live with relatives does not mean that they are the only ones looked after by relatives. One-third of elderly people who live alone have relatives living close by and are often dependent on them for all sorts of help. Both single elderly and elderly couples receive frequent visits from relatives and friends - 60 per cent see someone at least 2-3 days a week.

d. Financial Circumstances

8. The financial consequences of looking after elderly relatives also vary greatly between households. The (limited) evidence suggests that households which include an elderly person and other members under pension age are only marginally worse off in equivalent income terms than average households, and they are considerably better off than single elderly people or elderly couples living alone. This must be mainly because the former type of household includes an earner whereas the latter types do not.

9. On the other hand, there are undoubtedly families who do suffer a significant financial penalty from having to look after an elderly relative. The familiar, though atypical, case is that of the spinster daughter who has given up the prospect of work to care for a dependent parent and whose only income may be supplementary benefit and perhaps invalid care allowance. The more common case is where a married daughter or daughter-in-law is unable to work because of the presence of a dependent elderly relative. About 65% of married women currently work or are seeking work so there will often be a financial loss if they are unable to do so. (Such families will not normally be dependent on supplementary benefits because of the continuing earnings of the husband). There may also be extra costs involved in looking after certain elderly people particularly if they are incontinent.

10. Existing forms of financial help are shown at Annex C.

PROPOSALS FOR ADDITIONAL HELP

11. So much for the problem. Our policies should be directed at caring for elderly people in the community, in their own homes or in a family home. I think we can construct a useful package of additional help which we could introduce in 1983/84.

The items in this package might be:

(a) the development of appropriate services to support elderly people and their carers in the community, involving voluntary and community back-up wherever possible. An extra £25 million over 3 years could make a significant impact here.

(b) additional financial support for carers by extension of Invalid Care Allowance to married women looking after elderly relatives - net cost £11 million pa (plus about 50 staff).

(c) and, as a possible saving to offset, abolition of the outmoded Dependent Relatives tax allowance - revenue saving £20 million pa and 500 staff saving.

DEVELOPING SERVICES

12. Housing is one priority: it is clearly important whose roof is sheltering the old person. For those who stay in their own home, our policies must ensure it is kept weathertight and warm. For those who need to leave isolated or too large premises, then our policies must encourage a variety of alternative more sheltered provision: traditional sheltered housing, small group developments (housing association and other private as well as public sponsorship) and self-contained flatlets in a converted large house with a warden, are examples. Where a family takes in a frail old person, adaptations may be needed. Our Bill now going through will enable our NHS 'joint finance' programme - for which we have some increased resources - to support housing as well as social services schemes.

13. Next come services. Priority for services cannot be given just to families under stress. Often it is an elderly person living on her own who needs help more. There is a wide unmet need for services among handicapped elderly people in the community and there is some evidence that the provision of appropriate services can postpone or prevent admission to residential care. Where an elderly person is being looked after by a spouse or other relatives, services can make the essential difference to avoiding the breakdown of care. Community nurses, household aids, home helps and meals-on-wheels relieve pressures in the home. So do laundry services for the incontinent. Care attendants, often under voluntary schemes such as "Crossroads", should be more widely

available. If the old person can go to a day centre or be accommodated for a holiday break in temporary residential care, this relief is much appreciated. In some cases these services simply provide respite for the family; in others they might enable carers to retain a full or part-time job.

14. Much is already done by friends, neighbours and the wide range of voluntary and religious organisations. Useful local initiatives could be copied more widely with appropriate publicity. DHSS provides grants for a number of national organisations active in the field. We also launched the Opportunities for Volunteering Scheme in May 1982 to expand the scope for unemployed people to participate in voluntary work associated with health and social services. Some projects also are already supported by the Urban Programme. This is particularly important for inner cities where voluntary networks are weak, and in the coming years there will be an increasing number of elderly people from ethnic minorities some of whom will present special needs for care. More will need to be done in this area.

15. Most of the additional resources made available to the NHS in 1983/84 will go into services for the elderly as it has done in recent years, but this is likely to do little more than enable the services to keep up with the increased number of very old people. Some of the money reserved for central initiatives will be spent on projects benefitting the elderly (for example demonstration districts for the care of elderly people with psychiatric disorder and improving inner city primary care).

16. There is some scope for social services departments and health authorities to increase the effectiveness of their services. We should urge them, as I said in my paper to the Group circulated on 11 September, to emphasise home support, assessment and counselling, day and short-term care and day or night sitting services; they could do a lot more to organise voluntary groups, as well as their own staffs, to provide these.

17. But exhortation without extra resources is likely to be counter-productive (both politically and in its impact on authorities). We have said that we will review expenditure on health programmes in the next public expenditure round. If we wanted to make an earlier impact we could do this by commiting a relatively small sum (say, £25 million spent over three years) in ways that will be seen to be stimulating family and community support. We might for example:-

- provide for additional DHSS grants to increase further the capacity of bodies such as Age Concern, with a wide network of local branches, to find more volunteers and prepare them for effective service. (Our current 'opportunities for volunteering' scheme is working well, but Age Concern and others are pressing us to expand it);

- arrange for adaptation of methods of preventing and managing incontinence to the circumstances of elderly people in the community and for disseminating this knowledge amongst those caring for them;

- encourage the development of more local 'care attendant' schemes on the lines of those set up by Crossroads;

- explore with the major voluntary bodies operating in the field the scope for establishing a consortium which, working within clearly defined guidelines, would channel grants to a range of support services, including training arrangements for volunteers and the provision of professional guidance and supervision (within a voluntary body framework) for volunteers working with the more demanding elderly clients, including the mentally confused.

INVALID CARE ALLOWANCE FOR MARRIED WOMEN

18. We could also improve cash support for families who are caring for elderly relatives.

19. Invalid Care Allowance (ICA) is a non-contributory, taxable benefit of £19.70 a week which is paid to people under pension age who are caring for 35 hours a week or more for a relative or friend who is severely disabled and in receipt of attendance allowance. The link with attendance allowance ensures that there is a real need for care and the benefit is therefore efficiently targetted. The disabled person mav be any age (2 years or over) so the benefit is not limited to those looking after elderly relatives: it includes those looking after a severely handicapped son or daughter. It is also paid to a carer where the disabled person lives elsewhere. The benefit is not paid in addition to other maintenance benefits such as retirement pension or unemployment benefit. A condition of the benefit is that the carer must not earn more than £12 a week so it is paid only to those of working age who are not in full-time paid work but might otherwise be so.

20. The benefit is limited at present to married or single men and single women: married women cannot claim it. There is much criticism of this - eg from the Conservative Women's National Advisory Group, Equal Opportunities Commission, and Disablement Income Group - but we have resisted change so far on grounds of cost and other priorities.

21. We could however consider a limited extension of the allowance to those married women who are staying at home to look after an elderly invalid relative. We estimate that this would have a net cost of about £11 million and a staff cost of about 50 (compared with £60 million and 250 staff for a full extention). It would cover some 14,000 cases where married women are caring for relatives over pension age (leaving a further 35,000 looking after handicapped children under 16, and 31,000 caring for adults under pension age).

22. There would of course be a deadweight factor; the case for extension would have to rest mainly on equity and recompense for earning power foregone. It would also be objected that the households helped would already be receiving considerable benefits (attendance allowance, and probably mobility allowance as well).

23. We could hardly escape acknowledging that the move indicated an intention to extend the allowance more widely in due course; but the limited step could be defended on the grounds that married women would be looking after children (whether handicapped or not) in the normal course whereas giving up work to care for an elderly, previously independent relative involves a greater upheaval for which financial recognition is specially appropriate.

23a. In my view, the balance of political and other considerations favour a limited extension of ICA to married women caring for an elderly relative. The change would require primary legislation (perhaps an attractive element to associate with the 1983 uprating).

DEPENDENT RELATIVES TAX ALLOWANCE

24. If it were felt that the cost of the above proposals had to be offset I suggest we might consider abolition of the Dependent Relatives Tax Allowance. This is an allowance of £100 pa (£145 for a single woman) for taxpayers who maintain an elderly or infirm relative of limited means - either by having them living in the same household or by giving them financial support. The allowance is reduced £ for £ for any income (excluding inter alia, attendance allowance and mobility allowance) of the dependent relative above the basic retirement pension. About three quarters of a million allowances areclaimed at present at a revenue cost of £20million pa.

25. The allowance is worth only £30 a year - about 60p a week - to the basic rate tax payer. About 500 staff are required in Inland Revenue to administer it. It has remained at the same level since 1960. To increase the allowance to a level which might influence behaviour would be very expensive. Enhancement would only make sense if the rules of eligibility were changed to make it much more discriminating - for example, it might be limited to taxpayers with a resident infirm or very elderly (over age 75) relative. However there are strong administrative arguments for not changing the eligibility rules.

26. Could we therefore abolish it? In my view, given the current level of the benefit and its relatively indiscriminate nature and high staff cost, there is a good case for this. I believe we could justify abolition provided the revenue saved were used for a broadly similar objective particularly if it coincided with a general increase in tax thresholds. The improvements I have outlined above would be a more effective use of the money and would provide a useful net staff saving. Abolition would require primary (Finance Bill) Legislation.

CONCLUSIONS

27. The rapidly growing numbers of very elderly people is a challenge which many families have to meet, and we should expect them to do so; care in the community is a sensible policy. The combination of service and cash proposals I have outlined above would be a positive step to support their efforts - and some of the elderly who have no younger family. In so far as the help we gave encouraged more families to look after their elderly relatives, or to do so for longer, (reversing the trend for more elderly people to live alone) it should also result in some offsetting public expenditure savings - on the cost of maintaining elderly people in institutions or on the extra benefits and services they would be likely to receive if living on their own. If all three of my proposals were agreed, the £20m revenue gained by abolishing the Dependent Relatives Tax Allowance would pay for both the extension of ICA to married women looking after elderly relatives (£11m) and the improvement in services (£25m over 3 years). It would produce a valuable net staff saving of about 450. All 3 initiatives could if we wished be introduced in 1983/84 through legislation already in preparation for this session.

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ANNEX A

CAPACITY FOR SELF-CARE

Proportion of Elderly People unable to manage various tasks on their own, by age.

Activity	Age: 65-74	75-84	85 & over
Feeding	-	1	3
Bathing, Showering Washing all over	5	11	34
Household Shopping	8	22	56
Going out of doors, walking	6	17	48
Getting up and down stairs	4	11	31
Getting in and out of bed	1	2	10

Source: GHS 1980

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ANNEX B

WHO THE ELDERLY LIVE WITH

Percentage of elderly people who live in different types of household by age.

Age	65-74	75-84	85 or over	All over 65
Lives alone	28	45	48	34
Lives with spouse over 65 and no others	40	32	12	36
spouse under 65 and no others	13	2	-	9
Lives with others:				
Lives with spouse and others	11	5	7	8
Lives without spouse but with others:				
Son or daughter	5	11	22	8
sibling	2	3	7	2
other	2	2	5	2

Source: GHS (Elderly persons aged 65 and over in private households in Gt Britain)

note: totals do not add to 100% because of rounding

EXISTING FORMS OF FINANCIAL HELP

While it cannot be assumed that the income of an elderly person will always be pooled with that of the rest of the household, it is normally the income of the whole household which will determine the standard of living and the elderly person's income may be an important component of that. The benefits available from the State are:

Elderly Person:	Rate per week (from November 1982)
a. Retirement Pension: depends on contribution record. (Earnings-related component only building up slowly for new pensioners). Taxable.	single - £32.85 couple - £52.55
b. Over 80 Pension: for people aged 80 or over with a retirement pension of less than £19.70 a week. Non-contributory. Taxable.	single - £19.70
c. Over 80s Addition: non-contributory. Taxable.	single - 25p couple - 50p
d. Attendance Allowance: for severely disabled people who need a lot of looking after; if by day and night and higher rate, if by day or by night the lower rate. Attendance allowance is currently paid to 350,000 recipients including 193,000 over age 65. Non-taxable.	Higher - £26.25 Lower - £17.50
e. Mobility Allowance: for people who cannot walk. Recipients must be eligible before reaching age 65, but can keep the allowance once in payment up to age 75. Non-taxable.	£18.30
f. Supplementary Pension: if their income is insufficient for their basic requirements. AA and Mob A is not taken into account, nor is the income of other members of the household except a spouse. Approximately one-fifth of pensioners receive supplementary pension. But only 47,000 get the 'non-householder' rate of £26.15.	[£26]

g. Daughter's (or son's) services tax allowances: Allowance of £55 pa for elderly or inform people who have a daughter (or son) resident with them and maintained by them.

Caring Relative

a.	Retirement pension (if over pension age)	As above
b.	Invalid care allowance: (if under pension age)	£19.70
c.	Supplementary Benefit	As above
d.	Dependent Relatives Tax Allowance: Allowance of £100 pa (£145 for single woman) for taxpayers who help to maintain an elderly or infirm relative of limited means.	

File AH
cc F Mount
HOME AFFAIRS.

10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

21 December, 1982

Dear Dean.

Thank you very much for giving me a copy of Values and the Changing Family.

It is a most thoughtful and well-balanced report. I found it as encouraging about the future of the family as you suggested I might, and I am glad to note that such diverse contributors came to the same conclusion about the continued popularity of family life.

Yours sincerely

Margaret Thatcher

The Right Reverend The Dean of Windsor

AH

PRIME MINISTER

The Dean of Windsor left the attached letter with a copy of the report by his study commission on "Values and the Changing Family". He suggested that to get the flavour of it quickly, you should look at the preface (Flag A) and Part 6 (Flag B).

I have shown it to Ferdi Mount, who comments that the report corrects several popular misconceptions about the decline of family life - and has had reasonably good publicity on this account. There are one or two points which may be relevant to the work of the family policy group. Ferdi has suggested the attached reply.

FERB

20 December 1982

20 December 1982

MR BUTLER

I suggest:

> "Thank you very much for giving me a copy of Values and the Changing Family. It is a most thoughtful and well-balanced report. I found it as encouraging about the future of the family as you suggested I might, and am glad to note that such diverse contributors came to the same conclusion about the continued popularity of family life."

The report corrects several popular misconceptions about the decline of family life - and has had reasonably good publicity on this account.

There are one or two points which might be relevant to the Family Policy Group. Could you let me have it back in due course?

FM

FERDINAND MOUNT

10 DOWNING STREET

Mr. Mount

The Dean of Windsor left the attached for the Prime Minister to see, suggesting that she might get the gist of it from the Preface and Part VI if she did not have time to read the whole thing.

Would the Policy Unit like to suggest a brief reply for the Prime Minister to send? And would you like to consider whether there is anything valuable to extract for the work of the Family Policy Group?

F.E.R.B. 17.12.

MS

THE DEANERY
WINDSOR CASTLE.
WINDSOR 65561.

16th December, 1982.

Dear Prime Minister,

For the last few years I have chaired a Working Party of the Study Commission on the Family on "Values in the Family". This Report has received some publicity, and I thought that you might be interested to receive a copy. I think you will find this quite an encouraging document. Another interesting point is the diversity of the Working Party which came to an unanimous mind.

Yours very sincerely,

Michael Mann.

VALUES

AND THE CHANGING FAMILY

A FINAL REPORT FROM THE WORKING PARTY ON VALUES

STUDY COMMISSION ON THE FAMILY

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Contents

Preface

Because we tend to be ambivalent towards change, wanting the advantages which it brings, but reluctant to pay the costs of having these advantages, we find it difficult to come to a clear decision about some of the challenges we face. This difficulty in reaching a consensus about this balance is compounded by the nature of change. Some changes may be permanent, others temporary, and yet others may be cyclical where the time factor may be short or long. Because legal or statutory provision to help meet such challenges takes time to enact, it becomes important to identify the nature of each change. If it can be clearly seen to be good then it should be welcomed; if it is thought to be bad, it should be resisted; but it is where there is controversy and ambiguity that time is needed to ensure that statutory changes are not made in haste that will be out of date or unwelcome by the time they come into effect.

Some of the challenges posed by family issues, many of which display ambiguity and are subject to controversy are:

1 The role and place of women in the family. This is an area of concern where there is a considerable degree of intellectual assent to the ideal values which ought to pertain, but equally there is strong resistance still to paying the price for achieving these values.
2 The balance between **continuity** and the need for **security** which impose certain obligations and responsibilities and **change** and the desire for **freedom**.
3 The balance between the realistic expectations of real life and the fantasy world encouraged by so many modern developments.
4 The expectations placed upon children in the family, and the balance between competitive and material success and the desire for fulfillment and happiness, through caring, loving and sharing.

At present, society has not made up its mind about these value issues, and it is unlikely to do so until there is a lot more discussion and debate about the balance of values deemed desirable. This report is intended as a contribution to that debate.

Part 1 **Introduction**

The family in Britain is changing — in some respects quite dramatically. Increasing rates of divorce and a related increase in the number of one-parent families are perhaps the most discussed aspects of these changes but there are other important and related elements. Most notable amongst these are the changing role of women, both in the family and in the wider society; the growing importance of remarriage; and the popularity of cohabitation before, or perhaps as an alternative to marriage.

These changes, amongst others, have focussed attention on the state of the British family and this in turn prompts specific and concrete questions about social policy and raises practical issues for those who deal with family problems through voluntary bodies or in other spheres, such as industry. However the changes that are taking place also raise more fundamental questions about **values**.

The Study Commission on the Family has been concerned with the 'values' question since the start of its work and our membership was drawn up to reflect this concern. In our 1980 discussion paper, 'Happy Families?', we noted:

"There has undoubtedly been a shift in certain forms of behaviour and in attitudes and beliefs about some aspects of family life. What changes have taken place and do they constitute simply adjustments to changing circumstances or a more fundamental change in values?"

This is perhaps the key question we address ourselves to in this report.

The Study Commission's working party on values was set up in July 1980, under the chairmanship of the Rt Revd Michael Mann, Dean of Windsor. From the start we recognised that we were dealing with an important, but ill-defined, complex and contentious issue. Any attempt to look at values in any sphere of life must recognise a number of problems. First, there is considerable confusion in the literature regarding concepts such as values, attitudes, traits and norms, and there have been

many attempts to provide precise definitions. Notwithstanding the considerable debate within the academic community regarding precise definitions, for the purpose of this report, values are taken to be enduring and central beliefs, thoughts and feelings which influence or determine important evaluations or choices regarding persons, situations and ideas. They shade imperceptibly into attitudes.[1]

An important distinction should be made between those values pertaining to 'what is preferred' compared to those pertaining to 'what is preferable' and 'what is desired' compared to 'what **ought** to be desired'. There is a complex relationship between values, attitudes and behaviour. People may hold one set of values for themselves and a completely different one for other people; they may behave in a very different way from other people who appear to hold similar values. As Michael Mann has noted:

"There is also an ambivalence in each of us; when we are subject to conflicting pressures our true values are revealed by the way in which we act. We may give intellectual assent to a particular set of values, but our actions often indicate that we are motivated by a rather different set. We may also act in a certain way as an individual under one set of values, whereas we may behave very differently as a member of various groups. And both our basic values and the circumstances arising from them are by no means constant and will often alter as our circumstances change."[2]

The field of values is not only complex and difficult intellectually, it is also very controversial and, particularly in relation to aspects of family life, the evidence available to us is often open to different interpretations. As we shall see, some trends associated with marriage may indicate, at first sight, a decline in the value placed on marriage, but other trends may suggest an entirely opposite conclusion. Similarly some aspects of social change indicate, to some, that the family has been weakened as a unit, while other evidence might suggest that the family is remarkably strong and vital. Again, some facts might suggest that state support has undermined the family, while others evaluating the same facts will urge more state support for the family. Differences of interpretation may shade into straightforward disagreement about certain major trends. Some may point to certain forms of behaviour as indicating a healthy development in society, while others regard them as morally shocking.

We are aware therefore, that the area of family values is an intellectual and moral minefield and we do not present this

report as an infallible guide through these obstacles. Rather it is intended as a contribution to the wider public debate about family life in Britain today, which perhaps too readily neglects the fundamental value questions underpinning it.

We are concerned then with the following key questions. First, how have family patterns been changing and also what other key trends are affecting family life? Second, how do we interpret these changes? To what extent, for example, do they represent a departure from traditional values? What are the major areas of concern? Third, what values and attitudes do people themselves hold about the family? How have these changed and to what extent is there a consensus or conflict about values in relation to the family?

Many of these questions, and particularly those relating to how the family has changed, can be tackled at first descriptively. In the next section we therefore present a description of the family today and how trends are affecting it. We also look at other trends that are relevant, such as those affecting employment. This description shows that undoubtedly, a number of important changes are affecting family life. These are discussed and evaluated in Part 3 before we move on in Part 4 to consider the evidence that is available about peoples' own attitudes and values concerning the family. Given that changes can be identified, we then proceed in Part 5 to consider some of the implications of these changes in a number of different spheres and the dilemmas they have generated.

The nature of the subject defies a straightforward answer to most of the questions posed above. We therefore refrain from labelling the final section 'conclusions'. Rather, it is a statement of those issues which the working party are agreed appear to be central to any discussion of values and the family.

Part 2

Changing family patterns

To what extent are changing family patterns in Britain associated with changing values? This was the question we posed in the introduction to our Report and in this section we review the evidence about changing patterns before considering the significance of those changes in Part 3.

Continuities

Most contemporary accounts of the family emphasise change and, consequently, an increasing diversity in family patterns. In this account however we start by emphasising **continuity** in family life and only turn to changes later. For the fact is that **most** young people in Britain will get married; **most** marriages will survive; **most** married couples will have children; **most** children will be born legitimate and be brought up by two parents. Indeed nine in every ten children are still born within marriage and seven out of eight are living in two-parent families. The broad elements of continuity in family patterns are described below. A more detailed review can be found elsewhere.[1]

Marriage is, at least in one very important sense, more popular today than in earlier periods of our history. Partly because of a more balanced sex ratio the proportion of eligible persons marrying has increased during the course of this century. In mid-Victorian England almost one-third of women remained spinsters and of every thousand women in the age group 20-39 (in England and Wales) 552 were married in 1911; in 1931 the figure was 572; and by 1961 it had reached 808. And while later we note a decline in the marriage rate during the 1970s (a trend which is open to different interpretations) the fact remains that even on the basis of the 1976 marriage patterns only some 8% of women and 14% of men will **not** marry.

Once married, and despite the increased divorce rates, some two out of three marriages will survive, to be ended naturally, rather than through divorce. And of those couples who marry, most will have children. Indeed, compared with earlier times, there are fewer childless families today: among women

marrying in the period 1961-65 only 8% were childless after ten years. This compares with 10% for the period 1956-60 and 16% for 1920-24. And, as we have already indicated, the overwhelming majority of children are born within marriage and, despite the impact of divorce, over 87% of them are living in two-parent families at any one point in time. Also, despite major changes in patterns of work and family life, most very young children have mothers who do **not** work outside the home – some 79% in 1978 for those under two, for example.[2]

The views about what constitutes a 'normal' or 'traditional' family might vary, but for those who regard it as essentially based around a married couple with children, cemented by permanent relationships, then the family might be said to be alive and well.

Changes

It is, however, the changes, rather than the continuities, in family life which attract interest and concern. Evidence about divorce and the numbers of one-parent families make the headlines and encourage extreme predictions, such as the view that 'the future of marriage is now in question'.[3] What therefore are the facts, and which are the most important trends?

Marriage: We have already noted that, compared with the past, a large proportion of men and women now get married, but that is the broad historical trend. On a shorter time scale, things look somewhat different. In the early part of the 1970s there was a rapid fall in the total number of marriages, of the order of 15% in four years and marriage rates have dropped from the very high rates in the late 1960s to levels similar to those in the 1920s. However, since 1976, there has again been a slight increase in the total annual number of couples marrying, but not to the levels pertaining in the 1960s. Thus the picture for the 1970s is complicated, partly because of changes in the timing of marriage. In the 1960s nearly 10% of bachelors and 30% of spinsters married in their teens partly because of changing fashions. But an added impetus was the Family Law Reform Act, which took effect in 1970 and allowed young people over 18 years old to marry without parental consent. The effect was a 'borrowing' of marriages which would otherwise have taken place in the 1970s.

Divorce: Perhaps the key changes, from the viewpoint of values, concern the permanence of marriage and most attention is focussed on the question of divorce. As noted in another Study

Commission publication, 'Families in Focus', over the last twenty years there has been a 600% increase in the divorce rate. Currently one in three marriages is likely to end in divorce.[4] Some 60% of these will involve dependent children and the number of children involved in divorce each year is now around 163,000. Thus we might expect that between one in five and one in six children born today may witness their parents' divorce before they reach 16.[5]

One-Parent Families: One major consequence of divorce is the increasing numbers of one-parent families. There were 570,000 such families in 1971, 750,000 in 1976 and an estimated 920,000 in 1980. About one in eight families then is headed by a single parent, but this snapshot picture underestimates the impact of divorce on family life, for a far higher proportion of children will spend part of their childhood in a single-parent family.[6]

It is important to note, however, that one-parent families are not a homogeneous group and their diversity has implications for their quality of life. Today one in nine lone parents is male, one in seven an unmarried mother, one in six a widow, one in three divorced and one in five separated. We know little about the length of time children and parents spend in one-parent families. For many it would appear to be a long term experience, but an increasing number of lone parents do remarry and a new family type is therefore created.

Remarriage: Following changes in the divorce rate, the proportion of marriages involving a remarriage for at least one partner has increased from 13% in 1901 to 20% in 1971 to 34% today. Today 11%, or about one in nine, of all new marriages involve couples who have both been previously divorced. It is estimated that on the basis of current trends around one in five men will have been remarried by the year 2000, and a slightly smaller proportion of women will have entered a second or later marriage. The likelihood of remarriage varies with age, and is particularly high at ages under 30. Indeed trends suggest that something like 80% of those who divorced under 30 will remarry within five years.[7]

Cohabitation: An increasing number of people cohabit. Around 10% of women who first married between 1971 and 1975 had lived with their husbands before marriage compared with 3% who were married for the first time five years earlier. Data from the 1979 General Household Survey (GHS) suggests that this proportion had risen to 20% for those who married in the late 1970s and in addition about one in ten single women aged 20-29 reported that they were cohabiting.[8]

Extended Families: One further aspect of demographic change is the rapidly increasing number of very elderly people in the population. In 1901 for example there were 1,529,000 over 65s representing 4.7% of the total population. By 1981, however, there were 7,287,000 people over 65 – 14.2% of the population. And while in 1901 there were only 50,000 over 85s, by the year 1981 there were 514,000 and by 2001 there will be an estimated 778,000 people aged 85 or over. This represents a percentage increase between 1901 and 1981 of 930%.[9]

Increased life expectancy and growing numbers of the old have dramatically changed the nature of the family in modern times. Compared with earlier periods today's children are likely to have grandparents alive during much of their childhood and some will have one or more great-grandparents too. However, a significant proportion of the elderly appear to have very few potential family contacts. Undoubtedly, as we discuss in the next section, the increasing number of the very elderly in society represents one of our major social challenges and the nature and extent of the family's caring role in relation to elderly relatives is a primary focus of contemporary concern.

Women's Employment: The demographic and social changes described so far have been paralleled by qualitative changes in roles and relationships within the family and between the family and the wider society. Perhaps one of the most pertinent examples in this realm is the changing role of women and, in particular, their increasing participation in the formal labour market after marriage and childbirth. In 1921 women were only one in three of the labour force and the vast majority of working women were unmarried. Today, two out of every five workers are women and within this figure, married women now outnumber unmarried women by about two to one. Overall, one quarter of the labour force are married women and about one-half of these can be expected to be caring for at least one dependent child.[10]

Though marriage therefore no longer means the end of formal labour market participation for most women, as it did at least until the Second World War, childbirth and child care responsibilities still have a marked impact on women's ability to work outside the home. And the younger the child the less likely it is that women will have paid work. It must however be noted that the increase in proportions in paid employment can be accounted for almost completely by those women working part time. The proportion of women working full time with children under school age has remained relatively constant.

The trend towards smaller families means the earlier completion of family formation so giving more women the choice of whether to work or not. Women over 35 have a much higher participation rate reflecting both the return to work after childrearing and the smaller proportion of this age group responsible for a pre-school child.

These then are the major social and demographic trends affecting family life in Britain today. Undoubtedly they do indicate that a number of important changes are occurring. But to what extent do these changes represent a threat to family life – a fundamental change in certain key values or attitudes or mere adjustments in practice and style? It is to these issues that we now address ourselves.

Part 3

Interpreting change in family life: problems and implications

Do the family trends that we have outlined represent an undermining of family life? Indeed do they indicate a crisis for the family? It is possible to identify three major spheres of concern within today's debate about the family: the changing role of women; the welfare of children; and the nature of responsibilities and obligations between family members. However, it is also evident that the implications of change within these different spheres are the subject of considerable controversy.

Certainly there are many who are ready to argue that the social and demographic changes described are associated with decline. They feel that the family is being undermined, that its health is threatened; that it is not as valued as it used to be; and that, furthermore, it no longer performs adequately certain crucial functions such as child care and discipline, moral education, and the care of its elderly members. Others, however, will take a radically different view. They would not deny that there have been changes but would point to the increasing diversity of family life as a not unwelcome trend in that it allows individuals to express their own individuality and preferences in a way not always possible for earlier generations. There will be others who may welcome evidence of the decline of the traditional family on the grounds that it represented a patriarchal and conservative authority, which involved oppression of its female members. Some such critics may look for alternatives to the family in the form of communes or other co-operative forms. Given such differing views how should we therefore evaluate the family trends that are undoubtedly taking place?

Some Caveats

At the outset there is a need for caution. Every generation, throughout history, has interpreted some trends as evidence of moral decline and a lack of stability in certain key societal institutions. For this reason Fletcher prefaced his own book on 'The Family and Marriage in Britain', published originally in 1962, with the cautionary warning of L C A Knowles that:

"Englishmen are always despondent about their own times, and it would be easy to quote contemporaries in every period so that their testimony would show that we had gone downhill ever since the time of the Norman conquest."[1]

An additional major hallmark of contemporary comment on the British family is an often over simple comparison with an idealised past. But accounts of family life in previous times rarely reveal a golden age of the family. Historical evidence on social structure, illegitimacy, orphanages, pre marital and extra marital sexual activity suggests that the close knit and puritanical families of Jane Austen's 'Pride and Prejudice' for example, represented family life for only a very small sector of society, if at all. Other nineteenth century novels paint a far bleaker picture, as do twentieth century accounts of life in industrialised Britain. Commenting on the position of ordinary families in the nineteenth century, Fletcher concluded for example, that:

"The rapid developments of manufacturing industry and urbanisation then, did not bring about, for the wage earning classes, a total worsening of an earlier family life which had been altogether more satisfactory, so much as a new and terrible aggravation of existing evils. There was a new degree of family disunity in a situation where new insecurities, new harshnesses of work and environment, new miseries were added to the old."[2]

In other strata of society too, an ideal family life is difficult to discover. Within the aristocracy morals were lax to put it mildly; while within the middle class family, marriage was often based on a well defined subordination of women which many people today would find objectionable.

The idea that families knew greater conformity and stability in the past is therefore open to considerable doubt. Indeed, it has been argued that major social changes and legislation such as compulsory school attendance, institutionalised retirement ages and labour laws may have imposed **more** rigid patterns and therefore **greater** uniformity today than yesteryear.[3]

Some problems of interpretation

The popularity of marriage

To start with an obvious statement, the evaluation of family trends depends crucially on **what** is valued about the family. Thus, in regard to marriage, if it is **permanence** which is valued

– ''til death us do part' – then undoubtedly there is cause for concern, for as we have noted, increasing numbers of couples, many of whom will have taken traditional marriage vows, end their marriage with a divorce. As one of us has noted:

"Forty years ago the word 'family' was commonly recognised as meaning father, mother and children in the first instance, with grandparents, uncles, aunts and cousins at one remove all contained in British society within the bond of lifelong monogamous marriage. Today the same certainly no longer exists."[4]

Indeed the Rapoports have argued that:

"There is a sense in which variation, either by chance or by choice is now the norm. Attempts to isolate any 'normal' or even 'mainstream' type family are thwarted by a host of variables which cut across every apparent type."[5]

Those who value marriage, but not **necessarily** permanence, may well be less despondent about the evidence. As we have shown, some 90% of people get married and, despite some ambiguous evidence about marriage trends in the 1970s, this is likely to be the picture for the foreseeable future. It would certainly be wrong to assume too readily that divorce suggests a widespread disillusion with marriage itself; for again, as we have shown, many of the divorced get remarried, including the vast majority of those who divorce at a young age. Moreover, it is arguably the case that divorce often signifies not so much a rejection of marriage – or even a disillusionment with it – but rather a search for a better relationship and therefore a more fulfilling marriage. Indeed Dominian has suggested that:

"It may be that the present level of divorce is an indicator of the massive changes in marriage which need examining and adapting to rather than a precursor of any serious challenge to monogamy. There is certainly no evidence that there is any serious alternative to marriage which is replacing it. There is however evidence that marriage has many variations reflecting the increasing multiplicity of the characteristics of personal fulfilment."[6]

The question of whether or not marriage is less valued today than in previous generations is not therefore as straightforward to answer as a cursory acquaintance with the evidence might suggest. There is a need to distinguish between divorce, separation, marital breakdown and an unhappy marriage. Undoubtedly there are many more divorces than previously, but do more marriage breakdowns signify more unhappy

marriages? Divorce statistics understate the true extent of marriage breakdown, but this is less likely to be the case today than previously. Divorce Law Reform has certainly enabled more marriages to formally dissolve than used to be the case. However whether there are today more unhappy marriages than previously is an impossible question to answer, but one which it is important to pose for our discussion.

Cohabitation: trial marriage or alternative

Cohabitation is another trend that has been noted. Though there is now some evidence on the extent of cohabitation, the meaning for the individuals involved and the longer term implications are far from straightforward. There are many possible reasons for a couple choosing to cohabit. Some will enter cohabitation with no intention whatsoever that it should be permanent, or even a very long term relationship. Others may be unable to marry or remarry (because one partner is already married for example) or may not do so because of financial expediency (the loss of a widow's pension for instance). Still others may consider it a trial period before entering marriage whilst for some cohabitation represents a total rejection of the institution of marriage.

One French sociologist suggests that:

"Most de facto unions . . . are now deliberate . . . because the great majority of the younger generation believe that the partners are sovereign in the choice of their way of life, the status of their union and its duration. Even those who marry say that marriage is only a formality for them and that they consent to it for social convenience."[7]

For many cohabiting couples the period of living together does seem to be a stage before marriage – a trial marriage which frequently precedes the birth of a child. However, cohabitation may well be an increasingly popular alternative to marriage. One important indication of the nature of change is the increase in the proportion of illegitimate births which are jointly registered, from 49% in 1974 to 55% in 1979.[8] Joint registrations of illegitimate births suggest that parents, though unmarried, may be living together in a stable relationship.

Whether cohabitation does or does not represent a threat to **marriage** is a somewhat different issue from whether it represents a threat to the family. Research suggests for example, that qualities such as monogomy and permanence are highly valued by some of the couples involved. Indeed a government survey on patterns of family formation found that one group of cohabiting women regarded themselves as

'married'. They '. . . saw the relationship as a long term commitment usually including having children and sharing possessions and income.'[9]

A woman's place . . . ?

As with trends in marriage, divorce and cohabitation, the evaluation of female employment trends depends greatly on what is valued about the family. Is it the 'traditional' family unit itself – 'mother's place is in the home' – or is it other factors which may or may not be associated with that, such as the high quality of child care and parental responsibility?

For those who value what is regarded as 'traditional' family life and equate this with very separate roles for husbands and wives, fathers and mothers, then the trends since the war involving more and more mothers successfully seeking paid employment, will be a cause for concern. Others would argue that historically large proportions of women have always worked outside, as well as within, the home. They would welcome current trends towards more sex equality, which involves alongside other no less important developments, equality at work.

Issues associated with female employment, however, raise important practical questions and are the subject of controversy. Child care is of paramount importance. There is little evidence showing adverse effects on children as a direct result of the mother going out to work per se. However, there are conflicting views between those who feel that mothers should stay at home to look after very young children and those who feel that it is quite acceptable for such mothers to work and, indeed, would argue that there may be beneficial effects for both mothers and children in such circumstances. Indeed, a new analysis of trends since the war shows that while social security and fiscal benefits for families with children have failed to protect family living standards, vis a vis those of childless couples and young people, the fact that more of these families have both mothers and fathers working has, in fact, enabled these families to protect and indeed increase their material standard of living.[10] Furthermore, it is estimated that between three and four times as many families would experience poverty were it not for the wives' earnings.[11]

While the trend towards more dual worker families raises, for some, questions about the woman's role, for others it raises a broader question about the relationship between family life and work. Indeed, while a great deal of attention is focussed on the problems for women in combining parenthood and

work, others would also focus attention on men. In recent years, increasing academic interest has been directed towards the possible adverse effects on the family of fathers' absence through work or the effect of 'unsocial hours' associated with shiftwork, nightwork, etc. Men's involvement in domestic activities and child care is also the subject of interest and debate.

While evidence on these questions can affect public debate, the views of some will not be fundamentally changed, partly because evidence is seldom unqualified and conclusive, and more importantly because fundamental value positions are involved. Despite these differences, it is apparent that the trends towards greater female employment – and the rise of the dual worker family – have profound implications for public policy, as do many of the other trends we have discussed. The association between values and policy choices is discussed in a later section.

The caring role of the family

Female employment trends raise questions about the family's capacity to care for children adequately and whether or not the family is now valued in this respect as much as in the past. Similar questions concern the family's role in relation to the elderly. In particular, doubts are expressed about the family's willingness to care and some argue that the pursuit of individual self fulfilment has adversely affected this aspect of family life.

As we have seen there are many more elderly people to care for today than there were in the past, particularly the very elderly. In this sphere too, historical comparisons are prey to 'golden age' comparisons which may not always stand up to factual analysis. Indeed a study by Moroney demonstrates that every generation bemoans the family's neglect of its old.[12] For example the Report of the 1832 Royal Commission observed that:

> "The duty of supporting parents and children in old age or infirmity is so strongly enforced by natural feelings, that it is well performed, even among savages and almost always so in a nation deserving the name of civilised. We believe that England is the only European country in which it is neglected."[13]

Bearing in mind the obvious point that the number of people receiving any form of care depends at any time on the amount of such care available, it is worth noting that the proportion of elderly people in institutions, whether hospitals or other forms

of accommodation, has not increased since the turn of the century and then, as now, represents some 5% of the elderly population.[14]

What is the evidence today about the family's role in the care of its elderly members? Inevitably, it is only possible to build up a partial picture from the available evidence. Much of it depends on official statistics and, while it is possible to develop a reasonably accurate picture of household composition and social contacts, for example, it is obviously more difficult to measure the **quality** of relationships and feelings and attitudes that are present. The statistics can, undoubtedly, be interpreted in different ways, but much of the evidence supports the view that the family continues to provide a great deal of care for older people and this is all the more encouraging, perhaps, given the increasing numbers to which we have already referred.

The statistics for Great Britain in 1978-79 show that of all those aged 65 and over, some 51% still live with their spouse (and sometimes also with others); 15% live without their spouse but with others; and 34% live alone. Among the more elderly groups the picture changes radically, however. For women (and most of the very elderly are women) only 8% of those aged 85 or over live with their spouse; 39% live without their spouse but with others; and as many as 53% live alone. It is important to point out that of those living with others, most are living with children, children in law or other close relatives.[15]

This evidence shows, however, that large proportions of the very elderly – and therefore the most vulnerable – live alone. Does this represent familial neglect? This is not necessarily the case. First, it needs to be noted that some one-third of all elderly people have **no** living children and it appears from the evidence that the proportion of very elderly people in this situation is even higher. Thus, what might be viewed as the first line of family care, is not present. Second, it needs to be emphasised that living alone is not the same as social isolation. Rather, research shows that many of those living alone, even among the very elderly groups, live full active lives and have a great deal of contact with family members, neighbours and friends. Many elderly people would prefer to live alone, rather than with their families, whilst others may choose to live alone out of fear of the alternative, in particular residential care, which some elderly people may dread.

There is however considerable evidence of a great deal of contact between generations. A study for England in 1976, for

example, showed that 78% of those living alone reported that they visited relatives and some 39% said that they had visits from relatives 'several times per week' while a further 19% received visits 'at least once per week'.[16] Further evidence would support this picture with contact between the generations often taking the form of practical assistance during visits.

Inevitably, however, there is another side to the story and some evidence of social isolation. For example the same 1976 study showed that, of those living alone, 4% 'never' received visits from relatives and 25% said that they would like relatives to visit more often. Additionally 1.5% (representing a not inconsiderable number of elderly people) neither made nor received visits at all. Similarly, and alarmingly, 13% of those elderly people who are bedfast or housebound never received visits from relatives and as many as 42% of this group would like relatives to visit more often. Other evidence, concerning practical assistance received with household tasks such as climbing stairs and bathing, while revealing a picture of much family help, also shows that not insignificant minorities receive no such help. Elderly people without children or other relatives may rely on neighbours and friends for assistance and company.

Overall, the evidence suggests that, faced with the major social challenge represented by the increasing numbers of elderly people in Britain, families are in general coping well and providing a great deal of care. However, significant minorities of the elderly do not receive care of this kind and, while this is often because no close family members exist, there will undoubtedly be cases of family neglect. More positively, however, practical issues are raised about how to encourage families to provide and maintain care, often in very adverse social and economic circumstances. There are implications here for social services, voluntary bodies and churches which deserve fuller discussion.

So far we have been referring to 'family care'. It should however be stressed that the majority of carers are women. Mirroring the situation with childcare described earlier, it would appear that responsibility for elderly and/or infirm dependants similarly affects opportunities for paid employment, the hours that can be worked and the nature of the work possible. Whilst many of these women consciously choose to 'care' for their relatives, recent reports from the Equal Opportunities Commission suggest that for some the task is lonely and frequently harrowing. An additional dimension of such responsibilities which is not widely appreciated, is that some women (and indeed some men) may

experience a sequence of care – for children, elderly relatives and then frail, elderly spouses. These women are often full time, unpaid carers whose lives are difficult indeed.[17]

Summary

This discussion of the nature of demographic and social trends in relation to the family and how they may be evaluated, raises a number of important issues. Though there are changes occurring in the pattern of family life, there are also important continuities as we have described. In the realm of values, no definite statements are possible, but the extent to which traditional values associated with the family are seen to be threatened must depend upon whether the continuities or the changes are the primary focus. Similarly, any attempt at evaluation must avoid misleading references to a 'golden age' gone by, which do not stand up to a close scrutiny of historical evidence.

One issue, perhaps above all others, arises from the discussion so far. There is a need for a much clearer understanding of what precisely it is that is valued in relation to marriage and family life if we are to understand the implications of change and begin to formulate appropriate responses. We turn now to look at the survey evidence on values and the family to see what light this may throw on the issues under discussion.

Part 4 Survey evidence

Survey evidence on values and attitudes towards the family reflects many of the dimensions of continuity and change already identified. However, before we look at the evidence in more detail we should stress the need for caution. The data in this sphere is far from comprehensive and the extent to which it is possible to identify changes over time, or indeed differences between groups, is severely limited by the nature of the material.

The survey evidence reviewed here falls into three groups: large and small scale academic surveys; surveys conducted by commercial opinion polling companies and advertising agencies; and finally data from questionnaires carried in national newspapers and magazines. Clearly they vary considerably in the degrees to which they could be said to be 'representative' of any section of the community in a truly statistical sense. In addition, by no means all of the surveys were expressly conducted in order to elicit information about values and attitudes towards marriage and the family. In many cases these issues were covered in a single section of a lengthy questionnaire or indeed a single question. This has obvious implications for the amount of comparative analysis which has been possible as data relating to a particular issue may only be available from one of the surveys. In a very real sense then the issues raised in this section partly reflect the nature and limitations of the material used.

Additionally we should stress that we have limited ourselves to a discussion of the nature of values and the extent to which they have or have not changed. Whilst we do not intend to imply that values develop in a vacuum we have not addressed the very important social and economic changes which have occurred in society over the past century or more and which will have clearly interacted in complex and dynamic ways with social attitudes and values. For those who would wish to pursue such issues we have included a short bibliography.[1]

In survey evidence 'the family' is consistently ranked as an essential element of individuals' lives, crucial for personal satisfaction, happiness, contentment, psychological well being,

etc. However, there are a number of separate elements to be considered. The evidence suggests that both marriage and the family are still primary values for the majority of people; that despite the divorce rates, most people still view marriage (initially at least) as permanent; and that most couples still desire children and see them as an essential element in the transition from being a 'couple' to being a 'family'. However, though these elements would suggest a considerable degree of continuity, the picture is not so clear if one looks at the qualities being sought in a marriage; at the increasing acceptability of divorce, cohabitation and premarital sexual relationships; and at attitudes towards family forms other than the nuclear family. Similarly, whilst some changes are becoming more acceptable the possible or actual consequences of these, particularly for children, are a cause for concern for many people.

Dimension of continuity and change

The family and marriage as primary values

In surveys of values using different scales, in different countries, with different age and occupational groups and different sexes, some variant of the phrase 'family security' is consistently highly ranked.

In an open ended question in a national survey conducted in 1975 by the Social Science Research Council's Survey Unit, for example, people were asked what sorts of things they think of when they hear the term 'quality of life'; the largest single category of all references for the whole sample was to family, homelife and marriage. However, there were notable differences between men and women. Although 23% of all respondents referred to 'family' factors, only 18% of men did so, compared with 26% of women. The position was completely reversed for 'living standards', which were endorsed by 23% of men and only 13% of women.[2]

A more recent survey in Colchester in 1979/80 which involved interviews with 461 people similarly reported that most people in that sample saw marriage and family life as the most important aspects of their lives. There was little variation in the lists of aspects of life drawn up in order of importance by men and women of different ages – marriage and the family was consistently ranked ahead of health, job, money, friends, and so on.[3]

The Social Survey Unit's questionnaire also asked about the actual level of satisfaction with marriage and family life. No separate figures were given for men and women, but on a scale from 1-10 the family remained high and constant between survey dates (Table 1). Clearly such results may simply indicate that people are reticent to admit to a strange interviewer that their family life is not good. However, other work supports a conclusion that the family is an important source of happiness.

Table 1. Satisfaction with different aspects of life

	Mean satisfaction rating		
	1971	1973	1975
Marriage	9.2	–	–
Family life	8.5	–	8.8
Job	8.3	8.3	8.0
Town	–	7.8	8.1
Health	7.9	7.7	7.8
District	7.9	7.5	7.9
Being a housewife	7.9	–	8.1
Leisure	7.6	7.5	7.7
House	7.4	7.8	7.8
Standard of living	6.9	7.4	7.7
Education	6.5	6.7	6.9
Democracy	6.1	6.7	7.3
Financial situation	5.5	6.6	7.3
Life in Britain	–	–	6.5
Life as a whole	7.8	7.6	7.8

Source: J Hall, (1976) **Social Trends No 7**, p 50, table III

On the basis of the surveys reviewed here it would seem justified to state that the majority of young people **still** want to marry. A 'Sun' newspaper survey of teenagers' attitudes in October 1980 claimed, for example, that most teenagers want marriage, parenthood and a happy home life in the future. Seventy per cent of the 13-19 year olds who wrote to the newspaper felt that marriage was definitely not out of date, with 80% of girls and 65% of boys wanting a religious wedding.[4] The continued popularity of marriage is also supported by more representative surveys. Amongst the 15-19 year olds in a commercial survey by McCann Erikson in 1977[5] only 9% of single men and women in the sample said they would not marry or did not know. The slightly older age group seem to hold the same views, for the vast majority of the 15-24 year olds in a 'NOW'/MORI survey in 1979 also intended to marry.[6]

The meaning of marriage and family life

The evidence does therefore support a conclusion that marriage and family life are still highly valued by the majority of people. More problematic perhaps is to what extent the meaning of these relationships and institutions have, or indeed are changing. We return again to a question posed earlier – what exactly is it that is valued?

Permanence: Despite the high rates of divorce, permanence still appears to be important. Although in the McCann Erikson survey of 15-25 year olds, 60% said they might personally divorce, only 13% of the 'NOW'/MORI sample of a similar age thought it likely that they **would** divorce. Significantly perhaps, 87% of divorcees in an NOP survey in 1980 had expected their marriage to last forever and the proportion of the younger age group (18-34 year olds) was similar to that of the over 55s.[7] (It must be noted that the broad age bands used in these results may mask important differences.)

Divorce is however now fairly widely accepted, if not actually welcomed, though attitudes do reflect considerable concern. In a Mirror Group survey called 'Women in the '80s' and involving one thousand women aged between 18 and 40, around a quarter actually felt divorce should be made more difficult.[8] Attitudes towards divorce also reflect a degree of dual standards. In the NOP survey of divorcees, for example, though 78% felt they had tried 'hard enough' to save their own marriage, only 36% believed that others had tried hard enough. One area where there does appear to have been a change in attitudes is in relation to sexual activity, though here too the picture painted by available survey evidence is far from straightforward.

Premarital sexual activity

Premarital sexual activity does seem to be more acceptable – particularly amongst young people. In 1969 in a national survey Gorer found a 50% increase in the proportion of people in favour of sexual experience before marriage compared with a similar survey he was involved in twenty years earlier – an increase 'almost entirely due to the response of younger people'.[9] Indeed, in the 1979 'NOW'/MORI survey of 15-24 year olds, 36% of young people actually **disapproved** of marrying someone they had not slept with. However, attitudes appear to be changing in all age groups. In the national survey of women under 40 years old, conducted by the Mirror Group Newspapers Survey Department in 1980, almost identical proportions in all age groups (over 50%) felt premarital sex

was acceptable. The data does in fact suggest that part of any age difference may be reflecting a greater willingness to admit to more permissive views. For example, in the National Opinion Poll survey of divorcees a perhaps surprisingly large proportion of the over 55 year olds (34%) admitted to having had sexual experience before marriage (though of course sexual experience can mean very different things to different people).

However, in this sphere too people may hold different standards for themselves and others. The 1980 Mirror Group survey of women aged 18-40 actually gave an option 'alright for some but not for me' in relation to pre-marital sex which was endorsed by 13% of the 31-40 age group compared with only 6% of the younger group. Similarly, in the same survey, although 84% of the single women accepted or positively favoured pre-marital sex, only 66% admitted that they themselves would have sexual experience before marriage.

Related to this, though perhaps showing even more uniformity with age, are the changes in attitudes towards cohabitation. In a 1980 survey conducted by MORI for the 'Sunday Times' only 7% of 15-24 year olds supported the view that living together was morally wrong compared with 50% of those over 65.[10] Two years later, in the report of a further MORI survey, the reporter writes that the over 65s 'could not even summon up that degree of condemnation (50%) for the idea of unmarried couples living together'.[11]

Cohabitation is therefore becoming more acceptable, but for those involved the perception of the relationship appears to vary considerably. In the 1979 General Household Survey over half of the women who indicated they were co-habitating had originally described themselves as married. They had been co-habitating longer, and were more likely to have children, than cohabitating women who described themselves as 'living together', suggesting a more temporary arrangement.[12] It is also perhaps worth noting that 6% of the cohabiting adults in the 1982 MORI survey thought what they were doing was morally wrong.

Fidelity:

Sexual conduct within marriage is also a subject of debate. A range of surveys continue to support a conclusion that faithfulness in relationships and monogamy are still highly valued. In 1981 in what is described as 'one of the largest surveys ever undertaken on a world-wide scale' focused on values, 78% of the UK sample agreed with the sixth commandment – 'thou shall not commit adultery' – a far higher proportion than in

any other country. However, reflecting extreme scepticism, 25% of other people were believed to live by it and there does seem to be a view that infidelity within marriage is an important source of problems.[13]

On the basis of his two surveys in 1950 and 1969, for example, Gorer argued that infidelity was considered more important in the late 60s as a cause of unhappy marriages than 20 years previously – but so too was jealousy. Only 5% of the 1969 sample, evenly distributed by age, sex and social class, actually felt that faithfulness was not now so important and men appeared more concerned with fidelity than women. The recent 'Sunday Times'/MORI survey, in March 1982, provides some indication of the fine detail of these attitudes. Over 70% of 18-25 year olds, over 80% of 65 year olds and over two thirds of the total sample felt adultery was morally wrong. However, at the same time only 16% of the total (slightly fewer women than men again) felt sexual fidelity to be the **most** important ingredient of a good marriage. It does seem that whilst fidelity and monogamy are still valued, they are not considered to be as important as other qualities in a marriage.

Marriage: alive and well but different

In his 1950 survey, Gorer identified the traditional concept of marriage as a complementary relationship in which 'the ideal characters and function of husband and wife are seen as contrasting and complementing one another, man as the bread-winner and the defender of the home, woman as housewife and mother, man as aggressive and woman as timid'. In 1969, repeating the survey, Gorer claimed that the results of the 1969 survey demonstrated a major shift towards more egalitarian qualities – 'a symmetrical relationship'. Egalitarian **ideals** are certainly consistently highly ranked in different survey results as Table 2 shows. For most people, sharing, mutual adaptiveness, friendship and trust seem to represent the ideal qualities of a happy marriage. As the writer of the report in the 'Sunday Times' recently argued on the basis of the latest MORI survey of values in this field:

"the place that women now hold in society . . . has registered a sharp improvement in the eyes of both men and women over two decades."[14]

However, the existence of egalitarianism in practice within families is a very different issue and here change has been much less pronounced. Indeed in the 'Sunday Times' MORI survey, in 66% of cases the wife did all the housework, and other surveys suggests that even when working **full time,**

women are usually expected – and indeed often accept – that housework and childcare are their responsibility. In a recent study of women involved in factory work for example, the researchers noted that the women's employment had 'to be fitted in with household duties and childcare arrangements, which they and their families regard as unquestionably their responsibility.'[15]

Table 2. Qualities for a happy marriage, rankings in a number of surveys*

Quality	Rankings				
	A	B	C	D	E
Give and take/equality/understanding	1	1	1	1	1
Companionship/shared interests	2	4	2	2	5
Trust/respect/honesty	3	5	5	3	–
Love and affection	4	3	3	4	2
Children	5	6	–	–	12
Sexual compatibility	6	–	6	6	4
Financial security	6	2	7	–	7
Harmony/peace/contentment	6	–	3	7	–

A Gorer: this data is taken from a National Survey in 1969 which involved a sample of 1,987 men and women between the ages of 16 and 65.

B This work was carried out by the now defunct Social Science Research Council Survey Unit. The data is taken from a survey in 1971 which involved a quota sample of 593 respondents in the seven largest connurbations in Britain.

C 'Enter Marriage': a commercial survey of 110 married and engaged women undertaken in 1979 by Schlackman Market Research Group, as part of a series of surveys called 'The Seven Ages of Women'.

D 'Entering Motherhood': part of the above series. This survey involved a quota sample of women (either having a baby or already mothers) using both a questionnaire and group discussion. The sample size was 445.

E This survey was conducted in April 1982 by Market and Opinion Research International, using a quota sample of 1,069 adults aged over 18.

*The categories of 'qualities' used here have been adapted from the originals to facilitate comparison between the different surveys.

It has been suggested that the expectations of young people entering marriage and family life may be **too** high and that this may precipitate problems, as the institution and its relationships fail to live up to preconceived ideals. Whilst significant changes are occurring in attitudes and values amongst the young, they do not perhaps suggest the dawning of realism in some important areas.

As we have seen for example, young people do appear to hold traditional aspirations in relation to marriage and parenthood, and romantic love in particular is seen to be very important to

young people as a quality for a good marriage. 60% of those under 24 felt it was the **most** important quality in the 1982 MORI survey. For the sample overall, of all ages 'romance' came tenth in a list of important qualities.

Attitudes to parenthood

Children are a key element in the ideas and experiences of family life. The belief that the couple do not become a family until they have children is epitomised in the phrase 'starting a family' and in this sphere too continuity may be more significant than change. The importance of children, in both the ideal marriage and a happy family life and the predominance of the image of a two child nuclear family is well represented in survey evidence. There has been a decline in average family size, as we noted earlier, and this undoubtedly does reflect a change in views about what is considered to be ideal.

There is however also an important distinction between views of what is ideal for society and what is considered ideal for oneself: a distinction which is discussed in more detail in another Study Commission publication.[16] Suffice it to say here that over the past decade or more, women's ideas about what is ideal for them have come closer to their ideals for society as a whole and the ideal of a two child family now predominates. However, as an EEC report of a Europe-wide survey in 1979, looking at attitudes towards parenthood, concluded, the reduction in family size does not appear to suggest a widespread rejection of parenthood, rather:

"the tendency to restrict the ideal size of the family . . . goes hand in hand with the continuing importance of the family to Europeans today."[17]

Parenthood is certainly still popular even amongst the more career minded young women. Indeed, only 7% of the working women under 25 years old in the McCann Erikson survey of young people mentioned earlier, said they actually did not want children. There does, however, appear to have been a shift in the view that parenthood is a **necessary** and indeed **primary** ingredient for a happy marriage. In the European survey in 1979, whilst over half of the UK sample agreed for example that parenthood is 'the **ultimate** fulfilment of men and women', a full 38% (more than in any other country) either strongly or slightly disagreed with this somewhat extreme statement. In the recent 'Sunday Times' report of the MORI survey in May 1982 only 14% of both men and women felt that having children was the **most** important ingredient for a good marriage. Similarly, in the national survey of women

aged 18-40 carried out by Mirror Survey Division, whilst 62% of respondents felt children were essential or desirable if a marriage was to be happy, a sizeable minority (35%) disagreed and women married without children frequently claimed that children were 'not at all essential'.

Parent/child relationships

One dimension of the continuing importance of the family is the extent to which it is still considered a major reference point for the young. Some early work in this area was done by the Lynds in 1929 and 1937 in 'Middletown' in the USA.[18] They were concerned to identify elements of what is today termed the generation gap – the idea of a growing lack of understanding between parents and children associated with an increasing rate of social change. The Lynds concluded that the role of the home in the socialisation of the young was declining. A more recent study in 1979 in the same town provides somewhat surprising results however. The research concludes that there is 'increased family solidarity, a smaller generation gap, closer marital communications and more religion' than the studies of fifty years earlier had found.[19]

If the centrality of the family can be measured via attitudes toward parent/child relationships, what further evidence is there that these are significantly strained at the moment, or even that they have been markedly more or less in the past? The 'NOW'/MORI survey noted earlier reported 80% of their sample of 15-24 year olds – consistent across age, sex and social class – feeling that their parents understood them and 87% claiming to understand their parents. In a National Children's Bureau study, 86% of the 16 year olds in a national sample in 1974 felt they got on well with their mother, 80% got on well with their father.[20] In a commercial survey of 11-16 year olds published in 1980, 55% took most notice of their father and 54% of their mother compared with friends, teachers and others.[21] These proportions however did decrease with age, but such figures do not suggest a widespread and rapid deterioration of parent/child relationships.

The teenagers responding to the 'Sun' survey in October 1980 were reported to have been overwhelmingly happy at home though figures in the 'NOW'/MORI survey of 15-24 year olds showing those living at home to be less likely to be cheerful than those living away from home (41% against 53%), present a slightly more complex picture for this older age group.

Sources of disagreement between parents and children are perhaps predictable – appearance, time of going to bed, choice

of friends etc – but they would seem to be less significant than is commonly believed. The McCann Erikson survey reports only 5% of the parents of 15-24 year olds disapproving of the choice of steady boy/girl friends and in the National Children's Bureau study, only 2% of the 16 year olds disagreed often with their parents on choice of friends of opposite sex, and 11% about appearances.

Inevitably, however, the overall picture is far from straightforward. Despite the attitudes expressed in these surveys there is still a great deal of concern about the quality of parent/child relationships. In the EEC survey in 1979 mentioned earlier, for example, 78% of the UK sample complained that parents were not strict enough with their children – a much greater proportion in any country – either strongly or slightly disagreed however, and perhaps somewhat paradoxically, 44% in the UK (again higher than average) felt that parents were not concerned enough with their children's opinions. 62% – by far the highest proportion in any country – either strongly or slightly disagree that parents are **closer** to their children today than they had been themselves. In all other EEC countries under half of the sample disagreed.

Given these results it is perhaps not surprising to find that over 50% of those interviewed in the UK for the EEC survey felt that individuals and society fail to take the true needs of children into account. Such concerns are perhaps most apparent in attitudes towards working mothers and those attitudes associated with divorce.

Maternal employment and women's work

Irrespective of the research evidence on the effects of maternal employment on children, attitudes do reflect real concern that children will suffer if they do not have the full time care of their mothers in particular. However, there are large numbers who do not share these views or who hold ambivalent attitudes.

Two recent surveys of the readers of 'Spare Rib' and the 'Townswoman' magazine vividly illustrate the differences and dimensions of ambivalence.[22] Whilst a majority of both groups felt work was good for women (albeit a smaller majority of the slightly older 'Townswoman' sample) the two groups were divided about the effects on the children. A clear majority of the 'Townswoman' sample felt it was bad for them, compared with only 7% of 'Spare Rib' readers.

Despite the overt desire for egalitarianism within marriage described earlier, traditional views of the division of responsibility within the family are still common. Indeed whilst 48% of the 1982 MORI survey disagreed that a woman's place still was in the home, 35% either strongly or slightly agreed. Though slightly more women disagreed overall than men the difference was not great. Traditional views were more common amongst older respondents, working class families and amongst separated and divorced people – 46% of whom agreed. 90% of working women, however, felt that work either had no effect on the quality of their family life or actually helped it.

It is in relation to mothers of young children taking paid employment that attitudes become most conservative. In the 1982 MORI survey 61% agreed that such mothers should stay at home and look after the children. Women, however, were not as sure as men and the age group most likely to have dependent children were evenly split between agreement and disagreement. Such figures however can be no more than suggestive of current values in this sphere which are extremely complex. Some surveys suggest, for example, that mothers of very young children are more likely to agree that such women should not work.

Interview material from the survey of several hundred women factory workers mentioned earlier suggested in fact that women with children under five were unwilling to consider full time work unless financial pressures were extreme.[23] A number of surveys have, however, noted different responses from men and women to the presence of young children in the home. In 1968 Gorer, for example, noted that fathers in his survey mentioned the presence of children as an essential component of a happy marriage more frequently than mothers, who were 'much more likely to complain about the way the presence of young children render their lives restricted and monotonous'.

There is some suggestion in survey results that people feel parents do not spend enough time with their children. Indeed, in the EEC survey, 71% of young parents in the UK felt this and in Europe as a whole, such fears were more common where both parents worked. However, 86% of UK respondents felt that flexitime would help parents to look after their children better (more women than men) and 50% felt that parental leave without pay after the birth of a child would be helpful.

Divorce

The welfare of children is an important focus of current debates about divorce and lone parenthood, as is the nature of obligations between divorcing parents and non parents. This is however one area where attitudinal material on a comprehensive basis is badly lacking. Indeed, in their recent report on the financial consequences of divorce the Law Commission note that:

"The lack of factual information obviously constitutes a formidable handicap to the task of law reform. Moreover although the response to the Discussion Paper has been helpful in enabling us to form some view of the public feeling about the policy of the law, it has to be accepted that this response is necessarily selective, and to some extent self-interested."[24]

They go on to argue for a survey designed to ascertain public opinion on the major policy issues involved. These issues would include the custody of children and the payment of maintenance for these and for a spouse – usually the wife. The Commission noted that there was a considerable amount of agreement that priority should be given to making such financial provision 'as would safeguard the maintenance and welfare of children'. Payment of maintenance to wives however appears to be a more controversial area. Opinion appears to be divided as to whether marital misconduct should be considered when deciding maintenance, whilst many people now believe that women's increasing economic independence should make maintenance of ex wives redundant.

The Law Commission argues that the law should be based on widely accepted principles of justice, but it is clearly the case that to date we have very little information about which principles would be considered just. In relation to custody, there is certainly a view that, as one lawyer put it:

"although there is no legal rule that care should be granted to a mother, in most circumstances the mother is preferred if nothing else, by the laws of nature and the structure of society."[25]

However just how widespread is the acceptance of these 'laws of nature' and to what extent social structures are being changed is an important gap in our knowledge about attitudes and values.

We do know that attitudes towards family units other than the nuclear family are changing to some extent, though the data is

again very limited and the samples very small. In a small scale survey in Nottingham in the early 70s for example, George and Wilding found that 65% of the people they interviewed believed that with a reasonable income mothers and fathers could bring up children alone.[26] Similarly, in a small commercial survey of married women entering motherhood, 38% disagreed with the view that children in one-parent families were at a 'terrible disadvantage', whilst a further third were unsure.[27]

It would appear, however, that lone parents perceive that others' attitudes towards them are frequently unsympathetic. Over 60% of the sample in George and Wilding's study noted a change in attitudes towards them and the researchers estimated that 38.6% of these attitudes could be regarded as unhelpful or rejecting.

The caring role of the family

We have already discussed the extent to which families – and usually the women in the family – care for their dependent relatives. Until recently little attention was given to either the carers, or the cared for, in these situations and we still know little about the thoughts and feelings of the people involved.

The family's responsibility to care is valued in our society and it is this motivation which influences many of the people involved. Recent reports from the Equal Opportunities Commission have provided some qualitative material in this sphere. When asked why they had taken on the task of caring for elderly or other handicapped dependants, one report notes that:

"most were surprised and perplexed when the question was put to them . . . the vast majority considered that the responsibility for caring was naturally theirs . . . It's your family isn't it? . . . you can't say duty but they are family and it's a responsibility."[28]

A related aspect of family relationships and responsibilities is the extent to which families maintain contact with other relatives. The recent EEC survey suggests that there is concern that contact with grandparents, for example, is not as great as it used to be. We have already noted the possibility of misleading historical comparisons, but whether grandparents do or do not have as much contact with their grandchildren as they did, does not alter the fact that two thirds of UK respondants felt they did not and that this was regretted.

Summary

The material reviewed in this section is certainly inadequate for an indepth exploration of changes over time, or differences between population groups. In many cases the samples are very small, not truly representative and the picture presented is frequently ambiguous. This is partly because of the difficulties of comparing responses to differently worded questions. But it is perhaps also because changes are occurring in certain values and attitudes associated with marriage, parenthood and the family. Ambiguity may inevitably accompany a time of transition but on the basis of material presented here, it is extremely difficult to point to any reliable evidence for a major widespread shift in **fundamental** beliefs. Even in those areas where change is more evident traditional values may persist. Cohabitation, for example, for many people entails permanent, monogamous relationships and parenthood. And whilst there have been changes in the qualities that people are seeking from a marriage, most people would be unwilling to criticise the quest for equality between men and women in principle.

The review of survey evidence has however thrown up into sharp perspective important areas of uncertainty and ambivalence. In particular, there is concern that children may be adversely affected by divorce, lone parenthood and maternal employment. In addition the attitudes expressed towards equality in the home appear to be at variance with behaviour within families. There are, as we shall see in the next section, some indicators of family stress which should be, and are, a cause for concern. However, it can be argued that these are at least partly a result of ambivalence rather than a direct consequence of change.

Part 5

Responding to change: the nature of the dilemmas

Whatever the true comparison between the family in history and today and whatever the nature of the values attached to it, the family clearly remains and will remain a key social unit in society. Consequently, values and attitudes towards 'the family' underlie policy, guide practice and influence (but do not necessarily determine) behaviour in many fields.

Central and local government, the law, churches, voluntary bodies, trade unions, a range of professions and others, all have explicit or implicit views of 'the family', the roles and relationships within it and the interface between the family and other sectors of society. To the extent that such views fail to take account of the changes in roles and relationships we have described, they will not relate to the reality of family life for an increasing number of men, women and children.

Many public and private services are for example organised upon explicit or implicit views and values about the respective roles and responsibilities of different family members. Within the world of work, despite some changes, there is still an underlying assumption that the traditional single earner family is the norm. Though maternity provisions have been introduced, paid paternity leave remains very rare and men are not yet seen to have child care responsibilities. Rigid ideas about the respective roles of husband and wife, mother and father are also reflected in the history of statutory day care provision,[1] whilst the assumption that mothers do not work could be argued also to underpin the provision of many health services. The recent moves to provide more accessible health facilities at places of work and at more convenient hours are to be welcomed, but similar arguments are heard in relation to parents' evenings at schools and other 'appointment' issues. Similarly, in the words of the recent Green Paper, the present system of family taxation, though under review, still:

"proceeds on the basis (originally enacted in 1806) that 'A woman's income . . . shall . . . be deemed for tax purposes to be his (her husband's) income'."[2]

Traditional views of the 'ideal family patterns' also continue to influence the attitudes and actions of many professions, which can have adverse consequences for some families. There is, for example, evidence that lone parents and step families may feel a great pressure to conform to 'ideal' standards of child care, possibly far removed from what is common in many intact two parent families.[3] This may be particularly acute when the professional concerned is in a formal position of 'evaluating' them as parents — in custody cases, for example.

Change may also create dilemmas for those individuals and families adhering to 'traditional' beliefs. For example, whilst the Roman Catholic Church continues to insist on the rejection of all forms of artificial contraception, many millions of Catholic couples, for financial or other reasons, choose to disobey the teachings of the Church and control the timing, size and spacing of their families by 'artificial' means. Whilst the difficulties facing those who break the 'rules' are given some attention, the overall situation may also cause much soul-searching amongst those who remain committed to 'traditional' values.

Similarly, the continued insistence of the Church of England on the permanency of marriage vows means that many couples, where one or both partners are divorced, must remarry outside the church, despite their adherance to its teachings in other respects. Such dilemmas do present formidable problems for those within the church. For example, as one of our members has argued:

"Should Anglicans continue to insist upon the permanence of marriage? And, if that is the right thing to do, how do they cope in love and charity with the increasing number of people whose marriage has failed?" Michael Mann[4]

Resistance to change

The very complexity of much legislation and many administrative procedures represent a formidable barrier to any response to change. But there are others which relate more directly to value questions.

It is a matter for some considerable debate whether any sector or 'institution' has an obligation to uphold what are perceived as 'ideal' values, attempting to reverse or slow down certain trends rather than passively adapting to pressure from elsewhere. In many cases people look to the 'institution' in question for guidance (as with the church and medical ethics for example)

and they will be disappointed, if not in fact confused, if such guidance is not provided. There are very real fears also that legislative and institutional changes may inadvertently undermine the family. Such fears have been a constant feature of debates in Parliament and elsewhere for over a century. Proposals to ameliorate the situation of wives and children alone, for example, have been, and still are, criticised not only as being bad in themselves, but 'as securing the welfare of individuals by undermining the integrity of monogamous marriage and stable family life'.[5] Two recent examples confirm that these fears are still very much a part of the contemporary debates around the family. For example, during the House of Lords debate preceding the defeat of the Marriage (Enabling) Bill, which would have allowed a person to marry anyone who is not a blood relative, it was argued that the Bill, as originally drafted, 'would undermine the whole fabric of family life'.[6]

Similarly, recent comments on the effects of the Divorce Law Reform Act of 1969 argue that it reflected a devaluing of marriage and the family which has had its reward in the increased divorce rate of the past decade.[7] The same report, from the Society of Conservative Lawyers, also expressed the widely-held view that alternative life styles were not being merely tolerated but rather actively encouraged by being accorded the advantages previously reserved for marriage. They cited the Law Commission's proposals that the remaining distinctions between legitimate and illegitimate children should be eroded.

It is perhaps inevitable that change in policy and practice (whether enshrined in the law or otherwise) will have both intended and unintended consequences. But, at the same time, the social and humanitarian arguments for change are powerful.

The barriers to change thrown up by the value dilemmas discussed above are often explicitly recognised and the subject of much debate. Significantly, some of the most explicit value questions about family life, for example those concerned with divorce and abortion, have been the most controversial pieces of post-war legislation and have also, again significantly, involved private members' legislation and a free vote in the House of Commons. Such legislation often creates something approaching a national debate about the value issues involved and often is only introduced, or certainly carried, after many years of discussion, enquiries and heart-searching. But once these decisions have been taken, of equal importance, is the extent to which the implications for the required adjustments to a range of policies and practices are followed through or acted upon. Some such decisions or adjustments are taken

later, but they are not always taken, and confusion, ambiguity and often hardships are the results. Divorce provides a key example of this phenomenon.

There have been immense changes and the divorce laws of the 1970s do reflect a considerable shift since the views expressed by the Royal Commission on Marriage and Divorce in 1956, which noted that:

"the Western world has recognised that it is in the best interests of all concerned . . . that marriage should be monogamous and that it should last for life".[8]

But while divorce law reform has led, inter alia, to more divorces, an increase in the number of one parent families, increased remarriage and, hence, growing numbers of men and women who have more than one family, the implications of these developments for maintenance, social security and taxation, in particular, and the relative responsibilities of citizen and state in general, have not always been adequately thought through and acted upon.

The financial provision at divorce and the law relating to this are as we have already noted presently the subject of much debate. The emphasis in deciding maintenance payments is now expected to be shifted to encouraging self sufficiency. There are however many unresolved value issues. What value should be placed on the custodial parent's childrearing responsibilities? What of the limitations imposed on a woman's long term ability to be self-sufficient by past commitment to child care and domestic responsibilities? And what of women's continued disadvantaged position in the labour market, where they are most frequently found in low paid, low status jobs? In any event there is widespread recognition that maintenance payments do little to alleviate the considerable financial difficulties experienced by many one parent families. Scope for improvements are minimal. Few men, and even fewer women, earn enough to support themselves and a former family in a separate household, let alone two families. The reduction of poverty amongst one parent families is therefore an unresolved issue arising out of divorce.

We have also argued that the welfare of children is a major focus of the contemporary debate. The ties of parenthood and the rights and responsibilities it involves are in many respects independent of marriage and do not dissolve with the marriage. Yet the proportion of 'divorced' children losing contact with the non-custodial parent – usually the father – is high. There is an urgent need for processes and policies which will help to

reduce the often extreme levels of conflict around divorce and promote more positive relationships between both the parents and the children. Perhaps the slow progress in this sphere is a reflection of the still considerable ambivalence towards divorce. Conciliation procedures such as those being developed at Bristol, appear to make a positive contribution to this objective[9] and the consideration of these by an interdepartmental committee in the Civil Service is therefore to be welcomed. Additionally, one report has recently argued that the alternatives to divorce being developed by some couples, which allow the ending of marriage without breaking the ties of parenthood are worthy of serious consideration.[10]

Many one parent families, but also many two parent families as well, are affected by the failure to think through, and act upon, the consequences of another major trend that has affected the family – the changing role of women and hence the developing relationship between men and women in society, and the changed association between work and family life. There are different views – and values – about these trends and perhaps as a consequence of this policies have not changed to accommodate them.

This produces problems, anxieties and not a little hardship for families, particularly for women who are caught in a values trap. If they stay at home to look after the children, as they are often urged to do, they may suffer the implicit and explicit suggestion from some that they should be working, while others may cast doubt on their suitability for motherhood if they do in fact work outside the home. And for those women with husbands on low wages, there is often considerable financial pressure to seek employment, not for luxuries, or 'pin money', but to help feed, clothe and perhaps educate their children. These pressures present women with a major dilemma.

There is a sense in which society (and Parliament) has not made up its mind about these issues. It neither provides adequate child benefits (and/or a home responsibility allowance) for parents who wish to stay at home to provide child care nor has it provided adequate alternative child care arrangements for the children of those families where both parents choose – or feel they have to – work. Arguably one set of provisions follows from one value judgement, another set from the other. Although many would urge the need for choice and hence the proper mix of services and benefits.

The consequences of inertia

It would be far too simplistic to argue that all family problems are due to an inadequate response to the social and demographic changes we have been discussing. As Steiner has recently argued families may dissolve despite the presence of favourable social and economic circumstances whilst others 'hold together – providing for their members, maintaining Lasch's haven in a heartless world – under conditions of war, economic depression, slum living, environmental pollution and educational jungles'.[11] And there may well be 'no sure-fire policy prescription to strengthen families' but as he also notes, there is a very real sense in which the lack of adequate or appropriate support has led to severe difficulties for many individuals and their families – whatever form these families take.

In recent years, for example, the high incidence of depression amongst women at home with young children has received increasing attention.[12] Estimates of the frequency of significant depression range between 20% and 35% but it is without doubt a serious problem. Whilst the explanations for this are complex commentators have pointed to the association between mental well being and factors such as housing conditions, marital relationships, the presence of young children and the lack of choice in relation to employment.[13]

A number of important and influential committees of enquiry have argued for the extension of child care provision for the children of both working and non-working mothers, as a positive contribution to the quality of life for both adult and child, yet facilities are still woefully inadequate.[14]

Similarly, in England and Wales, in March 1980 there were just over one hundred thousand children under 18 in the care of a local authority.[15] Over the past decade the proportion of children in care has been rising steadily standing at 7.9 per thousand children under 18 in 1980. Clearly, children are taken into care for a variety of reasons, ranging from the illness of a parent to grave neglect and delinquent acts, but there has been a decline in the numbers admitted voluntarily.[16] A disproportionate number of these children are from one parent families, but others are from two parent families who find themselves homeless, unable to cope, or suspected of neglect. Financial difficulties are a common contributory factor, and may indeed be increasing.[17] Family violence, teenage pregnancies, football hooliganism and other forms of vandalism, anti-social behaviour and juvenile crime are also cited as further evidence of family stress.

Interpretation of all these trends in the context of changing family values and patterns is indeed a minefield. Some of the changes are partly reflections of changes in the way the data are collected, of increased public sensitivity to a particular phenomenon or of changes in the law. Similarly, comparisons with the past suggest that in many of these areas, the situation has apparently improved beyond recognition, for example, the treatment of children by parents or guardians. Cries of increasing lawlessness and the breakdown of social networks must be seen in this wider context, but, nevertheless, there is much deeply held and genuine public concern.

For some people, as we have described, the trends suggest that support for the traditional family is inadequate. They are frequently seen as a result of family poverty, caused by low wages and a fiscal system which discriminates against families with young children. Attention is also focussed on the inflexible relationships between work and the family, which almost inevitably place the full burden of breadwinning onto the father and of child care onto the mother. It is argued that support within the community has declined, perhaps encouraged by state provision of services and that extended family networks have been seriously affected by increased geographical mobility. Others, however, point to an increasing preoccupation with individual gratification which militates against the good of the family unit. There is certainly no simple answer to these issues and there is undoubtedly some truth in most of these positions.

A concluding comment

There are other issues which are at present the subject of debate in diverse fields, which also serve to throw into sharp perspective differing values relating to 'the family' and herald the many dimensions which are of relevance to a discussion of values and the family in the future.

The Council of Europe, for example, recently held a colloquy on the legal problems concerning unmarried couples. During the course of the discussions, the participants touched on almost all aspects of social and economic well being, for most of them may be, to a greater or lesser extent, affected if a couple choose to cohabit. The topics ranged, for example, from practical aspects of inheritance, pension rights and the ownership of property to formulating legislation which did not exclude non-married couples and the social and legal position of a child from such a union.[18]

Similarly, the present public debate over the possibility of artificial insemination of women unable to conceive, through a donor or a more anonymous 'spermbank', raises fundamental issues. It has involved much discussion of the rights of children to know their 'biological' parents and the difficulty of defining one in this case. The relative 'rights' of parents and children and the nature of responsibilities are also an intrinsic part of the contemporary debate about abortion and the position of severely handicapped children – both of which involve fundamental 'moral issues' beyond the scope of this report. Clearly, there are others we might have chosen. All of them suggest that 'value issues' and differing positions relating to the family and the nature of relationships and roles within it, will continue to arise as social, economic and technological changes have their impact.

Part 6

Contribution to the debate

We have seen that the changes in family life have many different dimensions. Change in any sphere brings both benefits and disadvantages – new dangers but also new freedoms. One of the most important issues to arise from the discussion in this report has been the need for a clearer understanding of those particular aspects of family life which are valued if we are to better understand the implications of change.

We have identified three recurring themes in the contemporary debate about marriage and family life: the position of women both in the family and the wider society; the nature of family responsibilities and family obligations under conditions of change; and the welfare of children and other family members. Within each sphere we have seen that the implications of change are the subject of considerable controversy. This controversy arises partly from the lack of information in regard to some of these issues (for example the effects of divorce on children) but it also arises out of the confusion about which qualities and/or aspects of family life are in fact valued and the relative importance of these.

There does seem to be a considerable degree of consensus in some areas. We have demonstrated, for example, that the family is still a valued institution in society, even in a period of quite rapid change; that qualities such as faithfulness and permanence are still important; that the family still provides a ready made network of support with mutual obligations; and that children are still a valued dimension of family life and their welfare is still of primary importance.

But we have also illustrated change. Technological change – in the sphere of contraception in particular – has provided the opportunity for greater freedom, particularly for women. There is growing support for greater choice for both men and women in relation to family roles and a greater sharing of responsibility. Additionally, we have demonstrated a widespread acceptance of divorce or separation, should a partnership 'fail', and the growing popularity of cohabitation. These changes in family forms and relationships raise important questions about other obligations and responsibilities, questions

which we have constantly returned to in this report. Perhaps one of the 'new dangers' associated with change is that fundamental obligations will be neglected.

The growing choice available to women is a change to be welcomed. It is also one which offers more choices for men in some spheres, in particular, an opportunity to be more involved with the rearing of children. In the past we have as a society devalued the roles involved in the raising of children. There is a need for a greater shared responsibility and commitment between men and women in this sphere. Indeed, one way of achieving higher status for the nurturing role is the sharing of it.

However, more choice for women also implies less choice for men in some spheres. Freedom and security are primary values in our society, but in affirming freedom, what should be the limitations? Responsibility for children must surely also impose some limitations. We have described how families are smaller and that there are some couples who are choosing not to have children. Parenthood is no longer a universally accepted obligation within marriage. Indeed those who choose not to bear children may choose to accept other responsibilities and make positive contributions to society in other ways. However, if we wish our society to continue, someone must have children, and the major responsibility for child rearing must clearly rest with the family. But the obligations and responsibilities of parenthood in a situation of change remain confused.

Whether it is men or women or both who take the responsibility for child rearing, the continuous provision of care imposes responsibilities and obligations on other family members and indeed on the wider society. A recognition of the value of 'caring' – whether that be for children or for other relatives – demands reciprocal support. But there is a sense in which the implications of this reciprocity, and in particular of more choice for women, are not being followed through, either within individual families or, arguably, in broader policy spheres.

We have demonstrated that despite the changes which are occurring, family life, involving close intimate relationships and parenthood, is valued by the majority of people in this country. Indeed, the trend towards remarriage supports this conclusion. But it would appear that one of the problems we do face is that the image of marriage and family life passed on to the young is one which is more aligned to fantasy than to reality. Whilst there is some consensus that expectations of marriage and family life are unrealistic, there is a lack of agreement about how expectations may be changed – but changed they should be. Some feel that cohabitation contributes to a more realistic view of relationships. There are however others who would not welcome a growth in 'trial marriages'. But whatever the balance of opinion in that sphere, there is a need to foster realistic expectations of marriage and parenthood as a contribution to the well being of family life today.

Education has a central role to play. But, whilst specific human relations courses have a contribution to make it is limited. What is required is that the ethos of realistic expectations and commitment to shared roles within the family, and indeed the wider community, pervade a range of educational activities.

In reducing the over valued position of certain aspects of family life, such as the romantic image of marriage, and affording true recognition to aspects such as parenthood and the care of the elderly (which are in reality undervalued and receive little 'reward'), we would hope to achieve a balance that could only foster more healthy relationships between men and women and parents and children.

In a period of rapid social and economic change, there will be increased uncertainty and for many people, an increased sense of insecurity. Change has brought with it diversity and this does have far reaching implications for many values in contemporary society. But, as one of our members has recently suggested:

'Pluralism, in so far as it denotes a wide range of individual beliefs, does not necessarily mean that this variety cannot lead to a consensus of agreed essential values."[1]

The family in Britain is not about to disappear, nor is it being fundamentally undermined. However, important changes are taking place both within the family and in other spheres, such as employment, that bear on family life. Stress is undoubtedly associated with some changes, just as new opportunities are offered by others.

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Values and the changing Family: a final report from the working party on values, 1982, £2.75

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Secretary of State for Industry

8 December 1982

Caroline Stephens
Private Secretary to the
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London SW1

Dear Caroline

FAMILY POLICY GROUP

I refer to your letter of 2 December to John Halliday.

2 My Secretary of State will be in the Far East on Wednesday on 19 January and hence unable to attend the Family Policy Group meeting.

3 I am sending a copy of this letter to recipients of yours.

Yours ever
Andrew Coop.

ANDREW COOP
Private Secretary

Hanne D88, Values of Society, Pt 2

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Ferdie Mount
DOE

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary 6 December 1982

I attach a note prepared by the Home Office summarising research on the reduction of crime which the Prime Minister has asked should be circulated to members of the Family Policy Group as background to their discussions.

I am sending copies to the Private Secretaries to members of the Group and those who have asked to be kept informed of its activities.

TIM FLESHER

Miss Jill Rutter,
H.M. Treasury.

4

PRIME MINISTER

FAMILY POLICY GROUP: HOME OFFICE PAPER ON CRIME

Attached is a Home Office paper which summarises the main research findings on crime and its reduction. Its main findings are as follows:

(i) Scale of the Problem

Although there are three million crimes recorded annually, the evidence suggests that the real level of crime is much higher, particularly in certain areas; for example, about half the burglaries and as many as three-quarters of woundings or sexual attacks are not reported. Nevertheless, England and Wales are still relatively safe countries; the average householder will be burgled only once in thirty years while the average car owner will have his car taken only once in fifty years. The risks are, of course, much higher in the inner cities.

(ii) Causes of Crime

There is no one cause of crime. Crime is associated with a poor family environment; there is some evidence that school organisation and regime may affect delinquancy; and inner city areas with high unemployment are associated with high rates of crime. But on the last point, note that some of the steepest increases in crime have occurred in times of full employment.

(iii) Social Policies

High crime is not inevitable; Japan and Switzerland for example have low crime rates. But there is no clear set of policies which has been demonstrated to reduce crime.

/ (iv)

(iv) Criminal Justice System

The paper concludes that there is no evidence that any available sentencing policy has a predictable effect upon individual crime or crime generally. There is no evidence for example that prison has any deterrent or any rehabilitative effect; similarly, there is no evidence that "therapeutic" regimes are any more effective than conventional or even punitive ones, and there is very little evidence that probation, community service, etc., produce any better results. What does have an effect is the deterrent value of the likelihood of being caught, which suggests a greater concentration on police effectiveness.

(v) Prevention

All this pessimism about the possibility of affecting crime rates directly by policy leads the paper to suggest much greater emphasis on prevention. Indeed, one of the main reasons for increased crime in the modern world is the greatly increased number of opportunities for crime. There are, for example, simply more cars to steal; and supermarkets are easier to steal from than the old-fashioned corner shop. Paragraph 17 of the Home Office paper sets out the kinds of area where action is possible.

All this may seem rather negative, but from my experience of prison service I would endorse the paper's pessimism about the likelihood of affecting behaviour through the sentencing system. I have increasingly come to hold the view that we should abandon the notion that sentencing is somehow about affecting behaviour and return to the idea that it is first about the punishment fitting the crime, and second about protecting society. Prison may be very bad at changing people for the better, but it is very good at protecting society against violent criminals; no prisoner has escaped from a high security prison for ten years.

/ Do you

Do you agree that I may circulate the Home Office paper, possibly with a view to discussion later in the New Year?

TF.

2 December 1982

REDUCING CRIME: THE FINDINGS OF RESEARCH

A note prepared by the Home Office Research and Planning Unit in consultation with other Departments.

This note summarises research findings about crime, its causes and its reduction. It covers not only measures involving the criminal justice system, but also considers broad social policies directed at the causes of crime and more specific preventive action designed to reduce criminal opportunities. The main conclusion is that the scope for reducing crime through changes to the criminal justice system itself is very limited. The impact of social policies (affecting, for example, the family, education or employment) upon crime is hard to predict and changes are difficult or slow to achieve. More hope at present seems to rest on opportunity-reducing measures aimed at specific types of crime.

2. The note is an overview of research, and while judgement is inevitably involved, an attempt has been made to apply strict standards of research evidence in reaching conclusions. The annex summarises a selection of key research studies bearing out the conclusions reached here.

THE SCALE OF THE PROBLEM

3. Before reviewing the findings, some of the background facts about crime should be noted. There are currently just under three million crimes recorded annually by the police in England and Wales, but social surveys of the general population suggest that very many more crimes occur than are recorded by the police. About half of all burglaries remain unrecorded and perhaps as many as three-quarters of woundings or sexual attacks. The official statistics suggest that current levels of crime are much greater than they were immediately after the war, but some of the apparent increase probably results from improved police record keeping, more police manpower and

greater public willingness to report crime.(In accounting for the remainder of the increase, broad social changes are likely to play an important part, though one should not overlook the greater opportunities for crime resulting from the vast expansion in the numbers of cars and other material goods).

4. Whatever the increases, the risks of falling victim to serious crime are still low in England and Wales, as they are in other West European countries. The average householder is likely to be burgled once in 30 years, while the average car owner will have his vehicle taken once in 50 years. However, the risks are not evenly distributed; they are much lower in rural areas and particularly high in the inner city. Only 5% of crimes recorded by the police involve confrontations, and contrary to popular belief the victims are much more likely to be young males than the infirm or the elderly. The remaining 95% of crimes are against property, and the vast majority involve small sums. Even two-thirds of burglaries involve losses under £100.

5. As for offenders, males aged 10-21 are the group most heavily involved in crime. They comprise about 40% of all offenders found guilty or cautioned, and a fifth of young males will have collected a criminal conviction by the age of 21. It has proved difficult to predict who amongst this group will go on to an adult criminal career, but the vast majority appear to have desisted entirely from crime by the time they reach their mid-twenties.

CAUSES OF CRIME

6. A large number of research projects have sought to establish the causes of crime and delinquency amongst the young and a wide range of factors concerned with particular kinds of family and social background have been implicated, though no single factor has emerged as being crucial. The main findings are as follows:

(i) An important group of associations relate to the family and include parental criminality, family discord, lack of supervision and discipline, and poor relationships between children and parents.

(ii) Areas of lower social status with high unemployment, especially in the inner city, are associated with high rates of delinquency and other social problems.

(iii) There is limited evidence that school organisation and regime affect delinquency, though the academic balance of pupils may be more important. In addition, while no British research is available, there is limited American evidence to show that pre-school provision may reduce subsequent delinquency among disadvantaged groups.

7. As far as adults are concerned, the best predictor of criminal involvement is a history of juvenile crime. In addition, unemployment, heavy drinking and (in the USA) drug addiction are related to adult criminality. As for the ethnic dimension, it is beginning to emerge that some black teenagers and young men are disporportionately involved in a small group of crimes such as street robberies. This may reflect, in addition to the factors described above, the development of deviant sub-cultures within these ethnic groups in response to racial discrimination.

8. Criminologists have developed a number of theories in which some of these findings are interpreted. Some of the more prominent examples are: "alienation" perspectives which stress the disenchantment felt by those who, by virtue of their position in society, are unable to realise ordinary ambitions; "sub-cultural" theories which draw attention to the ways in which delinquent sub-cultures develop within particular communities and the group pressures by which individuals are drawn into these; "control" theories which implicate the lack of those ties between child and parent or other adults which usually result in conformity; and "labelling" perspectives which blame continued delinquency on the counter-productive effects of contact with the law.

SOCIAL POLICIES

9. These findings might seem to suggest a wealth of options for social policy; moreover, the low crime rates of Japan and Switzerland, for example, suggest that forms of social organisation less conducive to crime are possible even in developed countries. But precisely what to change about our own society is not clear. Though many associations have been demonstrated between crime and social factors, the causal links are obscure. For example, despite improved housing and generally higher standards of living since the war, rates of delinquency have not fallen (though this may be because the crucial factor is the relative rather than absolute level of deprivation). Also, though disproportionate numbers of those convicted are unemployed, it should be recognised that some of the steepest increases in crime have occurred at times of full employment. A final example: some people have explained the continuity of criminal behaviour from parents to child as the result of learned or inherited deficiencies within the family ("transmitted deprivation"), whilst others, on the same facts, see both the deficiencies and delinquent behaviour as the result of structural inequalities of wealth, education and so forth.

10. This uncertainty about the best course of action to pursue is part of the reason why recent programmes to promote community integration and to compensate for urban deprivation have produced little in the way of reductions in crime. (It is also true that crime prevention was not always a primary objective). Moreover, even where it is clear what needs to be done, applying the right economic and social policies effectively can be very difficult, so that their crime prevention benefits may be slow to materialise. For example, even with

relatively disadvantaged pupils, the tone within the school can reduce delinquency rates, but it is difficult and takes time to improve the tone of a school. Again, consistent discipline on the part of parents and concern for their children can help to reduce crime, but it is unclear how much more scope there is for government action to bring this about beyond the provision of advice and encouragement.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

Treatment of offenders

11. Despite earlier optimism, it is now broadly accepted on the basis of a substantial body of research that existing approaches to rehabilitating or reforming offenders are ineffective. (Though some authorities advocate a continued search for more effective forms of treatment - see item 2 of the annex). Differing periods under treatment seem unrelated to the chances of reconviction; therapeutic custodial regimes appear to be no more effective than conventional or indeed punitive ones; and there is little evidence that non-custodial disposals - probation, community service and so forth - show any better results. These conclusions apply to juvenile and adult offenders alike (though "Intermediate Treatment" schemes are still the subject of evaulation). In explaining these negative findings, criminologists now suggest that the medical model of delinquency causation upon which "treatment" is premised is misplaced. As mentioned below, much crime may be best seen as the result not of deep-seated causes but of situational inducements and opportunities.

Deterrent sentencing.

12. If the sentence of the court - whether seen as treatment or punishment - appears to have little positive effect on its recipients, the threat of penal sanction might well have an effect on the population at large. Popular opinion would certainly hold that imprisonment - and the harsher the better -

is/a prerequisite for effective deterrence. However, there is no indication from the research evidence that the deterrent effect increases with the severity of punishment, and, indeed, it seems to be the likelihood of being caught that affects crime rates rather than the precise nature or severity of punishment. Furthermore, the precise extent of this deterrent effect depends on the circumstances in which offences take place and the kind of people involved.

13. An alternative view of deterrent sentencing - which might be termed "expressive" sentencing - is that the sentence imposed, and where relevant the conditions under which it is served, must be an appropriate expression of society's condemnation of offending and of the particular offence. In the long run, this condemnation will affect the moral climate in which decisions to offend are taken. This is a view which neither sentencing practice nor penal policy can overlook, but it does not lend itself easily to quantitative investigation.

Keeping offenders out of circulation.

14. Even if prison sentences fail to deter or rehabilitate, it can still be argued that they reduce crime simply by keeping offenders out of circulation. Studies examining the incapacitation effects of imprisonment - the amount of crime that is prevented by imprisoning offenders - suggest that a large amount of even serious crime is committed by undetected offenders and that, in practice, substantial gains in the reduction of crime could only be achieved at an impossibly high cost for the prison system.

Policing.

15. No one would doubt that the police have a major effect on levels of crime, but a substantial body of research indicates that there is no obvious way in which this effect can be enhanced, at least within acceptable cost.

In particular, it is becoming clear that the effectiveness of the "core" of policing - preventive patrol and criminal investigation - cannot be significantly improved by increased manning levels. Certainly, "saturation" patrolling may achieve short-term reductions in crime, but only at very heavy cost - both financial and in terms of relations between police and public. It is true that notorious crimes can sometimes be cleared up by very intensive detective effort, but this kind of investment would never be feasible for the vast majority of those crimes which at present go undetected. Changes in styles of policing, as exemplified by "community policing" schemes may have more to offer. At present there is no hard evidence either way but research in progress may clarify the situation.

Diversion from the criminal justice system.

16. Mounting evidence about the ineffectiveness of the criminal justice system has led to demands for minimising the involvement of offenders in the machinery of formal justice. These "diversionary" policies are advocated not only to lighten the load on the criminal justice system, but because of the belief that premature involvement with the system, particularly for juvenile offenders, can precipitate a criminal career. There is some, though not conclusive, research evidence that "giving a dog a bad name" can have the unfortunate effects posited by the so-called "labelling" theorists. However, diversionary policies can have unintended consequences; for example, one of the results of the wider use of the police system of formal warning - i.e. cautioning - was that juveniles who had previously been dealt with completely informally are now increasingly drawn into the net of formal law enforcement with the consequent risk of labelling that this implies.

SITUATIONAL PREVENTION

17. Both the machinery of criminal justice and prevention policies involving social change are aimed at reducing criminal motivation. Recent criminological theory focuses, however, not only upon motivation but also upon the situational

determinants of offending, including the opportunities for crime. The "situational" approach to crime prevention being developed within the Home Office is premised on the assumption that some sorts of crime can be reduced through the management, design or manipulation of the immediate environment in which crime occurs. It involves a systematic attempt to reduce opportunities for specific crimes, and examples of effective situational prevention include: vandal-resistant design and materials, improved lighting, closed-circuit television surveillance, screening of airline passengers and baggage, the control of alcohol sales at football matches, cheque guarantee cards, reducing the number of large cash transactions, supervision of children's play on housing estates, "defensible space" architecture, and the employment of caretakers, doormen or additional shop assistants. Research findings now to hand suggest that at present the development of situational prevention affords the best prospect for the reduction of crime. There are, however, considerable difficulties of implementation. While it may be obvious what should be done to reduce opportunities, it is frequently difficult to persuade the people or organisations concerned to take the necessary action. The costs of action may be high in relation to the benefits; the necessary measures may be construed as inconvenient or intrusive (though in practice these problems are usually surmountable); and where a number of agencies (public or private) are involved it can be difficult to achieve the necessary co-ordination.

ANNEX: SELECTED RESEARCH STUDIES

This annex includes a selection of what are considered key research studies relating to the reduction of crime. The selection attempts to be representative rather than comprehensive. Mention should also be made here of two further books: a review of the DHSS/SSRC research programme on transmitted deprivation has just been published under the title "Despite the Welfare State", by M Brown and N Madge; and a number of Home Office studies on "situational" prevention have been published in book form as "Designing Out Crime" (HMSO, 1980).

1. Crime Control in Japan. William Clifford (Lexington Books, 1976)
This book examines why, when crimes have been increasing with the growth of urbanisation and industrialisation in almost every other country, the trend in Japan at least until the early 1970's was actually reversed. (There is now some indication of a rise in crime). Clifford's analysis shows that the Japanese success cannot be put down simply to the legal system, the prisons and the police, which are all organised basically on Western lines. Nor are the patterns of social, economic and industrial organisation dissimilar from elsewhere. Rather, Clifford emphasises the distinctive Japanese culture - in particular, loyalty to the community, the predominance of group rather than individualistic values, and willingness to adhere to tight codes of conduct. Against this background, some of the apparently effective ingredients of social control are: informal action taken by local communities to deal with offenders without resort to the law; a high level of public involvement in crime prevention and volunteer work with offenders; close links between the police and the public which contribute to a high 'clear up' rate; the organisation of the police on a neighbourhood basis; wide discretion allowed to the police and the courts in the handling of cases which leads to little use of institutional sanctions and the dispersion of discretionary powers to several levels of the judicial system.

2. Delinquency: its roots, careers and prospects. D J West (Heinemann, 1982)

What has become known as the Cambridge Study of Delinquency took 20 years (from 1961 to 1981) to complete. It took a group of 400 schoolboys and studied them from age 8 to 25, looking for reasons why some became delinquent whilst others did not, and what happened subsequently in adult life. In its detailed assessment of the boys' backgrounds the study comes up with five key factors that are likely to make for delinquency: a low-income family, a large family, parents deemed by social workers to be

bad at raising children, parents who themselves have a criminal record, and a low intelligence in the child. Not surprisingly, the factors tend to overlap. Of the 63 boys in the sample with at least three of these factors present at age 10, half became juvenile delinquents - compared with only a fifth of the sample as a whole.

This book, by the project director, provides an overview of the findings and discusses the implications for social policy. Professor West argues in favour of a reversion to a 'treatment' ideology and more scientific evaluation of programmes and policies. He also advocates greater use of diversion and of community-based methods of dealing with young offenders.

3. Juvenile Delinquency - Trends and Perspectives. Michael Rutter and Henri Giller (to be published by Penguin Books, 1983).

This review of juvenile delinquency research literature, commissioned jointly by Home Office and DHSS, analyses and evaluates a comprehensive range of research findings and identifies policy implications arising. Rutter finds offending to be commonplace in adolescence, and identifies recidivist offenders as a more significant group than young offenders generally. Recidivism is usually preceded by antisocial behaviour at the pre-school and primary school stages, and is associated with a number of background factors such as parental criminality, family discord, ineffective supervision and discipline, weak parent/child relationships and large family size. The increase in juvenile criminality since the war, as revealed by official statistics, is to some extent illusory, since on the one hand a reasonably consistent recidivist group seems to be committing more crimes, and on the other more trivial crime by non-recidivists is being drawn to public attention. Nevertheless there was some increase over the 1960s and early 1970s, alongside increases in other indicators of adolescent malaise such as anorexia nervosa, drug dependency and suicide attempts. Immigration, unemployment, working mothers and urbanisation are not associated with crime but the problems associated with low social status are. Boys are more delinquent than girls.

Some intervention is counter-effective because of the labelling effect. but by and large the type of court disposal has little impact on the likelihood of reoffending. The most promising policies for reducing levels of juvenile offending seem to be physical crime prevention designed

to reduce the opportunity for crime, ecological intervention to improve school ethos and area influences, and firm and unequivocal disapproval of delinquent behaviour by parents and teachers without recourse to formal intervention by the police or the courts. Residential placement is not likely to reduce recidivism unless combined with efforts to improve the home environment.

4. Young Children Grow Up. L J Schweinhard and D P Weikart. (The High/Scope Press, 1980).

There has not yet been any research in the UK to test the possible effects of pre-school education on subsequent delinquency and criminality. However, a recent report from the US by the High/Scope Educational Research Foundation on the Ypsilanti Perry Pre-School Project, which has followed over a period of 18 years from pre-school age the lives of 123 disadvantaged children born between 1958 and 1962, concluded that pre-school education benefits the teenager in terms of both educational performance and social adjustment. Despite necessary reservations about the small size of the sample and the danger of applying findings from one country uncritically to another, this study could have implications for the UK.

5. 15,000 Hours: Secondary Schools and their effects on Children. M Rutter, B Maughan, P Mortimore and J Ouston (Open Books, London 1979)

This study set out to see what effects schools have on their pupils. It was conducted at a time when conventional academic wisdom doubted whether schools had any long-term impact at all. It compared the progress of some 2,000 children in 12 secondary schools in Inner London.

The study found that schools differed markedly in their pupils' intellectual attainment and general behaviour, including delinquency. Factors within the control of staff, such as the extent of academic emphasis and the use of incentives and rewards, were found to be related to pupils' intellectual performance, behaviour and to a lesser extent to delinquency. In addition to these 'school ethos' factors, the intellectural mix of pupil intake was found to be important. Physical factors such as school size, and the broad administrative structure of schools did not appear to have any effect on children's behaviour.

6. Parents and Children in the Inner City. Harriett Wilson and G W Herbert. (Routledge, 1978).

This research was concerned with a group of very disadvantaged inner city families. Delinquency was taken as one criterion of disturbance amongst the children under study. A highly significant association was discovered between lack of parental supervision and delinquency, with the parents of non-delinquent children operating a strict regime that limited their children's activities. A later study by Harriett Wilson, published in the British Journal of Criminology, looked at a further set of families, broader in range in terms of social handicap and divided between the inner city and suburban estates. Again, the findings confirmed the close association between parenting methods and delinquency. While lax parenting was most common among families with severe difficulties, Wilson argues that this should be interpreted less in terms of unsatisfactory attitudes than as a reflection of the difficulties under which handicapped families have to operate.

7. Home Office Research Study No. 35. The Effectiveness of Sentencing. (HMSO, 1976).

This review of the literature on the effects of various kinds of sentences in reducing or discouraging criminal behaviour was produced to provide a detailed appraisal of English research at a time when most published accounts had been based on North American experience. The first part of the report discusses some of the aims of sentencing - punishment, incapacitation, deterrence and rehabilitation. Criminological opinion has in the past tended to favour the last of these, thus to some extent influencing innovations in penal methods and limiting their evaluation by requiring that only correctional changes are regarded as legitimate evidence of effectiveness. The second part describes the techniques by which empirical research has been carried out, and summarises the results of 65 separate research studies.

The review confirms the pessimistic assessment made by others of the scope for reforming criminals by means of sentencing policy. There is no hard evidence for the greater effectiveness of long rather than short sentences, prison rather than non-custodial disposals, or therapeutic rather than punitive regimes.

8. Young offenders in Care (DHSS Social Research Branch, 1981)

This study looked at reoffending by a sample of children committed to care because of offending during 1975. 84% of the sample were boys, and over 80% had committed theft on burglary. The children were younger and less delinquent than a comparable sample of children admitted to approved schools some years before. Just over a third of the children reoffended during the 2 year period studied. 90% of them were prosecuted and 5% cautioned; no action was taken in only 5% of the cases. Reoffending was lowest among those who were placed at home as a deliberate policy, and highest among those who were placed at home while awaiting a residential placement, though two thirds of the reoffenders were placed in residential care at the time of the subsequent offence. However, the most significant predictor of reoffending was the frequency and the seriousness of earlier offending, and this factor outweighed all others.

9. Home Office Research Study No. 64. Taking Offenders out of Circulation (HMSO, 1980).

The first of two studies published here examines the 'incapacitation effect' of imprisonment - the amount of crime that is prevented by imprisoning offenders - by analysing the rates at which known offenders are convicted of crimes. It was found that if prisoners were given shorter sentences, or served a smaller proportion of them, the number of additional offences they could be expected to commit whilst at liberty would not lead to a dramatic increase in the overall level of crime. This is largely because many prisoners commit offences infrequently and most crime is committed by offenders given sentences other than imprisonment. At the same time, it is pointed out that quite modest reductions in the length of prison sentences imposed will significantly decrease the size of the prison population.

The second study considers the so-called 'dangerous offender' in prison. Although about 10% of the prison population can be described as capable of causing serious harm (based on their previous records), only a small proportion of them constitute such a high risk that they are detained indefinitely in the interests of public safety. The majority of the remainder, serving fixed sentences, do not subsequently commit further dangerous offences. Furthermore, the study finds that many dangerous crimes are in fact committed by those previously regarded as harmless. From this it is concluded that dangerous crime, being a relatively

uncommon phenomenon, can only rarely be forecast accurately and that increased use of very long or indefinite sentences for offenders initially considered dangerous would be unjustified. In any case, the small proportion who do constitute the greatest threat already serve long prison sentences.

Both studies reach the conclusion that although in theory prolonged incarceration could possibly prevent a good deal of crime, in practice substantial gain could only be achieved at an impossibly high cost. Nor did the research provide any reason to fear that a significant reduction of the prison population would have a seriously detrimental effect on crime prevention.

10. Home Office Research Study No. 67. Crime Control and the Police: A Review of Research. (HMSO, 1981)

The purpose of this review was to present, in readily accessible form, some of the more important pieces of research relating to police effectiveness. The opening chapters contrast the nature of routine police activities with commonly held assumptions of modern police work; the main part of the report consists of an appraisal of the research which has examined the effectiveness of traditional police strategies; it examines the obstacles to effective policing and finally considers the development of community policing. The review of the literature leads to two broad conclusions: first, that traditional police work such as patrolling or criminal investigation are probably less effective in controlling crime than generally supposed; secondly, that the introduction of carefully designed strategies specifically tailored to tackle selected problems might be worth exploring.

11. Home Office Research Study No. 47. Tackling Vandalism (HMSO, 1978)

This report describes the results of three studies looking at different aspects of vandalism.

The first examines the difficulties in attempting to measure the extent and distribution of vandalism. It finds that vandalism directed at people's private and personal property is comparatively rare; the highest rates of damage are suffered by schools and other local authority property as well as shops. Comparatively few incidents are reported to

the police whose records, consequently, considerably under-represent the scale of the problem.

In the second study some 600 boys from a large northern industrial city were questioned about their involvement in vandalism; few denied any involvement, about 4 out of 5 owned up to minor incidents but more serious vandalism was confined to a minority. Vandalism was seen by the authors to provide a way of gaining prestige within informal peer groups.

The third study examined the extent to which vandalism on housing estates is affected by building design and layout. Vandalism was found to be concentrated in the unsupervised communal areas of estates and was higher where entrances served as public thoroughfares. Estates where there were relatively high concentrations of children also suffered more vandalism.

The report concludes that remedies for vandalism need to be tailored to local circumstances; that a more systematic approach to the formulation of preventive strategies is required; and that design and management approaches deserve more consideration than broad-based 'social welfare' strategies.

12. Home Office Research Study No. 49. Crime in Public View (HMSO, 1979)

This report examines whether crime would be reduced if more people could be encouraged to intervene when they saw an offence being committed. The authors argue that the likelihood of people intervening is very small because most crimes are committed quickly and stealthily and the general public are surprisingly unobservant. The report examines a variety of measues aimed at improving the surveillance opportunities of employees and people in their homes, since these two groups seemed likely to notice suspicious behaviour and interpret it correctly. It is concluded that employees are more likely to provide effective surveillance.

13. Home Office Research Study No. 63. Crime Prevention Publicity: An Assessment. (HMSO, 1980)

Two crime prevention publicity initiatives are discussed. The first took the form of an anti-vandalism campaign operating through the medium of TV commercials: it was designed to warn the young of the risks involved

in the commission of vandalism and to encourage parents to exercise greater supervision over their children outside of the home. The levels of vandalism showed no change attributable to the publicity campaign. The other publicity campaign aimed to increase levels of car security using a TV campaign in one area and posters in another. Neither the degree to which people lock their cars nor thefts from cars in either area showed any improvement over the campaign period.

14. Community Planning Project: Cunningham Road Improvement Scheme. Final Report. A Hedges, A Blaber and B Mostyn. (NACRO, 1980).

This project, commissioned by NACRO, began in 1976 on a heavily vandalised and unpopular local authority housing estate. Its aim was to reduce vandalism and other sorts of crime principally through making physical improvements to the estates (e.g. pavement and fencing repairs, removal of graffiti, tree planting, etc.). Other elements of the project included putting a beat policeman on the estate, opening a Youth and Community Centre, and improving tenant-management relations. A policy of tenant consultation was followed in pursuing the various initiatives. The scheme was successful in improving the appearance of the estate, tenant satisfaction and feelings of security, and attitudes towards management. It is not clear, however, whether it succeeded in reducing crime.

FILE

Home Affairs
da

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

2 December 1982

Family Policy Group

There will be a further two meetings of the above Group in the New Year. The dates are Wednesday 19 January and Wednesday 9 February. Both meetings will start at 9.30 am and last for 1½ hours. I would be grateful if you could note these two dates in your diaries.

I am sending a copy of this letter to John Kerr (HM Treasury), Imogen Wilde (Department of Education and Science), David Edmonds (Department of the Environment), Jonathan Spencer (Department of Industry), Richard Bird (Department of Transport), David Clark (Department of Health and Social Security), Barnaby Shaw (Department of Employment), Alex Galloway (Office of the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster), Michael Gillespie (Office of the Minister of State, Home Office (Mr. Tim Raison)), Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office), Gerry Spence (CPRS) and Ferdinand Mount.

CAROLINE STEPHENS

John Halliday, Esq.,
Home Office.

SUBJECT
cc Master

File

cc Scottish Office
Welsh Office
Treasury

SECRET

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

1 December 1982

Dear Jill,

FAMILY POLICY GROUP

The Prime Minister took a meeting of the Group yesterday to discuss papers prepared for it by the Chancellor of the Exchequer and by the CPRS. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Secretaries of State for Education and Science, the Environment, Industry, Transport, Health and Social Security and Employment, the Lord Privy Seal, the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Mr. Raison, Mr. Sparrow, Mr. Wasserman and Mr. Mount were present.

Opening the discussion of his paper on husband and wife taxation, the Chancellor of the Exchequer said that the present position was coming increasingly under attack. Features which attracted particular criticism were the assumption that a husband was responsible for his wife's tax affairs and the bias in the system in favour of couples in which both partners were working. Both the SDP and the Labour Party had produced plans for thorough-going reforms and there was a considerable body of opinion within the Conservative Party in favour of change. In considering the options, he had three objectives: first, to treat men and women in an even-handed way; second, adequately to recognise the fact of marriage; and third, to remove the bias in favour of the working wife in the present system. There were three possible options to achieve these objectives:

(i) the right to choose independent taxation;

(ii) mandatory independent taxation with cash benefits (MIT);

(iii) independent taxation with transferable allowances (ITTA).

Option (i) had been canvassed in the Government's Green Paper and had received little support. Its effect would be limited to the disaggregation of investment income and as such would cost £300 million a year. This would be seen as designed to benefit the upper income group. To adopt this option would be seen as an inadequate response to the problem. Option (ii), which would involve taxing husband and wife as separate individuals, abolishing the married man's allowance and replacing it by cash benefits was the one favoured by the Labour and Social Democratic Parties. It was, however, quite unacceptable to the Government since it would continue the trend towards increasing the dependence of the individual on state handouts.

/In the view of

SECRET

In the view of the Chancellor option (iii), ITTA, under which husband and wife would be taxed as separate individuals with a single person's allowance which was partially transferable to the other partner was the only practical and politically acceptable alternative to the present arrangements. It had the advantages of treating husband and wife equally; of removing the disincentive for wives to stay at home and therefore enabling them to make a real choice; that if allowances were partially transferable a wife returning to work would not be taxed until she had earned the amount of her allowance; that there would be a £1 billion net gain to the Exchequer as a result of abolishing the married man's allowance which could be used, for example, to raise thresholds; and that the benefit of husbands and wives allowances would accrue to the family unit as a whole. There were objections to ITTA, a number of which were pointed out in discussion. There were, for example, five million couples in which both partners were working who would lose money through the loss of the married man's tax allowance. ITTA would also bring an additional twelve million people into the tax system and given its complexity, would require considerable additional administrative effort. Indeed, it would only be possible when computerisation of the Inland Revenue had proceeded further. There were also doubts about its social consequences; the decision by a wife to go out to work, for example, would automatically reduce her husband's income. Scepticism was also expressed about the desirability of altering the tax system to encourage wives to stay at home.

In further discussion an alternative approach was canvassed. Either there might be a household allowance or the tax system should explicitly recognise family obligations by increasing the married man's tax allowance and decreasing or holding constant the married woman's earned income relief. There were nevertheless a number of objections to this approach; to increase the married man's tax allowance would be contrary to the view widely held in the Conservative Party as well as the other Parties that that allowance was anomalous. It would, moreover, be politically very difficult to discriminate between women on the basis of their marital status.

In further discussion it was argued that the prime objective should be to improve the position of families with children. There was a case for increasing child benefits or reintroducing the child tax allowance. The case against increasing child benefit was that a further move in the direction of a high tax, high benefit society should be resisted. This argued, perhaps, for the reintroduction of child tax allowances: but there would be formidable political difficulties in this course. The real problem was to reduce the overall burden of taxation and Government policy should continue to be directed towards that objective. The Group noted, however, the scale of reductions in expenditure which would be required to enable substantial reductions in the standard rate of income tax or increases in tax thresholds. In these circumstances ITTA offered a way of meeting justified complaints about the present system while in itself being revenue-neutral.

/Summing up the

Summing up the discussion, the Prime Minister said that while ITTA was preferable to the other options outlined in the Chancellor's paper, it was nevertheless objectionable in a number of ways. She was not convinced that to retain the status quo would be politically difficult; the fact that ten million people or more would lose under the schemes proposed by Labour and the SDP was a powerful argument. Before the matter could be considered further, a paper should be prepared by the Treasury setting out the effects of ITTA on families at various stages of their lives and in particular an analysis by geography and status of those families that would lose as a result of its introduction.

In a brief discussion of the paper by the CPRS on the Group's priorities it was agreed that it was not possible to take up all the themes identified in the paper. It was noted, however, that a paper on the elderly was in preparation which might usefully be taken at the next meeting, together with the paper on housing for the elderly promised by the Secretary of State for the Environment. The broad outline for the programme for the next few meetings proposed by the paper was agreed; particular points on responsibilities for papers should be resolved between those immediately involved.

I am sending a copy of this to the Private Secretaries to those present at the meeting as well as to John Halliday (Home Office) and Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office). I should be grateful if further circulation could be limited to those specifically authorised by their Ministers.

Yours ever,

Tim Lankester

Miss Jill Rutter,
HM Treasury.

cc JV

HOME OFFICE
QUEEN ANNE'S GATE
LONDON SW1H 9AT

1st December, 1982

G. J. Wasserman, Esq.
Central Policy Review Staff
Cabinet Office
70 Whitehall
London
SW1A 2AS

2/12

Dear Gordon

FAMILY POLICY GROUP

Thank you for your letter of 29th November.

We were grateful for your offer of a covering paper and for the draft which you enclosed with the letter, but as I mentioned on the telephone the Home Secretary's preference is to have the letter circulated with no more than a very short covering note on the lines of Colin Walter's letter to Tim Flesher - and indeed of Tim Flesher's letter of yesterday to John Halliday enclosing the Chancellor's of the Exchequer's background paper. Tim Flesher subsequently told me that he was not proposing to circulate the Home Office paper before yesterday's meeting of the Group, but that he would circulate it towards the end of this week or early next.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Tim Flesher.

Yours ever

David

(D. E. R. FAULKNER)

Sorry: I have

1 December 1982

MR FLESHER

File

WIDER PARENTAL CHOICE

There is a considerable danger that Keith Joseph's paper, after revision by the Department, will still be couched in a negative and doubting spirit. If it is unreasonable for us to ask for a sight of the paper before it goes to the new Committee, there is another request we might fairly make.

The Prime Minister could invite Keith to append to his paper an annex listing and answering the commonest objections to vouchers. This would save the time of Ministers and start proceedings in a positive spirit. I understand that Sir Keith's advisers have the materials ready for an annex of this sort.

FERDINAND MOUNT

CONFIDENTIAL

HL

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

30 November 1982

Dear John,

I enclose a paper by the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the expenditure background to the work of the Family Policy Group and in particular its discussions today on husband and wife taxation.

I am sending a copy of this letter to the Private Secretaries to the members of the Group and to those who had asked to be kept informed.

Yours ever,

Tim Flesher

Tim Flesher

John Halliday, Esq.,
Home Office.

CONFIDENTIAL

HL

10 DOWNING STREET

PRIME MINISTER

Family Policy Group: Chancellor's paper

You wanted one or two revisions in the paper for the Family Policy Group which the Chancellor put in at the weekend. I attach an amended version. I think it meets your points; do you agree that it may now be circulated?

Yes

Tim Flesher

29 November 1982

FPG(82)4

The background to the Group's work

Memorandum by the Chancellor of the Exchequer

The purpose of this paper is to set out what I see to be some of the wider background against which we should take our decisions, and to comment briefly on our programme of work.

2. At the meeting of the Group on 10 September, the Prime Minister said that the main thread running through the programmes we discussed was the need to return to consumers the power to make their own choices, to return to them more of their own money to spend as they saw fit, and to pass to them control in many areas which are at the present controlled by bureaucracies. I agree, and in the key principles for the work of the Group which were set out in my note of 31 August I said as much. In my view the points which Ferdinand Mount makes in FPG(82)1 will help us towards achieving these aims.

3. But much depends on the overall economic picture. Our aims - fostering individual responsibility and substituting personal responsibility for a collectivist attitude - are closely related to and depend in large measure on the success of our economic policies. And we shall only succeed in restoring growth on a sustainable basis if we continue to implement responsible fiscal and monetary policies.

4. Which poses us with a dilemma. The Group will recognise how difficult, but now necessary it is to restrain public expenditure and control public sector deficits. Yet many of the individual proposals that are being put forward in FPG(82)2 will inevitably involve some additional public expenditure or some reduction in tax receipts. To that extent they would operate against the overall requirement to contain the public deficit.

5. This dilemma is not new. I have faced it in each of the four Budgets I have presented since we came to office. I have endeavoured to reconcile the containment of the public deficit with my desire to make room for worthwhile measures. I agree that, while our aim should

be to minimise any addition to public expenditure or any reduction in revenue, new proposals which involve additional expenditure should not be ruled out on that account. I hope we can discuss this sort of proposal as soon as possible. But I would ask that the Group bear this dilemma in mind. And I would suggest that as a matter of mechanics, and to help the work of the Group, the Treasury and the Inland Revenue as appropriate should always be consulted on the drafting of papers where such costs - in terms either of reduced tax receipts or higher public expenditure - are involved.

6. I turn to another point. As we agreed at our first meeting, we need to keep our discussions as specific and as practical as possible. From this point of view, we must not allow ourselves to be swamped under a tidal wave of paper - I note, for instance, that Appendices A to C by themselves call for no fewer tan 19 papers from Group members. I do not think that we should take up time next Tuesday on procedural matters. But I am sure that we can in practice do all we want, and do it better, with fewer papers, more sharply focussed.

..... 7. Finally, I attach a paper on the origins of the poverty and unemployment trap which is interesting in its own right but which should also provide useful background to our discussions of the tax and social security aspects of our work. It demonstrates what can happen when, with the best of intentions, successive Governments take decisions in the tax and social security field without consideration for their long-term implications. It is not going too far to say that if different decisions had been taken, the existence of the present Group might not be necessary.

HM TREASURY
29 November 1982

THE ORIGINS OF THE POVERTY TRAP AND THE UNEMPLOYMENT TRAP

The unemployment trap can mean that people are little or no better off in work than out of work. The poverty trap affects people in work on low income can mean that an increase in their earnings results in little or no extra money in purse or wallet.

2. This note examines how this unsatisfactory and perculiar position has arisen and what can be done to improve it.

3. The traps arise from the overlap, or near overlap, of the tax and social security systems. Over the last 25-30 years the gap between benefits and tax thresholds has been compressed.

4. Benefits have been increased broadly in line with average earnings. Thus we get :

	(% average earnings)			
	1950	1960	1970	1980
Supplementary Benefit (married couple)	29	31	30	30
Unemployment Benefit (man plus dependent wife)	26	30	32	29
Child Support (one child family tax allowances, FAM and child benefit)	7	5	3	4

While the figures move around a bit, the picture is one of a fairly stable relation with average earnings. Child support is something of an exception; the child support figures for FAM and child benefit alone (for a 2-child family) would be 2 per cent in 1950, 1 per cent in 1960, 2 per cent in 1970 and 8 per cent in 1980.

5. Meanwhile on the tax side, income tax thresholds have been rising generally in line with prices and so have been falling in relation to average earnings :

	(% average earnings)			
	1950	1960	1970	1980
Tax thresholds				
- for married man with no children	63	46	37	35
- for married man with 2 children	100	79	52	35
- for single man	39	27	25	23

Comparing the two tables above, it can clearly be seen that the gap between benefits and thresholds has declined dramatically. On the second table the differences over the period 1970 to 1980 in the figure for a married man with no children and for a married man with two children reflects the abolition of child tax allowances.

6. Why has the tax threshold fallen in this way? Two factors have been at work. First, the rise in public expenditure required higher and higher levels of taxation. Total tax receipts rose from about 30 per cent of GDP in 1955 to about 36 per cent in 1980. It is not easy to get a consistent series of figures over time for the share of public expenditure in GDP. Public expenditure in 1980 was about 44 per cent of GDP; in 1970 it was 38 per cent; in late 1950s it was around 32 per cent. The main programme responsible for the growth of total public expenditure is social security which has risen by the equivalent of about 5 per cent of GDP since the mid 1950s. Health, education and housing have also shown considerable but smaller increases.

7. Second, Governments have tended to seek higher tax receipts by way of direct taxation, not indirect taxation. In 1980 indirect taxes receipts were about the same percentage of GDP as in the mid 1950s and in the early 1960s. Over the same period income tax receipts rose by the equivalent of 3-3½ per cent of GDP and social security contribution by 2½-3 per cent of GDP.

8. In part this result - high expenditure coupled with high taxation - was genuinely unplanned. Successive Governments planned their expenditure on over-optimistic assumptions about economic growth. When that growth did not materialise the money had to be found from somewhere - so taxes were increased. It was easier to do this by failing to increase income tax thresholds than by raising rates of tax.

9. Internationally these same phenomena have been at work throughout the OECD - public expenditure rising as a percentage of GDP and the tax burden being shifted onto direct taxes and social security contributions. Our income tax thresholds are not much out of line with other countries, but we do start paying at a relatively high rate of income tax.

For married person without children in 1982 :

	Threshold (£)	Income tax rate (%)	Rate of income tax plus employees social security contribution (%)
UK	2445	30	39
USA	3270	12	19
Sweden	1710	30	30
Netherlands	3150	16	35
Japan	2730	14	19
Italy	1795	10	16
Germany	3000	18	35
France	3250	7	17

One reason why other countries have a lower onset rate of income tax is that they rely much more heavily than we do on social security contributions; in 1980 such contributions were about 17 per cent of UK total tax receipts compared with 43 per cent in France, 34 per cent in Germany, 35 per cent in Italy, 29 per cent in Japan and 26 per cent in USA. The final column of the above tables picks this up and shows the combined rate above the income tax threshold of both income tax and employees social seucrity contributions. It does not, of course, pick up employers social security contributions which are relatively high in e.g. France.

10. The traps therefore arise from a contribution of :

a. attempting to alleviate poverty and hardship. To do this social security benefits have been increased with earnings;

b. using means testing to hold down the cost of benefits. Means testing means withdrawal of benefits as income rises and so acts in the same way as a tax;

c. despite b. the cost of social security has risen markedly, as have the costs of certain other programmes;

d. as a result of c. the tax burden has risen;

e. tax has fallen increasingly on incomes rather than expenditure. This is partly a reflection of further policies to help the poor as indirect taxes tend to hit them relatively hard;

f. the result of e. has been to hold down income tax thresholds (relative to earnings) and increase rates of income tax and of social security contributions. This has produced a compression of the gap between benefits and tax and, combined with the withdrawal of means tested benefits, high marginal rates of "tax" on in-work income.

11. What can we do? The long term answer is to work towards a reversal of the trends that have got us where we are. This means lower public expenditure as a proportion of GDP which in turn means slower growth of public spending and faster growth of GDP (in both cases relative to the past). This would lead to a reduction in the burdens on the taxpaying population.

12. In the short term this approach would involve concentrating whatever scope there is for tax reductions of income tax, particularly on thresholds.

010

Treasury Chambers, Parliament Street, SW1P 3AG
01-233 3000

29 November 1982

Tim Flesher, Esq.,
No.10 Downing Street

Dear Tim,

... I attach a slightly revised version of the Chancellor's paper for the Family Policy Group.

Yours sincerely,

Jill Rutter

JILL RUTTER

cc TF to HO
d/d 11/11
+ DHSS

JP

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

29 November 1982

The Family Policy Group is to meet tomorrow and I attach an agenda which the Prime Minister has approved for discussion on that occasion.

I am sending copies of this letter to the Private Secretaries to other members of the Group and to those who have asked to be kept informed.

(TIM FLESHER)

John Halliday, Esq.,
Home Office.

file

Hy0970

To: MR FLESHER

29 November 1982

From: G J WASSERMAN

c Mr Mount

Family Policy Group: Home Office Paper

The Home Office has taken a firm line against the proposal contained in the letter which I wrote to David Faulkner earlier today about how to handle the paper by the Home Office Research and Planning Unit summarising the findings of research about crime, its causes and its reduction.

It appears that Home Office officials - I shouldn't imagine that there was time to consult the Home Secretary - are not anxious for the conclusions of this survey to be spelt out too clearly at this stage. To do so, they say, would stimulate too much interest in this matter and would probably lead to a demand for a meeting to discuss it. They are not ready with positive proposals to put to the meeting and they would therefore prefer the paper to be sent out as a dull piece of background material in the hope that colleagues would not notice the wide ranging implications of its findings.

I think that this is a pity. But if the Home Secretary insists, I doubt that there is much we can do about it. I propose, however, that the Prime Minister should write to the Home Secretary along the lines of the draft memorandum attached to my letter to David Faulkner expressing concern at the disappointing conclusions of the survey, ~~and~~ asking the Home Secretary what he intends to do about its more positive proposals and suggesting that the matter be discussed at a FPG meeting in the New Year.

If you agree, I should be happy to let you have a draft.

In the meantime, Mr Faulkner suggested that you should circulate the note as you received it from Colin Walters under cover of a compliments slip from you. The note should of course be numbered FPG(82) 4.

GW

Hy 0967

CABINET OFFICE
Central Policy Review Staff
70 Whitehall, London SW1A 2AS Telephone 01-233 7217

D E R Faulkner, Esq.,
Home Office,
50 Queen Anne's Gate,
London, SW1

29 November 1982

Dear David,

Family Policy Group

We spoke about how best to handle the note prepared by the Home Office Research and Planning Unit on Reducing Crime: The Findings of Research.

2. As I told you, both Tim Flesher and I would be sorry to see the paper circulated in its present form; i.e. simply as a note produced for another purpose and without a summary drawing out at least some of its implications for the work of the Family Policy Group. I have therefore tried my hand at producing a brief covering memorandum by the Home Secretary which (I hope) draws out the main (negative and positive) conclusions of the HORPU note and suggests something for the members of the Group to discuss.

3. If you agree, I propose that the Prime Minister's approval should be sought to the HORPU note being circulated as soon as practicable under cover of this Memorandum by the Home Secretary and under cover also of a letter from Tim Flesher indicating that while it is being circulated for information at this stage, the Prime Minister would be happy for it to be discussed by the Group if members expressed an interest in doing so.

4. Perhaps we could discuss later in the day. I am sending a copy of this letter and enclosures to Tim Flesher.

Yours ever,
Gordon

(G J WASSERMAN)

DRAFT LETTER FROM:

PS No. 10 TO PS/CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER

I enclose a copy of a paper by the Home Secretary covering a note by the Home Office Research and Planning Unit and other Departments summarising the latest research findings about crime, its causes and its reduction. This document is being circulated for information at this stage because, as the Home Secretary points out, its findings are relevant to many of the issues with which the Family Policy Group is likely to be concerned. If, however, members of the Group wish to discuss the note and its implications for policy and action, the Prime Minister would be happy to put it on the agenda for a later meeting of the Group.

DRAFT

FPG(82)

FAMILY POLICY GROUP

REDUCING CRIME: FINDINGS OF RESEARCH

Memorandum by the Secretary of State for the Home Department

1. Earlier in the year I established an Interdepartmental Group of Officials to consider how Departments outside the criminal justice field could help to reduce crime. (Appendix I to FPG(82) 2 refers). As background to its deliberations, this Group asked the Home Office Research and Planning Unit, in consultation with other Departments, to undertake a review of the most up-to-date research findings about crime, its causes and its reduction. The conclusions of this review have recently been reported to me and because I think that they are relevant to the issues which we are about to consider in the Family Policy Group, I have decided to circulate them to the Group for information. [as soon as possible.] (Attached).

2. The main conclusions of this review - that the scope for reducing crime through changes to the criminal justice system itself (including sentencing policy, prison regimes, and police deployment and technology) is very limited and that the impact on crime of social policies (affecting e.g., the family, education or employment) is hard to predict and changes are difficult or slow to achieve - may strike colleagues as negative and disappointing. But we should not lose sight of the fact that the risks of falling victim to serious crime are still low in England and Wales, that only 5 per cent of crimes reported to the police involve confrontations and that the victims of such crime are much more likely to be young males than the infirm or the elderly. (The remaining 95 per cent of crimes are against property; the vast majority involving small sums.)

3. As far as tackling crime is concerned, the research confirms that the best predictor of adult criminal involvement is a history of juvenile crime and that juvenile criminality is itself related to many matters which I hope we shall be considering in the Family Policy Group; viz., family discord, the lack of consistent discipline and supervision at home and at school and the absence of pre-school facilities.

4. In addition, recent research by the Home Office appears to indicate that some of the most common and publicly disturbing sorts of crime - burglary, vandalism, etc. - can be effectively reduced through the management, design or manipulation of the immediate environment in which they occur; e.g., improved lighting, vandal-resistant design and materials, closed circuit TV surveillance, the employment of care-takers, doormen or additional shop assistants, improved supervision of children's play on housing estates, reducing the number of large cash transactions, etc. If further work confirms the cost-effectiveness of this "situational" approach to crime prevention, we shall have to consider what the Government can and should do to persuade the people or organisations concerned (e.g. local authorities, housing associations, firms) to take the necessary action.

W W

Home Office

29 November 1982.

29 November 1982
Policy Unit

PRIME MINISTER

BRIEF FOR FAMILY POLICY GROUP
5pm TUESDAY, 30 NOVEMBER 1982

I. TAXATION OF HUSBAND AND WIFE

The Chancellor's memorandum explores the historical background. His officials' note outlines the present system and summarises the options for change.

If the Group wants to go ahead with reform, then the Chancellor's preferred option - Independent Taxation with Transferable Allowances (ITTA) - is clearly the only sensible alternative to the status quo. Clearly too, the allowances should be partially transferable. If they were fully transferable, that would err too much in the opposite direction and be unfair to the couple where both husband and wife are earning. The Group will want to consider:

(a) whether it is worth changing at all; and

(b) the risks and drawbacks of change.

(a) Is it worth changing?

The economic and social grounds for change are strong. The present system is bizarre, unfair and illogical. Page 1 of the officials' note shows how it favours the working wife over both the working unmarried woman and the non-working wife.

Combined with the present high taxation on lower incomes, it puts strong pressure on young mothers to go out to work; it is thus an anti-family system for poorer families, because they cannot afford to employ child-minders or au pairs.

At the margin, it must also add to the numbers of women seeking jobs (sometimes reluctantly) at a time when we would prefer, if anything, to shrink the labour market. It is a system designed for the war years when the munitions factories were short-handed, not for 1982. Not for nothing was Britain probably the most highly mobilised nation fighting in World War Two.

No doubt the high participation of working wives in the labour force in Britain - as opposed to, say, in Mediterranean countries - is partly due to national tradition and personal preference. But the bias of the tax system is much more marked here than anywhere else.

To introduce a system which would be genuinely neutral as between working and non-working wives would be both equitable and timely. It would offer working-class wives more choice between full-time work, part-time work and staying at home. It would also be possible, at no Exchequer cost, to make some impact upon the numbers seeking work as recorded on the employment register - which, as we have seen, is highly sensitive to people's perceptions of whether it is worthwhile registering (in the light of the economic situation, the wages likely to be available and the tax system).

(b) The risks and drawbacks of change

The Chancellor's paper (page 8) lists the following disadvantages:

- The change would reduce the present incentive for wives to go out to work. But we might not object to that, so long as the change does not penalise the working wife as against other categories, and it does not.

- It would, in consequence, reduce the tax threshold for 5 million married men. There would need to be transitional cushioning. The potential loss to the two-income family is the greatest political problem. It could be minimised by enveloping the transition in a Budget which reduced income tax overall, thus making most of the disadvantage relative not absolute. A gradual increase in VAT rates, coupled with a parallel rise in income tax thresholds, is in any case the best way to phase out the poverty trap.

- Transferability would be complex and demand extra staff (5-6,000). Some of this cost would be merely transitional if the Inland Revenue showed ingenuity.

- Up to 12 million wives would have to take over from their husbands responsibility for their own tax affairs. But if a joint declaration form could be evolved, this might be both less costly and less unpopular than we may now imagine. After all, one of the criticisms of the present system is that it

treats wives as appendages. Is this appropriate to the age of the joint bank account?

- There would be certain consequential problems, eg on Capital Transfer Tax. But these seem minor and capable of resolution. After all, other countries manage ITTA-type systems easily enough.

The next steps

The timetable laid out in the Chancellor's memo (paragraph 28) suggests a White Paper with Green edges after the 1983 Budget.

If the Group agrees to this, we might suggest that, provided the White Paper is well received, we should include in the Manifesto a general commitment to the introduction of ITTA in the next Parliament.

II. PROGRAMME OF WORK

You are invited to approve the programme outlined in the CPRS paper. Some of the work is already under way. Colleagues are preparing papers on the key topics which I have asterisked. I have also picked out some other important topics which urgently need attention.

It is important that you should endorse, with some emphasis, those pieces of work which you do want followed up in a positive spirit. Otherwise, departments will lapse back into the defensive apathy from which we have just begun to rouse them.

A. Personal Taxation and Benefits

The taxation of husband and wife is only one half of the low-income family's tax problem.

The Treasury has already submitted a note on the unemployment trap and the poverty trap. We might invite the DHSS to submit a full-scale paper when they have completed their follow-up work on the unemployment reports.

B. The Elderly

* Norman Fowler's paper on the general situation of the elderly is likely to be ready in time for the next meeting.

* The Department of the Environment is also ready to offer a paper on housing for the elderly.

C. Encouraging Self-Reliance

I think we need to commission a paper from the Treasury on all the methods of encouraging personal wealth-creation: profit-sharing, personal investment in equities, personal pension funds and so on. There is considerable opposition to this both from the Treasury itself which is worried about loopholes, and the City which would rather deal with large funds. But we must press on if we are serious about a capital-owning democracy.

D. Children and Schools

i. Wider parental choice is already being discussed separately.

* ii. Keith Joseph has already circulated a paper on Preparation for Parenthood which could be discussed at the next meeting.

iii. We might also welcome a paper from Keith on Maintaining Discipline and Authority - particularly on the crucial question of the headmaster's power to hire and fire teachers.

E. Voluntary Action

* (a) and (b) Tim Raison is discussing with other departments what changes in the tax system might encourage greater generosity among individuals.

* (c) The DoE will be putting in a Business-in-the-Community paper on how public and private initiatives can be married to encourage local enterprise and involvement.

* (d) The DoE is working up a paper which will cover not only the use of school and other local authority facilities out of school hours, but also the use of facilities owned by the nationalised industries and the private sector.

F. Housing

The DoE intends to offer two papers:

* i. Furthering the sale of council houses.

* ii. Recent developments in the management of council estates.

G. The Face of Government

The CPRS proposes to work on this in collaboration with the MPO and a number of departments which serve the public directly. If you are content that they should go ahead, you might emphasise that they should set out to produce specific recommendations for action.

H. Professionals and the Individual

Again, specific recommendations for action would be welcome. I think it is important that the CPRS should bear in mind the sensitivities of the professions involved - whether they be architects or probation officers - and should be certain of its ground before making recommendations.

J. Reducing Crime

* The Home Office is circulating a paper which summarises recent research into the causes and cures of crime. The main conclusion is negative - that the criminal justice system by itself is unlikely to reduce crime much - but it does contain some useful practical suggestions on crime prevention which might be worth discussing: vandal-proof design, more caretakers, better architects etc.

K. Racial Equality

We have nothing to offer here at the moment. The Group might like to discuss what initiative the Government could take which would stop us being pressed back onto the defensive and being carried down the road to ethnic monitoring and positive discrimination which may inflame as much resentment as it soothes. Would you like me to do a paper?

III. NEXT MEETING

It would be helpful to maintain the momentum which we have just established, if the Group could meet again fairly soon - say, in mid-January, and thereafter at monthly intervals.

FM

FERDINAND MOUNT

PRIME MINISTER

c. Mr. Scholar

FAMILY POLICY GROUP

The Group is to meet on Tuesday 30 November at 1700 hours. You agreed that at that meeting we should discuss first the programme of work proposed by the CPRS and second the Chancellor's paper on taxation of husband and wife. You may like to glance through the latter, a copy of which is attached.

TL. MS

26 November 1982

FPG (82) 3

TAXATION OF HUSBAND AND WIFE

Memorandum by the Chancellor of the Exchequer

1. This note considers the case for reforming the present treatment of husband and wife for income tax - which in essence dates from the time when income tax was first introduced in the early days of the 19th century.

2. Our own supporters have been among the foremost pressing for reform. After wide consultation and after debate at the Annual Women's Conference, our (then) Women's National Advisory Committee published in 1979 a report by a Committee under Miss Shelagh Roberts: "Women and Tax". This spoke of "great resentment building up" and argued for change

> "to enable women to be treated as independently as they wish to be treated, but, at the same time to encourage and support the family".

3. In December 1980 we published a Green Paper on the Taxation of Husband and Wife (Cmnd 8093). Virtually everyone who has responded to the Green Paper argues that the present system needs to be changed. Those who seek radical reform include our own Conservative Women's National Committee and the professional organisations (such as the Law Society and the Chartered Accountants), as well as a very wide range of social and political commentators.

4. The attached note by officials outlines the tax treatment of husbands and wives as it has developed to date, summarises the criticisms of it, and explains the options for change.

CRITICISMS OF THE PRESENT SYSTEM

5. The basic criticism is that the present tax system reflects a 19th century world, in which the vast majority of married women were legally and financially dependent on their husbands. Today, over 7 million married women contribute to the family income and the vast majority of women go out to work at some point in their married lives. Many of these are, or should be, our natural supporters. But almost as many of them find the present tax concepts anomalous, and sometimes offensive.

6. There are other criticisms. In particular, the present system:

- gives more than the sum of two single persons' tax allowances to the married couple, if both husband and wife are earning. This is an anomaly dating from 1939-45, specifically introduced to encourage women into war work

- by contrast, imposes a tax penalty on marriage in other respects (mainly in the case of investment income).

7. Finally, there is a body of "advanced" option which argues that it is wrong for the tax system to give any recognition to marriage, and in particular to give the married man a bigger tax allowance than the married woman, or the single man or woman.

OBJECTIVES OF REFORM

8. The broad criteria against which to measure options for change of the tax system are those rightly identified by the WNAC in 1979: independent treatment of women and - crucially - support for the family. It may help to set out the objectives in more detail. In my view they are:

(a) to treat men and women ~~as equal~~ for tax purposes with an own hand and respond to the reasonable demand for independence and privacy in the tax affairs of partners in a marriage;

(b) to support the family and avoid a tax penalty on marriage;

(c) for this purpose to strike an equitable balance in the tax system

- between the single man or woman and the married couple and

- between those married couples where both husband and wife go out to work, and those where one (usually the wife) stays at home.

In particular, to continue to take direct account in the tax system of the fact that a married couple, when the wife does not go out to work, has a lower taxable capacity than a single person with the same total income.

(d) to remove the present tax bias in favour of the married couple where both husband and wife go out to work, as compared with two single people both working, so that a wife's freedom of choice is not distorted by consideration of tax.

(e) to minimise cost and administrative complexity, for Government and the public;

(f) to improve - or at least avoid worsening - work incentives and encourage wage moderation (bearing in mind the implications for the poverty and unemployment traps.)

(g) more generally - to produce a system which ordinary people can understand, and find attractive, as matching the way in which married couples now organise their financial affairs.

9. The relative weight to be attached to these objectives is a matter of judgement. But they provide a series of benchmarks for judging the relative merits of the options for change set out below and - in more detail - in the attached paper by officials.

A LIMITED REFORM

10. As the note by officials explains, successive Governments have so far responded to pressures for reform by ad hoc change. At one time, I saw attraction in a further limited reform - introducing a "right to choose independent taxation" for married women, which would still leave the present basic structure intact. We floated a scheme of this sort in the 1980 Green Paper. The response has made me doubt whether it is the right way forward. It would be widely interpreted as failing to deal with the real problem, and bringing substantial benefit only to wealthy people with investment income. At best, it would get no more than a lukewarm reception from our supporters. And, in practice, I fear that taxpayers would find it complex and difficult to understand.

OPTIONS FOR THOROUGH-GOING REFORM

11. I think it follows that, if we decide to respond positively to the present pressures, we need to consider a more thorough-going reform, reaching to the root of the problem.

12. The response to the Green Paper has identified two main options:

(i) Mandatory independent taxation with cash benefits (MIT)

Under this a husband and wife would be taxed as separate individuals; the present married man's allowance would be abolished and "replaced" by cash benefits for those with children and other dependants.

(ii) Independent taxation with transferable allowance (ITTA)

Under this a husband and wife would again be taxed as separate individuals but if one of the two had too little income to use up their allowance, part or all of the balance could be transferred to the other.

13. Each system has powerful advocates.

14. At present, the pace is being set by advocates of MIT with cash benefits. This is now the official policy of the Labour Party and the SDP. Its supporters include (at one extreme) the Child Poverty Action Group and the National Council for Civil Liberties and (at the other extreme) Mr Sam Brittan in a recent article in the Financial Times.

15. I am convinced that this is the wrong approach. It would take a further large tranche of income from taxpayers, and pay it out as social benefits. By contrast with ITTA (see paragraph 22)

it would reduce the tax threshold for every married man with unwelcome effects on take-home pay and wage claims. It would be difficult to devise a satisfactory benefit alternative which did not either add significantly to public expenditure or result in an unacceptable number of losers or further complication of the social security system.

16. MIT would also involve the State in the highly objectionable business of discriminating between "deserving" and "Undeserving" or "idle" wives. It would be logically inconsistent with maintaining the present widows' bereavement allowance - let alone improving it (one could hardly say that, for tax, marriage begins with the husband's death). I believe its wider implications for the family are wholly unacceptable.

17. The alternative, independent taxation with transferable allowances (ITTA) is supported, in particular, by the WNAC and by the professional organisations. I believe that this offers in principle a much more coherent and acceptable tax structure than either MIT or the present system. It provides independence, where the wife goes out to work or otherwise has her own income; but it also provides fair support, where she stays at home to look after the family; and it recognises that this is a choice for her to make, not for any Government, whether by arbitrary rule or by still more arbitrary discretion.

18. Under ITTA there is a choice to be made between allowing the partner who stays at home to transfer the whole of his/her allowances to the other partner, or only part of them. We do not need to decide on this now. But, for the reasons given in paragraph 22 of the note by officials I think the balance of argument favours partially transferable allowances, rather than full transferability.

19. ITTA would also bring us much closer to the best practice in other European and North American countries, combining the two WNAC criteria of independence and support for the family. By contrast, no major western country either has anything comparable with our present system or seeks to disregard the reality of marriage, in the way that the advocates of MIT with cash benefits propose.

COSTS OF CHANGE

20. Either MIT with cash benefits or ITTA carries significant costs.

21. First, they both reduce the (now relatively too large) total tax allowances payable to the married couple where both husband and wife are earning. This is the clearest anomaly in the present system, and virtually everyone who responded to the Green Paper accepted that it should be removed. The impact could be eased by transitional arrangements. Nevertheless those who would lose (some 5 million couples) may complain, while the gainers may stay silent.

22. Over time the removal of this anomaly could yield savings (allowing for the cost of disaggregating investment income) approaching £1 billion under ITTA with partially transferable allowances (though with full transferability there would be a net cost). As the savings would not emerge before the end of the decade, it is not necessary to decide now how these should be used - whether to increase tax thresholds or cash benefits for families with children.

23. MIT would go further and use the whole saving from abolishing the married man's allowance to finance a new system of cash benefits. So virtually all married couples would face a higher tax burden.

24. Second, they both involve additional administrative costs, requiring perhaps some thousands of extra staff. Obviously, we should make every effort to reduce additional costs to a minimum. But some significant cost is unavoidable. This is partly because they require the Revenue to take on its books up to 12 million married women, whose tax affairs are now treated virtually as a by-product of their husbands'. In addition, the systems themselves are more complex, requiring (with MIT) the creation of new cash benefits, or (for ITTA) a system to transfer allowances between husband and wife. The planning and introduction of either system would take some years and the introduction of ITTA could not, in any event, be managed before the computerisation of PAYE is complete. There is the risk that - whilst virtually every woman may support the principle of independence - some women may in practice have difficulties when they have for the first time to fill in their tax returns, and become themselves responsible for payment of tax on their income.

THE CHOICE

25. The questions we now have to decide are

(i) what is the best alternative to the present tax treatment of husband and wife?

(ii) do the advantages of this alternative outweigh the costs?

(iii) if so, how far should we commit ourselves to reform at this stage?

(iv) what would be the timetable for implementation?

26. On the first question, I have no doubt that, if we decide to make a thorough-going reform of the present system, independent taxation with transferable allowance (ITTA) is the only acceptable alternative.

27. The second and third questions are more difficult. For obvious reasons, I am reluctant to make any change which would, in itself, complicate the tax system and add to administrative costs. However, I am not at all sure whether we have the option of stayingwhere we are. We are under pressure for reform from many quarters - both the other main political parties, our own Conservative Women's National Committee, the academic commentators, the political and equal opportunities lobbies, and professional organisations. If we cannot respond positively to these pressures, we risk leaving a clear field to our political opponents, and to a system of mandatory independent taxation with cash benefits, which I believe to be wholly unacceptable.

28. If we decide that there is a sufficient case for reform, the next step might be to prepare a White Paper - though with some pretty broad green edges. I might announce this in the Spring 1983 Budget, and publish perhaps a little later. The paper would need very careful drafting and I would wish to involve my colleagues fully in its preparation. It might indicate more or less firm Government support for the principle of independent taxation with transferable allowances; and then go on to launch the necessary next stage of public consultation on a number of points which have as yet been barely touched on in the public discussion. These include implications for other aspects of the income tax, for the capital taxes, and for social security benefits, in particular for the elderly.

29. The White Paper would also, of course, bring out as clearly as possible the disadvantages of MIT with cash benefits.

TIMETABLE

30. The timetable would be designed to give ample time to assess the response to this further consultative document, before we finally commit ourselves to go ahead. Given where we now stand, legislation would be a matter for the next Parliament. Implementation would be towards the end of the decade, when we have the benefits of a computerised PAYE system.

TAXATION OF HUSBAND AND WIFE

THE PRESENT SYSTEM OF TAXING HUSBAND AND WIFE

1. The present arrangements basically treat the income of husband and wife as one. The wife's income is taxed as if it was the husband's and he is responsible for his wife's tax affairs as well his own. The married man is given an allowance which is higher (by 56%) than that of a single person. There is an additional allowance (equal to the single allowance) which is given against the wife's earned income, but does not run against either her investment income or any income of the husband's.

The present structure of personal allowances can thus be summarised:

		£ p.a.	(% of a.)
a.	Single Person	1,565	(100)
b.	Married Couple, only husband earning	2,445	(156)
c.	Married Couple, husband and wife both earning	4,010	(256)
d.	2 Single People, both earning (compare with c. above)	3,130	(200)

MEASURES WHICH OFFER MARRIED WOMEN A MEASURE OF INDEPENDENT TREATMENT

2. Over time there have been a number of changes to the basic system, designed to give married women a measure of independent treatment. Thus the normal tax rules can be varied in two ways:-

a. Separate assessment (introduced in 1914) enabled husband and wife to be responsible for handling their own tax affairs, and for payment of their own share of the tax. It does not alter the total tax payable by the couple; it divides the bill between them according to their share of the joint income. Very few people (about 10,000) take advantage of this election.

b. Wife's earnings election (introduced by the Conservative Government in 1971) enables a couple to elect for the wife's earnings to be taxed separately. She gets a single allowance against her earnings and the husband gets a single allowance (instead of the married allowance) against the rest of their joint income. The wife's investment income is still taxed as her husband's income, and he remains responsible for returns of his wife's income as well as his own. The election is only beneficial for couples where the total income and the wife

earnings are large enough for the loss of the marr[illegible]d allowance to be outweighed by the reduction in their higher rate tax. About 200,000 couples benefit from it at present.

3. In addition, there have been some administrative changes in th last few years to provide more equal treatment for married women in some respects - for example,

repayments of tax on the wife's income are now usually made direct to her;

and

correspondence on the wife's own tax affairs is now normally addressed to her direct.

CRITICISMS OF THE PRESENT SYSTEM

4. The main criticisms of the present system are:-

a. It treats the married woman as a 'chattel' of her husband (section 37 ICTA - if a married woman is living with her husband her income shall "be deemed for income tax purposes to be his income and not to be her income.").

b. The married man's allowance gives married men a bigger tax allowance than their wives (and a bigger allowance than single men or women).

c. It gives more than the sum of two single allowances to th married couple where the wife is working (they get 2½ tim the single allowance, while one income couples get 1½ tim the single allowance).

d. (from some critics) it gives <u>any</u> recognition to marriage.

e. (from some critics) it imposes a tax penalty on marriage (mainly in the case of couples where the wife has substantial investment income) so that couples can be better off co-habiting than married.

RESPONSE TO THE GREEN PAPER

5. The Green Paper, published in 1980 posed two basic questions:

a. <u>should the present system be left unchanged?</u>

- virtually all those who responded said that the present system was unacceptable, and that fundamental changes sho be made;

b. <u>if the system was changed, should the tax unit be the fam or the individual?</u>

- there was almost no support for moving towards the fami

as the basic tax unit (as in France). The virtually unanimous response was that the individual should be the basic tax unit. Discussion centred on the form that a system of independent taxation should take, and in particular how far it is possible - or right - for the tax system to reconcile the principle of independence for the individual as the basic unit for tax with support for the married family.

OPTIONS FOR CHANGE

6. The main options for change canvassed in the Green Paper and subsequently developed in further work, are as follows:-

a. A right under which either husband or wife could choose from year to year

- to remain under the present system: or
- fully independent taxation of both earned and investment income, each with a single person's allowance - and no transfer of allowances between husband and wife.

This would extend the present options for separate assessment and for separate taxation of wife's earnings. A less developed version of the proposal received lukewarm support in response to the Green Paper, and then only as an interim reform before option c. becomes possib

b. Mandatory independent taxation with cash benefits (MIT):

i. tax husband and wife as separate individuals, each with a single person's tax allowance

ii. abolish the married man's allowance, and replace it by

iii. cash benefits - increased child benefits and other benefits (usually unspecified) for those with dependents.

This is favoured by the poverty lobby, the Equal Opportunities Commission and both the Labour* and Social Democratic parties.

c. Independent taxation with transferable allowances (ITTA):

i. tax husband and wife as separate individuals

ii. give each, in the first instance, a single person's allowance

iii. permit any allowance unused by one partner to be transferred to the other (wholly or partially).

This is favoured by the Women's National Advisory Committee and the professional bodies.

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* See extract from 'Labour's Programme 1982' attached.

EXCHEQUER IMPLICATIONS

7. Under all three options the investment incomes of husband and wife would be taxed separately, whereas the wife's investment income is now aggregated with that of her husband and taxed at his marginal rate. The Exchequer cost of this at present allowance levels would be £bn0.3 under option a. and some £bn0.5 under MIT and ITTA mainly for the benefit of higher income families. Under both MIT and ITTA - but not option a. - there would be an off-setting gain of up to £bn1.3 from ending the anomaly under which a couple in which both husband and wife are earning get more than two single person's allowances (see paragraph 22. below for the further effect of fully transferable allowances). Under MIT there would also be an increased tax burden on one-income couples, and a further revenue gain on this account of £bn2.2.

STAFFING IMPLICATIONS

8. All three options are more complex than the present system and would involve additional staff costs. Option a. would cost several hundred additional staff. Both under MIT (particularly if we wished to mitigate the impact on minority groups such as the disabled) and under ITTA the costs could perhaps add up to several thousand additional staff; one of the reasons is that the Revenue would require tax returns of some kind from up to 12 million women whose affairs are now handled along with their husbands. The eventual costs will of course depend on the precise form the new system takes and its suitability for computers. This is a most important area for further work.

9. IMPACT ON TAX THRESHOLDS

Option a. would of course leave the present pattern of thresholds unchanged, except for the few hundred thousand couples who might choose independent taxation (where the husband would receive only the single person's allowance). On the existing levels of allowances, MIT would reduce the tax threshold for all married men from £2,445 to £1,565, increasing the tax bill for some 12 million couples; under ITTA the only major group to lose would be 5 million or so two-earner couples - the different effect on one-earner couples of partially or fully transferable allowances is discussed at paragraph 22. below.

Under both MIT and ITTA about ¼ million couples where the wife is the sole breadwinner would lose, but more so under MIT.

The impact of either MIT or ITTA on the elderly is more varied and more difficult to estimate, but under MIT almost all the taxpaying elderly would lose (some substantially) and under ITTA about two-thirds would gain and one-third lose.

TIMING

10. Option a. could be introduced quickly: perhaps legislation in 1983 and implementation in 1984. ITTA is not administratively practicable until after PAYE is fully and successfully computerised, at the earliest, by the end of 1987/88; it would in any event be prohibitively expensive of staff without computerisation. In

practice the timescale for any comprehensive MIT system would probably be very similar because it would involve a new range of cash benefits; it could only be implemented much earlier on a crude basis which would disadvantage many one-income couples of the kind which even the advocates of MIT would probably wish to protect.

11. Paragraph 24. below sets out a possible "time path" to reform.

ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS

Option a.: Right to choose independent taxation

12. This would give the wife the right (which she now does not h to independent taxation; and it could thus be presented as going s of the way towards meeting the pressure for change. It avoids the upheaval to the basic system that the other two more radical optio entail, and, though costly in staff for the Revenue (some hundreds of extra staff would be needed), it is a good deal less costly tha the other options.

13. This has attractions, but also serious disadvantage:

- it depends on a choice - with the attendant complexity and risk of criticism from taxpayers who find the choice difficult -. and some of them would inevitably get the choice wrong.

- it retains the married man's allowance for the great majority of families and so does not tackle the anomaly that a two-earner couple can get more than two single allowances.

- if it has to be seen as no more than a first step towards independent taxation with transferable allowances, it implies the disturbance of two major changes in this sensitive area of the tax system within a decade

- it would be strongly opposed - as a step in the wrong direction, by those in the Equal Opportunities Commissio poverty lobby and the Opposition parties who want to abolish the married man's tax allowance in favour of bigger and better social security benefits.

- it would get only a lukewarm welcome from the other critics of the system, as no more than a first step in th right direction - independent taxation with transferable allowances.

- it would (like all moves towards independent taxation of husbands and wives) benefit those with investment income and the first costs might arise in 1984-85. But it would not have the broader (and arguably more "progressive") distributional effects of the more radical options.

Option b.: Mandatory independent taxation with cash benefits

14. This approach has a variety of supporters, not all with the same objective:

- an increase in child benefit would be welcomed by mother

in particular in low income families;

- increases in child benefit, and consequent possible reduction in means tested benefits, would also be helpful in mitigating both the poverty trap and the unemployment trap for some families with low incomes (though the consequent reduction in tax thresholds would also make th trap worse for some families);

- if financed by a reduction in income tax allowances, it could contribute to a new re-distribution of income more generally from middle and higher income families, in favour of those with low incomes;

- the whole approach would be consistent with a view of society in which marriage is irrelevant*.

15. The first two of these objectives are important, so far as they go. Indeed, they were among the Conservative Government's objectives in the original tax credit scheme of 1971. The question always, is cost; and whether - as is proposed here - the cost is easier to handle if it is wholly financed by increasing the income tax burden on married couples without children below school leaving age. Why income tax? and why married couples?

16. The second two points are not among the Government's objectiv In particular, the present Government have always emphasised the importance of the family, and the fact that the family is based on marriage.

17. Moreover, when one comes to look at this approach more closely it raises some formidable problems:-

i. it would take a further £3½billion directly from taxpayers in order to pay it out in social benefit;

ii. it would inevitably involve a radical review of the way the social security system treats married couples and the family unit;

iii. as stated above, it would reduce the tax threshold for all married men.

iv. it is based on the objectionable idea that in dealing with couples where the wife is at home the State should

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* eg National Council for Civil Liberties -

"Neither sex nor marital status should result in a different tax burden"

National Labour Women's Commission -

"Men and women should be treated as equal and separate for tax purposes regardless of marital status"

discriminate between 'deserving' and 'undeserving' wives that is, give cash benefits to those who look after children or have other "worthy" reasons for staying at home and deny cash benefits where the wife "simply chooses to stay at home";

v. even if one accepted the principle of discrimination between 'deserving' and 'undeserving' wives, in practice it would be impossible to devise a sensible cash benefit system and put the dividing line in the 'right' place;

vi. it would at the same time be logically inconsistent with any special tax relief for widows, such as the Widow's Bereavement Allowance introduced by the Chancellor in 1980;

No other major Western country completely disregards the fact of marriage in the way that the advocates of this system propose.

18. It may help to illustrate the practical points at iv. and v. above.

- The most important case is also the simplest; replacing the married man's tax allowance by an increase in child benefit payable to the mother. It is thought there was some effect on wage claims when child tax allowances were abolished and child benefit first introduced between 1977 and 1979; the transfer from wallet to purse with MIT would of course be much larger.

But there is an almost infinite variety of other situations, where a wife has a commitment which prevents her from going out to earn her living in the market place, and where we could not possibly justify withdrawing tax relief on any grounds of "equity". For example:

- There may be a dependent parent or other relative; sometimes may be someone living with the family, and so infirm that they cannot be left for any length of time; at the other extreme, it may be an elderly or infirm person living nearby, who does not need full time care, but who cannot be left to fend for himself or herself day in and day out. In either event, the wife may be unable to commit herself to a regular job.

- Again, the husband may be disabled, or in such uncertain heal that the wife cannot commit herself to employment.

- The wife herself may be disabled etc.

- The wife may have stayed at home to look after her children. When they leave home, she is in her forties or fifties - when she finds it most difficult to go out and resume a career. Child benefit has ceased, and the proposed new system would

give the family no marriage allowance to take its place.

- The husband may have work in an area of high unemployment - or where there are few if any businesses employing women but the wife (unlike a single woman) is not free to leave home and look for a job elsewhere.

- The couple may be elderly and retired; the adverse effects virtually all elderly couples would be severe and difficul remedy, at least without further action that could be eith anomalous or costly, or both.

19. In these cases, and many others, withdrawal of relief woul wholly unjustified on its merits. No-one has yet suggested a scheme of cash benefits which would cater for all these situatio all their variety - and which would not cost far more to pay, an administer than the present system.

Option c.: Independent taxation with transferable allowances

20. As a long term objective, this would in principle provide coherent and rational alternative to the present sex discriminat system. It meets the legitimate pressure for more independence equality under the tax régime, but it still pays proper regard t reality of marriage. In particular

- it would treat husband and wife equally;

- it would end the anomaly under which the two earner couple gets more than two single allowances;

- the UK system would be in line with tax systems abroa in recognising marriage (as now) but not (as now) giv more than the sum of two single allowances;

- it would give relief to wives as of right with no invidious discrimination between the 'deserving' and 'idle'.

21. At the same time, it would be a pretty radical change, wit broader implications and some substantial costs. In particular

- the change in the tax treatment of two earner couples would - for better or worse - reduce the present incentive for married women to go out to work;

- it would in consequence reduce the tax threshold for 5 million married men (those where the wife is earnin more than about £13 per week); and there would probab need to be transitional arrangements to soften the impact;

- the transferability of allowances would be complex and cost a lot of staff - up to 6,000 depending on the degree of transferability (see paragraph 22. below) and the precise form of administration chosen;

- up to 12 million wives would have to take over from their husbands responsibility for their own tax affairs;

- it would raise difficult questions about consequential changes elsewhere in the income tax system - such as whether a married couple should qualify for two separate mortgage interest ceilings: some of these could be to the benefit of the taxpayer; others could be his disadvantage;

- measures would be needed (as its advocates freely accept) to control avoidance through transfers of income between husband and wife;

- changes would need to be considered in the present taxation of capital transfers between husband and wife.

22. Within an ITTA system, there would also be a choice to be made between wholly and partially transferable allowances - that is, whether a spouse with insufficient income to use up his or her own single allowance should be able to transfer to the other the whole or only part of the unused allowance. Both versions would provide equal and independent treatment where the wife has sufficient income of her own, whether earned or not, to use up her single allowance, and both would reduce the allowances available to the two-income couple from 2½ to 2 times a single allowance. Full transfer would however increase the allowances to the one-income couple from 1½ to 2 times the single allowance, whereas partial would maintain the present relativity of 1½. At existing levels of allowances, the net exchequer gain of £0.8billion from a partial scheme would be converted into a net loss of £0.3billion if full transfer were allowed; this means that if the change were made on a revenue-neutral basis, the single allowance would have to be cut and all single taxpayers would lose. The staffing costs of up to perhaps 5,000 for partial transfer,(though it might be significantly less, depending on the form of administration) would be increased by at least 1,000 for full transfer. The choice is not one that has to be made yet, but for these and other reasons the balance of arguments points at present very strongly towards a system of partial transfer.

23. Comparison with other countries. Under ITTA the UK tax system would be broadly similar to that of most other Western countries, in that it would continue to recognise the position of one-income married couples in the tax system but give the working couple only twice the single allowance (the present advantage for two earner couples is a peculiarity of the British system). ITTA would however give more independence and privacy than in many other countries. Some have joint taxation of investment income, though earnings are separately taxed. Others have a joint taxation system, with 'income-splitting'. Under this approach a married couple's income is added together and divided by two, with a single allowance and set of rate bands being set against each half of the couple's total income. This approach would give a bigger benefit than ITTA to wealthy one-income couples. It would also be more complex than ITTA - particularly if it was necessary (as in the USA) to add in an option for independent treatment of husband and wife, because of the restrictions on privacy in the basic income splitting approach. Variants of this joint taxation approach were floated in the Green Paper, but attracted very little interest.

SUMMARY

24. Option a. - the right to choose independence - has attractions but it would be complex and difficult for taxpayers, involve significant revenue and staffing costs, and would still be seen at best as only a modest step in the right direction. For the reasons set out above and summarised in the Chancellor's paper, MIT is open to very strong objections. ITTA has significant costs in terms of administrative complexity, major extra staff requirements, redistributive effects and the wider implications for other areas of the tax system and for social security. On the other hand, it seems to go nearest to achieving the right balance between independent tax treatment, support for the family and individual choice.

TIMETABLE

25. If Ministers conclude that a sufficient case has been made for radical change on the lines of ITTA, a possible timetable for action following the publication of a White Paper next Spring might involve:-

- a period of between 1 and 2 years for people to digest the broader implications of major reform and for consultations;

- draft clauses and legislation early in the life of the new Parliament - eg 1985/86;

- a further period for consultation on detailed regulations, administrative instruction to employers, training, publicity and so forth (experience suggests that, even leaving aside the need to wait until the Revenue's computers come on stream, employers also will need at least 2 clear years to implement a change of this kind);

- final instructions to employers, issue of tax returns, coding notices etc - followed by implementation towards the end of the decade.

[illegible] the personal allowances. Our first priority, however, is a significant real increase in tax thresholds.

The income tax age allowances will be kept under review to ensure that those elderly taxpayers with little or no income above the present basic state pension are kept out of the tax net, and we will consider aligning the age allowance with pension age.

At the other end of the scale, Labour will act to bring down the starting point of the higher rates of tax. In order that those with higher earnings pay their full share of National insurance contributions we shall act to remove the ceiling on contributions or levy a higher rate of tax above the ceiling.

Tax reliefs and perks

Even with the existing rates and allowances, the income tax system could be much more redistributive. The steady erosion of the tax base, by a range of special reliefs of which the wealthiest taxpayers are best placed to take advantage, greatly increases inequality.

These special reliefs include those available on life assurance premiums, and for self-employed annuities for company directors and others not covered by pension schemes. All such reliefs have some justification, and none is used exclusively by the rich. Labour does not seek a total withdrawal of the reliefs. We shall, however, act to limit the open-ended nature of tax reliefs so that the better-off no longer benefit disproportionately.

Labour will also make a determined attack upon the great array of tax-free perks made available by companies to their employees. We shall ensure that employees are taxed on the full personal benefit of company cars over and above their use for genuine business purposes. The new tax treatment for company cars will, however, be phased in over a period having regard to any possible adverse effects on the British motor industry.

Tight restrictions on the availability of special reliefs and perks will provide the extra revenue to make possible higher personal allowances for all taxpayers.

Some perks directly undermine the public services by artificially encouraging private provision. As a matter of priority, Labour will act to remove all the tax privileges of the independent schools, and the income tax relief on school fees; and will tax employer-funded private health insurance at its full value to the employee.

Sex discrimination in tax

For income tax purposes, married women are treated as wholly dependent on their husbands. Married men receive a differential income tax allowance, and are taxed on the joint income of husband and wife, with the option for separate taxation of earned income only. There must be a fundamental change in the tax treatment of married women, to end the indefensible discrimination of the present system.

Labour will phase out, over a period of three years at most, the married man's additional personal allowance, so that all taxpayers receive the [illegible] allowance regardless of sex or marital status. The revenue costs of the allowance — some £3,000 million a year at present — will be redirected towards those with responsibility for dependants through enhanced child benefit rates, and an extension of the Invalid Care Allowance.

Completely independent taxation, with the ending of aggregation between husband and wife, is the only option which would end discrimination according to marital status and ensure that married women can have privacy in their financial affairs. There are other options which could remove direct discrimination between the sexes, but without allowing privacy and independence. We favour the principle of total disaggregation, but recognise that this could cause some problems. By itself, disaggregation would reduce tax revenue and would favour couples with high incomes from investments. It could, however, be acceptable within the context of a total package of tax changes which significantly reduced inequality overall. We are currently consulting within the party on this issue.

Indirect taxation

Labour's commitments for the public and social services will require a strong base of indirect as well as direct taxation. However, Labour vigorously opposed the Tories' heavy switch from direct to indirect taxation in 1979. A reduction in the rate of Value Added Tax (VAT), appropriately timed, could play an important part in Labour's strategy against inflation. Labour will also take action to ensure that the benefit of any reduction in indirect tax rates is passed on to consumers.

Labour will be ready to make changes in indirect taxes, as well as income tax, to move in the direction of greater social equality. One such change would be the introduction of differential rates of VAT, so that the less essential goods and services were taxed at a higher rate than everyday living costs. Labour will ensure that such essential items as food, fuel, children's clothing and public transport, remain fully relieved of VAT through zero-rating. It will add sanitary protection, for example, to this list while making private hospitals liable for higher rates of VAT.

In the longer term Labour intends to remove the complex VAT system and replace it with alternative taxes on goods and services which will place less of a burden of paperwork on businesses, and will also require less public administration. For consumer goods, this alternative would involve a single-stage tax like the former purchase tax, levied on wholesale prices and capable of being levied at a number of different rates with essentials exempted.

Taxing wealth

Taxes on income and expenditure alone can never go very far to change the extremely unequal distribution of wealth in Britain today. It is essential to act directly on inherited wealth, which is by far the greatest source of the inequality. The taxation of capital at present is on an extremely small scale, accounting for only 2½ per cent of total tax revenue in the current year, compared with 5½ per cent ten years ago.

The next Labour Government will introduce an annual [illegible]

Home Assists, Family Relay Group,
Pt 2

1

PRIME MINISTER

Attached is a draft agenda for the Family Policy Group and a paper by the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the financial background to the work of the Group. Do you agree that I should circulate the agenda (Mr. Mount has indicated his agreement) - and the Chancellor's paper.

TF.

Would you return the paper separately for the Chancellor. The passages I have marked could prove embarrassing if the paper leaked. They could be altered. MT.

Tim Flesher

26 November 1982

From: THE PRIVATE SECRETARY

c/c JV
cc G Waterman
CPRS

HOME OFFICE
QUEEN ANNE'S GATE
LONDON SWIH 9AT

24 November 1982

Dear Tim

FAMILY POLICY GROUP

Your letter of 11 November enclosed copies of the papers by Mr Mount and by the CPRS which are to be discussed at the meeting of the Family Policy Group on 30 November (FPG(82) 1 and 2).

Appendix I to FPG(82) 2 refers to the Interdepartmental Group of Officials which the Home Secretary established earlier in the year to consider how Departments outside the criminal justice field could help to reduce crime. A paper had already been commissioned by the Official Group summarising the findings of relevant research. This paper is now available and I enclose a copy. The Home Secretary thought that members of the Family Policy Group might be interested to have copies for information at this stage.

I wonder if you could arrange for the paper to be circulated to members of the Family Policy Group, if the Prime Minister agrees?

Yours ever
Colin

C J WALTERS

T Flesher, Esq.

Monte Hearn

Tim Flesher
We spoke.
GW.
24.X.81

With the Compliments of

G. J. WASSERMAN

CENTRAL POLICY REVIEW
STAFF

See ✓
AG.

Cabinet Office
Whitehall London
SW1A 2AS

Telephone 01-233 3000

Hy0964

CABINET OFFICE
Central Policy Review Staff
70 Whitehall, London SW1A 2AS Telephone 01-233 7217

D E R Faulkner, Esq.,
Home Office,
50 Queen Anne's Gate,
London, SW1

24 November 1982

Dear David,

Family Policy Group

I hope that I am correct in assuming that you and the other "link persons" have by now seen copies of the first two papers circulated for next Tuesday's meeting of the Group; viz:

(i) FPG(82) 1 - A Guidance Note for Officials by the No. 10 Policy Unit; and

(ii) FPG(82) 2 - Proposals for a Programme of Work: Note by the CPRS.

Both documents were circulated on 11 November to members of the Group and to the Secretaries of State for Scotland and for Wales (who are not members but receive papers) under cover of a letter from Tim Flesher (NO. 10) to John Halliday (Home Office). The Chancellor of the Exchequer's paper on Taxation of Husband and Wife, which is also on the Agenda for next Tuesday, is due to be circulated later today.

In connection with the circulation of papers, I have had words with both Mr Mount and the Private Secretary at No. 10 and have agreed with them that it would probably be best if, except in special circumstances, all papers were circulated from No. 10. This would enable those of us responsible for the Group's administrative arrangements to impose a minimum of order on what is bound to be a pretty loosely organised forum. Copies of papers for circulation should therefore be sent to me or to Tim Flesher at No. 10. We shall ensure that each is assigned a number and circulated to the Group, if possible under cover of a note indicating when the paper is likely to be considered and perhaps also (when appropriate) drawing out the main points for consideration.

In response to enquiries about the membership of the Group, which appears to change from time to time, I enclose a list of those who are members as of close of business today.

I am sending copies of this letter and enclosure to the usual list of "link persons".

Yours ever,

Gordon

(G J WASSERMAN)

Members of the Family Policy Group

1. Prime Minister
2. Home Secretary
3. Chancellor of the Exchequer
4. Secretary of State for Education and Science
5. Secretary of State for the Environment
6. Secretary of State for Industry
7. Secretary of State for Transport
8. Secretary of State for Social Services
9. Lord Privy Seal
10. Secretary of State for Employment
11. Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster
12. Minister of State, Home Office (Mr Raison)
13. Sir Robert Armstrong
14. Mr John Sparrow
15. Mr F Mount

Copies of papers go for information to: Secretary of State for Wales
Secretary of State for Scotland

24 November 1982.

cc: Mary Brooman (LPSO)

Treasury Chambers, Parliament Street, SW1P 3AG
01-233 3000

23 November 1982

Tim Flesher, Esq.,
No.10 Downing Street

Dear Tim,

FAMILY POLICY GROUP

..... I attach a paper prepared by the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the taxation of husband and wife which you agreed should be discussed at the meeting of the Family Policy Group on 30 November.

Copies of this letter and attachments go to John Halliday (Home Office), Imogen Wilde (Department of Education & Science), David Edmonds (Department of the Environment), Jonathan Spencer (Department of Industry), Richard Bird (Department of Transport), Barnaby Shaw (Department of Employment), Alex Galloway (Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster's Office), David Clark (Department of Health), Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office), Gerry Spence (CPRS) and Mr. Mount (No.10). Copies also go for information to C. Evans (Welsh Office) and Muir Russell (Scottish Office).

Yours sincerely,

Jill Rutter

JILL RUTTER

fc DHSS

file

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

11 November 1982

Dear John,

As you know, the next meeting of the Family Policy Group will be at 1700 on 30 November. The Prime Minister has asked that at that meeting the Group should consider proposals by the CPRS for the Group's future programme of work and I enclose a paper prepared with that in mind.

The Prime Minister has also asked that a paper by Mr. Mount on the background to and purpose of the Group should be circulated and a copy of that paper is also enclosed.

I am sending a copy of this letter and enclosures to John Kerr (H.M. Treasury), Imogen Wilde (Department of Education and Science), David Edmonds (Department of the Environment), Jonathan Spencer (Department of Industry), Richard Bird (Department of Transport), Barnaby Shaw (Department of Employment), Allex Galloway (Office of the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster), Michael Gillespie (Home Office), Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office) and Gerry Spence (CPRS). Since they have asked to be kept in touch with the Group's deliberations, I am also sending copies to Adam Peat (Welsh Office), Muir Russell (Scottish Office) and Mary Brown (Lord Privy Seal's Office).

Yours ever,

Tim

TIMOTHY FLESHER

J. F. Halliday, Esq.,
Home Office.

Members of the Family Policy Group

1. Prime Minister
2. Home Secretary
3. Chancellor of the Exchequer
4. Secretary of State for Education and Science
5. Secretary of State for the Environment
6. Secretary of State for Industry
7. Secretary of State for Transport
8. Secretary of State for Employment
9. Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster
10. Sir Robert Armstrong
11. Mr John Sparrow
12. Mr F Mount

Copies of papers go to: Secretary of State for Wales
Secretary of State for Scotland

No

We can't have 7 priorities

PRIME MINISTER

Moreover I think some of the proposals are misconceived – especially for example the first one. We should not discuss the programme of work before deciding any further, not

FAMILY POLICY GROUP

As you know, Ferdinand Mount and Gordon Wasserman of the CPRS have been thinking about the future of the Family Policy Group. Mr. Mount advises that from now on the Group should concern itself with major specific issues and with that in mind the CPRS have drafted the attached paper (Flag A) which sets out a programme of action which has been discussed at Official level in Departments. The paper assumes that the next meeting ~~of the Group should~~ consider a paper by the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the taxation of husband and wife. This was originally to have been ready by next week to enable it to be discussed at the meeting scheduled for next week. There was, however, a delay and on Mr. Mount's advice I have rescheduled that meeting for 30 November when the paper will be ready.

Mr. Mount considers that the programme of work outlined in the CPRS paper is a sensible and realistic one. If you agree, therefore, I shall circulate it to the Group with your endorsement so as to encourage Departments to get on with the necessary work. The programme is of course neither exclusive nor absolute and if you agree my letter might therefore emphasise this.

Also attached is a note by Ferdinand Mount (Flag B) which is a note of guidance for officials on the purpose of the Group. I think this might help to set its work in context.

~~Also~~ Do you agree that I should circulate both papers to members of the Group with your endorsement subject to the caveat that the Group remains open to new ideas or proposals, and that the next meeting of the Group should consider the Chancellor of the Exchequer's paper on taxation of husband and wife?

Circulate to the Group and arrange a meeting

No further work which we have dismissed not

TB

5 November 1982

Hy0957A

CONFIDENTIAL

To: MR FLESHER

5 November 1982

From: G J WASSERMAN

c Mr Mount

Family Policy Group

We spoke about the fact that the Chancellor of the Exchequer's paper on the Taxation of Husband and Wife, which we had been lead to believe would be ready for consideration by the Family Policy Group on 8 November, is now unlikely to be available until the end of the month and that the Secretary of State for Social Services' paper on The Elderly - also promised for 8 November - has apparently been delayed indefinitely. We agreed, with Mr Mount, that under these circumstances the best course was to postpone the next meeting of the Group until the Chancellor's paper (or that of the Secretary of State) was to hand. I understand that, on the advice of HM Treasury, you have fixed that meeting for 30 November at 5 p.m.

We agreed also that these delays raise more general questions about how to ensure that the initial momentum given to the Group by Mr Mount's paper on Renewing the Values of Society and the 10 September meeting is not lost. As you will see from the attached copy of the draft programme of action which we are proposing for the Group, there is no shortage of work for it to do. But the facts of Whitehall life are such that until our proposals have been approved by the Group, we are unable to put any effective pressure on Departments to devote scarce resources to preparing the papers which we propose the Group should consider. If, therefore, we were to wait until the next meeting of the Group for our programme of work to be approved, we should in effect be delaying the start of the substantive work of the Group for a further three weeks.

I therefore propose that the papers which we and No. 10 Policy Unit have prepared for the 8 November meeting should be circulated to the Group as soon as possible under cover of a letter from you indicating that the Prime Minister has approved them and that, subject to the views of colleagues, she would like the work on the 7 priority themes described in Appendices A-G to be put in hand straightaway.

A draft letter for your signature is attached.

GW

Draft letter from Mr Tim Flesher to Mr John Halliday (Home Office)
Copied to the Private Secretaries of the other members of the Family Policy Group.

As you know, the meeting of the Family Policy Group planned for the afternoon of Wednesday, 10 November has now been postponed until 30 November at 5 p.m. This will ensure that the Group has before it at that meeting the paper by the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the Taxation of Husband and Wife.

In the meantime, members of the Group will wish to have copies of the enclosed papers by the No. 10 Policy Unit and the CPRS. The former, FPG(82) 1, describes the objectives and scope of the Group; the latter, FPG(82) 2, makes proposals for an initial programme of work. The Prime Minister has approved both of these and has asked that, subject to the views of colleagues, the work proposed in Appendices A-G to the CPRS paper be put in hand straightaway.

FPG(82) 2

5 November 1982

COPY NO

FAMILY POLICY GROUP

PROPOSALS FOR A PROGRAMME OF WORK

Note by the Central Policy Review Staff

1. The aims and objectives of the Family Policy Group are described in the paper circulated by the No 10 Policy Unit (FPG(82) 1). This note makes proposals for a programme of work in accordance with these objectives.

2. At the end of the meeting of the Group held on 10 September, the Prime Minister asked the CPRS to produce from the papers for the meeting a comprehensive list of proposals for action. This was circulated to members of the Group on 30 September under cover of a letter from the Private Secretary to the Head of the CPRS. The Prime Minister subsequently asked the CPRS to draw up a draft programme of work for the Group based on the list but focussing on a more limited number of issues.

3. After consulting the Departments concerned, the CPRS has consolidated the range of proposals in the summary list of 30 September into a number of themes (Annex 1). We suggest that seven of these merit priority treatment and recommend that they should be discussed at a series of meetings to be held as soon as practicable. We have identified also a "reserve" list of themes which we believe should be followed up separately by the Ministers concerned and perhaps discussed in a second series of meetings. Appendices A-G discuss the main issues raised by each priority theme; the other themes are described more briefly at Appendix H.

4. The appendices suggest, where appropriate, the particular aspects of each theme which might be the subject of papers for the Group, and which member of the Group might take the lead in preparing these papers. (Members are asked to consult Treasury colleagues about any papers which may have significant implications for public expenditure.)

5. The Group is invited:

(a) to endorse the list of priority themes at Annex 1, and

(b) to agree that these themes should be tackled as proposed in Appendices A-G.

Cabinet Office
5 November 1982

ANNEX 1

PROPOSED PROGRAMME OF WORK

A. Priority Themes

It is proposed that the Group should begin its work by considering papers on the following themes, each of which is described in an Appendix:

Personal Taxation and Benefits	(Appendix A)
The Elderly	(Appendix B)
Individualism in the Economic Sphere ?	(Appendix C)
Children and Schools	(Appendix D)
Meeting Social Needs through Voluntary Action	(Appendix E)
The Face of Government	(Appendix F)
Professionals and the Individual	(Appendix G)

B. "Reserve" themes

It is proposed that the following themes should be followed up by the Ministers directly concerned and perhaps discussed by the Group in a second series of meetings. Each is described briefly in Appendix H.

Reducing Crime through a Strengthened Sense of Community Responsibility
Housing
Racial Equality of Opportunity

APPENDIX A

PERSONAL TAXATION AND BENEFITS

The aim of all the issues collected under this theme is to identify changes in the system of personal taxation and benefits which would (a) help families with children and (b) encourage individuals and families to be more self-reliant.

The Group may wish to begin its work on this theme by considering the Chancellor of the Exchequer's proposals for taxation of husband and wife. A separate discussion might cover family support for the elderly (see Appendix B). Other main issues which might be considered under this theme include the following:

(a) Supporting families with children

Is the tax/benefit system sufficiently orientated towards families? Areas to be considered include the tax treatment of working and non-working wives, and the account which the system takes of the cost of children, both in general and for working mothers and widows in particular. Possible options include improved child benefit or a new second tier means-tested benefit. Factors to be considered include the effect on work incentives (both the unemployment and poverty traps). (Papers from GH, NF, FM)

(b) Self-reliance

i. What more can be done to encourage families - in the widest sense - to reassume responsibilities taken on by the state eg responsibility for disabled (and elderly - see Appendix B) family members, unemployed 16 year olds. (Paper from NF with GH)

ii. Do present policies for supporting single parents strike the right balance between ensuring adequate child support to prevent poverty; and encouraging responsible and self-reliant behaviour by parents? (While not highlighted in previous correspondence, single parents are one of fastest growing groups of those dependent on the state.) (Paper from NF)

APPENDIX B

THE ELDERLY

This theme is concerned with finding ways in which the elderly can be helped, particularly by their families, to live full and happy lives in the community with minimum dependence upon the state. These issues must be considered against the background of the projected sharp increase during the rest of this century of the number of those who are over 75 years of age and of the likely demands which, under present policies, this shift in the age structure of the population is likely to make on state-provided institutional care.

The Group might examine the scope for helping the elderly and their families in each of the following 4 areas and then consider the balance between them:

i. Fiscal help

Should benefits or tax allowances be adjusted to reward families who look after elderly relatives? How many families not now looking after elderly relatives might do so by this means? (Paper from NF)

ii. Services

The elderly are supported in the community by a wide range of services, supplied by local authority social service departments, by voluntary organisations and by the private sector. Is the balance of services right? In particular, should more be done to assist families to care for elderly relatives (eg community nurses, home helps) and to give families a break from their caring responsibilities (eg day care, temporary accommodation for an elderly relative while the family takes a holiday)? (Paper from NF)

iii. Housing

The most desirable housing situation will vary depending on the circumstances and preferences of the elderly and their families (eg living in same home, 'granny flat' extension, living nearby). Can families be helped to achieve their desired situation (eg through home alteration grants, more flexible use of public housing stock)? Can the elderly without

families be supported in the community (eg by special forms of housing, including sheltered housing provided not only by the public sector and housing associations but also by private developers)? Despite progress in these areas, some obstacles may remain (eg private developers and housing authorities reluctant to provide special housing which could prove difficult to let or sell later; difficulties of private developers in gaining planning permission; elderly people anxious about leaving existing home and confused about the range of available options.) (Paper from NF)

iv. Community

How can the elderly be encouraged to play an active part in the life of the community to benefit of both (eg adopt-a-granny schemes)? How can individuals other than their family be encouraged to help elderly people (eg good neighbour campaigns)? (Papers from NF, KJ)

APPENDIX C

INDIVIDUALISM IN THE ECONOMIC SPHERE

This theme is concerned with a wide range of porposals designed to encourage individuals to take more responsibility for securing their own jobs and incomes.

Several of the issues have been frequently discussed in other contexts eg MISC 14. Among the issues which the Family Policy Group might consider under this theme are the following:

(a) Responsible behaviour among employees

Union matters are being dealt with outside the Group, while work incentives are included for discussion with tax and benefits issues (Appendix A). This leaves

i. incentives for profit-sharing and other means of encouraging involvement of individual employees. (Papers from GH, NT)

ii. ways of encouraging public sector organisations to create shorter and clearer lines of command for man management. (Paper from FM)

(b) Encouraging self employment and small business

Tax and other measures to help new, small and family businesses are kept under continuous review. The Group might wish to focus on:

i. how to make it easier for the unemployed to start businesses and co-operatives. (Papers from NT, GH, PJ)

ii. how to encourage a culture more conducive to business, risk taking and wealth creation. In relation to young people's education, this could include teaching business skills and providing work experience with small traders. (Papers from PJ, KJ)

(c) Savings and pensions

Banks are already doing much to encourage the "unbanked" to bank and to encourage young people to save. The Group might, however, examine:

i. whether the treatment of capital for supplementary benefit purposes unduly discourages prudent financial behaviour. (Paper from NF)

ii. whether better disclosure of their accounts by pension funds would encourage more active member involvement in the management of these funds. (Paper from CPRS)

iii. how individuals can be encouraged to assume more responsibility for their own pension arrangements. (Paper from CPRS)

APPENDIX D

CHILDREN AND SCHOOLS

This theme is concerned with examining ways of encouraging the development of children, the country's major resource of the future, into self-reliant, responsible, capable, enterprising and fulfilled adults. The main issues which the Group might consider are the following:

(a) Influences on children

Consideration of this theme might begin with a survey of the existing literature to serve as a backcloth to action-oriented work. Objectives of the study:

- Identify characteristics of behaviour and attitude which Government might legitimately hope to see adults possess or, conversely, avoid; eg ability to run one's own life, regard for property and people, tolerance of different social and racial groups, expectations of life, attitudes to work.

- Identify major influences on children; eg parents, schools and teachers, peers, the media.

- Assess correlation between influences in childhood and characteristics in later life. (Paper from CPRS with contributions from Departments concerned).

(b) Schools: preparation for the modern world

i. Increasing parental choice

- education voucher system to make parental choice of maintained schools more effective and facilitate the setting up of schools by parents. (Paper from KJ)

- more parental involvement in schools, eg parent governors. (Paper from KJ)

ii. Gearing curriculum to modern needs

- preparing for work by securing higher standards over a broad spectrum including literacy, numeracy, reasoning ability and understanding of basic values of society. (Paper from KJ)

- preparation at school (and elsewhere) for marriage and parenthood. (Papers from KJ (already circulated) and NF)

iii. Maintaining discipline and authority to secure (i) and (ii) above.

- classroom management, including staff college training of head teachers, education officers and others. (Paper from KJ)

- giving head teachers powers to enable them to strengthen their authority, eg power to dismiss teachers and to hire teachers only on short term contracts. This subject is linked to delegation of power in the work place (Appendix C). (Paper from KJ)

- truancy - examination of causes; possible correlation with delinquency and vandalism; cures. (Papers from KJ, WW)

In the light of the above studies, the Group might consider how the relationship between the school and the family can be adapted to foster the capacity to cope with the modern world at work and at home.

This is much too
broad a programme
to work. It will
get nowhere

APPENDIX E

MEETING SOCIAL NEEDS THROUGH VOLUNTARY ACTION

One of the clearest signs of a society in which individuals are prepared and able to take care of themselves and their families is the existence of a vigorous voluntary sector. The Group might consider how best to encourage voluntary effort to meet social needs, either as a complement to state-provided services, or as an alternative to them. Among the issues for consideration are the following:

(a) What is the scope for, and implications of, a major extension of voluntary sector activity aimed at meeting social needs? What parts of the voluntary sector (eg bodies relying mainly on paid staff, mainly on volunteers, or self-help/mutual-aid groups, etc) would be involved? How can an increase in voluntary sector activity and charitable giving best be stimulated? Should this increased activity be aimed primarily at supplementing "State-provided" services or at offering alternatives to them? Should the emphasis in future be more on bodies making substantial use of volunteers or on bodies relying mainly on paid workers? (Paper from WW)

(b) Can voluntary financial contributions be significantly increased, eg by changes in the tax system (such as making charitable donations deductible for tax purposes, repealing provisions under which close company covenants are apportioned among participants) or by encouraging employers to deduct charitable contributions at source? Has experience in other countries anything to teach us? Does the existing legislation on charities constrain the growth of new forms of voluntary action, eg community enterprises? (Paper from WW)

(c) How can the close involvement of the private business sector in the well-being of the local community be further encouraged? Is enough being done by shared cost schemes, local campaigns and initiatives to encourage enterprise, community service and environmental improvement? Who should take the lead?

(d) Can schools and their recreation facilities be open outside school hours as a resource for sport, play etc? (Paper from KJ) Are there non educational public facilities which can be used in this way? (Paper from MH)

(e) Can more use be made of surrogate families, eg "homeline", "homestart" and other voluntary schemes? (Paper from NF)

APPENDIX F

THE FACE OF GOVERNMENT

The aim of the study proposed under this theme is to ensure that when government come into direct contact with the citizen it does so in ways which encourage mutual respect and diminish people's sense of alienation.

No matter how much it may be possible to reduce the role of the state in people's lives, there will always be some functions performed by government which involve direct contact with the citizen. This contact raises issues of concern at two levels. First, when developing and reviewing policies, governments should ensure that an individual's sense of personal responsibility is not stifled. This is the general theme of the Group's work. Secondly, when making arrangements for implementing these policies, the government should bear in mind the importance of ensuring that they operate simply but sensitively, avoiding overbearing or complex bureaucracies which destroy self-respect. We propose that the CPRS, in collaboration with the MPO and a number of Departments which serve the public directly, should undertake work in this second area.

The proposed study would have three objectives:

a. to identify general lessons from recent particular initiatives to improve the "face of government" (eg improved practices, such as giving reasons for decisions, development of decentralised management, analysis of complaints, staff training to improve standards of service). This would involve examining such initiatives with a view to identifying those which have been most successful in particular contexts, considering their wider application, and developing ways in which what has been learned can be disseminated to those most able to make use of it quickly and with maximum impact. (A particular aim would be to achieve a better appreciation of where administrative discretion is useful and where it should be replaced by rules.)

b. to examine areas where present information is deficient, such as the comparative efficiency and effectiveness of different ways of avoiding complaints and redressing grievances and the expectations which people have of the public services.

c. to propose methods of increasing the awareness of policy makers about the practical impact of different policies, separately and in combination, on individuals' lives, and to suggest factors which should be taken into account in making policy.

The work would concentrate on the services provided to the public by central government although it is likely that lessons of wider relevance could be drawn from it. The aim would be to draw upon and synthesize relevant experience from, in particular, social security, unemployment benefit and income tax systems as well as the employment and training and immigration services.

APPENDIX G

PROFESSIONALS AND THE INDIVIDUAL

This theme is concerned to identify ways of increasing individual responsibility and freedom of choice, by reducing to a necessary minimum the extent to which decisions are taken for individuals by professionals. This is a complex and far reaching topic. We propose a study by the CPRS which would aim to highlight the issues for Government and the options available. The general approach is outlined below.

Background

Most professions offer services direct to individuals. Often this involves judgements made by the professional on behalf of the individual who, it is thought, is unable to make the judgement himself. In some cases this will be true (eg some aspects of the medical services). There is a presumption that any judgements he makes on behalf of the individual will be made with integrity. Such a presumption rests on an operational concept of a professional standard (or ethic). Many professions are organized so that members exercise collective responsibility for the competence and the conduct of their practitioners - often through bodies which set their own standards and test for competence in them (eg the Law Society for solicitors). In return for this self-regulation, professionals frequently enjoy a substantial degree of monopoly power.

The relative success of these arrangements for some of the more traditional professions has encouraged others to adopt the same approach. The growth of the social and other public services has been accompanied by a proliferation of professions, or more accurately by an increasing 'profes-sionalization' of occupations. These newer 'professions' (along with some older ones) are mostly embedded in state bureaucracies - sometimes with the statutory function of regulating people's behaviour (eg probation officers). This adds to the power they have over the individual. The concept of the professional, with his claim to unique understanding of his area of practice, when incorporated in a state bureaucracy, can also lead to service provision being driven by producers' (ie professionals') vies of what ought to be provided, (eg in council housing) rather than consumers' views of what they want.

For many people a significant part of their lives is dominated by decisions taken by others on their behalf. In some cases the effect will be to undermine the individual's self-reliance and self respect. He (or she) may have no effective choice about which services he will receive, (even refusal may be difficult!) and even less about the form in which they will be delivered (eg institutional vs domiciliary services for the elderly); he may have little information about the value or the effect of the services (eg some aspects of medical services); and he may have little or no power to demand either information or choice. The result is that he makes little input to many decisions affecting him, and hence feels little responsibility for the outcome.

The problem is one of balance. The benefits of securing freedom for the individual to make decisions for himself have to be weighed against the possible risks to himself (eg to his health, safety, property or livelihood); or risk or offence to others. In its examination of restrictive practices in professions, the MMC identified three categories of risk: so serious that every possible safeguard should be provided; serious, but where the disadvantages of any safeguard outweighed the advantages of reducing the risk; not particularly serious and hence no special safeguard justified.

The Project

The study would be carried out internally using existing evidence to draw conclusions about the effect of professionals on the individual. It would not involve formal consultations with the professions (see para 9). Because of the breadth of the subject, it would concentrate on a few professions or occupations. The emphasis would be on those professions whose services impact fairly directly on individuals, either through direct contact (eg social workers), or at one step removed (eg local authority architects). For each profession it would examine the balance between the extent to which an individual was enabled to make his own decisions, and the need for some safeguards against risk. On this basis, we would hope to be able to draw some helpful conclusions of wider application.

In particular, the study would identify barriers to increasing the individual's control and examine the rationale for the barrier and its effectiveness as a safeguard against the sort of risks outlined in para 5 above. Such barriers might include restrictions imposed by the professions themselves (eg

controlled access to specialists) and certain powers exercised by the professions whether with statutory backing (eg regulations on public sector housing) or through custom (eg teachers' powers over what is taught in the classroom).

The study would aim to identify the advantages and disadvantages of the present arrangements; and to suggest ways of changing them if that seemed desirable. Examples of possible changes might be conferring rights to more information, the encouragement of competing services, the relaxing of government imposed restrictions, changes in professional training, the role of official and non-official consumer watchdogs, etc.

There would probably be no general all-embracing conclusions because of the heterogeneous nature of the subject. We would envisage two possible types of conclusion. The first would be recommendations on points which are directly amenable to Government action, such as the way in which some public services are organized and delivered; the second would be issues on which action would lie with the professions themselves. The outcome on both types of issue, especially the latter, would need sensitive handling by Departments with the professional bodies concerned.

I think this is much too vague

APPENDIX H

"RESERVE" THEMES

The following themes are proposed as subjects which might be pursued initially by the Ministers directly concerned independently of the Family Policy Group but which the Group might consider at a later stage:

(A) REDUCING CRIME THROUGH A STRENGTHENED SENSE OF COMMUNITY RESPONSIBILITY

Insofar as strengthening self-respect and individual responsibility contributes towards a reduction in vandalism, juvenile delinquency and other forms of crime, the work of the Group described in the other Appendices is concerned also with law and order. If the Group wishes to take a more direct interest in this subject, however, it might most usefully do so by considering first the report due in the new year of the inter-departmental official group established by the Home Secretary to consider how Departments outside the criminal justice field could help to reduce crime. The Group might consider also the paper which this official group has commissioned on the relationships between crime and social factors including the evidence produced recently by Professor Michael Rutter.

The discussion on children and schools (Appendix D) will provide an opportunity to consider whether, notwithstanding the provisions of the Criminal Justice Bill, there is more scope for making parents responsible for some of the anti-social behaviour of their children and how to extend community work for certain offenders and how to expand intermediate treatment.

(B) HOUSING

Apart from its importance for the elderly (Appendix B(iii)) this could be tackled as a general issue. People's control over, and responsibility for their home and housing environment, plays a central part in their lives. By enacting the right to buy and the Tenants' Charter for public sector tenants, and by encouraging low cost home ownership, the Government have already made major advances in this area.

The Group might examine ways of increasing the proportion of council tenants who take up their right to buy. The No. 10 Policy Unit has put proposals about this to the Secretary of State for the Environment. The results of an examination of these could be reported to the Group

In addition, the Group could consider how to increase further the responsibility of the remaining council tenants for their homes and estates.

(C) RACIAL EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY

The group may wish to consider at some stage whether a special effort should be made to strengthen the sense of self-respect, confidence and hence individual responsibility of members of the ethnic minority communities, by, for example, making the communities aware of the possibilities open to them, and publicising the success of those who have made good. As background against which to consider the need for such an initiative, the Group may wish to commission reviews of such matters as:

- how the ethnic minorities have fared over the past decade in education, employment, housing, etc.
- the success of present legislation and institutional arrangements at tackling racial discrimination and at securing genuine equality of opportunity.
- how far present institutional arrangements in this field, most of which were introduced primarily to settle immigrants, are appropriate for dealing with problems faced by a largely British-born ethnic minority community

cc: David Clark (DHSS)
a ODA

FP/82/1

FAMILY POLICY GROUP

A Guidance Note for Officials by the No.10 Policy Unit

1. The purpose of the Group is to ensure that all the Government's domestic policies help to promote self-respect and a sense of individual responsibility. We are concerned with the overall well-being of the family, and not solely or specifically with the provision of welfare by the state and other public agencies (which is how "Family Policy" is sometimes interpreted). In the words of the 1979 Conservative Manifesto:

> "Our country's relative decline is not inevitable. We in the Conservative Party think we can reverse it, not because we think we have all the answers but because we think we have the one answer that matters most. We want to work with the grain of human nature, helping people to help themselves - and others. This is the way to restore that self-reliance and self-confidence which are the basis of personal responsibility and national success."

This Government came to power asserting that it is the exercise of responsibility which teaches self-discipline. But in the early stages of life it is the experience of authority, when exerted fairly and consistently by adults, which teaches young people how to exercise responsibility themselves. This two-way relationship between obedience and responsibility is what makes a free, self-governing society.

2. The Group was set up in order to refocus Ministers' attention on these objectives and to enable them to stand back a little from their departmental duties and think about where their policies are leading and discuss fresh ideas across departmental boundaries.

3. The Group is a forum for discussion, and not a formal Cabinet Committee. Papers may be submitted as and when members feel it would be useful to air or revive particular ideas. Papers need not necessarily seek final decisions - which, in any case, would usually have to be taken in the appropriate Cabinet Committee or by individual Ministers.

4. Some discussions may lead to action in this Parliament; some may stimulate White or Green Papers; and some may suggest proposals or emphases to be borne in mind in the preparation of the Manifesto for the next Election.

1 November 1982 FERDINAND MOUNT

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CONFIDENTIAL

5/11

To: MR FLESHER

5 November 1982

From: G J WASSERMAN

c Mr Mount

Family Policy Group

We spoke about the fact that the Chancellor of the Exchequer's paper on the Taxation of Husband and Wife, which we had been lead to believe would be ready for consideration by the Family Policy Group on 8 November, is now unlikely to be available until the end of the month and that the Secretary of State for Social Services' paper on The Elderly - also promised for 8 November - has apparently been delayed indefinitely. We agreed, with Mr Mount, that under these circumstances the best course was to postpone the next meeting of the Group until the Chancellor's paper (or that of the Secretary of State) was to hand. I understand that, on the advice of HM Treasury, you have fixed that meeting for 30 November at 5 p.m.

We agreed also that these delays raise more general questions about how to ensure that the initial momentum given to the Group by Mr Mount's paper on Renewing the Values of Society and the 10 September meeting is not lost. As you will see from the attached copy of the draft programme of action which we are proposing for the Group, there is no shortage of work for it to do. But the facts of Whitehall life are such that until our proposals have been approved by the Group, we are unable to put any effective pressure on Departments to devote scarce resources to preparing the papers which we propose the Group should consider. If, therefore, we were to wait until the 30 November for our programme of work to be approved, we should be delaying the start of the substantive work of the Group for a further three weeks.

Mr Sparrow therefore recommends that the Group be convened for a brief - say, 45 minute - meeting as soon as practicable to consider our proposed work programme, the paper by the No. 10 Policy Unit and the paper on "Preparation for Parenthood" already circulated by Sir Keith Joseph. This would enable us to make a start on an agreed programme of work two or so weeks earlier than would otherwise be the case.

G/W

PART 1 ends:-

CPRS to Home Office 29/10

PART 2 begins:-

FM Minute FA 82/1 1.11.82

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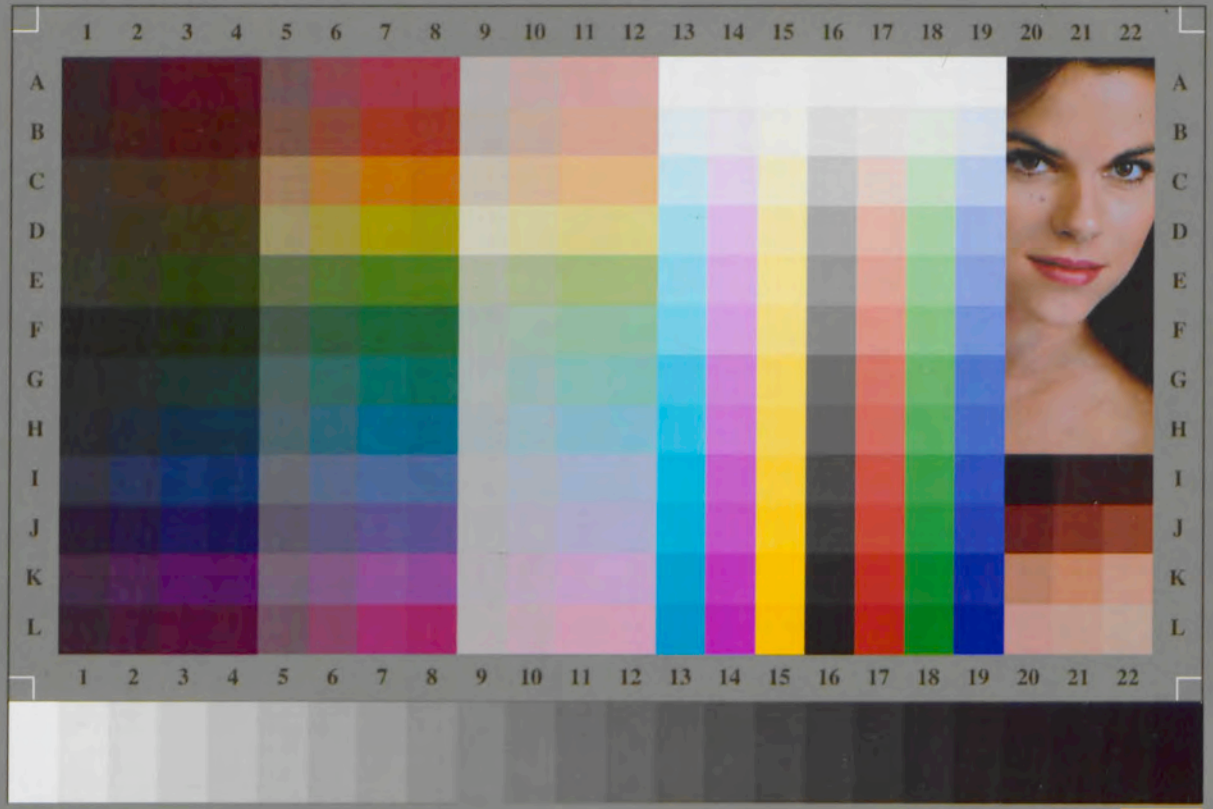

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