

VLB



10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

6 June 1979

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Dear Mr. Sirs,

Thank you for your letter of 20 May.

I do of course share your concern about long-term unemployment. As you say, the main burden of it is borne by the unskilled, the more elderly, and the less fit. Apart from this, it is an appalling waste for people to be unemployed when they might be in work and adding to the country's wealth. One of the Government's overriding objectives, as you know, is to create a more thriving, efficient economy which will enable employment to expand. Only in this way will the problem of the long-term unemployed be tackled at its root.

As for the rate of benefit for the long-term unemployed, you will not expect me to anticipate what the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Secretary of State for Social Services will be saying about Social Security benefits generally in the Budget Debate next week.

Yours sincerely
Margaret Thatcher

W. Sirs, Esq.

VLB