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The Rt Hon Nicholas Edwards MP

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From The Secretary of State for Wales

26 March 1987

John Major

NBR2.

COMMUNITY CHARGE: RESIDENTS OF HOMES AND HOSTELS

Thank you for copying to me your letter of 2 March to Nicholas Ridley. I have also seen John MacGregor's and Douglas Hurd's letters of 17 March, and Nicholas' reply to you of 20 March.

I agree with John that accountability demands that liability for the community charge should be as wide as possible. If residents of nursing homes and hostels are not liable we will find it very hard to justify a refusal to exempt people with similar problems who are being cared for in the community; and the effect could be that, rather than heading off pressure on behalf of vulnerable groups, we open the door to further requests. We resisted the exemption of students for similar reasons; and the lack of serious pressure on Malcolm Rifkind in the Commons to amend his Bill, combined with our decision to introduce a rebate system remove the considerations which led us to defer a firm decision in November. I fully support, therefore, the line taken by Nicholas, and would wish my officials to be involved in the discussions he suggests.

/ I am copying this letter to Nicholas Ridley, other members of E(LF), and Sir Robert Armstrong.

John Major
NBR

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