



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SECURITY

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From the Secretary of State for ~~Social Services~~ Health

The Rt. Hon. John Major MP,
Chief Secretary to the Treasury,
H.M. Treasury,
Parliament Street,
London, SW1P 3AG.

NBM

Recd 23/9

21 September 1988

Dear Chief Secretary

COMMUNITY CHARGE: SPECIFIC GRANT FOR PREPARATION COSTS

I have seen Nicholas Ridley's letter to you of 8^{with PG} Septembere pressing his case for a specific grant to support expenditure on preparing for the community charge. I support his case. Although it could be argued in logic that those authorities likely to receive reduced grant in 1989-90 would have received even less without block grant for their Community Charge costs, I agree that this would be a difficult point to present and it would not meet the case of those Shire Districts likely to be out of grant entirely.

It is a pity I did not receive my copy of Nick's letter until after I had written to Cecil Parkinson setting out the case for a specific grant in respect of AIDS. Similar arguments apply to my proposal, only more so. Several of those authorities most closely involved in providing services for people with AIDS are likely to lose grant while others, notably Westminster, are likely to remain out of block grant. AIDS, like expenditure on preparation for the Community Charge, is largely an inescapable pressure. Without a grant those authorities subject to rate limitations would need to meet this pressure either by further resort to creative accounting or by cuts in other services. The latter would be unfortunate in view of its effect on local attitudes to people with AIDS, who are already subject to discrimination and even harassment in some cases.

There is no prospect of developing a GRE to distribute block grant in respect of AIDS expenditure, even were we inclined to complicate the system further in its final year. The case for a small specific grant therefore seems incontrovertible, particularly as in other respects the proposals for the Settlement for 1989-90 are distinctly unfavourable to the personal social services.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, other members of E (LF) and E(LA) and to Sir Robin Butler.

Yours sincerely

Flora Goldhill

for KENNETH CLARKE

(approved by the
Secretary of State and signed
in his absence)

