



## DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SECURITY

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

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Rt Hon Nicholas Ridley MP  
Secretary of State for the Environment  
2 Marsham Street  
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29 September 1988

*Dr. [unclear]*

## COMMUNITY CHARGE: STUDENT NURSES

I have seen your letter of 8 September to Malcolm Rifkind in which you advocate that the 80 per cent relief should be granted to pre-registration nurses only when their pattern of study brings them within legislation's normal definition of student - option (i) of paragraph 10 of the paper by officials. I agree that this is the best of the options available.

I am anxious to avoid a de facto narrowing of the pay differential between pre-Project 2000 student nurses and registered nurses, because we have opened up that differential in recent years as an important inducement to nurses to stay in the NHS when they qualify. I think this is an additional argument in support of yours against exemption of existing students from the community charge. As you say, we envisage that nursing students undergoing Project 2000-type training will receive non-means tested bursaries, based very largely on existing DES guidelines - the exception being students who enter nurse training, aged 26 and over, where we propose some "top-up" as a recruitment aid. These bursaries will be lower than student nurses' current pay, and the introduction of community charge relief for those students will help to smooth the transition to lower income levels.

I also agree with you about the position of midwifery students and the other proposals addressed in the note by officials.

I am sending copies of this letter to the Prime Minister, Members of E(LF), the Chief Whip and Sir Robin Butler.

*[Handwritten signature]*

KENNETH CLARKE

LOCAL GOVT: Rating PTH.

