

*John*



ST. ANDREW'S HOUSE  
EDINBURGH EH1 3DG

*MBAM & Min. Secy*

*RAC 6  
4/5*

The Lord Belstead  
Lord Privy Seal  
Privy Council Office  
Whitehall  
LONDON  
SW1A 2AT

1 August 1989

*Dear John.*

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND HOUSING BILL: EXEMPTIONS FROM THE COMMUNITY CHARGE**

*file with R*

Thank you for your letter of 28 July to Malcolm Rifkind about his proposal to extend the present exemption from the community charge for persons in respect of whom another person is entitled to child benefit. Malcolm is at present on holiday and I am replying on his behalf.

I am, of course, well aware of the pressures we are likely to face in considering the remainder of this Bill after the recess and of the need to keep further amendments to a minimum. In this particular case, however I think we are dealing not with a change or extension of policy but simply with a proposal to correct a technical inadequacy in the present arrangements which has been shown up by our working experience of the community charge. I believe also it can readily be presented as such rather than as the creation of a new class of exemption of the kind which could lead to the kind of problems you envisage. As such it need take up very little of the House's time. It is nevertheless an important amendment for the small group of people, such as foster children, who do not qualify for the existing exemption.

I understand that colleagues in the Department of the Environment have a similar proposal in mind and whatever the result of wider discussions they are having, will wish in any case to make a similar change. It would be most helpful therefore if space could be found for this small but important amendment.

Copies of this letter go to members of E(LF) and L Committees.

*Tom Egan*  
*Rutten*

SANDERSON OF BOWDEN

LOCAL Gov't: Rates  
P 15

