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DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SECURITY  
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From the Secretary of State for Social Security

Prime Minister<sup>2</sup>

To note.

BAP

26/4

The Rt Hon Norman Lamont MP  
Chief Secretary to the Treasury  
HM Treasury  
Treasury Chambers  
Parliament Street  
London  
SW1P 3AG

26 April 1990  
J. Newton  
15/10/90  
6W 20

Joe Norman

Chris Patten and I have discussed the proposal to publicise Community Charge Benefit and have agreed that any campaign should be undertaken by my Department. I think in fact that this should concentrate on a simple message to encourage people who should have claimed, but have not, to do so before 27 May, the date after which the special provision for backdating of claims will run out in all authorities which issued bills by 1 April. There is a strong case for such a campaign, and it would have to be planned and executed to a tight deadline - too tight for the decision to await the results of Chris's market research. If this showed high awareness of Community Charge Benefit and positively demonstrated strong resistance to further advertising, we would of course need to consider whether to abort the campaign. I propose two insertions in national daily and Sunday papers, over the period 4th to 13th May, at a cost of about £1/2 million.

I have consulted on the proprieties and am satisfied that, provided we wait until after the local government elections, there should not be a problem. Michael Partridge has written to Sir Robin Butler about this.

I had of course already provided in my Department's publicity budget for any necessary publicity on Community Charge Benefit in 1990/91 and will try to absorb the costs of this campaign within my existing resources, but it is helpful to see your recognition, in your letter of 17 April to Chris Patten, that this expenditure is needed.

*Handwritten signature of Tony Newton*

TONY NEWTON