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n. b. P.M.  
Consent taken  
by (insert)  
JHP  
1317



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From the Secretary of  
State for Health

11 July 1990

*Dear Sir,*

**LOCAL AUTHORITY GRANT SETTLEMENT 1991-92**

I have seen Chris Patten's letter to you of 10 July.

I am sure it is right that my statement on care in the community should be on the same day as his on the grant settlement. In whatever order the statements are made we each face the prospect of being challenged about what the other is going to say.

However, I think the logic of the decision we have taken on community care and the arguments that we must use to defend it point very clearly to my following and not preceding Chris. The decision on community care flowed from decisions on local government expenditure, and should in my view be presented as such. It can only really be justified on the totality of local government spending which we were prepared to see and the effects on the likely level of the community charge of introducing new open-ended duties too quickly.

It is essential, from my point of view therefore to be able to build on the general approach that Chris will have described towards the totality of local government spending, in order to be able to explain the decision on community care.

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Were I to seek to justify my decision on the grounds of community charge and local government expenditure decisions that have not yet been announced, we should collectively in my judgement be likely to get into all kinds of difficulty.

I also consider that it is unrealistic to believe that the House will be surprised by the news that the community care reforms will not be fully implemented as previously planned on 1 April next year. The central point of my announcement seems to have been trailed throughout the lobbies. My statement will of course need to explain the reasons for the phasing but the main new information that it will contain will inevitably be in the detail of the revised timetable.

I agree that we need to take account of statements in respect of the territorial departments, which will also be necessary for community care.

As to timing, I prefer Thursday.

I am sending copies of this to the Prime Minister, John Major, Chris Patten, Malcolm Rifkind, Norman Lamont, Peter Brooke, David Hunt and Sir Robin Butler.

KENNETH CLARKE