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## POLICY IN CONFIDENCE

PRIME MINISTER

## WHITE PAPER ON NEW PROPOSALS FOR CHILD MAINTENANCE

1. At the meeting which you chaired on 17 July, the proposals which I put forward at that time were approved as a basis for working up more detailed proposals. In particular, you asked that details on the costs and benefits which would accrue should be decided as part of the negotiations on the Survey and that a White Paper be published before the end of this Parliamentary session.
2. Norman Lamont and I have now completed our discussions on the Survey. In the course of these discussions, we have agreed to make some modifications to the detail of the formula and the incentives which were described in my original proposals. These modifications will decrease the costs and increase the savings while preserving all our original objectives for this major piece of new policy. We have also agreed that the startdate for the Agency can be advanced so that the savings will accrue from an earlier date.
3. I attach a copy of the draft White Paper. I hope that this is now close to a final version as it incorporates comments made by officials on earlier drafts. Some work still needs to be done to finalise the presentation. For example, the examples in the main text present helpful material but the text would read more easily if some of the longer examples were contained elsewhere. These presentational changes will not affect the substance contained in this draft.
4. In your speech on 18 July, you indicated that the White Paper would include full details of our proposals. The draft reflects this wish. It sets out clearly the broad strands of the policy which have been decided and which formed part of the Survey settlement. At the same time, it makes it clear that much of the

necessary detail is not yet fully firm. We expect this White Paper to have a large and varied audience. It seems right to demonstrate to that audience that we have a well considered and effective policy by describing its major effects plainly. We have a good story to tell here and it is for us to seize the initiative in telling it.

5. Subject to Geoffrey Howe's agreement on the date, we aim to be in a position to publish the White Paper on 29 or 30 October. I will make a statement in the Commons which I hope to agree with James Mackay. He will then make a similar statement in the Lords.

6. To meet the deadline I should be grateful to receive any comments from yourself or colleagues to whom this is copied by 3pm on Friday 19 October.

7. Copies go to Geoffrey Howe, James Mackay, Peter Fraser, David Waddington, Michael Howard, Malcolm Rifkind, Kenneth Baker, Norman Lamont, Peter Brooke, David Hunt, Tim Renton, Bertie Denham and Robin Butler.

T.N.  
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TN

15 October 1990



N Bram

WJ



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*Oddi wrth Ysgrifennydd Gwladol Cymru*

*From The Secretary of State for Wales*

The Rt Hon David Hunt MBE MP

CT/5677/90

26th October 1990

*Zear Tony*

**WHITE PAPER ON NEW PROPOSALS FOR CHILD MAINTENANCE**

*Hiap*  
Thank you for sending me a copy of your letter of 15 October to the Prime Minister with a copy of your draft White Paper on new proposals for child maintenance.

I very much support your proposals to improve the child maintenance system. There are no comments I would wish to make on the draft at this stage, though I understand that my officials are to co-operate with yours in the consultation process and we will feed any Welsh comments in at that point.

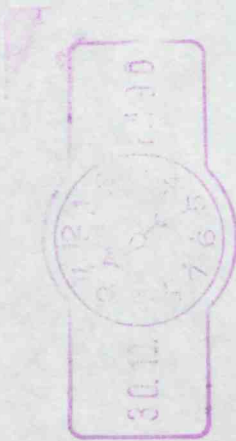
Copies of this go to the Prime Minister, Geoffrey Howe, James Mackay, Peter Fraser, David Waddington, Michael Howard, Malcolm Rifkind, Kenneth Baker, Norman Lamont, Peter Brooke, Tim Renton, Bertie Denham and Robin Butler.

*Juno eor*

*David*

The Rt Hon Tony Newton  
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D Morris Esq  
Prime Minister's Office  
No.10 Downing Street  
London SW1

*10 Downing Street*

Your reference

Our reference

Date

8 June 1990

Dear *Mr Morris*

**ANNOUNCEMENT OF LEGISLATIVE INTENTIONS - MAINTENANCE  
ENFORCEMENT BILL**

I enclose excerpts from a speech which will be given by John Patten on Monday 11 June to the Marriage Research Council which gives an indication of the policy which will be behind this Bill. We want to make a public announcement in order that we can consult with interested bodies such as the Justices' Clerks' Society.

Please let us know no later than 3.30 this afternoon if you have any objections to these paragraphs being included in the Speech. If we do not hear from you we will assume that you have no objections.

SUZANNE BAILEY  
C2 Division

Announce



- \* guidance issued to local education authorities and school Governors, encouraging the use of school premises for after school and holiday play schemes.

[As a government we believe strongly in family responsibilities. These responsibilities survive the breakdown of a marriage or other relationship. A father has a legal as well as a moral duty to maintain his children; but unfortunately we have seen too many cases where this responsibility is avoided, and too many cases where the courts cannot give lone parents the help they need. Many are thrown back on state benefits.

We therefore intend to bring forward legislation, the Maintenance Enforcement Bill, to give the courts two additional powers. First, we think that the courts should be able to order earnings attached for maintenance when the order is first made. At present attachment can only be ordered after default has occurred and been proved. In our view it is better to prevent default from occurring in the first place. Secondly, some people liable to pay maintenance are of course not in regular employment, or are self-employed.

Here we envisage that the courts should be able, taking account of the wishes of the woman concerned, to order that maintenance should be paid direct by standing order, into her bank or building society account. This will certainly give more assurance that maintenance payments will be made regularly - and reliability of maintenance is just as important as the amount ordered to be paid. Standing orders will also make payments easier and more convenient, and will save court time and overheads.]

Jack Dominion has announced that One Plus One intends to go out into the community armed with the results of previous research and;

- \* provide a valuable information resource;
- \* develop an integrated training package with industry [and explore the possibility of developing a similar package with the Clergy];
- \* facilitate preventative work with health centres or other multi-clinic agencies.