

B.R.
PRIME MINISTER

STOCK TAKING REVIEW OF THE HEALTH SERVICE IN SCOTLAND

At the beginning of this month you blocked Malcolm Rifkind from issuing a stock taking booklet on the Scottish Health Service until the NHS Review discussions were further advanced.

Mr. Rifkind had planned to return to this issue at last Monday's NHS meeting but failed to do so. However his Private Secretary's letter of 19 October attached now returns to the charge and presses for the booklet to be published no later than mid November.

The printed version of the booklet itself is also attached.

Now that we are clearer how key aspects of the NHS Review are coming out I have had another look through the booklet and I see nothing that would cause serious problems if published before the Review outcome. The most awkward bits are those (which I have highlighted) concerning community care - for which the way forward is still very unclear - but I do not think the difficulty is sufficient to justify continuing to resist publication. I have discussed this with Richard Wilson who shares my view.

Content now to let the Scottish Office go ahead with publication in the next few weeks?

RAG.

PAUL GRAY
21 October 1988
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Yes