



CONFIDENTIAL

From: R T J Wilson
1 December 1988

P 03291

RA

MR GRAY

cc Mr Monger

COMMUNITY CARE

1. I am prompted by Mr Ingham's minute of 30 November about future business, which mentions an undated White Paper on Care in the Community, to tell you where things stand. As you know, Ministers have not yet had a discussion on the Griffiths Report, let alone reached decisions or thought about a White Paper. At the last meeting of the NHS Group the Prime Minister was opposed to the solution recommended in the Griffiths Report and was inclined to forget it.

2. As it happens Mr Moore raised the subject with me this morning before E(A) and I have since talked to his department. The position now appears to be as follows. Mr Moore, Mr Clarke and Mr Ridley recently had a meeting to discuss what should be done about the Griffiths Report. Mr Major was meant to be there but was unable to attend. The three Ministers were apparently agreed that a solution based on local authorities was the right one but not in the form which the Griffiths Report recommended. The concept would be that local authorities would be "enablers", arranging for others to provide the necessary services without doing so themselves. They would act only as "gate-keepers". This ties in with Mr Ridley's thinking about the role of local authorities more generally.

3. The next step, I understand, is for Mr Clarke to talk to Mr Major to try to persuade him that this is the right approach. There may then be another meeting of the four Ministers to



finalise an agreed position. Thereafter, one of them - Mr Moore's office think it will be Mr Clarke - will minute the Prime Minister, setting out their proposals.

4. Mr Moore was particularly insistent when he spoke to me this morning that the matter could not be allowed to drift: everyone knows that he has the Griffiths Report and is awaiting his response with interest. I have accordingly asked his office when all this is likely to come to a head. They say that the timing is uncertain but that the letter may arrive before Christmas. I have made the point to them that the Prime Minister's diary is extremely full up to Christmas and that the sensible thing would probably be to leave Community Care to be dealt with once the NHS Review was out of the way. They must however satisfy themselves in their discussion with the Department of Health that the NHS Review is not going to rule out any option which might need to be available in community care ~~let~~. On the basis of my rather slender knowledge, I cannot immediately see that it will; but clearly the outcome from the two exercises must be consistent.

5. All of this is informal background for your information. We will keep you in touch with developments.

R.T.J.

R T J WILSON