



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SECURITY

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From the Secretary of State for ~~Social Services~~ Health

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Pamie Minkley (2)

The Rt Hon Margaret Thatcher MP

14 FEBRUARY 1989

Dear Pamie Minkley,

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HOSPITAL SOCIAL WORKERS IN SOUTHWARK

You asked me at a recent meeting what has happened on this subject since Tony Newton wrote to you on 20 November 1987. A constituent of yours (Dr A James) who worked at the Maudsley Hospital had originally raised the issue with you.

In September 1988 Southwark Social Services Department eventually published a consultative document outlining proposals for a restructured Hospital Social Work Service. Those who responded (the Maudsley Hospital included) were critical of the evaluation of the current service and pointed out that uncertainty had made it even more difficult to staff the services, making life more difficult for those social workers who were left.

As a result the Director of Social Services in Southwark has decided not to proceed with the recommendations in the consultative paper and has undertaken to set up three further reviews. They continue to be indecisive therefore but I understand that following John Gummer's redetermination of their expenditure level the local authority will not be reducing its Social Services budget by as much as first intended and will protect "front line services".

Regular meetings between London Borough of Southwark Social Services Department representatives and local Health Authority Managers are continuing, and my officials are offering assistance to both parties in order to sort out difficulties.

We are therefore seeking to reduce the problems of the Maudsley. I am afraid however, that my people have not been able to identify any legal basis for a shift of money from Southwark to the Hospital to cover the loss of their experienced social workers.

KENNETH CLARKE