



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH ~~AND SOCIAL SECURITY~~

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PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL

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Dear Paul

COMMUNITY CARE -
PRIME MINISTER'S MEETING WITH SIR ROY GRIFFITHS


I attach a short brief for the meeting as you requested. I also attach, in case it is helpful, a summary of Sir Roy's report together with a note of the public reactions to it.

Yours ever

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FLORA GOLDHILL

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BRIEF FOR MEETING WITH SIR ROY GRIFFITHS

Purpose of Meeting

The main purpose of the meeting is to enable Sir Roy to explain why he came to his conclusions in preference to other options and retains that preference. He is fully aware of Ministers' reservations about transferring social security funds to local authorities and wishes his voice to be heard before final decisions are taken.

2. In the circumstances, it seems best to allow most of the time to Sir Roy so that he can set out his views rather than enter into detailed discussions on particular issues.

Opening remarks

3. Points to make :-

- * The Government fully accept the importance of the issues raised by community care and wish to reach early conclusions.
- * The Government were very grateful to Sir Roy for taking on the task of writing a community care report in addition to all his other public and private duties. There is great value in the independent analysis provided by the report and the proposals set out in it, irrespective of whether all the proposals are themselves accepted by the Government.
- * The Government have been addressing the proposals made in Sir Roy's report with care and thoroughness. As he knows, they set up an interdepartmental committee of officials to report on them. And Ministers are themselves now examining community care. As Sir Roy also knows, it was not possible to deal with community care at an earlier stage; it was agreed in the Ministerial Group on the NHS Review that the Review must be completed first.



Sir Roy's Proposals

4. Ministers accept many of the broad objectives identified by Sir Roy. In particular they wish to see a proper balance between the provision of residential and nursing care on the one hand and help in the home or in sheltered accommodation on the other. They want to see the effective targetting of help at those who most need it. They see considerable value in an assessment of the need for residential care before additional social security payments are made. And they want to see clear lines of responsibility and accountability, as Sir Roy has recommended.

5. But Ministers are doubtful about two of the main recommendations underpinning Sir Roy's report :-

first, Ministers are not yet convinced of the desirability of putting any one authority in charge of the very wide spectrum of community care policies and services. There is an advantage in the present system with a number of agencies each contributing its own expertise. To brigade everything under one authority, whichever authority that is, could well stifle the initiative of others, both in the public and the private sector. Ministers are particularly keen that the voluntary sector should play a substantial role. And they want to avoid the turbulence caused by transferring responsibilities from one authority to another or by the creation of new agencies.

Secondly, Ministers are doubtful about the capacity of local authorities in general to take on the much wider role envisaged in Sir Roy's report. They are also doubtful, in some cases, about the readiness of local authorities to do the job in an even-handed way. They would not want to see the public sector dominating the scene in a way that crowds out the important contribution to be made by voluntary bodies, the private sector and most of all the individuals and families themselves.

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