

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SECURITY

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



CONFIDENTIAL

The Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey Howe QC
Lord President of the Council
68 Whitehall
London
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Prime Minister²

Follows your earlier
conversations.

REC 6 12 September 1989
13/9

NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE BILL

WILL REQUEST IF REQUESTED

I wrote to John Wakeham earlier in the year explaining the need for early Royal Assent to this Bill if our reforms of the Health Service are to be implemented to timetable. I was most grateful for his assurance that the business managers would use their best endeavours to ensure that the Bill reached the statute book as soon as possible and by the summer recess at the latest. I remain of the view though, that if we are to achieve successful implementation we need early Royal Assent. I would therefore still like to aim for April (of if necessary May) 1990.

Thanks to excellent service from Parliamentary Counsel, we now have a first draft of the main elements of the Bill. I am also grateful for the help which the Chancellor's officials and those of territorial colleagues have offered in the course of preparing legislation and look for this to continue in the coming months.

My officials will be offering Counsel instructions in the two outstanding areas shortly and I should therefore be able to come to Legislation Committee with a draft at the beginning of November.

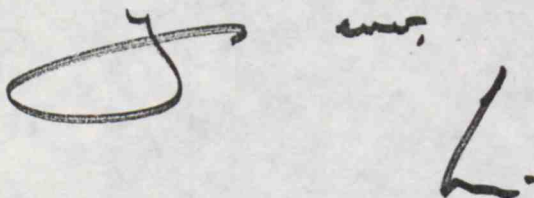
I believe that we should aim for the earliest possible introduction. Second reading very early in the session would demonstrate publicly the Government's commitment to maintaining rapid progress with its plans and would also help to establish the necessary momentum if we are to keep to the demanding Parliamentary timetable for the first half of 1990.

The comparative brevity of the Bill, when compared to the major measures of the last two sessions, should serve to reduce some of the pressure on this timetable. Even so we can expect the Bill to be subject to heavy opposition amendment.

E.R.

I hope that you will therefore be able to agree, subject to discussion in L, that the Bill should receive its second reading at the earliest possible opportunity after the Queen's Speech.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, the Chancellor, Chris Patten, Tony Newton, Peter Brooke, members of L Committee, Sir Robin Butler and First Parliamentary Counsel.

The signature is written in dark ink. It begins with a large, stylized capital 'J' that loops around. To the right of the 'J' is a small, horizontal flourish. Below the 'J' and to the right is a large, capital 'L' that also has a small horizontal flourish at its base.

KENNETH CLARKE