



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SECURITY

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From the Minister for Health

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26 JUL 1988

C.C. The Prime Minister

CONFIDENTIAL

The Rt Hon Norman Lamont MP
Chief Secretary to the Treasury
H M Treasury
Parliament Street
LONDON SW1 3AG

Dear Chief Secretary,

PERSONAL SOCIAL SERVICES : SPECIFIC GRANTS - PES 1989

John Major wrote to me on 28 June and made an offer for continuing and new specific grants for personal social services. I appreciate his wish to come to an early settlement on these grants and am happy to respond in the same spirit.

I was glad to receive agreement to the continuing need for the AIDS support grant throughout the survey period. I acknowledge the difficulty of estimating precisely the value for this grant in the later years of the Survey and would be content with your offer to set it at the level bid for in 1990-91 and to roll that figure forward for the later Survey years on the understanding that we will review the level each year thereafter.

I am also glad of agreement to continue for 1990-91 the existing training support programmes for elderly and childcare and to merge the two into a composite grant programme. As I have indicated, I consider this to be a valuable development. I am also pleased that you are willing to extend the composite grant to include the training requirements associated with the Children Bill which is a twelve months programme spread over two financial years, and a first year post qualifying training programme directed towards improving management.

On the existing training programmes you have said that decisions on later years should be deferred until we are able to assess their effectiveness in the light of the end of year reports. I agree that all programmes should be reviewed regularly in order that we can be sure that our objectives are being met and that the level of funding is appropriate to the need.

The decision is nevertheless disappointing in relation to the Child Care Training Programme where I am faced with a practical difficulty in that the first feedback of data, based upon end of year reports, will only become available this time next year and the report will not be completed before Autumn 1990. We would therefore have no more data available in the 1990 Survey than we have now to support our bid. Yet I do see real benefit in being able

to signal a continuing life of more than one year for this programme for the following reasons:

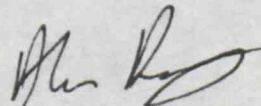
- The first one or two years of the child care programme will be largely taken up by remedying deficiencies in the basic child care training needs of staff working with children before they can progress to being trained to deal with child protection cases and, in particular, those which involve sexual abuse. That is not something that can be undertaken and completed in a year or so. It is a major undertaking and will need to continue in a controlled and planned way with close monitoring to ensure that the central standards which have been set are being maintained. Such an approach cannot be pursued against the background of annual agreements only.
- Many local authorities have introduced effective self-disciplines which link developments with funding and there is an understandable reluctance among LAs to take on the additional commitment needed to carry through these programmes when they are only guaranteed funding for one year at a time.

I would very much hope, therefore, that you will feel able to consider a two-year continuation of the Childcare training programme on the understanding that continuation thereafter would be dependant upon evidence of its effectiveness on the basis of the end of year reports.

The results of the first year of the Elderly Training Support Programme are still coming in and my officials will discuss their findings with yours, once the analysis of the results is completed in September. I intend to review the progress made in achieving our objectives, in the light of that report, taking account of what we know of take up, targets which have been set for the second and subsequent years of the programme etc, in order to see whether it needs to continue beyond 1990-91, and if so at what level.

I am willing to not press my bid now for the practice placement programme for 1990-91. This is an important component of a comprehensive strategy to improve social services training and I hope to return to it, in the context of the proposals I am developing for consideration by colleagues in the Autumn, as part of the medium/long term strategy for social services training.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, Members of E(LA) and to Sir Robin Butler.



pp DAVID MELLOR

(Approved by Mr Mellor
and signed in his absence)

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Public Expenditure PE42.