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NATIONAL HEALTH:
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DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & SOCIAL SECURITY

Alexander Fleming House, Elephant & Castle, London SE1 6BY

Telephone 01-407 5522

From the Secretary of State for Social Services

The Rt Hon John Biffen MP
Lord Privy Seal
Management and Personnel Office
Whitehall
LONDON SW1

JD

19/11

SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE ENQUIRY INTO NHS MANAGEMENT INQUIRY REPORT

The Select Committee on Social Services, which was reconstituted - again under Mrs Short's chairmanship - just before Christmas, is shortly to start an enquiry into the NHS Management Inquiry report which I published and made an oral statement about in the Commons on 25 October.

Mrs Short has given notice that she intends at Business Questions to seek time for a debate on her Committee's report, which is expected at the end of February; and has suggested that in the meantime I should defer guidance to the NHS on implementing parts of the Management Inquiry proposals. I attach a copy of her letter.

In presenting the report to the House on 25 October, I said that the Government accepted its main thrust, and hoped that health authorities would be able to start implementing the "general management function" (a key recommendation) from April of this year. The two month consultation period for the NHS and other interested bodies is now over, and provided that they meet their own deadline (of end February) - the Committee should report just in time for me to consider their report before finalising my guidance; should they over-run, of course, then I have no intention of holding back.

I would not necessarily think it undesirable to agree to Mrs Short's request for a debate on the Committee's report. As well as being a courteous gesture towards the Committee, it might be opportune, in March, for us to explain to the House the progress we had made, and to emphasise again our positive overall strategy for the NHS (including the expenditure provision for 1985-86 and 1986-87 which will by then have been published in the Public Expenditure White Paper). But it would be prudent to suspend judgement on the issue until we can sense better how the Committee's report is likely to shape up; and I suggest that in the meantime you should be suitably non-committal in replying to Mrs Short at Business Questions.

E.R.

I am sending copies of this letter and its enclosures to George Younger, Jim Prior and Nicholas Edwards; and because implementation of the Management Inquiry report was raised at the general discussion of DHSS business at No 10 last week, to the Prime Minister and Nigel Lawson. I am copying also to Sir Robert Armstrong.

Younger

Norman Fowler
NORMAN FOWLER

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NBPM AT 15/2



NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE
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SECRETARY OF STATE
FOR
NORTHERN IRELAND

The Rt Hon Norman Fowler MP
Secretary of State for Social Services
Department of Health and Social Services
Alexander Fleming House
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SE1 6BY

15 February 1984

SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE ENQUIRY INTO NHS MANAGEMENT INQUIRY
REPORT

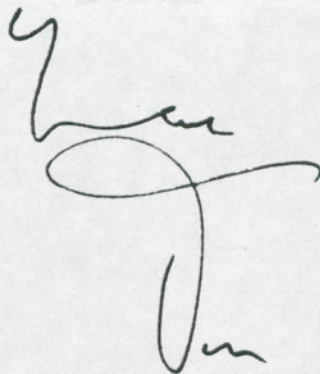
I read with interest your recent correspondence with John Biffen and Nicholas Edwards on the NHS Management Report and am grateful to you for keeping me abreast of developments in England and Wales.

The NHS Management Report is to be discussed with the Chairman of Health and Social Services Boards here before the end of February. I then intend to issue a consultation paper on the implementation of the principles in the Report to Northern Ireland. This exercise will not be straightforward given the need to adapt the recommendations to meet local circumstances, not the least of which is the administrative structure which uniquely in the United Kingdom covers the personal social services as well as the health service. Moreover this integrated administrative structure was only recently reviewed and the changes resulting from that review will not be fully implemented until later this year. While I am confident that various of the recommendations in the Report can be grafted onto the new administrative structure to the benefit of services I am nonetheless anxious that the progress that has already been made in securing more efficient and effective management should not be undermined by any precipitate action on the Government's part.

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Meanwhile I endorse Nicholas Edwards' remarks about the need to be fully aware of each other's proposals and their rationale. For this reason my officials are maintaining close contact with yours.

I am sending copies of this letter to those who received yours.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to be "John F. Kennedy".

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5 JAN 1984

CC 100

NBPM



SCOTTISH OFFICE
WHITEHALL, LONDON SW1A 2AU

Mr. [Signature]

The Rt Hon Norman Fowler MP
Secretary of State for Social Services
DHSS
Alexander Fleming House
Elephant and Castle
LONDON
SE1 6BY

10 February 1984

Min. Inquiry

Dear Norman,

SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE ENQUIRY INTO NHS MANAGEMENT INQUIRY REPORT

I refer to your recent letter to John ^{19.1.84} Biffen and to Nick Edwards' letter to you of 2 February.

I should like to associate myself with the views expressed in Nick's letter. While I believe it is important that England, Scotland and Wales should each be able to have management arrangements specific to the needs and circumstances of the National Health Service in the respective countries, we also need to be clear how we stand in relation to each other. I know that officials of our respective Departments have been in touch, and that contact is also being maintained with the Treasury, and I believe it is important that close liaison on this issue should be maintained. But I also welcome his suggestion that we meet soon to discuss the way forward, before any formal guidance is issued.

I am sending copies of this letter to recipients of yours.

*Yours
wv,
Cunze.*

1984

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The Rt Hon Nicholas Edwards MP

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From The Secretary of State for Wales

2 February 1984

De Norman

SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE ENQUIRY INTO NHS MANAGEMENT INQUIRY REPORT

Thank you for copying to me your recent letter to John Biffen (19-1-84) about the handling of this Inquiry.

My Department has not been asked to give evidence but clearly the hearings and findings are of interest to me and I should be grateful if your officials would keep mine informed about the line you propose to take.

I note what you say about pressing ahead with guidance to health authorities in England after the end of February, even if the Select Committee has not responded by then. My Department issued on 13 December 1983 a consultation letter on the implementation in Wales of the principles of the Management Inquiry Report (which I copied to you) and we have asked for comments by 17 February. I have no desire to hold up your action in England, but I should be grateful if I could be consulted again before your guidance is issued. I say this because, for example, guidance on terms and conditions of service in England may also have to be applied in Wales and I would like to satisfy myself that what you propose does not prevent me from doing what is necessary in Wales.

More generally we need to be fully aware of each other's proposals and their rationale so that we can justify publicly any differences in the way the principles recommended by the Management Inquiry are translated into practice in different circumstances. The same of course applies to the responses by Jim Prior and George Younger to the issues posed by Mr Griffiths.

The Rt Hon Norman Fowler MP
Secretary of State for Social Services

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FEB 1984



Before final decisions are taken it would be helpful if you George and I could meet to discuss the way forward and we should ensure too that there is close contact at official level at all stages.

/ I am sending copies of this letter to those who received yours.

J. Es-

Nia

FEB 1984





COMMITTEE OFFICE
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SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

21 December 1983

Rt Hon Norman Fowler MP
Secretary of State for Social Services
Department of Health and Social Security
Alexander Fleming House
Elephant and Castle
London SE1 6BY

Dear Norman,

As you may know, the Committee held its first meeting on Tuesday and re-elected me as its Chairman. I am sure that the Social Services Committee will continue the sort of constructive work it carried out in the last Parliament, and I look forward to receiving from you and your Department the cooperation you have given so readily in the past.

The Committee decided to undertake a very quick inquiry into the Report of the NHS Management Inquiry, holding four oral evidence sessions in January and February. We have invited you to give evidence on 8 February, after Mr Griffiths. The Committee was aware that you were intending to issue guidance to health authorities on the implementation of the Report fairly early in the New Year. While the Committee's inquiry is not of itself intended to delay that timetable, I would very much hope that you would be willing to await a Report from the Committee, which we would expect to have out by the end of February, before issuing any such guidance. I imagine that the Committee would also hope to have such a Report promptly debated in the House, and I will be raising that with the Leader of the House at Business Questions.

Yours sincerely
Renee

Renee Short MP
Chairman

So have a lovely Christmas