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*From the Secretary of State for Social Services*

The Rt Hon Sir Keith Joseph Bt MP  
 Secretary of State  
 Department of Education and Science  
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18 February 1985

*Norman Fowler*

REVIEW OF STUDENT SUPPORT

You sent me a copy of your letter of 21 December to Nigel Lawson about your review of student support.

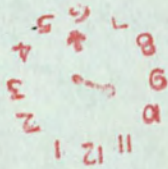
As you say, the timetable is a very tight one but we in DHSS will do our best to provide help on the social security implications of any options for changing the structure of student support. I am sure your officials will keep mine fully in the picture as DES thinking develops. I hope you will be able to consider the needs of students, and the most appropriate ways of meeting those needs, over the whole year including the long vacation. It is also worth registering at this stage that any move to student loans could have important implications for supplementary benefit and housing benefit payments in vacations; and I would want to ensure that a loan scheme did not make us vulnerable to greater benefit expenditure. So far as the inter-departmental working party on students and benefits is concerned, I have asked officials to produce as soon as possible their proposals for both short-term and long-term changes for removing or reducing students' dependence on supplementary benefit and housing benefit. I can then consider with colleagues how options for change can be carried forward in the context of the social security reviews and your own review of student support.

I am copying this letter to the recipients of yours.

*Norman Fowler*

NORMAN FOWLER

Policy: EDUCATION Pt 4.



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