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DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SECURITY

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From the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Health

Kenneth Baker Esq MP
Minister for Local Government

22:2:85

ABOLITION AND VOLUNTARY SECTOR

I am replying to the request in your letter of 11 February to Patrick Jenkin for comments on your proposals for concessions about grants for voluntary bodies in the Local Government Bill. You also asked for information about plans for central government grants to voluntary organisations in 1986/87.

We welcome the concessions you propose to offer to the voluntary sector about the expenditure allowable under the new collective grant making arrangements, and about the transitional provisions for local activity. I hope these concessions will defuse the significant clamour of opposition we face from our friends concerned with the health of worthwhile voluntary organisations.

We have no current plans to change significantly the real value of support DHSS gives direct to the voluntary sector in 1986/87. In general, in the DHSS field, we take the line that public money to support voluntary activity at local level should come from local authorities and health authorities, and I reserve our general scheme of grant giving largely to voluntary bodies whose activities have a national coverage. We do not, therefore, propose to change our approach to the applications for grants to voluntary organisations which we receive as a result of abolition. It seems to us that, to the extent we are concerned about the impact of abolition on the voluntary sector, solutions should be sought directly in the context of the Local Government Bill, and we would hope that you have pitched the concessions you propose to make at a level to provide acceptable solutions to these problems.

I am copying this to members of MISC 95 and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

JOHN PATTEN

- will request if required

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