

Subject



file  
cc David Willetts

10 DOWNING STREET

cc Maxer

From the Private Secretary

9 May 1984

Financial support for the NSPCC

Your Secretary of State met the Prime Minister today to discuss financial support for the NSPCC, in the light of your letter to me of 17 April.

The Prime Minister said that she would be addressing the Annual General Meeting of the NSPCC on 16 May. She recalled various precedents for centenary grants to voluntary organisations and similar bodies, including one to the Royal Academy of Music during her time as Secretary of State for Education and Science. She was, nevertheless, inclined to accept your Secretary of State's view that, insofar as resources might permit further Government support, the NSPCC itself might well prefer an assurance about the level of annual grant for the next three years rather than a one-off payment.

Your Secretary of State said that resources for helping voluntary organisations were strictly limited. His annual budget for expenditure on "Section 64 grants" was only about £10 million, and the NSPCC had received £450,000 towards its HQ administration costs over the past three financial years. Although a final decision had yet to be taken on the level of support for 1984/85, he hoped that it would be possible at least to maintain the level of HQ support grant given in 1983/84, which had been £100,000. The Prime Minister commented that there was in her view a good case for some addition to mark the Society's centenary.

In conclusion, your Secretary of State agreed to consider what level of support it might be possible to provide for the NSPCC in 1984/85 and subsequently. He undertook to report the outcome to the Prime Minister before 16 May.

On a separate matter, your Secretary of State reported that the pensions and social security enquiries were proceeding well. One important point to emerge on the pensions front was that a portable pension was a possession in the same category as a home,

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in terms of the Government's aim of turning "every man into a man of property". As regards the social security enquiries, the Prime Minister expressed the hope that fundamental changes would be carefully examined - ordinary people found the present level of some benefits hard to understand, and it was in particular indefensible that housing benefit should be paid to one in three households. The Prime Minister referred to an approach she had had from Ralph Howell, M.P., about a case in which housing benefit had been paid to a man reportedly earning £17,000 a year. Your Secretary of State expressed surprise that this could happen, but agreed to ask Mr Newton to have a word with Mr Howell about the case.

David Barclay

Miss Ellen Roberts,  
Department of Health and Social Security