



10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

31 May 1984

Dear Dr. Havard.

In your letter of 30 May you urged the Government to respond to the recommendations of the Review Body on Doctors' and Dentists' Remuneration as soon as possible. I stated in the House that the Government intends to make its response known as soon as possible after the Whitsun Recess.

I can assure you that the Government recognises the need to deal with the report expeditiously. However, we have reports from four separate review bodies and it is appropriate that we should consider them together. In doing so, we have to consider not only the amounts recommended by the individual review bodies but also other issues, including where the money will come from to meet whatever recommendations are made. That process of consideration is under way and we will make every effort to adhere to the timetable I have suggested.

Yours sincerely  
Margaret Thatcher

Dr. J.D.J. Havard.

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cc: Press Office

**BRITISH MEDICAL ASSOCIATION**

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Telephone 01-387 4499

Our ref. JDJH/HT  
Your ref.

The Rt Hon Margaret Thatcher MP  
Prime Minister  
10 Downing Street  
London SW1

30 May 1984

Dear Mrs Thatcher,

I am writing to express our extreme concern at the long delay in publication of the Report of the Review Body on Doctors' and Dentists' Remuneration.

The Review Body was set up as a result of our acceptance of the "package deal" offered by the Government to the professions on the findings of the Royal Commission on Doctors' and Dentists' Remuneration. There were disadvantages to the professions in accepting the package. However, these were endured by the professions in the belief that acceptance by the Government of the Review Body system, and the conditions which were attached to it by the Royal Commission, would lead to settlement of our remuneration in the future without the need for public dispute, and would assure the professions that their remuneration would not be determined by considerations of political convenience.

Amongst the conditions placed by the Royal Commission on the successful operation of the Review Body system, was the need for "prompt action by the Government in dealing with any recommendations that may be made by the Review Body". The Royal Commission attached "special importance" to this, and emphasised that "Nothing will restore confidence between the professions and the Government more than experience of really prompt action on the recommendations of the Review Body".

The other condition to which we must draw your attention, is that "Doctors and dentists in the public service should not be used as a regulator of the national economy. Their earnings should not be prevented from rising because of a fear that others might follow".

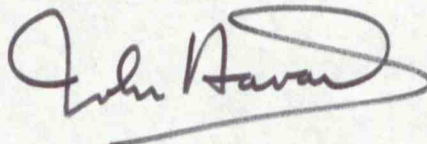


We find it very difficult to reconcile the Government's acceptance of the Royal Commission's findings with your decision to delay consideration of our Review Body Report so that it can be considered together with the Reports of Review Bodies covering other groups in the public sector.

The Royal Commission, whilst accepting that the Government cannot abrogate its functions and responsibilities for ultimate decisions said "we are insistent that the recommendations of the Review Body must only very rarely and for most obviously compelling reasons be rejected". Yet the Government has rejected them for the past three years in succession.

In the circumstances it is hardly surprising that there is widespread and mounting concern in the professions that the Government may no longer be willing to fulfil the conditions set out by the Royal Commission. I must earnestly request you to restore the confidence of the professions by making an announcement within the next few days.

The British Dental Association strongly supports the views contained in this letter and wishes to be associated with it.

*Yours sincerely,*  


Secretary

It is very difficult to reconcile the Government's position  
with the Commission's findings which are in fact  
contradictory to our view. It is not an easy  
matter to reconcile with the findings of the Commission  
other than in the obvious sense.

The Government's position is that the Commission's  
findings are not binding on the Government and that  
the Government is free to do as it pleases. It is  
not necessary to say that the Government is free to  
do as it pleases. It is not necessary to say that  
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In the circumstances it is not surprising that there is a  
discrepancy between the Commission's findings and the  
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30 MAY 1955

Secretary