

PRIME MINISTER

20 June 1985

HEALTH POLICY

① Agree an initiative to bring
health issues to be forefront (I
suspect some parts of DHSS feel
neglected and would welcome
this)
AG 21/6

Norman Fowler has rightly been devoting his energies to the Benefits Reviews. The time has now come to shift attention back to health policy, where we are standing still and letting the Opposition hit us where they want - from Frank Dobson's clever exploitation of cervical smears, to the report of the Health Service Ombudsman this week.

I recommend the following initiatives:

- i. The Family Practitioner Service Green Paper has slipped from its summer publication date. Meanwhile, a real appetite for change is developing amongst the more forward-looking members of the profession. I suggest you ask the DHSS about progress - they have not formally reported back since your meeting in January.
- ii. Victor Paige, the Chairman of the Health Service Management Board, has now been in post for 6 months. He has a formidably difficult task in bringing businesslike efficiency to sprawling hospital services dominated by vested interests. But he needs a sense of purpose, and you can help instil it. I suggest you

invite him in for a discussion about the problems of the Health Service and his programme of action.

- iii. We need to identify the tricky political areas where we can head off problems before they arise by taking the initiative now. Three areas for presentational initiatives are: waiting lists, the future of London teaching hospitals, and treating the patient like a consumer.
- iv. Would you be prepared to take the opportunity of the quieter summer period to visit a new NHS hospital? This would help with the infrastructure argument as well as showing that you care about the Health Service. It would need careful planning to avoid tomatoes and shop stewards. But I would like your permission for Mark Addison and I to investigate the possibility in a low-key way.
- v. How about an informal lunch discussion with leading sympathetic figures so that you got a range of views and helpful advice? This again would demonstrate your interest.

If you agree, I would draft a short tactful letter for Andrew Turnbull to send to the DHSS.

David Willetts

DAVID WILLETTS



MJ2 ASW

cdw

10 DOWNING STREET

2 July 1985

From the Private Secretary

The Prime Minister recognises that your Secretary of State has been giving priority to the Benefit Reviews over the past few months. She hopes however that it will now be possible to give greater attention to important initiatives in health policy.

She would particularly welcome a report of your Secretary of State's thinking on the FPS Green Paper. She recognises that the timetable has inevitably had to slip because of the burden of work on the Benefit Reviews. But she believes that the need for change is increasingly recognised, and hopes that your Secretary of State will soon be putting forward proposals to catch the tide of opinion.

Equally important is the strengthening of the management of the hospital service under Victor Paige. The Prime Minister would like to hold a discussion with your Secretary of State, Mr Paige and some members of the NHS Management Board to hear their analysis of the issues facing the hospital service. The discussion could then move on to consider Mr Paige's programme of action. We will be in touch to agree a time, attendance and papers for this meeting.

The Prime Minister would also like to consider the possibility of presentational initiatives, so that the Government gets more positive coverage for its achievements in health policy. She knows that your Parliamentary Under Secretary is already campaigning on reductions in waiting lists. She believes we might also consider how to head off problems on the future of London teaching hospitals, and how we might launch a campaign to spread best practice in treating the patient like a consumer.

Andrew Turnbull

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Steve Godber Esq
Department of Health and Social Security.

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CCD/0

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & SOCIAL SECURITY

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Telephone 01-407 5522

From the Secretary of State for Social Services

Andrew Turnbull Esq
Private Secretary
10 Downing Street

5 August 1985

NBPM

Dear Andrew

In your letter of 2 July to Steve Godber, you asked about progress with the FPS Green Paper.

My Secretary of State has commissioned some redrafting of this but hopes to be able to circulate a final draft to colleagues soon with a view to publication shortly thereafter. He has been considering how to handle the consultations. The important thing will be to get as much public and parliamentary support as possible for changes which the professions will resist. This points to a structured consultation process (similar to that which took place during the Social Security Review) drawing in individuals and organisations able to represent the interests of the public. My Secretary of State will be making proposals in this regard as well.

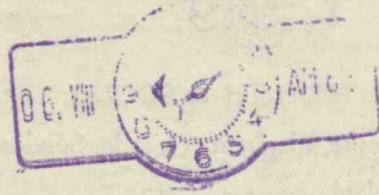
Yours sincerely

A Laurance
Private Secretary

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NHS PTS

EXPENDITURE



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GR
PL type a PS letter

26 June 1985

MR TURNBULL

HEALTH POLICY

I attach a draft letter for you to send to Steve Godber. I have left out the idea of a visit and a lunch here, as I will be pursuing this separately.

David Willetts

DAVID WILLETTS

ASN

26 June 1985

DRAFT LETTER FROM A TURNBULL TO
STEVE GODBER, SECRETARY OF STATE'S OFFICE, DHSS

The Prime Minister recognises that

Your Secretary of State has rightly been devoting his ^{quite priority} energies to the Benefit Reviews over the past few months.

But the Prime Minister ^{she has hopes that it will now be possible to give greater} hopes that the Government will also ^{attention to} keep its sights on important initiatives in health policy.

She would particularly welcome a report of your Secretary of State's thinking on the FPS Green Paper. She recognises that the timetable has inevitably had to slip because of the burden of work on the Benefit Reviews. But she believes that the need for change is increasingly recognised, and hopes that your Secretary of State will soon be putting forward proposals to catch the tide of opinion.

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ANDREW TURNBULL