

CONFIDENTIAL

PRIME MINISTER

10 January 1986

ROY GRIFFITHS

Last year you wanted Roy Griffiths to serve as Chief Executive for the Health Service. But in the end Sir John Sainsbury would not release him, so we had to settle for Victor Paige.

Roy Griffiths is planning to leave Sainsbury's this July. He doesn't believe that Victor Paige has got to grips with the Health Service. Ministers are too tied up in day-to-day politics to provide businesslike management. So Roy Griffiths believes there is a gap which he can fill.

This idea has many attractions:

- i. Roy Griffiths has a very impressive commercial background as the Managing Director of Sainsbury's.
- ii. He is a widely known and respected figure in the health world.
- iii. He would be under a clear duty to deliver what his own Report says can be achieved.
- iv. Money would not be a problem, as he will have a generous pension from Sainsbury's.

CONFIDENTIAL

But there are problems as well:

- i. The timing is bad. Victor Paige will be half way through a 3-year contract this summer. He won't relish being overshadowed by Roy Griffiths. On the other hand, if we don't get him this summer he will accept other offers, and a great opportunity will have been missed.
- ii. Finding a slot in the organisation. He doesn't want to be a civil servant, because he wants to cut down the central DHSS administration. Sir Kenneth Stowe may well be unhappy with this.

This idea is still at a very early stage. Norman Fowler doesn't know about it. Roy Griffiths doesn't want to pursue it unless he feels he has your backing.

Next Steps

Would you be prepared to meet Roy Griffiths for half an hour to hear his views on improving the Health Service? It would also give him an opportunity to explain the job which he thinks needs to be done.

Yes
no

David Willetts

DAVID WILLETTS

Nigel

Can we speak?
MERT 20/1



10 DOWNING STREET

Prime Minister ^①

I will arrange a short
meeting with Mr. Griffiths. But
I do not see how we can do this
without also asking S/HMS to

come too. I will have a word
with S.H.S. to let him know
I am seeing Roy Griffiths?
We ought to try and fit in

this in before 4 February
when the summer or VFM is
the Health Service is scheduled.

Agree with this approach?

MERT 17/1

CONFIDENTIAL

N Alderman

MR WICKS

21 January 1986

ROY GRIFFITHS: DISCUSSION WITH NORMAN FOWLER

I had a personal word with the Secretary of State about Sir Roy Griffiths yesterday evening.

I recalled that the Prime Minister had been keen to appoint Roy Griffiths Chairman of the Management Board back in January 1985. Sir John Sainsbury had not been willing to release him in advance of his retirement. Roy Griffiths' contract with Sainsbury's would come to an end this summer, and I wondered if it would now be possible to use his experience and talents in some way. It was almost 3 years since his Inquiry was set up; it might, for example, be useful to commission him to investigate whether it was being successfully implemented.

Mr Fowler asked if Roy Griffiths had been to see the Prime Minister. I said that he had not. But if Norman Fowler and Roy Griffiths wished to see the Prime Minister together to discuss NHS management and a possible rôle for Roy Griffiths, I would be optimistic that such a meeting could be arranged.

Mr Fowler said that he would invite Roy Griffiths to a personal lunch. He had not realised Roy Griffiths might shortly be available, and would think about how to use him. He was particularly keen on some sort of investigation of how the management reforms were going.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

- 2 -

Mr Fowler's tone was friendly and interested. I got the impression that the germ of an idea had been implanted in his mind. It is now up to Roy Griffiths to persuade Mr Fowler that there is a job for him to do.

David Willetts

DAVID WILLETTS

CONFIDENTIAL



10 DOWNING STREET

M. Willelts

Ray Griffiths

Thank you.
Let us have a
word after the
meal to consider
next steps.

N. L. W

21.1

Personal.



10 DOWNING STREET

Nant.

I spoke to Stowe who
spoke to Fowler. Willett has
also spoken to Fowler. There is
a possibility that Griggitts
will be asked to carry out
some study on the NTS. Fowler
is seeing Griggitts on 3 Feb.
I will speak Stowe say
on 12 Feb, to see what is
happening. Reamable about
approach Griggitts.

N.L.W.

21.1