

PRIME MINISTER

NHS REVIEW: GP PRACTICE BUDGETS

You saw over the weekend a note from Ian Whitehead reporting on the difficulty he foresaw in persuading DOH to agree satisfactory drafting of the detailed working paper on GP Practice Budgets. I took this up with Kenneth Clarke's office, stressing that you would wish to see the draft document, and asking them to ensure that Ian Whitehead was closely involved in the drafting exercise.

Ian's further note attached reports on latest developments. He continues to feel that the draft of the key paragraph 4.5 is inadequate, and suggests a redraft.

You will want to consider whether to press this point with Kenneth Clarke. Ian's suggested redraft is rather closer to the wording of the White Paper, but I am not sure there is an enormous difference of substance. You will also want to bear in mind that:

- Ian has persuaded Kenneth Clarke to make a number of changes in other parts of the document;
- Kenneth Clarke took the decision on his present proposed wording after a long meeting at which Ian was present, where the opposing arguments were aired.

If you want to press Mr. Clarke on this I think it may therefore be necessary for you to have a word with him direct.

Are you content, reluctantly, to accept Mr. Clarke's wording?

Or, do you want to press Ian's suggested alternative to him?

PAUL GRAY

15 FEBRUARY 1989

Note

Passed a PM's reaction to Andy Mackay (Dott), and agreed there was no need for any formal exchange of letters.

PRCB

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[although the redraft is better - but there is a limit to what a Minister will change]