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Treasury Chambers, Parliament Street SW1P 3AG

The Rt Hon Kenneth Clarke QC MP
Secretary of State for Health
Department of Health
Richmond House
79 Whitehall
London
SW1

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30 October 1989

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Dear Secretary of State,

COMMUNITY CARE WHITE PAPER

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Thank you for copying to me your letter of 20 October to Geoffrey Howe, with the draft White Paper.

2 I am content with most of the draft, and have only certain reservations on it, mentioned below.

3 First, as regards the issues in the annex to your letter, I should make the following points.

4 You suggest that health authorities and self-governing hospitals should be able to offer social care services for sale to local authorities. But that would surely be an undesirable diversion of their efforts, at a time when they should be devoting all their energies to implementation of the NHS review changes. The Government has decided that local authorities should be responsible for community care in future, and I think we should leave it at that for the time being. Perhaps in a few years' time we could consider whether the health authorities and hospital trusts should move into the business of social care, but I suggest that it would be premature to propose it now.

5 Secondly, you propose to deprive local authorities of the power to top-up or provide care for people who have preserved entitlement to income support at the special rates for residential homes. As I have said in my letter to Nick Scott, I am opposed to your doing so.

6 I am content with your remaining suggestions, subject (as I have said in my letter to Nick Scott) to the five year limit mentioned in the last item being a maximum, not subject to review.

7 The draft White Paper will also be affected by the other points in my letter to Nick Scott. And I understand that officials have agreed on certain further drafting changes. Subject to those various points, I am content.

8 I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, members of H and E(A) and Sir Robin Butler.

Yours sincerely,

P. Warner

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[Approved by the Chief Secretary
and signed in his absence.]