



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SECURITY
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From the Secretary of State for Social Services

Rt Hon Malcolm Rifkind MP
Secretary of State for Scotland
Scottish Office
Whitehall
London
SW1A 2AU

23 October 1987

Dear Malcolm,

*NBM
at day*

STUDENTS AND THE COMMUNITY CHARGE

I have seen your minute to the Prime Minister of 24 September.

I see the force of your arguments in favour of using for community charge purposes a definition of full-time student that is narrower than the definition used by my Department, but I am concerned about the effect of your proposals on our long-term commitment to end the entitlement of full-time students to all means-tested benefits.

Financial support for students, is, as you say, being considered by Robert Jackson's review, and in my view it would be sensible not to pre-empt our decisions on his conclusions.

I would not wish, for example, that certain students should remain within the scope of housing benefit for purposes of community charge rebates when they were excluded from housing benefit for the purposes of receiving help with their accommodation costs.

I can accept your proposals only as an interim measure pending our decisions on the position of students in relation to means-tested benefits in the longer term. Since at that stage we may need to end the entitlement to community charge rebates of those students you are now proposing should be brought within the scope of the rebate scheme, I suggest that the interim nature of the arrangements are made clear now.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, to the Lord President and the other members of E(LF), and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

JOHN MOORE

LOCAL GOVT: rates pto

