

CABG



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The Rt Hon Nicholas Ridley MP
Secretary of State for the Environment
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24 February 1988

Len Miles

STUDENTS AND COMMUNITY CHARGE

at flat

Thank you for your letter of 17 February.

I am glad that you accept the need to avoid any arbitrary differences in the rules governing the treatment of students for community charge purposes, as between England and Scotland. I am content with your proposal to provide for a power to make an Order requiring educational establishments to provide information, on the understanding that you will consult the bodies representing these establishments to explore the possibility of proceeding by voluntary agreement before invoking that power. I would only add that the consultation should go rather wider than the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals; my officials will be in touch with yours about its appropriate scope.

I think you are right in your conclusion that a process of certification must be provided for in the legislation so that students will have no difficulty in establishing their eligibility to pay the community charge at the discounted rate. Though this will mean additional administrative work for the educational institutions, I am sure that they will accept it in their students' interests. I would not therefore argue that this provision should depend on the outcome of consultation.

I remain of the view that special payment rules for students would be unjustifiably discriminatory, but I agree that this should be pursued between our officials and Malcolm Rifkind's.

I am copying this to the other recipients of your letter.

[Signature]
Kenneth

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