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From The Secretary of State for Wales

The Rt Hon Peter Walker MBE MP

CONFIDENTIAL

CT/6078/90

*MBM
MUG
14/3*

14 March 1990

Anthony Newton

*at top
MUG*

I have received a copy of your letter of 28 February to Chris Patten in which you express concern about the effect which late community charge billing might have on income support claimants and other applicants for community charge benefit.

I have also seen a copy of David Hunt's letter of the same date to Gillian Shepherd and I agree with David that we should encourage authorities to bill correctly and on time and that we should not seek to intervene in their arrangements at this stage.

The very different nature of the transitional relief scheme in Wales means that charging authorities here have not had to accommodate the same level of complexity in their software systems as have their counterparts in England. I would not, therefore, have expected them to be encountering any significant difficulties in implementing their billing systems, and it is my understanding that only minor difficulties are outstanding. So it seems reasonable to expect that the authorities will be in a position to bill net of benefit in reasonable time.

I would prefer, then, that we do not write to authorities at this stage about the possibility of late billing for benefit claimants and that we address this problem if, and only if, billing is sufficiently delayed to present real problems.

/ I am copying this letter to other members of E(LG) and to Sir Robin Butler.

Anthony Newton

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LOCAL Gov IT: Rates
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