

Paul Gray

Note
Discussed in JH
Mills. No letter
sent. MR. MILLS

Rec'd
28/3

I fully understand 'X'. But, given all the difficulties which are going to arise, it seems a great pity not even to see if the opportunity of the Bill cannot be used to make slight changes to s.40 of the 1988 Act so that the Secretary of State could override local authority discretions. What if the PM is really pushed into a corner on indefensible cases? If that could be done, she would be enabled to give further assurances in this financial year, if the need arises. In any case I would not be surprised if backbenchers didn't seek amendments along that line.

HOLIDAY CARAVANS AND STANDARD COMMUNITY CHARGE

I put this forward solely in the knowledge that some real horrors could emerge on standard charge in the next few months. JFG.

Thank you for your minute of 27 March. Unfortunately this arrived after I had put Mr. Patten's note in the Box last night. 28/3.

X

The Prime Minister has now agreed to the Bill for caravan owners. But her agreement to that - and indeed her original encouragement for the idea - was based on the fact that an assurance had been given to caravan owners. The problem has only arisen because, as it has turned out, the present legislation did not give effect to that assurance.

I understand other Ministers have also agreed to the Bill. The Lord President will be writing round to confirm this, but asking DOE to ensure that there are no other cases where similar assurances were given and now need to be honoured.

The case of long-stay hospital patients to which you refer does not, as far as I am aware, fall into that category. Rather, it is one of the many problem areas in the Standard Charge arrangements which have now come to light. It seems to me that all of these, including the long-stay hospital patient case, should be looked at together in the review of the Statutory Orders for 1991-92 which Ministers have already agreed to carry out.

JFG.

Paul Gray

28 March 1990