



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

13 June 1986

Dear Jim,

WORKFARE

The Prime Minister has seen the letter from the Secretary of State for Health and Social Security to your Secretary of State of June 10 about the "lost" cases of unemployed people who had failed to turn up for Restart interviews.

The Prime Minister regrets that an error, though in good faith, was made in providing this information. But the need now is to work for better practical cooperation between DHSS and Department of Employment. The Prime Minister looks forward to receiving by 2 July the report commissioned in my letter of 2 June which recorded the Prime Minister's meeting on Workfare.

I am copying this letter to Rachel Lomax (H.M. Treasury), Tony Laurance (Department of Health and Social Security), Andrew Lansley (Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster's Office), Jacob Franklin (Paymaster General's Office), Jill Rutter (Chief Secretary's Office, H.M. Treasury) and Malcolm McHardy (Mr. Morrison's office, Department of Trade and Industry).

Yours,

David

(David Norgrove)

PA

John Turner, Esq.,
Department of Employment.

Prime Minister 1

CC B/L/P

Relations between the two departments are not good, and David's suggestion seems a good one.

MR NORGROVE

Agree to write? *DS* 12/6

12 June 1986

LOST RESTART CASES

Yes

Norman Fowler is upset because at your meeting on Workfare last week, David Young said that the DHSS had "lost" papers for 800 of the 1,700 people who failed to turn up for Restart interviews. Officials have now checked the figures, and established that they are wrong. I backed David Young at the meeting, and am sorry that we put mistaken figures into circulation.

But our mistake was not a casual one - the statisticians working on the Restart scheme did record that 800 cases had not received attention from the DHSS. Such genuine statistical mistakes reinforce one of the main points the Prime Minister made at the meeting - liaison between the two departments is not as good as it ought to be. Regrettably, the Ministers involved seem to be getting into an unproductive "who does what" dispute, rather than come up with practical proposals for improving the links between the Restart scheme and benefit offices.

The Prime Minister might care to intervene in this correspondence, regretting that wrong information had been used, saying that she understood it was a genuine error, and urging progress in improving practical co-operation between the two departments. *and looking forward to the expected report.* This need not involve big changes in departmental responsibilities, but should focus on improving arrangements within the current framework.

David Willetts

DAVID WILLETTS

cc B9

MJB



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From the Secretary of State for Social Services

The Rt Hon the Lord Young of Graffham
Secretary of State for Employment
Department of Employment
Caxton House
Tothill Street
LONDON
SW1H 9NF

Prime Minister?
I shall nevertheless
continue to seek the report
within a month for which
you asked.
June 10. DRS
11/6.

Dear David.

mf

I understand that at the meeting with the Prime Minister on Workfare last week you expressed concern that DHSS local offices had apparently 'lost' some 1,700 cases of unemployed people who had failed to turn up for Restart interviews. John Major demurred at this observation but was not immediately able to categorically refute it.

As you know, I strongly support the Restart initiative and therefore I asked my officials to liaise with yours over this matter. I gather from this examination that the position is not as you stated.

The actual number of cases referred to us was 1,300, not 1,700. Only some 40 or 50 cases are left awaiting action in our local offices and most of these have been referred to us only within the last few days.

There does, however, seem to have been some weakness in the early arrangements set up between our offices for collection of statistics - hence, no doubt, your misunderstanding about the number of referrals and the action taken upon them.

I am copying the letter to the Prime Minister, Nigel Lawson, Norman Tebbit, John MacGregor, Kenneth Clarke and Peter Morrison.

Yours ever

NORMAN FOWLER

MANPOWER: Special employment measures: PE14

