



Your Ref: 639/91/mt/sc

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*From the*

*Minister for Health*

25 JUL 1991

*D. Matthew.*

Thank you for your letter of 17 July enclosing correspondence from Dr Patrick Dixon, Director of ACET.

First let me say how important the Government considers the role played by the voluntary sector in HIV/AIDS provision to be, and it is for this reason that the Department of Health has made available a total of £1.9 million to non-statutory agencies in this field in 1991/92. As Dr Dixon points out in his letter, ACET has been awarded a grant of £150,000 from this sum towards its administrative costs in this financial year, for up to three years.

The main aim of the NHS reforms is that district health authorities should be responsible for assessing the health needs of their residents and for purchasing local services to meet those needs. In 1991/92, £137.3 million has been allocated to health authorities specifically as a contribution to the cost of provision of services for people with HIV infection and AIDS. We have also made £10.2 million available to local authorities through the AIDS Support Grant scheme to help them meet the additional costs incurred in providing support services to people with HIV/AIDS.

I am sure you will agree that, for service provision for people with HIV/AIDS to develop coherently and responsively, health and local authorities in particular localities are the most suitable bodies to determine local needs and how best to meet them. The role of the Department is to make resources available to enable this to happen and it would be inappropriate if we were to dictate from the centre, how money should be spent locally. The high value the Department places on the contribution the AIDS voluntary sector makes in providing care and support to people with HIV/AIDS is made clear in



our guidance to both the health service and local authorities on the use of HIV/AIDS monies. These stress the need to involve voluntary groups in service planning and provision, and to consider funding them where appropriate.

We sympathise with the problems which ACET has faced in making grant applications to health authorities. If ACET is unhappy with the outcome of these applications, we suggest that the matter is taken up with the relevant District General Manager. The NHS reforms have widened the freedom of Districts to provide better for local health needs; and we have made it clear that providing for local needs should involve the voluntary sector as much as possible where they have a valuable contribution to make.

I hope this is helpful.

*Yours*

GRO-C

VIRGINIA BOTTOMLEY