

Ref: MRW/dlc/m06/Knott

24 June 1996

Mr Nigel Knott
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Dear Nigel

Further to my conversation with the Department of Health and our subsequent own telephone conversation, the situation relating to local purchasing seems entirely depressing.

The Department are clearly saying that there is nothing immediately on the horizon and their time has been taken up with the recent announcements. They can see no immediate prospect of legislation, although I guess that will emerge at the end of the summer (and then we shall be heading towards an election).

The Department have talked to me about possibly running a 'simulation' which will be designed to keep interests alive and develop some learning. However, there is the potential also for wasted energy on our part, certainly if we have to involve GDPs in this process who will see it as a theoretical exercise, I guess, without having any impact on their practice for the foreseeable future.

I suggest, as we agreed on the telephone, that the best thing we can do is simply bide our time, see what emerges from the Department and then decide when the starting gun is fired (if it is!) whether we have the time commitment to afford to the project and the opportunities offered are in line with our existing thoughts. I think the time has come to stop being strung along really with any further effort for the moment.

In terms of the 'access' money, when I get notification on this we can have another discussion. However, I was told on the telephone that the current arrangements are that £40,000 will be available per county and this is barely scratching the surface. It, indeed, doesn't sit happily with the commitment already to provide us with salaried dentists as we need them and can recruit. You and I will have a further chat then: I note your possible interest through WPA. At all events, we shall review this at the end of the summer.



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