

CBH



QUEEN ANNE'S GATE LONDON SW1H 9AT

20 November 1987

nbpm

Dear Nicholas,

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BILL: HOMOSEXUALITY AMENDMENT

Dir

Thank you for sending me a copy of your minute of 16 November to the Prime Minister.

I welcome the principle of the amendment and your proposals for handling it.

It is of course already an offence for anyone, including a local authority, to incite counsel or procure another person to commit a homosexual act prohibited by law (for example, with a person under 21). I am anxious not to get drawn along the path of extending the criminal law to proscribe the mere expression of opinion. Your proposals do not, of course, call on the criminal law. It would help, however, if the arguments for the amendment could be presented in terms of the proper limits of the functions of local authorities and not in terms which would make it difficult to resist the creation of a general criminal offence.

With this point in mind, I should be grateful to be kept in touch with developments, including sight of your redraft in due course.

I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, members of H and L Committees, the Minister for the Arts, Sir Robert Armstrong and First Parliamentary Counsel.

Com,
Daryl

The Rt Hon Nicholas Ridley MP.

LOCAL GOVT: Relations PT33

