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PROFESSOR GRIFFITHS

THE NHS

I discussed this morning with the Prime Minister what she would like to do next on the NHS.

The Prime Minister is now prepared to think seriously about holding an inquiry (not a Royal Commission) into the future of the NHS. But she would like her own ideas better advanced before she discusses this with John Moore, probably in the New Year. She would be grateful if you and the Policy Unit could give some thought to the possibilities, including terms of reference, a chairman and membership. The Prime Minister thinks it would be useful if you were to talk to David Willetts.

It is vital that no hint of this should go beyond the Policy Unit. If word were to leak out the Prime Minister could well be forced to act before she is ready.

It would also be worth giving some thought to the conclusions the Government would want the inquiry to reach: an inquiry fired off into the blue could land almost anywhere. Indeed, if Ministers could begin to get a feeling for the changes they would like to see, the need for an inquiry would itself recede a little.

David Norgrove

8 December 1987