



**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & SOCIAL SECURITY**  
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*From the Secretary of State for Social Services*

The Rt Hon William Whitelaw CH MC  
Secretary of State for the Home Department  
Home Office  
50 Queen Anne's Gate  
LONDON SW1

22 March 1983

*Dear Willie.*

*DF*  
*23/3*

VHF BAND II AND INDEPENDENT NATIONAL RADIO

I welcome your proposals on the use of the new VHF facilities after 1990. The addition of an extra network to the BBC will not only make it possible for Radios 1 and 2 to have separate VHF frequencies; it should ease fears which have frequently been expressed by the audiences of other BBC services that lower audience specialist services, such as Radio 3 classical music, might be made to give up time in the longer-term to mass audience programmes.

More importantly, I strongly endorse your recommendation to allocate a network to the IBA for a new Independent National Radio. The IBA is best qualified to coordinate this service. I hope that we can take an early decision in principle to do this and to release a PQ answer as suggested. The proposals are in keeping with our basic philosophy of wider competition and would have practical benefits. The BBC monopoly on national radio broadcasting has been unchallenged for too long. Competition, for the INR franchise in the first instance and thereafter with the BBC, should serve to raise broadcasting standards, and would be welcome to the listening public. We should therefore aim to make these proposals publicly known as soon as possible.

I am copying this letter to Cabinet colleagues who received a copy of your minute and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

*[Handwritten signature]*

NORMAN FOWLER

Broadcasting  
Apr '82 Radio  
Frequency

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & SOCIAL SECURITY

1121  
898  
3002

22 MAR 1982

*[Faint signature]*