



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Rt.Hon.Mrs.M.Thatcher MP
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London SW1

24th September 1987

Dear Prime Minister,

B-3/7

It was reported yesterday that the Government proposes to renege on earlier promises to uprate benefits to those people who will be required from April 1988 to meet the minimum 20% rates contribution. The reports indicate that civil servants have advised social service directors that any such uprating will only be 'temporary'. If this is true it is a reprehensible breach of faith and a further attack by this Government on the most vulnerable in our community.

I would remind you of a number of categorical statements made over the last few months. Speaking on 'Newsnight' on 21st May 1987, Nicholas Ridley said: "We have been absolutely clear in saying that the 20% which the least well-off will have to pay will be covered by uprating their benefits, so that they will have an increase commensurate with paying their share."

Then on 25th June 1987, the Conservative Research Department Briefing for all Conservative MP's said: "Benefit recipients will have their benefits uprated to enable them to pay the average minimum 20% community charge."

Most recently on 13th July 1987, Michael Howard wrote to all Conservative MP's saying: "The least well-off will only pay 20% and income support recipients will have their income support uprated to enable them to pay the average 20% community charge."

At no stage has there ever been any suggestion that the uprating proposals were to be for a temporary period. Would you please give an unequivocal assurance that there is no truth in these reports and that benefits will be fully uprated as promised above?

I look forward to hearing from you as a matter of urgency.

Yours sincerely,

Jack Cunningham

Dr. J.A. Cunningham MP