

Conservative Research Department

RH

32 Smith Square Westminster SW1P 3HH

Telephone 01-222 9511

JAC/PC

Director: ROBIN HARRIS  
8th May 1985

Dear Mr Turnbull,

We have now sent out the enclosed brief to all London MPs.

*Yours sincerely*  
*Judith Chaplin*

PP. MRS JUDITH CHAPLIN

Mr Andrew Turnbull  
Private Office,  
10 Downing Street,  
London SW1

SPEAKING NOTE

HELPING THE DISABLED

- AN ANSWER TO THE GLC

The GLC have recently been advertising a unit they have set up to help disabled people find work (see attached). The implication is that the Government is not acting vigorously to promote the employment of disabled people. This is totally contrary to the facts.

The Government has:

- (i) Sought fair treatment for the disabled in the jobs market.
- (ii) Backed training and other programmes for disabled people.
- (iii) Substantially increased the financial help given to disabled people.

(i) The New Code of Practice.

A new code of good practice for the employment of disabled people was formally launched by the Prime Minister on 14th November 1984. Help in gaining employment is given to disabled people through the Statutory Quota Scheme. The Government was concerned that the quota was no longer working satisfactorily. It therefore asked the Manpower Services Commission to look at ways suggested by the Select Committee on Employment and others for improving the effectiveness of the scheme within the framework of the existing legislation. To help in the task of reviewing the quota system the Commission set up a working group whose membership included representatives of the National Advisory Council on Employment of Disabled People, disabled peoples' organisations, the CBI and TUC. The working group has now reported and Ministers are considering their response.

The Manpower Services Commission's disablement advisory service has been promoting the Code of Practice among employers throughout the country. 62 specialist teams advise employers on it and also give advice on financial assistance available. During 1984/5 these teams made 17,000 visits to employers. Initial indications are that it is being favourably received both by employers and by organisations representing disabled people. The code has been endorsed by the Select Committee on Employment, the National Advisory Council on the Employment of Disabled People, the Royal Association for Disability and Rehabilitation, the CBI and the TUC. The Manpower Services Commission will continue closely to monitor the response to the code.

(ii) Training and other programmes for the Disabled

The Manpower Services Commission also has major continuing programmes for disabled people:

- 1) - Employment rehabilitation: This is to assess the capabilities of disabled people and restore confidence and fitness

for work. It is provided through 27 MSC centres and a number of agencies throughout the country at a cost of about £21 million in 1984/5. In addition, an initial 3 new ASSET (Assistance towards employment) teams are shortly to be established in areas not currently served by employment rehabilitation centres.

2) - Sheltered employment: Work is provided in a sheltered environment for severely disabled people. Some £79 million was spent on this during 1984/5. There are around 15,600 people in sheltered employment at the end of 1984/5 compared with 14,900 at end of 1983/4.

3) - The MSC Disablement Resettlement Services and Blind Persons Resettlement Officers provide specialist job-finding help for disabled people. Through them, and through general Jobcentre services, 72,00 disabled people were placed in work or on the Community Programme during 1984/5 compared with 69,000 in 1983/4.

4) - The MSC also provides financial help. Some 4,500 disabled people received direct financial or practical assistance at a total cost of £2.6 million in 1984/85. Such help is given in a variety of ways. For example:

a. A grant of up to £6,000 to help towards the adaption of employers' premises or equipment to enable them to employ a disabled person, e.g. a switchboard can be adapted to accommodate a blind operator.

b. Fares to Work Scheme which offers help up to a weekly maximum of £60, to registered disabled people who are unable to use public transport to get to work because of their disability and who therefore need extra costs.

c. A Job Introduction Scheme whereby a grant of £45 per week is offered for a fixed interval - usually 6 weeks but sometimes 13 - after the placement of a disabled person in a new job.

d. A Special Aid Scheme which aims to lend the equipment necessary for disabled people to take the opportunity of a job. Last year 1,884 aids to employment were loaned to disabled workers.

The Government's Fit for Work Award Scheme provides recognition to those employers who have demonstrated an outstanding record in employing disabled people. The importance the Government attach to this is shown by the fact that the Prime Minister herself attended last year's national reception for award winners.

(iii) Financial Help for Disabled People

The Government gave a commitment in the Conservative Manifesto 'to protect the most vulnerable members of our society'. This commitment has more than been honoured.

Total Expenditure on benefits for long-term sick and disabled people has increased by 35 per cent in real terms between 1978-9 and 1984-5. There has also been a substantial increase in the numbers of recipients of certain benefits as a result of Government measures to widen the entitlement and increase the take-up.

Invalidity Benefit. In November 1980 invalidity benefit was raised by 5 percentage points less than prices because, unlike the retirement pension, it was tax free. In the Autumn Statement, the Chancellor announced that this abatement would be restored from November 1985.

The Severe Disablement Allowance. The Health and Social Security Act 1984 introduced a new Severe Disablement Allowance (SDA) to replace the non-contributory invalidity pension (NCIP) and the separate housewives' non-contributory invalidity pension (HNCIP).

It is expected that SDA will give over £20 a week to an additional 20,000 people at a cost of £20 million initially.

The Attendance Allowance has increased by more than the rise in prices between November 1978 and November 1984. This non-taxable benefit is payable to a person who is severely disabled physically or mentally and requires frequent attention or continual supervision.

The Invalid Care Allowance, which had previously been paid to relatives (other than married women) who are looking after disabled people in receipt of the attendance allowance, was in July 1981 extended to those carrying out this service who are not relatives. Some 2,000 people were expected to benefit. The amount a recipient of invalid care allowance can earn before affecting his or her allowance was increased, in November 1982, from £6 to £12. To extend this to all married women would cost £60 million net a year.

The Mobility Allowance, is now £20 a week, double the amount of £10 a week when Labour left office; since April 1982 it has been tax free. The number of beneficiaries has doubled since 1978-9.

(iv) Opportunities for participation and integration

The Government endorsed this major theme of the International Year of Disabled People in 1981. Priority is being given in health and personal social services to enabling the disabled to be cared for in the community. For example, joint financing between health and local authorities which has this as one of its aims has increased to nearly £100 million this year. The desire for integration is reflected in legislative measures such as the Education Act 1981 which should lead to greater integration of disabled children in ordinary schools. The Government has also

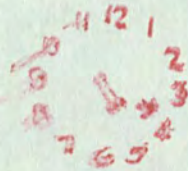
attached great importance to improving access for disabled people in public buildings. It has brought forward an amendment to the Building Regulations to certain categories of new buildings, and has funded the establishment of an independent Access Committee for England to provide awareness of the needs of disabled people.

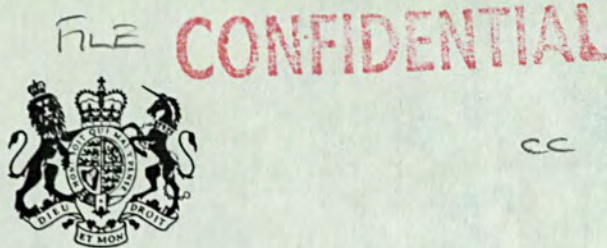
Conclusion

All Governments and parties care about disabled people. That undoubtedly includes the hard Left leaders of the GLC. But this Conservative Government is committed to policies which will provide the prosperity to create the jobs and pay for the benefits to help disabled people. Encouragement of fair but flexible employment practices; more help to train and provide opportunities for disabled people in work; and increased help for those who could not otherwise cope - these are the achievements of a Government which doesn't just say it cares but shows it.

JAC/PC  
7.5.85

8 MAY 1985





DA

cc Bingham

10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

2 May 1985

GLC Advertising

The Prime Minister has seen a copy of Alan Davis' letter to you of 25 April commenting on my letter of 22 April. She accepts that for COI to prepare an advertisement responding to the one by the GLC would be inconsistent with the approach the Government is setting out in its evidence to the Widdicombe inquiry.

Nevertheless, she hopes that other ways of countering misleading GLC advertising will continue to be sought and she has noted the suggestion that Central Office should circulate a speaking note to London Conservative MPs. Government supporters should seek out opportunities in the newspapers and on radio and television to put right misrepresentations of the kind referred to in Mr. Clark's letter of 18 April.

I am copying this letter to Alan Davis (Department of the Environment) and Steve Godber (Department of Health and Social Security).

TS

(Andrew Turnbull)

Miss Judith Rutherford,  
Department of Employment.

**CONFIDENTIAL**

MC



Parliamentary Under  
Secretary of State

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LONDON SW1

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Telephone Direct Line 01-213..... 6670

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NBPM AT 2/5

This crossed with my letter  
of 2/5. Told Judith Rutherford  
I was content. No further reply

AT  
2/5

2 May 1985

Dear Andrew,

Thank you for your letter of 22 April, I apologise for the delay in my reply. Mr Clark has considered the best way of rebutting the GLC's advertisements on the employment of the disabled. He very much favours the preparation of a speaking note for MPs. Following my telephone call with you last week, I hope this will be acceptable.

Our draft speaking note has been sent to Conservative Central Office for comment. Robin Harris will send you a revised version this evening. I hope this is helpful.

Yours sincerely,  
Judith Rutherford

JUDITH RUTHERFORD  
Private Secretary

Manpower

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CONFIDENTIAL





10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

Prime Minister ①

I put to Departments your suggestion that COI might put out an advertisement to counter GLC's misrepresentation of the Government's record on the disabled.

Both DoE and Bernard think this is inconsistent with the submission the Government is putting to the Widdicombe inquiry. Instead Departments should find ways of getting the Government's views into newspaper articles and on radio and TV. Putting the points in the Clark's letter into a usable speaking note would help.

Agree?

Yes not

AT  
1/5



2 MARSHAM STREET  
LONDON SW1P 3EB  
01-212 3434  
My ref:

Your ref:

25 April 1985

Dear Judith

My Secretary of State has seen a copy of Andrew Turnbull's letter of 22 April to you about Mr Clark's letter to London MPs. He is concerned by the suggestion that COI might prepare an advertisement responding to the GLC one, because of the possible implications for the Widdicombe Inquiry if the Government were to respond in this way.

He wonders, therefore, whether a better way forward would be for Mr Clark to produce a speaking note based on his letter, which could be circulated to London Conservative MPs by Central Office. I am sending copies of this letter to Andrew Turnbull and Steve Godber.

Yours ever  
Alan Davis

ALAN DAVIS  
Private Secretary

Miss Judith Rutherford

26 APR 1985

