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cc PS/Mr Moss
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CMO
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Mr Maxwell
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Mr Treacy

Date: 27 October 1994

PS/Secretary of State (B&L)

NORTHERN IRELAND DEBATE - FUND FOR PEOPLE DISABLED BY VIOLENCE

1. The Secretary of State will be including in his speech a paragraph announcing the creation of a fund of £1m to help people with physical disabilities or psychiatric difficulties, and people needing bereavement counselling and support, incurred during the last 25 years of violence. This note provides some background and a line to take, should the Secretary of State be asked for more detail.

BACKGROUND

2. Although no systematic assessment has been carried out, there is some evidence that victims of violence may not always receive sufficient long-term care and support, after their initial treatment. There is a waiting list for wheelchairs and other aids; there is evidence of an increasing psychiatric workload resulting directly from violence; and there are regular calls from the public for more support for counselling bodies such as CRUSE.

It is intended that £1 million per year should be earmarked from the Government's overall allocation for community care (£71m in 1994/95, rising to £106m in 1995/96). These funds are distributed on a capitation basis to the four Health and Social Services Boards and they will be expected to set aside their share of £1m to devote to the victims of violence.

4. In practice, it is likely that the bulk of the fund would go, at least initially, towards the provision of more and better quality wheelchairs, and improving and extending the facilities at the Regional Disablement Centre at Musgrave Park Hospital in Belfast. We would also expect Boards to increase their grant aid to voluntary bodies such as CRUSE which offer long-term bereavement counselling and support.

LINE TO TAKE

5. If the Secretary of State is pressed on the point, he might say:

"It is essential that, as we look forward to the future, we do not forget the victims of the last 25 years. This special fund of £1 million which I have announced will allow the health and personal social services in Northern Ireland to build further upon the excellent work which they and voluntary bodies already do to support victims who have been scarred physically or mentally. For example, more can be done to enhance the facilities at the Regional Disablement Centre at Musgrave Park Hospital; more can be done to improve the services at a number of psychiatric centres; and more help can be given to voluntary bodies which provide counselling and support".

6. If more information is required, please contact me at 0232/524329 or Mr Treacy at 0232/524305.

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