

centres and the short stay hostel, the following additional service elements have since been brought into use: Malvern Day Hospital (February 1979); Evesham Day Hospital (March 1979); Droitwich Day Centre (May 1979); and the Kidderminster Day Centre (June 1979). Clearly, therefore, these facilities were nearing completion at the end of 1978.

Finally, it is to be doubted (optimism or not!) whether many who are concerned with the Worcester Development Project, either users of the facilities or those professionally involved would agree that the Project is 'apparently a poor return for 11 years work and for a vast expenditure of money'.

In any event, those who wish to find out what the Worcester Development Project is really all about and what the Report actually said can obtain copies from the DHSS, Mental Health Division A, Room C401, Alexander Fleming House, Elephant and Castle, London, SE1 6BY.

W. H. TRETOWAN

*Queen Elizabeth Hospital,
Birmingham.*

Cuts in the NHS

The following letter has been received from the Secretary of State in reply to that addressed to him by the President and referred to in the issue for December 1979, p 188.

DEAR PROFESSOR POND,

Thank you for your letter of 9 November about possible reductions in psychiatric services.

This Government has consistently promised to maintain spending on the National Health Service at previously

planned levels, and expenditure on the NHS next year will see a 3 per cent increase in real terms over the latest estimates for this year. However, in the current year our cash limit inheritance has caused some interim problems, and although we have given the health service as much protection as possible, some areas will find it hard to live within their limits and they may need to rationalize their services if economies cannot be made in other ways. The distribution of NHS resources locally is primarily a matter for Health Authorities, but I have indicated that I regard mental health as a national priority. The Government stands where the previous Government stood on policy development for mental illness and mental handicap services and firmly endorses the view of the 1971 and 1975 White Papers that we should aim for locally based integrated patterns of health and social services.

The Government expects that local authorities too will make their necessary savings in ways that as far as possible will protect the most vulnerable groups, and this includes the very frail elderly, the seriously disabled both physically and mentally, and children at risk.

My answer to your final paragraph is this: insofar as it is for me to make decisions about the distribution of NHS resources, I do want mental illness and mental handicap to continue to rate as priorities, even in a period of retrenchment.

Yours sincerely

PATRICK JENKIN
Secretary of State

Department of Health and Social Security

Forthcoming Events

The third term of the **MRCPsych Basic Science Course** began on 22 January and will run until 25 March 1980. Details: Secretary to Dr Weller, Charing Cross Hospital Medical School, 24 St. Dunstan's Road, London W6.

A one-day symposium on '**Psychiatry in the General Hospital**' will be held on 25 April 1980 at St James's University Hospital. Further details and application forms: Dr M. Y. Jardine, Department of Psychiatry, Clinical Services Building, St James's University Hospital, Leeds.

The fifth **Winnicott Conference** on 'Can Human Relationships Survive in Education?' will be held at Bedford College, London NW1. Details available from Mrs Joyce Coles, 1 Anne Mount, 44 Madeley Road, Ealing, London W5 2LU.

The newly-formed **British Association for the Study and Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (BASPCAN)** will hold a one-day discussion on 'The Boundaries of Child Abuse' at the Imperial College of Science and Technology, South

Kensington, on 12 March 1980. Information available from John Pickett, Honorary Secretary, 30 Bankfield Lane, Norden, Rochdale, OL11 5RS.

A three-day residential training course entitled '**Learning from Experience in Therapeutic Community Living**', organized by the Association of Therapeutic Communities, will take place from 25 to 27 April 1980. Designed for members and students who work in therapeutic communities. Details and application forms from: Graeme Farquharson, Henderson Hospital, 2 Homeland Drive, Sutton, Surrey SM2 5LT.

An intensive course in **Forensic Psychiatry** will be held under the auspices of Birmingham University Midland Centre for Forensic Psychiatry from 24 to 27 March 1980. Residential, and some non-residential, places available. Further details: Professor R. Bluglass, Forensic Psychiatry, All Saints Hospital, Birmingham B18 5SD.