

ALBERTBRIDGE ROAD DAY HOSPITAL

TELEPHONE No.
BELFAST 456007

225 Albertbridge Road.

Belfast, BT5 4PX

Your Ref.

Our Ref.

PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL

3 April 1991,

Mr Robert Ferguson,
Unit General Manager,
South & East Belfast Community Unit of Management,
Administration Building,
Purdysburn Hospital,
Saintfield Road,
BELFAST.

Dear Bob,

I have this morning received a letter from the Secretary of State, Mr Peter Brooke, in respect of the Inter-Party Talks to which the Alliance Party, and the other three constitutional parties agreed at the end of March. As you know I am the Leader of the Alliance Party.

In his letter Mr Brooke says '....we must all be prepared to clear our diaries for around three or four days a week throughout the talks.' If they proceed (without collapse) it is envisaged that they will last for some 10 weeks. Elsewhere in the letter he says '....we should aim to launch the formal talks process before the end of April.'

At present this information is all confidential, however I felt that I must write immediately to you because while until now my political involvement has been able to be kept out of the six sessions for which I am contracted to the Unit, this will be impossible, if, as now looks likely the 'talks process' gets under way, at this intensity.

As Party Leader, I will have to participate fully in the talks process. If it is agreed all round that this level of time commitment is necessary, I should feel compelled to give it. The only way that I can see to do this, is to request that I be permitted to take absence/s without pay. In order to minimize the effect on the service I would like to try to do this, only in so far as necessary. For example, if possible I would try continue to work **three** of my **six** sessions during the period. If this was impossible I should try to make another workable arrangement.

-2-

Of course it is also entirely possible that the whole talks process could collapse before it starts, or indeed shortly after, but I have to try to make plans as best I can.

I appreciate that such a request places you in a difficult position, and no less so because it is so provisional, but I felt that I should try to give you what information I had, as soon as possible. I would of course make appropriate arrangements with my colleagues to ensure the care of the patients, and the service as a whole, throughout. If you would like to have a chat with me, I should be most happy to come along.

I will try to keep you informed of developments, and very much hope that as Manager you will feel that it is possible to facilitate me in this situation.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Dr John T Alderdice
CONSULTANT PSYCHOTHERAPIST/HON LECTURER