

To: 1. Mr Canavan
2. Rachel Woodley
(APS/MS (H))

From: Mr M H Arthur
HS1A
Room 506 EH
X GRO-C

Date: 21st November 1989

MEETING WITH HAEMOPHILIA SOCIETY ON 22 NOVEMBER

1. You asked for additional background note on the Vaccine Damage Payments Scheme and the Family Fund.

Vaccine Damage Payments Scheme

2. These payments are not compensation, as was made clear during the passage of the Act in 1979. They are to help ease the present and future financial burden placed on disabled people and their families by vaccine damage. The present level of the single payment is £20,000.
3. Not only does vaccination provide protection for the individual, but it is a safeguard to public health generally, and in line with WHO's aim to eliminate seven specific diseases from the European region by the year 2000. It is therefore public health policy to promote vaccination and the remote risk of injury resulting from it is recognised by the special scheme.
4. Individuals retain the right to seek compensation through the Courts on grounds that negligence led to the vaccine related injury.

Family Fund

5. Payments from the Family Fund are not compensation either, since payments are subject to a means test, (where family income is over £12,000 p.a. help is justified closely). The Fund is administered by the Joseph Rowntree Memorial Trust which was established in 1973.
6. Announced in the midst of the thalidomide crisis, the Fund was initially to give financial help to families with a severely congenitally disabled child(ren) while the child was at home. The term was later extended to include non-congenitally disabled children.
7. An interdepartmental review of the Fund in 1979 concluded that the existing arrangements were the most suitable in the

absence of a general disability allowance for children.

8. In the 1988/89 financial year, the Family Fund gave out 36,000 payments, 5,100 of which were to families applying for the first time. The total amount given to families was £8.1m (average payment £226). In total some £67m has been distributed to 89,000 families.
9. The objectives of the Family Fund have remained broadly constant over its 15 years of operation. The main needs met by the Fund are close to those already provided by the Macfarlane Trust, e.g. washing machines, clothing, bedding, holidays for the family, etc.

CC

Mr Wilson	MCA
Dr Pickles	MED ISD
Dr Rejman	" "
Mr Powell	SOL B3
Mr Dobson	HS1
Mr Cutowski	MCA
Mr McGlinn	WELSH OFFICE
Mr Panton	SHHD
Mr Walker	NI

GRO-C: Mr M H Arthur