

Graham Evans MP
House of Commons
London. SW1A 0AA.

Thank you for your letter of 7 December 2012, enclosing correspondence from your constituent Mr **GRO-A**

Decisions regarding the current payments in respect of HIV were made by the previous Government. The review that we conducted in the autumn of 2010 was focused on the system of payments in respect of hepatitis C infection. All of the decisions regarding payments for hepatitis C that were made as part of the review, were based on an expert review of the clinical and scientific evidence base on the spectrum and impact of disease associated with hepatitis C infection. This is explained in sections 4 and 5 of the report of the review of the support available to individuals infected with hepatitis C and/or HIV by NHS-supplied blood transfusions or blood products and their dependants. Copies of the report can be found on the Department of Health website at:
http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_4130917.

In relation to Mr **GRO-A** first point. The advice of the experts, as summarised on page 58, was that progression to cirrhosis or liver cancer has a substantial impact on both quality of life and life expectancy.

In relation to Mr **GRO-A**'s second point. The advice of the experts, summarised on page 57 of the report, was that there are a range of symptoms associated with chronic hepatitis C infection and some loss in quality of life, and that prior to the development of cirrhosis, therapy is able to clear the virus in the majority of recipients.

In relation to Mr **GRO-A**'s third point all decisions regarding the Skipton Fund eligibility criteria were made by Ministers.

In relation to Mr **GRO-A** fourth point. It is not known exactly how many people in the stage 1 category have died, as neither the Skipton Fund Limited, nor the Department of Health, are routinely notified of these deaths. Data provided by the Skipton Fund suggests that 305 recipients of Skipton Fund stage 2 payments may have died between 2004, when the Skipton Fund started operating, and 23 November 2012. However, there are a number of uncertainties in this figure. It includes some estimated dates of death and a further 203 stage two beneficiaries whose status is unknown. This is because the Skipton Fund did not maintain regular contact with beneficiaries before the introduction of regular payments in 2011, and no longer has up to date contact details for them.

I hope that Mr **GRO-A** finds this information useful.

ANNA SOUBRY