

PS(PH)

From: Jill Taylor
PH6.6

Date: 7 January 2002

Cc: Mary O'Mahony PH6
Vicki King PH6.6
Charles Lister PH6.6
Robert Finch PH6.6
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**PO0001435 – SYLVIA HEAL MP
MEETING WITH MANOR HOUSE GROUP**

The issue

1. The Manor House Group (MHG) have asked to meet with you to discuss the issues surrounding compensation for haemophiliacs infected with hepatitis C through NHS blood products although it is likely other areas affecting haemophiliacs (eg the unknown risks from vCJD) will arise. PS(L) last met with MHG in December 2000.
2. The Manor House Group was formed about 8/9 years ago as a campaigning and self help group for haemophiliacs with hepatitis C. The membership is UK-wide but mainly in the Midlands and North-West. The Group broke away from the Haemophilia Society because they did not think the Society was pursuing vigorously enough the matter of compensation for haemophiliacs infected with hepatitis C.
3. During 2001 they have remained very active in campaigning for compensation and have been working with another group - Haemophilia Action UK. In the Spring MHG joined them in a protest march on Downing Street, Richmond House and Parliament demanding compensation.

Compensation for Haemophiliacs with hepatitis C

4. Following meetings with officials in September and November 2001 John Hutton agreed that compensation was not appropriate. This conclusion is supported by Health Ministers in the devolved administrations.
5. Ministers have made clear in numerous letters, PQs and debates in both Houses that:

"The technology to make blood clotting products free from hepatitis C in sufficient quantities to treat people with haemophilia in the UK was not possible until the mid 1980s and it was not until 1987 that there was positive proof of means of eliminating the virus. As soon as the technology became available to make blood products free from hepatitis C, the NHS introduced it. There is no legal liability to justify compensation for people with haemophilia and hepatitis C."

This was also the view of the previous Government.

6. The Haemophilia Society also plan to approach you early in the New Year for a meeting on compensation. Over the past few months they have been developing a suggested scheme which they will be lobbying Ministers to introduce.

7. Parliamentary interest surrounding all issues affecting haemophiliacs remain high, e.g compensation, demands for a public inquiry, treatment with recombinant clotting factors and vCJD. An EDM supporting these aims has been signed by 50 Members, and the subject was raised in a number of adjournment debates last year. There is also a newly formed All Party Group on Haemophilia

Conclusion

8. The Manor House Group is a small but vocal group of haemophiliacs and their relatives all directly affected by hepatitis C. In organisational terms they are fairly ineffective but they are driven by anger at the injustice they feel has been perpetrated by the refusal to compensate. Any meeting with them will be difficult because of their strength of feeling and the fact that we have nothing to offer. As the request has been made by an MP, we advise that you agree to meet the Group. However there is no need to meet them quickly.




7. A draft reply to Sylvia Heal MP is attached.

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PO PS(L) - Reference PO001435
Request to Action Officer (Person responsible for the correspondence)
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A REPLY IS REQUIRED BY NO LATER THAN 17:00 HOURS ON 07/01/2002

Minister Replying:	PS(PH)	Correspondent:	SYLVIA HEAL MP
Keyword:	Blood Products/Safety/ Transfusion/Supply	Constituency:	HALESOWEN & ROWLEY REGIS
Service First Target	21/01/2002	Party:	LAB
		Constituent:	Mr David Tonkin
To:	Jill Taylor/HSD7/DOH/GB@GRO-C Charles Lister/HSD2/DOH/GB@GRO-C		
cc:	Mary O'Mahony/PH6/DOH/GB@GRO-C Robert Finch/HSD7/DOH/GB@GRO-C		
From:	CN=LN1006/OU=SERVERS/O=DOH/C=GB		
Subject:	PO PS(L) (Ref No. PO001435) from SYLVIA HEAL MP: Reply Due 7/1/2002 -		

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