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A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Edwina Hart'.

Following the previous Government's decision to bring forward a review of the Skipton Fund from 2014 to 2010, I have been considering the case for continuing with this course of action.

I have decided to adopt a different approach and have asked officials to initiate a short review of some aspects of provision and support for those affected by contaminated blood. The terms of reference for the review are attached to this letter. Some aspects of the review are relevant to England only; others will touch on matters that have wider implications, such as the level of payments made to those infected with hepatitis C. Please let me know if you wish to participate in the latter aspects of the review. If not, I plan to proceed on an England-only basis. I will nevertheless consult with you on any recommendations which touch on matters for which you, in your area, have responsibility.

This will be an internal review, drawing on external expertise. I cannot justify the expense of a fully independent external review. It will also be rapid: I want to be in a position to announce my intentions before Christmas.

I have taken this decision within the wider context of a Judicial Review Judgment in April 2010, which requires me to remake the decision on Lord Archer's recommendation 6(h) that payments to those affected by contaminated blood receive payments on a par with those made in the republic of Ireland. I expect to announce my decision on this recommendation on 14 October, and intend to announce the wider review at the same time.

I have asked my officials to keep yours informed as the review progresses.

I am writing in similar terms to Nicola Sturgeon MSP and Michael McGimpsey MLA.

Foot wales

GRO-C

ANNE MILTON

Terms of Reference

1. To review the following aspects of provision and support for those affected with HIV and/or hepatitis C via NHS-supplied contaminated blood and blood products.
 - a. to review the level of ex-gratia payments made to those infected with hepatitis C, including:
 - the consideration of financial support for their dependants;
 - the eligibility date for entry to the current scheme;
 - comparison with the ex-gratia payments made in the UK to those infected with HIV (and their dependants);
 - b. to review the mechanisms by which the ex-gratia payments for HIV and hepatitis C are made;
 - c. to consider the provision of insurance for those infected, (having regard to similar access available to other groups) including:
 - life assurance cover;
 - mortgage protection cover;
 - travel insurance;
 - d. to consider the issue of prescription charging for those infected;
 - e. to review the provision of, and access to, nursing and other care services in the community for those infected.
2. To develop options arising from the above, and make recommendations to Ministers for their consideration by the end of the year.

