

Caroline

overnight
please

Are you content with the proposed
statement?

To: PS(PH)

From: Sophie Coppel

13 December 2005

GRO-C

Cc: Dani Lee
Paul Richards
William Connon
Kim Norman
Jon Hibbs
Jane Dwelly
Sophie Coppel
Elisabeth Vanderstock

BBC 10 O'CLOCK NEWS REPORT ON CONTAMINATED BLOOD PRODUCTS

Issue

The BBC are planning on broadcasting a news item around the issue of imported blood products from the USA in 1970s and the use of 'skid-row' blood donors. The people who received these blood products were all infected by hepatitis C and there is a strong lobby demanding a public inquiry and compensation.

It is likely that this item will appear on the 10 o'clock news on Thursday although as there is no news hook, it could be broadcast on another day.

Media Centre have prepared a DH statement to be used in response which has been agreed with policy (attached for your information).

A DH spokesperson said:

"We are aware that during the 1970s, blood products were sourced from so called 'skid row' donors in the US. These imported blood products from the US contained plasma pooled from many thousands of donors, which was normal practice at the time. Only one donation needs to carry the virus to infect the whole batch. Donor screening for hepatitis C was introduced in the UK in 1991 and this marked a major advance in microbiological technology, which could not have been implemented before this time.

"An ex-gratia payment is available to every person who was alive on the 29 August 2003 and whose hepatitis C infection was due to NHS treatment with blood or blood products received before September 1991. These payments aim to help alleviate the suffering of people living with inadvertent hepatitis C infection.

"We are aware that some people would like the Government to set up a public inquiry into this issue. We have great sympathy for those infected with hepatitis C and have considered the call for a public inquiry very carefully. However, the Government does not accept that any wrongful practices were employed and, therefore, there is no justification for a public inquiry"

Are you content with this statement?

car
we say so eh
hello Dan this
"acknowledging - good to have
better technology help
card -

DHSC0041162_049_0001