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## **LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**

WRITE TO: THE EDITOR, STRABANE CHRONICLE, 4 CASTLE ST, STRABANE, CO. TYRONE

### **Infected blood payments welcomed**

INTERIM payments of no less than £100,000 will be paid to Northern Ireland beneficiaries of the Infected Blood Payment Scheme, which will include people who became infected with Hepatitis C or HIV as a result of NHS-supplied contaminated blood, as well as bereaved spouses and partners registered on the scheme.

The use of contaminated blood and blood products in the 1970s and 1980s was a tragedy for everyone involved and I am very aware of the financial hardships and suffering endured since then.

In my time as Health Minister, I have met with a number of people who have been either directly infected or affected by contaminated blood and have heard first-hand the devastating impact it has on their lives. The confirmation on interim payments is to be welcomed and my Department has been working with counterparts in Westminster to ensure that the payments will be made at pace.

The interim payments confirmed follow the recommendation made by Independent Public Inquiry chair, Sir Brian Langstaff QC last month following oral evidence from Sir Robert Francis QC.

**Robin Swann**  
Health Minister