

LIE 10
f (CHARLES DOBSON
FILE)



Mr R Anderson Cowe
Vice Chairman
The Haemophilia Society
123 Westminster Bridge Road
LONDON
SE1 7HR

CC. Mr Heppell
Mr Dobson EHF.
Mr Powell SA3B
Mr Canavan
Mr Sands
Mrs Baxter
Mrs Delyon
Mr Watkinson,
Richmond House
79 Whitehall
London SW1A 2NS
Telephone 071 210 3000
From the Secretary of
State for Health

26 NOV 1990

In Mr Anderson Cowe.

Thank you for your letter of 3 November and for your kind remarks made about my appointment to this post.

I fully accept, of course, what you tell me about the Society's position on the current litigation.

But perhaps in turn I might make the Government's position clear. Those taking legal action are of course entirely free to do so, if they believe they are entitled to compensation on grounds of negligence. But it is their own choice. The Government has not encouraged them to take such action. Indeed, by providing financial help totalling £34 million for HIV infected haemophiliacs and their families, with an undertaking to keep the sum available under review, we have shown that it is not necessary to take legal action to secure financial help.

I have taken careful note of the other points made in your letter. In particular I understand the point you are making about the way we feel obliged to put this very sad issue in the context of NHS services more generally. But for the reasons set out in the Department's published response to Mr Justice Ognall, I do not believe it is possible to deal with this issue in isolation. However you look at it the resources available for health care in this country are finite and I am bound to take account of the impact of any decisions on this particular issue on the provision of health care generally.



I also understand the point that you are making about the possible role of an intermediary. I am doubtful if this would be a helpful way forward. But if you wanted to let me have more details of what you have in mind, I would of course be ready to consider the idea.

GRO-C

WILLIAM WALDEGRAVE