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Follow-up briefing for the APPG Meeting Thursday 10th November

Background to establishing the Skipton Fund Appeals Panel

Timetable

- It was announced by press notice on 3 June 2004 that applicants would have the right of appeal.
- A consultation exercise was undertaken with key stakeholders on the composition of the panel including with the DA's.
- This exercise was not completed until Spring 2005.
- The initial focus was on making payments and finalising the Agency Agreement before putting the appeals procedures in place
- Very limited departmental resources have delayed completion of the appeals process.

Appointments

- It has still not been confirmed that the NHS Appointments Commission will be able to take on this work
- The main question is whether they can take on the Skipton Fund as decisions made by the Trustees and not the SofS for Health.
- If the Appointments Commission cannot handle the appointments then we will have to identify a suitable external agency.
- Whoever handles the appointments, it is likely to be some months before the panel members are appointed and in post
- The job descriptions will have to agreed, adverts placed and people interviewed and appointed, which we anticipate could take several months.
- Again limited staff resources have hindered the development of the appeals procedures

Scottish Changes

- The Scottish amendment allows relatives and dependents to make a claim on behalf of a deceased person, who had not registered a claim before 5th July 2004, when the Skipton Fund became operational
- In the rest of the UK, under the existing scheme, people infected by Hep C through NHS treatment, must have registered a claim before that date if, following their subsequent death, payments are to be made to their estate.
- If this change were to be introduced in, the rest of the UK no legislation would be required as SofS has the necessary powers.
- The Scots estimate that the numbers involved will be very low (estimated at five additional claims in Scotland) and therefore the financial cost should be relatively low.
- We could implement the change very quickly once a decision has been reached. It would be a largely administrative change for the Fund.
- We would suggest that any change is simply posted on the Skipton Fund website and that there is no need for any further announcement.
- Given our experience of the various stakeholders, it is inevitable that any change would be interpreted as the rest of the UK following the Scots lead, which was the perception when the Skipton Fund was established.

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