

GRO-C

16/11

Mr C Joyce

AIDS

By Mr Ghagan's minute of 15.11.84, PS(L) asked for an update on an AIDS screening test in blood donation.

The NBTS is not yet screening blood for evidence of AIDS infection. A test has been developed and will be in use in a pilot trial at one Regional Transfusion Centre very shortly. At the same time arrangements are being made with industry to scale-up production of test reagents so that a British test is widely available for use as soon as possible.

It is not yet possible to forecast accurately the costs of such testing, which would depend amongst other things on the extent to which it is applied, but it is of the order of magnitude of £2m per annum. (MS(H) has decided that allocation from Central Reserves would be inappropriate; funding would therefore have to come from Regional Health Authorities existing budgets.)

As well as technical problems, there are numerous medical and ethical implications of such testing, and these are being examined by the Working Group on AIDS set up under the Advisory Committee for the NBTS. The first meeting of the Working Party is being held tomorrow.

GRO-C

26 November 1984

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cc

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Mr Arthur - for file ✓