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# Extra £20 million for infected blood support

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**Scotland Health and Community Care**

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## Key recommendations of independent group accepted.

Financial support for people affected by infected NHS blood and blood products will be strengthened with an extra £20 million investment over the next three years.

The announcement came as the Scottish Government accepted the key financial recommendations of the independent Financial Review group looking at the issue.

The group, involving patient and family representatives, was set up by Health Secretary Shona Robison following the Penrose Inquiry into infected NHS blood, which reported last year. The group was tasked with recommending how to improve the level of support on offer to people who contracted hepatitis C and HIV through infected NHS blood and blood products in the 1970s and 80s.

Today the Scottish Government also confirmed a new Scottish scheme will be established for people who became infected with HIV and hepatitis C after treatment in Scotland, and their dependents. Current support packages for those affected by infected blood are delivered through UK-wide schemes.

The recommendations, which will be implemented in full in Scotland, are:

- Annual payments for those with HIV and advanced hepatitis C will be increased from £15,000 a year to £27,000 a year, to reflect average earnings
- Those with both HIV and hepatitis C will have annual payments increased from £30,000 to £37,000 to reflect additional health needs
- When a recipient dies, their spouse or civil partner will continue to receive 75 per cent of their annual payment
- Those infected with chronic hepatitis C will receive a £50,000 lump sum payment (previously £20,000), meaning an additional £30,000 for those who have already received the lower payment
- A new Support and Assistance Grants scheme will be established in Scotland, to administer and provide more flexible grants to cover additional needs. Scottish Government funding for this scheme will be increased from £300,000 to £1 million per year

Ms Robison said:

"Infected blood is one of the most terrible chapters in the history of our NHS. Those affected have suffered dreadful impacts on their health, life expectancy and quality of life, including financial losses. It is quite right that they and their families are given adequate support to help them cope with consequences for which they are entirely blameless.

"We acknowledge that many people affected by this issue believe the financial support packages on offer do not reflect the impact of these infections, not just for them but also their families.

"With this in mind, I established a financial review group so patient groups and others could input into how the new reformed schemes will work. I am pleased today to be able to accept the key financial recommendations in full.

"This will mean a substantial package of additional financial support, recognising the hardships many face.

"I have today accepted the group's key financial recommendations, and we will move forwards on this basis. I am also clear that this is not the end of the process, and that there will be on-going work with the patient groups on this matter.

"We are now working with the UK Department of Health, and the existing UK-wide support schemes, to provide the additional financial support as soon as possible and manage a smooth transition to our new Scottish scheme."

**GRO-A** Chair of Haemophilia Scotland, said:

"This announcement is a watershed moment for everyone involved in this long running campaign. There are three key elements of the announcement which are particularly welcome.

"Firstly, the increase in on-going support for those who are most unwell means that we can have some confidence that they will no longer be living in poverty as a result of their infections.

"Secondly, introducing pensions for widows and widowers is an important recognition that they suffered losses in their own right and that they should have a secure future.

"Thirdly, the upfront payment of an additional £30,000 to all those who will not receive on-going support goes some way towards recognising that everyone who has lived with these infections has suffered physically, mentally, or financially.

"No scheme can truly make up for the loss of life, and health, caused by this disaster. The Cabinet Secretary has acknowledged that there is more to be done once these schemes move to Scotland. However, today, we have made historic progress.

"This new, Scottish, approach stands in stark contrast to the deeply concerning proposals currently being consulted on south of the border."

## Background

Infected blood products infected thousands of people in hospitals and clinics across the world during the 1970s and 1980s. The whole of the UK's NHS was impacted.

An estimated £10.5 million will be made available in 2016/17 and 2017/18 and £6.5 million in the years after that. This compares with a current budget of £2.5 million each year – an additional £20 million over the first three years.

As recommended by the group, the Scottish Government will aim to deliver the new scheme through a single body so those affected no longer need to apply to more than one body for funding. In the interim, the Scottish Government is working with the UK Department of Health and existing support schemes with the aim of delivering increased financial support through some of the existing schemes during the 2016-17 financial year. A further announcement on the timescales for implementation will be made in due course.

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