

3178

FROM THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH,  
SOCIAL SERVICES AND PUBLIC SAFETY  
Michael McGimpsey MLA



Department of  
**Health, Social Services  
and Public Safety**

[www.dhsspsni.gov.uk](http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk)

AN ROINN

**Sláinte, Seirbhísí Sóisialta  
agus Sábháilteachta Poiblí**

MÁNNYSTIRE O

**Poustie, Resydènter Heisin  
an Fowk Siccar**

Rt Hon Andrew Lansley MP  
Secretary of State for Health  
Department of Health  
Richmond House  
79 Whitehall  
LONDON  
SW1A 2NS

Castle Buildings  
Stormont Estate  
BELFAST BT4 3SQ  
Tel: 028 90 520642  
Fax: 028 90 520557  
Email: [private.office@dhsspsni.gov.uk](mailto:private.office@dhsspsni.gov.uk)

Your Ref: IMC2600

Our Ref: COR/222/2011

22<sup>nd</sup> March 2011

*Dear Andrew,*

Further to my correspondence dated 11 February and your response on the 22 February, I am again writing to you about the circumstances surrounding the publication of the Contaminated Blood Review report published by the Department of Health and announced by you to the UK Parliament on 10 January.

I have spoken to Edwina Hart and Nicola Sturgeon and we all share the same concerns on the lack of engagement by the Department of Health (DH) with the three devolved administrations on the review and recommendations for additional financial support.

Despite a commitment in Anne Milton's letter of 13 October 2010 that I would be consulted on any recommendations which touched on matters for Northern Ireland, I was not kept fully informed with developments of the review, nor did I have an opportunity to comment on the likely recommendations for additional support and their associated costs.

In December 2010, similar to other Devolved Administrations, I did receive a copy of the draft Medical Expert Working Group report which reviewed the natural history of the Hepatitis C infections which in due course became an Annex to the final Report. However, this gave no indication of the likely outcome of the Review overall. Only in December 2010, did your officials share information on the provisional financial implications with my officials. This information also did not give any indication of policy direction you were likely to take. Repeated requests were made for sight of the final review report or for an understanding of its likely content. This situation has clearly undermined the Memorandum of Understanding between the UK Government and Devolved Administrations.



The support provided to those affected by contaminated blood is currently a UK-wide arrangement which can only be changed by the agreement of all UK Health Departments. You took the decision unilaterally to implement the recommendations of the Review and this has put additional and unexpected financial pressures on the Department of Health and Social Service and Public Safety's (DHSSPS) budget without our prior agreement. The Statement of Funding Policy (agreed between HM Treasury and Devolved Administrations) is quite clear where the financial responsibility lies in these circumstances. It states "where decisions taken by UK departments or agencies lead to additional costs for any of the devolved administrations, where other arrangements do not exist automatically to adjust for such extra costs, the body whose decision lead to the additional cost will meet that cost".

The work undertaken as part of the Review recognises clearly the additional costs resulting from a change to the current support arrangements. However, your Department took decisions which had financial implications without proper or prior consultation and, most importantly, formal agreement with the DHSSPS, on the changes to these arrangements. In these circumstances, I must now seek your assurance, in line with the Statement of Funding Policy principles, that your Department will meet the additional costs involved for the individuals from Northern Ireland who access the Fund which we estimate to be £309k recurrently per annum and £1.4m to meet the one-off payments.

I am copying this letter to Nicola Sturgeon MSP, Edwina Hart AM, the Chief Secretary to the Treasury and the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland.



GRO-C

**Michael McGimpsey MLA**  
**Minister for Health Social Services and Public Safety**

