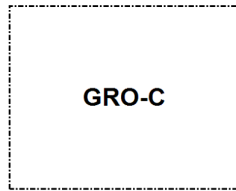


Sue Treakall



Devon. 

Thank you for your letter of 10 September 2012 to the Secretary of State for Health, regarding the work of Tainted Blood. I have been asked to respond on his behalf.

The government is deeply sorry about the events that led to the infection of so many people with HIV and hepatitis C, and has the utmost sympathy for all those affected.

As I expect you know, it has been the view of successive governments that after all this time, there is no justification for a public inquiry into the matters relating to NHS supplied contaminated blood or blood products in England. The relevant facts are already in the public domain. All relevant documents held by the Department of Health on blood safety, covering the period 1970 - 1985 (when heat treatment of clotting factor products was introduced), have now been published in line with the Freedom of Information Act. If any further documents from that period come to light, the Department will also publish them in line with the Freedom of Information Act.

The most important issue now is how best to support those affected. This Government has sought to improve the financial and other support that is available to them. On 10 January 2011, the former Secretary of State for Health announced a series of measures which established a much more coherent, comprehensive, and generous package of support than was in place previously.

There are no plans to conduct another review. However, the Department has put arrangements in place to consider potential changes to the Skipton Fund eligibility criteria, in the light of new and emerging scientific evidence on hepatitis C infection. On 29 November, there will be a

meeting with Anna Soubry, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Public Health and a group of experts to discuss the evidence on the natural history of hepatitis C that underpinned the 2010 review. I believe you will be attending this meeting. The Department's expert Advisory Group on Hepatitis will then keep the clinical and scientific evidence base under regular review.