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Subject: Hepatitis C

First, I think you have, in the light of all the other current pressures, done a heroic job in getting this submission together (and I don't think it is anything like as rough and ready as you made out in your minute of 22 December).

Dr. Metters has given you a number of helpful amendments, including the point about costs. I agree that, if it is at all possible, we should try and clarify that, exceedingly difficult though that may be.

My comments are general rather than specific drafting points..

In various places (paras.5 and 7, for example) we say that we have not yet done various things and this reads oddly against the comment in paragraph 3 that we have known about this issue for five years and have been expecting a campaign of this sort at any time. And yet we are caught unprepared apparently. We either need to explain this apparent contradiction or to make our lack of preparedness less obvious (if we can do so without telling fibs).

PARA 4 refers to various writs which are flying and we need to make the point that the NBA is getting its act together (?) to deal with these in a coordinated way rather than as one offs.

In paragraph (54) the kind of 'action' referred to in the penultimate sentence is unclear.

In paragraph 10, I find it difficult to make the link between 'prior to 1985' and 'prior to September 1991' and Ministers may find it so, too. I found paragraphs 15 and 20 extremely dense and hard to follow. Could it be put through the 'plain english' machine, please ?!

Para 19 - I dont see anyone on your copy addressee list who is from RDD.
Para 27 - the idea of piggy-backing on the Scots activity seems very sensible.

Finally, the Annexes. I found bits of them helpful , particularly parass 1, 6, 7 and 10 of Annex A. For the rest, I found them very heavy going and (to be frank) not all that helpful to the lay reader. I personally would import the key bits which are not already in the main submission into it from the Annexes and drop the annexes, while making it clear that they are availabe and have been sent to the Territorials. But Dr. Metters may feel that the annexes should travel in full with the main submission; if so, I would notr want to argue with him on that (or any other, come to that) score.