

PermSec - Contact with draft press release?

Mr Davey has contacted the Scottish Office, who are generally content, but Mr Davey doesn't think there is time to agree a joint press release. The NAO have been told we are content (and he is faxing a copy over to them). We have been asked for a *quick response on this*.
 Ms Wright PS/Perm Sec
 Mr Greenshields for ME

From: J A Thompson
 AIDS Unit

Date: 23 October 1991

cc: Mr Jex PS/MS(H)
 Ms White PS/CE
 Mr Heppell
 Mr Hale
 Mrs Firth
 Ms Moseley ID
 Ms Wears FA

I'm generally content, noting that V. Keppell's 2 points are being followed up. But I doubt if the press will be interested. I've suggested showing him to make it, perhaps, more palatable to him.

GRO-C

23/10

NAO REPORT ON HIV AND AIDS RELATED HEALTH SERVICES

1. The NAO Report, published today, has received a lot of publicity in the Press and on television and radio. Although the press release from the National Audit Office (attached) was in fact quite favourable as to what has been achieved in AIDS services in the Health Service, the main thrust of reporting has been to focus on underspending in the year 1989/90. In particular the focus has been around North East Thames RHA, who vired £8.5m from their AIDS allocation into their capital overspend in 1990.

2. Given that this somewhat partial reporting by the media amounts to a distorted view of the report, permission has been received from Treasury (exceptionally) to put out a Departmental press release. A draft is attached. This is entirely composed of material taken from the report itself, as of course the facts in the report are accepted. The point we are addressing is that the press coverage distorts the central thrust of the report.

3. We would appreciate the urgent agreement of Sir Christopher and Mr Greenshields for the ME to issuing this press release early this afternoon.

Ms Wright

GRO-C

I am content with the draft.

but I have asked to kill what is

(1) check with Mr Heppell's department, esp. husband, to see if they want to be a joint press release

(2) keep NAO in touch and see if they have any views on the wording
 S. Heppell

GRO-C 23.10.91

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DRAFT PRESS RELEASE ON NAO REPORT

The Department of Health today welcomed the report by the Comptroller and Auditor General on HIV and AIDS related services.

The report's central finding is that the Health Departments and the NHS have responded well to the emerging demands and uncertainties of the HIV and AIDS epidemic, and have developed innovative approaches. The report recommends a review of planning and funding systems to ensure full value for money in the future.

The report states that the Department has already taken steps to improve methods of allocating resources and monitoring expenditure, and that action has been taken to ensure that money which was underspent in 1989-90 has ~~been spent~~ on AIDS related services.

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used

The report ^{also} notes ^{action} ~~that some under-reporting of numbers of HIV positive people and people with AIDS has occurred, but that measures were being taken both nationally and locally to improve reporting levels of numbers of HIV positive people and those with AIDS~~

The report acknowledges that the Health Departments are addressing the effect of the NHS Reforms on funding and provision of NHS services.

Notes for Editors

The report refers to the financial year 1989-90, when the Department allocated £121m to Regions and Districts for treatment, care and prevention work. In 1990-91 £137m has been allocated. The use of the money is monitored by the AIDS (Control) Act reports. Each District reports to Region, who report to the Department.

Many of the areas where the NAO report make suggestions for improvement are already being addressed or have been addressed. These include:

- * Improved financial monitoring through the annual AIDS (Control) Act reports

- * For 1992/93, an improved methodology for allocating resources is planned

- * A working party on the implementation of the NHS reforms in the field of AIDS services has reported to the Management Executive.