

File

Mr Thomson.

IS/Mr MacKay

- Copies to: PS/SHEB
Mr Fraser
Mr Morrison
Mr Davies
Mr Roy, SIO

Mr MacKay

ACQUIRED IMMUNE DEFICIENCY SYNDROME (AIDS)
HEALTH EDUCATION

1. Mr MacKay may wish to know that DHSS are, with Ministerial agreement, to discuss with the Health Education Council the distribution and handling of a leaflet which the Council have prepared on AIDS as part of their current programme of work on the prevention of sexually transmitted diseases. A copy of a current draft of the leaflet is attached for Mr MacKay's information.
2. DHSS have been considering for some time the pros and cons of Departmental advice on this sensitive topic but have concluded that as advice has now been issued by several homosexual organisations and as the HEC have now prepared a leaflet a separate Departmental initiative would be wasteful and unnecessary and are content for the HEC leaflet to stand as the central advice.
3. Given its content any health education initiative in this area is bound to be highly sensitive and presentationally difficult. To have a constructive impact on homosexuals, it should avoid moral censure. On the other hand, any advice on this subject may be criticised by those who do not accept homosexuality. DHSS will be bearing all this in mind in their discussions with the HEC. They will be reporting back on the final draft and detailed distribution and handling arrangements when these have been drawn up. It is hoped that the leaflet will be ready for distribution towards the end of the year.
4. We do not think that the preparation of a separate leaflet for Scotland is justified. It should suffice if SHEG uses any HEC leaflets as they do in some other areas of activity.

GRO-C

Mrs E C G Craghill
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