

Mrs Craghill

Mr. Thompson 80

Mrs Seamount

Copies to: Dr Scott
Dr McIntyre
Dr Prentice

AIDS - HEALTH EDUCATION

I refer to your minute of 16 August. I have also seen the contributions from Dr Scott and Dr McIntyre.

As I think you are aware, this Division kept Mr MacKay informed about AIDS last year when the presenting issue was largely the risk of transmission through donated blood. I passed to him, under cover of my minute of 6 May 1983, material which DHSS had prepared for their Ministers and the Prime Minister. I sent you a copy at the time. We also showed him the leaflet which the Blood Transfusion Directors later produced. In the light of these precedents, I do not think you can avoid showing him the HBC leaflet. Even if you were minded to suppress it, there would be the possibility of unfavourable repercussions.

It is not really for me to comment on the leaflet, though I share the medical view of its prose style. I cannot resist making one comparatively minor point, and that is that the reference to "Central Africa" may be misleading in a British context - I suspect that it has been taken from American material. Central Africa to us surely means what are now Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe whereas the implicated area seems to run north from the Congo basin to the Sahara. Erstwhile inhabitants of the former area may well be found in Scotland, and be offended, whereas those of the latter will be extremely rare.

GRO-C

J G DAVIES
23 August 1984

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