

TUESDAY 23 OCTOBER 2007

Lord Jenkin of Roding asked Her Majesty's Government:

Why the Department of Health's response to the letter of 14 August from Mrs **GRO-D** of **GRO-C**, Suffolk, the widow of a National Health Service patient infected with contaminated National Health Service blood products, informed her that the Independent Public Inquiry into contaminated blood products headed by Lord Archer of Sandwell had ignored the Department's offer of a meeting with the Inquiry; when the Department's head of Blood Policy first saw Mrs **GRO-D** letter; when he informed Lord Archer of Sandwell of his view of the letter; under whose supervision the response was sent; and whether apologies have been offered both to the Inquiry and to Mrs **GRO-D** HL5488

LORD DARZI

I am very sorry that the reply from the Department to Mrs. **GRO-D** to her letter of 9 July was open to misinterpretation. The letter was prepared by the Customer Service Centre, using information supplied by the Department's blood policy team, but did not fully reflect the Department's dealings with the Archer inquiry. No criticism of the Archer inquiry team was intended in the reply of 14 August. An apology for the unfortunate wording of the original reply was sent to Mrs. **GRO-D** on 17 September and this was copied to the inquiry team.

Our officials are co-operating fully with the Archer inquiry team, and have met with them twice, on 25 April and 19 September. In addition, we are releasing copies of official documents from 1970-85 to assist their enquiries. It is expected that the final batch of documents will be released by the end of October.

Alf

GRO-C

I have to be at the ACP meeting at
2.00 pm - but can we meet after
Questioning?