

Our ref: TO00000224816

Mrs **GRO-A**

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Suffolk **GRO-A**

14 August 2007

Dear Mrs **GRO-A**

Thank you for your letter of 9 July to Alan Johnson about the contaminated blood enquiry. Due to her busy schedule, Ms Hewitt is unable to answer all her correspondence personally and your letter has been passed to me for reply.

The Government understands that those who were infected with hepatitis C and HIV want to know how it happened and why it could not have been prevented. However, the Government of the day acted in good faith, relying on the information available at the time. We have been open and transparent on this issue, ensuring that as much relevant information is in the public domain as possible, with numerous documents having been released under the Freedom of Information Act.

As you are aware, there is a non-Governmental inquiry underway, which is chaired by Lord Archer of Sandwell. Department of Health officials met with members of the inquiry team on 25 April to discuss how the Department may assist. In the months since April, the Department has suggested further meetings with the inquiry team, but as yet Lord Archer's team has not arranged to meet again.

In line with this policy of openness, and to address concerns raised following the return of documents previously considered missing from a firm of private solicitors, the Department reviewed all documents in relation to non-A, non-B hepatitis between the period 1970-1985. A copy of the Review has been sent to Lord Archer and placed in the library of the House.

The Review identified just over 4,600 official documents that are available, including those released with the Review. The Department proposes to release these documents in line with the Freedom of Information Act. As it will take some time to prepare this number of documents officials will release documents in batches at monthly intervals.

Yours sincerely,

GRO-C

Morven Smith
Customer Service Centre
Department of Health