

PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

PQ256698	2008/2009
Commons Ordinary Written	

To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what (a) correspondence and (b) meetings his Department has with the inquiry team of the independent public inquiry into contaminated blood products (a) prior to and (b) since the beginning of the inquiry; on which dates such meetings occurred; and if he will make a statement.

Target Date:	24/02/2009
For Answer on:	11/02/2009
Notice Paper Date:	10/02/2009
Notice Paper Page:	1704
MP (Party):	Jennifer Willott MP (Liberal Democrat)

DRAFT REPLY TO REACH PARLIAMENTARY BRANCH BY
12:00 12/02/2009

PARLIAMENTARY RELATIONS UNIT

FINAL MINUTE

To Parliamentary Relations Unit:

I confirm that the attached suggested reply has been drafted in accordance with the Departmental guidance. Drafted by:

Name	<i>Patrick Hennessy</i>	Building	<i>Wellington House</i>
		Room	<i>530</i>
Branch	<i>HIP-HP (ID&BP)</i>	Ext	
		Date	<i>12.2.09</i>

I confirm that the attached suggested answer has been approved in accordance with the Departmental guidance. Approved by (a member of the SCS):

Name	<i>Ailsa Wight</i>	Ext	GRO-C
Room	<i>524</i>	Building	
		Date	<i>12.2.09</i>

3. The following special points should be noted:

Written Answer

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Jennifer Willott MP (Cardiff Central) To ask the Secretary of State for Health, what (a) correspondence and (b) meetings his Department has with the inquiry team of the independent public inquiry into contaminated blood products (a) prior to and (b) since the beginning of the inquiry; on which dates such meetings occurred; and if he will make a statement. [PQ256698]

SUGGESTED REPLY

A search of Departmental records shows approximately 50 items of correspondence between the Department and the Independent Inquiry into Contaminated Blood and Blood Products.

Only one piece of correspondence dates from before the start of the Inquiry (27 March 2007). This was a letter from Lord Archer to the Secretary of State dated 16 February 2007.

Officials from the Department of Health attended four meetings with the Inquiry. These took place on 25 April 2007, 19 September 2007, 18 February 2008 and 12 June 2008. No meetings were held prior to the start of the inquiry.

The following table shows the main correspondence between the Department and the Inquiry team. The remaining items consisted of emails discussing administrative arrangements relating to meetings and the delivery of documents.

Date	Type	From	To	About
16/02/2007	Letter	Inquiry	DH - SofS	Inquiry being set up
30/03/2007	Letter	DH – MS(PH)	Inquiry	Reply to letter of 16/02/2007
10/02/2007	Email	DH	Inquiry	Email providing information on the chronology of screening of blood donors.
22/05/2007	Letter	DH – MS(PH)	Inquiry	Release of report <i>Review of documentation relating to the safety of blood products 1970 – 1985 (non-A, non-B hepatitis)</i>
14/06/2007	Documents	DH	Inquiry	Release of first tranche of 20 volumes of documents held by the department
10/07/2007	Documents	DH	Inquiry	Release of second tranche of 20 volumes

				of documents held by the department
01/08/2007	Documents	DH	Inquiry	Release of third tranche of 20 volumes of documents held by the department
22/08/2007	Letter	DH	Inquiry	Letter providing information on prion removal technologies
31/08/2007	Documents	DH	Inquiry	Archer supplied with copies of documents returned from private solicitors that had already been released in 2006
22/08/2008	Letter	Inquiry	DH	Reply to letter of 22/08/2007
05/09/2007	Documents	DH	Inquiry	Release of fourth tranche of 20 volumes of documents held by the department
18/09/2007	Email	DH	Inquiry	Clarifying an issue that arose with private office correspondence
26/10/2007	Documents and Letter	DH	Inquiry	Release of final tranche of 21 volumes of documents held by the department and a letter covering two documents that were being released following a review of FOI decision to withhold
02/01/2008	Documents	DH	Inquiry	Release of 6 documents following a review of FOI decision to withhold.
28/03/2008	Documents	DH	Inquiry	Release of 3 documents following a review of FOI decision to withhold.
01/04/2008	Documents	DH	Inquiry	Release of 3 documents following a review of FOI decision to withhold.
02/05/2008	Documents	DH	Inquiry	Release of 1 document following a review of FOI decision to withhold.
16/06/2008	Email	DH	Inquiry	Email providing information on the timetable for heat-treatment
08/10/2008	Letter and Documents	DH	Inquiry	Letter covering 10 documents released by the department
16/10/2008	Letter	Inquiry	DH	Reply to letter of 08/10/2008

Background

The MP is joint Secretary of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Haemophilia.

Lord Archer of Sandwell set up an independent inquiry in 2007 into the contamination of NHS blood and blood products with hepatitis C and HIV during the 1970s and 1980s. Officials have met Lord Archer's team on a number of occasions and supplied him with a large number of official documents. These documents are now available on the Department's website.

When officials last met Lord Archer in June 2008, he intimated that his report may be published in the autumn of last year. We have had no further information from Lord Archer as to the likely publication date, but there are some indications that it could be later this month. This is one of a number of PQs from Jenny Willott that appear to be anticipating the report.