

SofS45998

The Rt Hon The Lord Archer of Sandwell, Q.C.
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30 MAR 2007

Dear Peter,

Thank you for your letter of 16 February. Please accept my apologies for the delay in responding.

The Government has great sympathy for those infected with hepatitis C and, as I am sure you are aware, we have considered the need for an official public inquiry very carefully indeed. However, our view remains that this would not be justified and would not provide any further benefit to those affected.

Nevertheless, the Department is willing to assist you as far as we can; and an early meeting between officials here and yours might be helpful in this respect. In particular we are, of course, willing to cooperate with your team by sharing the results of our own review. Work has been underway within the Department, over the past few months to identify and review all the documents held relating to the safety of blood products between 1970 and 1985. A draft report on the analysis of the documentation is currently being compiled, and is expected to be completed shortly. My former colleague, Lord Warner has already agreed to send a copy of this report to Lord Jenkin and I would be very happy to arrange for you to receive a copy as well.

Furthermore, a large number of the documents referenced in this report are already in the public domain and consideration will be given to releasing the rest in accordance with the provisions of Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Best wishes,

GRO-C

PATRICIA HEWITT