



"Re: Fw: SECRETARY OF STATE VISIT - BIRMINGHAM - 11TH OCTOBER"

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William Connon

09/10/2007 12:15

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To: Rachel

cc: Patrick

bcc:

Subject: Re: Fw:

SECRETARY OF STATE VISIT - BIRMINGHAM - 11TH OCTOBER

Rachel,

I suggest we keep it very brief on Archer:

Lines to take

- The Government has great sympathy for those infected with hepatitis C and HIV.
- The Government has considered the call for a public inquiry very carefully. However, we believe the Government of the day acted in good faith, relying on the technology available at the time and therefore we do not consider that a public inquiry would provide any real benefit to those affected.
- Officials are fully cooperating with Lord Archer's Inquiry

Background

Lord Archer of Sandwell is chair of a non-governmental public inquiry into contaminated blood and blood products. The inquiry was opened on the 27th March 2007 and was estimated to take 3 to 4 months. We now expect this to be extended until the end of the year, at the earliest.

There are a number of haemophilia lobby groups who believe that there should be a government led public inquiry into the issue of contaminated blood products and hepatitis C. The Department's position that an inquiry is not necessary was not helped by the loss/destruction of some papers covering the period in question, about which we have been quite open.

Most patients with haemophilia treated with blood products (clotting factors) in the 1970s through to the mid 1980s were infected with hepatitis C virus (originally known as Non-A, Non-B hepatitis (NANBH)) and many with HIV/AIDS virus. It was not possible to produce effective clotting factors for the treatment of haemophilia that were free from that risk until 1985 when heat-treatment was introduced.

The Scottish National Party's manifesto included a commitment to a public inquiry into hepatitis C. At a meeting in the summer the Scottish health minister confirmed to interested parties that an inquiry would be set up in Scotland, but in order to avoid duplication of work they will wait the conclusion of Lord Archer's public inquiry before deciding on the scope of the inquiry. Legal advice is that the scope would have to be confined to Scottish issues.

Whilst DH officials are not appearing before the actual Inquiry we are cooperating with the Inquiry team and making all information available. DH is also working with Scottish officials on their proposed inquiry.

Happy to discuss

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Rachel Bell

Rachel Bell

09/10/2007 10:56

To: Triona
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Subject: SECRETARY OF STATE VISIT - BIRMINGHAM - 11TH OCTOBER
Re: Fw:

Good morning,

As you know I am compiling the briefing pack to support SoS visit to UHB on Thursday.

1 - Neil Moors / Triona Norman - have supplied me with an over-view of transplants, prose on the organ donation taskforce, briefing on the presumed consent issue and relevant transplant statistic. I have just request additional briefing on n organ donation systems and rates in other countries (as requested by private office).

2 - Henrietta - please would you supply briefing on the NHSBT Strategy and the impact on Birmingham - review of the National Blood Service supply chain and specialist services. I am looking for very concise briefing - a summary really - perhaps 1-2 pages. What sort of time do you think you could get this to me today? 2pm-ish?

3 - William - please would you supply a couple of paragraphs (1 page max) on the Archer Inquiry/Scottish Public Inquiry into contaminated blood. You thought it would be prudent to cover these issues.

I am aiming to compile the pack by close today and then circulate to contributors for comment. The pack must be back with private office by 12:00 tomorrow (Wed 10 Oct). Therefore, if you are able to get the remaining contribution to me by 3pm (latest) today - that would be very much appreciated.

Regards - Rachel

Rachel Bell
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