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*From the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State*

POH(6)5593/29

Archie Norman Esq MP

20 JAN 1999

Dear Archie

Thank you for your letter of 14 December to Tessa Jowell enclosing one from Mrs Colette Wintle of **GRO-C** Kent about the request for a special payment scheme for people with haemophilia infected with hepatitis C through NHS treatment.

I was sorry to hear that Mrs Wintle has been infected with hepatitis C through NHS treatment **GRO-C**. Ministers do appreciate that those who have been infected in this way, and their families, felt deep disappointment at the decision not to introduce a special payment scheme. When Frank Dobson gave the Government's decision he wrote to the Haemophilia Society explaining the reasons in full. He said that he had found the decision a very difficult one to make.

The Government's general policy is that compensation or other financial help to patients is only given to patients when the NHS or individuals working in it have been at fault. After looking at a number of different approaches to the question of special payments, and thinking long and hard about the issues involved, Ministers decided that they could not make an exception to that general policy in order to single out those with haemophilia infected with hepatitis C.

Although we could not reach the decision which the Haemophilia Society would have liked on special payments, we are offering constructive support for their forward looking Hepatitis C Youth Information and Support project which aims to meet the advice and information needs of young people. In the current year, and the next, we are providing the funds which the Society requested for the project and we will liaise closely with them as it progresses.

Yours

**GRO-C**

THE BARONESS HAYMAN