

## **RESTRICTED - POLICY**

**Mr Gallagher PS/SofS**

**From: Mr Guinness CA OPU**  
**Date: 15 April 1997**  
**Copies: Ms Fraser PS/M(H)**  
**Mr Fahy PS/PS(H)**  
**Ms Rogers PS/PS(L)**  
**Dr Shepherd PS/CMO**  
**Ms Christopherson PPD**  
**Dr Metters DCMO**  
**Mr Tinston NWRO**  
**Dr Winyard DHC**  
**Prof Ashton NWRO**  
**Mr Staniforth CAD**  
**Miss Mithani HP3**  
**Dr Rejman CA OPU2**  
**Mr Billinge PPD**  
**Miss Corrigan CA OPU2**  
**Dr King HP3C**  
**Mr Lamont NWRO**

### **TRANSMISSION OF HIV BY BLOOD**

1. As Secretary of State has heard from Dr Metters, 3 patients in the Liverpool area, 1 of whom has since died, have received blood components from a single donation given in August last year by a donor who was infected with HIV. The first case came to light when her blood was tested as a potential bone marrow recipient. She knows that she is HIV positive and how this occurred, and wants to avoid publicity. Her partner has been tested and is HIV negative. The second living patient was informed today that she may have been infected with HIV and she or her relatives may contact the media. The dead patient was HIV positive, but her relatives have not yet been informed. The blood donor is not yet aware why he has been contacted. He will be seen tomorrow, counselled, and asked to give a blood sample.
2. Although all the indications at present are that this is a "window period" case (i.e. a case where the donor gave blood after becoming infected but before producing the antibodies which are detected by HIV testing), more work is required before this can be said with certainty. Notably, preserved samples of the donor's 5 previous donations need to be tested. This is in hand but the results will not be known until tomorrow afternoon.
3. Assuming that there are no problems with the earlier donations, it is proposed that the existence of this case should be made known through the Communicable Diseases Report (CDR) which will appear on the Internet this Friday and in hard copy this Saturday. The National Blood Authority (NBA) will issue a brief press notice. Further details will be given in the CDR the following week and, in due course, a scientific report will be made, probably in the form of a letter to the Lancet or the BMJ. (This is the first such known transmission in England since screening of blood for HIV was introduced in 1985. (There was one transmission in Scotland in 1986.) As such it is bound to raise interest in the scientific world.)

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4. However, it is possible that the story may break in the meantime. If this occurs tonight, the attached line to take and Q & A briefing will be used by the Department and the NBA.

**K J GUINNESS**

**EH 322**

ext **GRO-C**