



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

WRITTEN STATEMENT BY THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

TITLE **Infected Blood: Update on financial parity**

DATE **25 March 2021**

BY **Vaughan Gething MS, Minister for Health and Social Services**

I am pleased to inform members of additional financial support for those infected with hepatitis C and/or HIV via contaminated blood or blood products. The significant impact of such infections on many individuals' lives has been extensively discussed in the Senedd chamber.

Members will be aware that agreement was reached in principle between the 4 UK health departments to resolve disparities in July 2019. Since then officials have worked with their counterparts and those in UK Cabinet Office to resolve these disparities.

Today UK Treasury has announced that they will fund a number of changes to the 4 UK schemes to work towards parity. This funding will be backdated to April 2019. For our beneficiaries who currently receive ex-gratia payments delivered through our partners at the Welsh Infected Blood Support Scheme (WIBSS) the scheme will be amended as follows:

- Our regular annual ex-gratia payments will be increased to the rates currently paid in England/Scotland;
- Payments for bereaved partners will be increased to 100% of the beneficiaries payment in year 1, and 75% in year 2 and subsequent years in line with the position in Scotland;
- All the above payments are to be back dated to April 2019
- Lump sum payment to a Hepatitis C Stage1 beneficiary will increase from £20,000 to £50,000, with the additional £20,000 payable if a stage 1 beneficiary moves to stage 2. The total lump sum payable for Hepatitis C beneficiaries remains at £70,000. This is in line with Scotland and will be backdated to April 2017
- Lump sum payments for HIV (£80.5K), will change in line with England and be backdated to April 2017
- Winter fuel payments are to be paid in addition from April 2021

The other UK schemes will now follow our lead by paying the £10,000 death benefit on the death of a beneficiary.

Our bespoke psychological support scheme, available through WIBSS, has been in place since 2019 and is available to all those infected and their families. I note that the other UK schemes have now put in place similar support for their beneficiaries.

We remain committed to working towards addressing disparities between the schemes and will work with WIBSS to communicate the changes to beneficiaries. Beneficiaries will continue to receive their current payments until the changes can be made. We anticipate that they will be able to make additional payments where required by the end of the calendar year, and sooner if possible.

I have also agreed with my fellow Health Ministers that any future changes to national schemes would be subject to consultation across the four administrations.

This is good news for beneficiaries and their families.

We are issuing this written statement during the pre-election period in response to today's announcement by the UK Government, to ensure that Welsh residents impacted by the scheme are informed about how the changes apply to them.