



## Infected Blood: bereaved have not been forgotten - Swann

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Health Minister Robin Swann has announced annual financial support for those bereaved as a result of NHS contaminated blood.

The annual payments will be made to people registered on the Northern Ireland Infected Blood Payment Scheme who have not been infected by contaminated blood but have been left bereaved following the death of a spouse or partner who contracted Hepatitis C or HIV after receiving NHS-supplied infected blood or blood products in Northern Ireland.

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Minister Swann said: "When I took up post as Minister of Health last year, the issue of financial support for those impacted by contaminated blood was something that I wanted to address immediately. I announced one-off payments of £5,000 to non-infected spouses and partners but it was my always my intention to provide further financial support as soon as possible.

"I have met with and corresponded with many affected people and I have listened to their experiences of how contaminated blood has impacted on their lives and the sacrifices they have had to make. I want to say to those who have been bereaved: you have not been forgotten. I sincerely hope this annual financial support will provide some long-term financial certainty as well as recognition for those bereaved through contaminated blood."

The payments represent a Departmental funding commitment of around £400,000 annually and range from £14,079 to £33,561 per year. These payments will be

backdated to April 2020 and will continue into future years, rising annually with inflation.

Last year the Department carried out a survey of scheme beneficiaries in Northern Ireland, to seek feedback on the support provided, both financial and in terms of psychological support. The analysis of the survey results is now complete and be found on the [Department's website](https://publications.infected-blood-payment-scheme-ni-survey-report) ([/publications/infected-blood-payment-scheme-ni-survey-report](https://publications.infected-blood-payment-scheme-ni-survey-report)).

Minister Swann concluded: "The purpose of the survey was to give all beneficiaries an opportunity to have their voices heard and be involved in the ongoing review of the scheme. The feedback we received supports my decision to introduce financial support to the non-infected bereaved spouses and partners. It also highlights a number of other important areas to be addressed and this feedback will be invaluable as I move forward with the ongoing review."

Phase 2 of the review of the NI Scheme is continuing and consideration will be given to potential reform in other aspects of the scheme, taking into account feedback from the survey Phase 3 will address recommendations from the ongoing UK-wide Infected Blood Inquiry.

Those eligible for the new payments will receive written notification of the details in the coming weeks.

## Notes to editors:

1. Since 2017, each UK country has had its own infected blood payment scheme. Details of the NI scheme were announced in December 2016: [www.health-ni.gov.uk/news/michelle-oneill-announces-improved-financial-support-people-affected-by-contaminated-blood](http://www.health-ni.gov.uk/news/michelle-oneill-announces-improved-financial-support-people-affected-by-contaminated-blood) (<http://www.health-ni.gov.uk/news/michelle-oneill-announces-improved-financial-support-people-affected-by-contaminated-blood>).

2. Links to further announcements can be found at:

a. [www.health-ni.gov.uk/news/infected-blood-payments-announced-by-swann](http://www.health-ni.gov.uk/news/infected-blood-payments-announced-by-swann)  
(<http://www.health-ni.gov.uk/news/infected-blood-payments-announced-by-swann>)

b. [www.health-ni.gov.uk/news/health-minister-announces-additional-infected-blood-payments](http://www.health-ni.gov.uk/news/health-minister-announces-additional-infected-blood-payments) (<http://www.health-ni.gov.uk/news/health-minister-announces-additional-infected-blood-payments>):

c. [www.health-ni.gov.uk/news/swann-announces-increased-payments-infected-blood](http://www.health-ni.gov.uk/news/swann-announces-increased-payments-infected-blood) (<http://www.health-ni.gov.uk/news/swann-announces-increased-payments-infected-blood>)

3. Further information on the scheme is available on the [NI Direct website](https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/infected-blood-payment-scheme)

(<http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/infected-blood-payment-scheme>).

4. The new payments for non-infected bereaved beneficiaries are calculated at 75% of the payment their deceased spouse or partner was receiving or would have been entitled to receive, were they still living and represents an ongoing funding commitment of just under £400,000 annually. The 2020/21 annual payments for non-infected bereaved beneficiaries in NI are as follows:

- Hep C stage 1 - £14,079;
- Hep C stage 2 - £21,357;
- Hep C stage 1 co-infected - £28,984.50;
- Hep C stage 2 co-infected - £33,561;
- Mono HIV - £21,357.

The payments are tax free and not taken into consideration when calculating eligibility to social security benefits and will increase annually in line with the Consumer Price Index.

5. For media enquiries please contact the DoH Press Office by email [pressoffice@health-ni.gov.uk](mailto:pressoffice@health-ni.gov.uk) (<mailto:pressoffice@health-ni.gov.uk>).

6. Follow us on Twitter [@healthdpt](https://twitter.com/healthdpt) (<https://twitter.com/healthdpt>).

7. The Executive Information Service operates an out of hours service **For Media Enquiries Only** between 1800hrs and 0800hrs Monday to Friday and at weekends and public holidays. The duty press officer can be contacted on **GRO-C**.

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