

29th June 2009

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**MISINFORMATION FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH- URGENT PLEASE READ ATTACHED
EVIDENCE FROM IRISH GOVERNMENT AND SOLICITORS**

Dear Mr Burnham,

I understand that there is to be a debate at Westminster on haemophiliacs/Archer Inquiry this coming Wednesday. I am writing to inform you of my concerns with regard to misinformation that has been perpetuated by the Department of Health for the last five years relating to the situation of haemophiliacs in Eire and the Irish government/blood transfusion service.

This started with an inaccurate comment made by Lord Warner in 2004 where he claimed that the Irish blood service/government were found to be at fault/liable. Despite repeated attempts to have this corrected in the Lords and Hansard and an apology given after I secured letters from both the Irish government Blood Policy Department and Irish lawyers acting for haemophiliacs this has still not happened. I am even quoted in the Archer report – p 90 I believe but to no avail. Now the same misinformation is being uttered in the House of Commons by Gillian Merron. This is very distressing to the haemophilia community and an insult to our intelligence! I am appealing to you in the name of truth and justice to address this issue as a matter of urgency.

I am an independent researcher and was recently awarded the Michael Young Prize (in honour of Lord Michael Young of Dartington) for my critique of a government report into Self Sufficiency in Blood Products 2006 see <http://www.esrcsocietytoday.ac.uk/ESRCInfoCentre/PO/releases/2009/june/blood.aspx> I also gave evidence to the Archer Public Inquiry and have acted as a researcher to BBC2 Newsnight on blood contamination issues, Susan Watts, Science Editor will verify this. In addition I lost my husband and brother-in-law (both haemophiliacs) to HIV/HCV as a result of contaminated NHS blood so am only too familiar with the extraordinary suffering endured by persons with haemophilia and by their families. My MP Mr Jim Cousins is currently attempting to secure a meeting between yourself and I so that I can disseminate my research as part of my commitment to the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) who awarded me the prize. He has known me for many years and will vouch for my credibility as a researcher and as someone who has always campaigned peacefully and within the law.

I would be most grateful if you would familiarise yourself with the content of the letters that I am sending to you. You will see very clearly that the letter from Anne McGrane (Assistant Principal

Officer) Blood Policy Division, Eire, written to me on 13th February 2004 states **"As you rightly point out, compensation for persons with haemophilia was made on compassionate grounds, without legal liability on the part of the State"**. You can also see that compensation was awarded to haemophiliacs and their families in recognition of **"extraordinary suffering"**.

The letter from Raymond Bradley of Malcolmson Law solicitors, Dublin, dated 17th February 2004 explains in some detail the circumstances surrounding the Eire government compensation settlement. Please note the pay-outs **PREDATED** any public inquiry and quote **"At no juncture has the Irish Government, in relation to any claim by a person with Haemophilia before the Irish courts, accepted liability, ie, filed or delivered a Defence admitting responsibility."**

The evidence I have submitted backed by the Irish government and Irish lawyers for haemophiliacs shows that there is no difference between the situation in Eire and the UK. In fact there is the ridiculous situation where two cousins in the same family with haemophilia, treated with the same blood products are treated very differently in terms of financial pay-outs, this can't be right. Surely a life in the UK is worth the same as in Eire. The average payment for a haemophiliac or family member in Eire was £800,000 compared to just £45,000 in the UK, how can that be when the circumstances are the same. I call upon the UK government to put this injustice right and accept the full recommendations of Lord Archer which included **"parity with Eire"**.

Thank-you for taking the time to read this. I hope you will now grant me a meeting in response to my MPs request and I look forward to your written reply.

Yours sincerely

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