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31/10/22

England Infected Blood Support Scheme – John Hemsley GRO-C

Dear Sirs,

Following my recent communication with EIBSS regarding my late father John Hemsley, I am writing to yourselves to seek further clarification regarding payments that my mother Sandra Hemsley has now received from the Scheme.

On the 26/08/22 I phoned the EIBSS to enquire if my mum qualified for the recently announced £100k payment for bereaved widows. This was confirmed by Jessica Spry who informed me my mum was also eligible for bereaved partner payments, which would be backdated to 2019. An application was sent to me to complete which arrived on 02/09/22. Unsure how to complete this form, as I was completing it on behalf of my mum, I rang the EIBSS on 02/09/22 for clarification. The lady was very helpful with advice on how to fill the form in. She informed me my mum would also be eligible for the bereavement lump sum, and I should also tick that box as well. She also confirmed to me, after looking through the records you had on your system received from the Skipton Fund, that my mum was included on the Death Certificate, so that would not need to be included with the application.

I phoned the EIBSS on 21/09/22 to enquire how the application was progressing. To my dismay I was told by Tracy Tinling that she could not find the historical data received from the Skipton Fund on the system, which was strange as on the 02/09/22 it was confirmed you had all the details, which must have been the case as my dad had already been set up on your data base and given a ref GRO-C. This was confirmed in an e-mail on 23/09/22 and I was asked to contact Russell Cooke to have them sent over again, and until then you would not be able to process the application. Following a phone call with Russell

Cooke I was told this could take up to 6 weeks to send across. Fortunately, this did not take as long, and they were sent over on 28/09/22.

Following various further phone calls, I received an e-mail on 05/10/22 advising me that the Skipton Fund files had been received and my mum's application would now be processed.

Finally, on 12/10/22 I received another e-mail confirming that my mum's application had been processed and confirmed the amounts to be paid and payment date. To my surprise the backdated amount was only for one month, and no lump sum was included. I again phoned the EIBSS for clarification and was told that the lump sum and back dated amounts were only for members of the scheme that were still alive, which was completely the opposite of what I was told on my first phone call with the EIBSS.

What I find confusing is why my mum is not eligible for the monthly payments to be backdated, just because we have only now become aware she was eligible. Last year my dad received a letter from the EIBSS dated 21/07/21 (attached) advising him he was eligible for a lump sum payment of £30k, which also advised you had contacted Russell-Cooke for details of the Skipton Fund scheme, which also I find strange to be told on 23/09/22 these files had gone missing. Again, I phoned the EIBSS on the day the letter was received to inform you my father had actually died in 2012. The lady was very apologetic and explained that the letter had been sent in error and was told my mum was not eligible for the lump sum payment, or any other payments which was confirmed in a further letter dated 27/07/21 (attached). However, as I have now found out in my phone call in August 2022 this was not true as she would have been due the monthly bereaved partner payments last year. Therefore, as we made the original enquiry last year surely my mum should have these monthly backdated payments paid as well.

As I am sure you can appreciate this is distressing enough for me and my mum to sort out without all this confusion. What I am therefore seeking is clarification as to what the rules actually are, as it seems your team do not know themselves, and confirmation or not that my mum is eligible for these backdated amounts.

I look forward to your findings in due course.

Best regards,

Paul