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NORMAN FOWLER ANNOUNCES SPECIAL AUTHORITY TO MANAGE

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CENTRAL BLOOD LABORATORIES

Norman Fowler, Secretary of State for Social Services, today (Tuesday) announced the setting up of a Special Health Authority to run the Central Blood Laboratories at Elstree and Oxford. In response to a Parliamentary Question from Robert McCrindle, MP for Brentwood and Ongar, he said:

"In place of the present interim arrangements I propose to set up a Special Health Authority to manage the Central Blood Laboratories, with a membership and terms of reference which will ensure that it is sensitive to their special needs as important pharmaceutical manufacturing units. I shall be laying an order for this shortly. I am pleased to say that Mr David Smart has agreed to accept the chairmanship of the new authority."

NOTE FOR EDITORS

THE CENTRAL BLOOD LABORATORIES

The Central Blood Laboratories comprise the Blood Products Laboratory at Elstree, the Plasma Fractionation Laboratory and the Blood Group Reference Laboratory both at Oxford. They are centrally funded by DHSS and are currently managed jointly by DHSS and NW Thames RHA.

The Blood Products Laboratory and the Plasma Fractionation Laboratory manufacture numerous blood products from plasma taken from voluntarily donated blood, primarily Factor VIII for the treatment of haemophiliacs and plasma protein fraction used for the treatment of surgical shock and burns, valued at over £12 million per year.

The Blood Group Reference Laboratory makes blood grouping reagents and among its many other functions, maintains the National and International Panels of Donors with Rare Blood Types.