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## Blood Supplies (Handling Charges)

*HC Deb 08 November 1983 vol 48 c73W*

*Mr. Knox* asked the Secretary of State for Social Services whether he will introduce handling charges for blood supplied to non-National Health Service hospitals.

*Mr. Fowler* It has always been the policy of the national blood transfusion service to meet private hospitals' reasonable requests for blood and certain blood derivatives according to availability and clinical need. After consultation with representatives of the National Health Service, the private sector and the medical profession, I have decided that, in keeping with the Government's policy that economic charges should be made for NHS services offered on an agency basis, private hospitals will be required to meet in full the costs incurred by the blood transfusion service in supplying blood and blood derivatives. This policy will also apply to private patients receiving treatment in NHS hospitals. The charges will be designed to cover the cost of collecting, processing, handling and transporting such materials. I would stress that the charges will not include any element for the blood itself, which is of course freely donated to the national blood transfusion service for use where it is needed. Private hospitals will be free to pass on these handling charges to their patients. It will, however, remain a strict condition of supply that no profit is to be made from blood or derivatives supplied by the national blood transfusion service.

The Government are committed to a policy of ensuring that this country becomes self-sufficient in blood products. We are investing £21 million in the redevelopment of the blood products laboratory at Elstree; but self-sufficiency can only be achieved if there is an adequate supply of blood plasma. It is for this reason that I shall be asking regional health authorities to ensure that the income from handling charges is used for this purpose.

I shall be discussing the details of these new arrangements, including the operative date, with representatives of the NHS and the private sector and will issue guidance as soon as possible.