

SECRETARY OF STATE'S MEETING WITH RHA CHAIRMEN ON 21.3.84

Supplementary Briefing Note - Blood Handling Charges

1. It is understood that Dame Betty Paterson (North West Thames RHA) may raise the issue of the timing of the introduction of handling charges for blood and blood products supplied to non-NHS hospitals.
2. In November 1983 Ministers announced that handling charges would be introduced and that there would be consultation with both the private sector and the NHS on the precise arrangements. Consultation with the independent sector and the BMA was protracted, and not completed until the end of February 1984. Ministers then approved a draft Health Circular for consultation with the NHS, but wished to keep 1 April 1984 as the implementation date, to coincide with the parallel increase in charges for private patients in NHS hospitals, and to avoid the loss of revenue if a later date were set.
3. Advance notice of this intention was given to Regional Treasurers at their meeting on 22 February 1984, and they raised no objections. The consultation letter and draft Health Circular are due to be dispatched this Friday, 23 March 1984, giving HAS three months to comment on the arrangements. The only immediate action requested is that they notify the non-NHS hospitals of the scales of charges which will be applied retrospectively from 1 April; HAS will of course need to keep records of quantities supplied so that invoices can be raised subsequently but such records should already exist as part of proper stock control.