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27 February 2006

Dear David

I enclose a copy of the report on Self Sufficiency in Blood Products in England and Wales. The report includes a chronology of events between 1973 to 1991 (when donor screening for hepatitis C was introduced in the UK).

As you know, Ministers commissioned an informal review of papers to establish the facts around your commitment to make the UK self sufficient in clotting factors. The review provides an analysis of key issues in England and Wales. I am sorry that it has taken a long time to conclude the review.

The review of papers indicates that the funding you made available of £500,000, about half of which was recurring, in order to make the UK self sufficient was allocated to the then Regional Transfusion Centres in 1975 to increase production of plasma for Blood Products Laboratory (BPL). This allocation was linked to a target of 275,000 blood donations to be used annually for the preparation of Factor VIII concentrate and 100,000 donations for cryoprecipitate.

The review shows that the funding enabled BPL to increase production of Factor VIII. However, the rapid growth in demand for clotting factors at the time meant that commercial products continued to be imported. As a consequence we were unable to achieve self sufficiency in blood products.

If we had achieved self sufficiency in the 1970s as you intended, blood products would still have transmitted hepatitis C because the virus was also present in the UK donor population.

We are sending a copy to the Haemophilia Society and a number of other haemophilia lobby groups and individuals who have been campaigning on issues affecting haemophilia patients. The report is also available from the Department of Health Website at [www.dh.gov.uk](http://www.dh.gov.uk)

Yours

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Reply to do.