

## **WRITTEN MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

### **DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH**

#### **Contaminated blood: review of the Skipton Fund**

Tuesday 6 April 2010

**The Minister of State, Department of Health (Gillian Merron):** Further to the Government's response to Lord Archer of Sandwell's report on NHS-supplied contaminated blood and blood products, which we published on 20 May 2009, I wish to inform the House that we have decided to bring forward a review of the Skipton Fund, which makes ex-gratia payments to those infected with hepatitis C as a result of their treatment.

The unintended and tragic consequences of these treatments have seriously impaired the lives of many people, together with those of their families. We have listened carefully to the views of those infected, their families, carers and many in this House, who have told us that our intended review date of 2014 will be too late for many of those affected. Consequently, we have decided that the review will begin as soon as possible this year.

It will be an independently chaired review. The terms of reference, membership and conduct of the review will be agreed in conjunction with the Devolved Administrations.

I would also like to take this opportunity to confirm payment of £100,000 to the Haemophilia Society, as promised in our response of 20 May 2009.

I would like to reiterate this Government's sympathy for those affected by these treatments many years ago, before screening tests and methods of viral inactivation became available. We remain fully committed to supporting them in the best way we can.