

THE HAEMOPHILIA SOCIETY

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Patron: HRH The Duchess of Kent
President: Dame Catherine Cookson

Mr Roger Godsiff MP
House of Commons
LONDON
SW1A 0AA

02 April 1998

Dear Mr Godsiff

Thank you very much for hosting yesterday's meeting regarding people with haemophilia infected with hepatitis C. We found the discussion most helpful and encouraging.

We have written to all the MPs present and advised them that your office will be co-ordinating the proposed approach to Frank Dobson. I enclose a draft letter for you to send on behalf of the group, and will leave it to your office to clear this with the various MPs. A list of those who attended is attached, together with names of those who expressed an interest, but were not able to attend on the day.

In order to ensure the group is fully cross party, a Lib-Dem member would be needed. None actually attended the meeting, but we know Simon Hughes and Dr Peter Brand are very supportive. Would you be happy to contact them to join the initiative or would you prefer the Society to do this?

Again, our thanks and should you require any further information, please contact either myself, my PA Sue Rocks or Lucy McGrath, our Hepatitis Worker.

Yours sincerely,

GRO-C

Karin Pappenheim
Chief Executive

Caring for people with haemophilia and other bleeding disorders

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MPs who attended the meeting on 1st April 1998

1. Dafydd Wigley	Plaid Cymru	Caernarfon
2. Roger Godsiff	Labour	Birmingham
3. Paul Goggins	Labour	Wythenshaw and Sale
4. Geoffrey Johnson-Smith	Conservative	Wealden
5. Patrick Nicholls	Conservative	Teignbridge
6. Eddie O'Hara	Labour	Knowsley South
7. Paddy Tipping	Labour	Sherwood
8. Tony Clark	Labour	Northampton South

MPs who expressed an interest, but were not able to attend on the day

1. Bob Blizzard	Labour	Waveney
2. William Etherington	Labour	Sunderland
3. Adrian Sanders	Lib-Dem	Torbay
4. Martyn Jones	Labour	Clwyd South
5. Alan Meale	Labour	Mansfield
6. Peter Pike	Labour	Burnley
7. Steve Hesford	Labour	Wirral South

Draft letter for Roger Godsiff MP on behalf of cross-party group of MPs

Frank Dobson MP
Secretary of State for Health

Dear

I write on behalf of a cross-party group of MPs, who have recently come together in response to the concerns of people with haemophilia infected with Hepatitis C. We understand that you met with representatives of the Haemophilia Society last autumn to discuss the issues, but have yet to respond formally to their request for financial assistance for those infected with the Hepatitis C virus through their NHS treatment prior to 1986.

Clearly, we appreciate that the issues are 'complex' as you have indicated. However, we are deeply concerned at the plight of this group, who are now experiencing severe health problems, which are taking a heavy toll on their family life, education and employment prospects, with many experiencing considerable hardship. The group includes many whose haemophilia is mild, and were it not for their Hepatitis C might have expected to lead full and active lives. Among them are young people whose future is now blighted through this life threatening virus.

The issue appears to us to be a moral one. These are people who were infected through their NHS treatment, and for whom financial assistance should be made available on moral grounds. That principle, as you know, has been applied to haemophiliacs infected with HIV through their NHS treatment and a fund has been established to provide financial assistance. Both those infected with HIV and with Hepatitis C acquired their infection in the same way, both are suffering equally. There is a lack of equity in offering financial assistance to one and not the other.

We would be very glad of the opportunity to meet with you, as a cross party group, to discuss this matter, and to explore possible options for providing some help for these individuals.