

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors of The Skipton Fund Limited held at 10:00 on 26 March 2012 at Alliance House, 12 Caxton Street, London, SW1H 0QS**

Present:	Mr P Stevens	Chairman
	Mrs E Boyd	Director
	Mr M Harvey	Director
	Mr P Spellman	
In attendance:	Mr N Fish	Scheme Administrator

142. **Apologies for Absence**

There were no apologies for absence.

143. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meetings held on 17 February 2011 and 24 May 2011 were signed as a correct record.

144. **Matters Arising**

129 - The Scheme Administrator reported that the expected increase in borderline stage two applications had occurred. As a result, a meeting had recently taken place with Professor Howard Thomas, a world expert in hepatitis C and liver disease, during which a collection of borderline claims had been discussed. The meeting had been extremely useful and resulted in a decision being made on each case to either approve, decline or write back to the applicant for specific further information. The meeting had been useful in pinpointing biochemical trends which are indicative of cirrhosis as well as other symptoms which are significant when assessing the likelihood of advanced liver disease. When borderline claims are received in the future, the lessons learned from Professor Thomas would be applied, with the option of referral to him if there is any doubt. The Scheme Administrator also reported that the stage two form now included a section on transient elastography (e.g. Fibroscan®), the wording of which had been cleared with the Department of Health (DH). Mr P Spellman asked if there was a recognised 'trigger' at which a Fibroscan® reading was indicative of cirrhosis. The Scheme Administrator responded that a reading of 15 was accepted as being 90% indicative of cirrhosis based on information provided by Dr David Mutimer, a leading liver specialist who is also a member of the independent appeal panel. The Board requested that this reading be double checked with Professor Thomas.

145. **Review of activity following the Ministerial Announcement**

The Scheme Administrator summarised the number of payments that had been made in each of the various payment categories since the Ministerial announcement in January 2011. The number of payments in the financial year had been far higher than in previous years as a result of the Ministerial changes but, other than the ongoing regular payments, this number was expected to return to normal in the upcoming financial year. Mr P Spellman asked if a future spike in payments could be expected, to which all agreed that it would be unlikely unless there was a major initiative from Government to test people for hepatitis C or make further alterations to the scheme guidelines. Mr P Stevens suggested that the Scheme Administrator contact Ben Cole at the DH to clarify how applications from the estates of people who died before 29 August 2003 should be dealt with from 1 April 2012. It should be mentioned that some centres had not submitted registrations in cases where there were no patient records available to confirm the presence of hepatitis C, even though it is now widely accepted that anybody treated with clotting factor before it was screened would more likely than not have suffered from chronic hepatitis C.

146. **Appeal Panel**

The Scheme Administrator reported that he was pleased with the overall performance of the Appeal Panel and had no issues with them. In response to a question, he confirmed that feedback from the panel suggested that they were satisfied with the cases that they were being asked to consider and were not concerned that cases were going to appeal that should have been approved by the Skipton Fund.

147. **Draft Director's Report**

Mr M Harvey thanked the Chairman for a very good report, which was echoed by the rest of the Board. The Chairman asked that the missing statistics be completed by the Scheme Administrator once they became available in April. With Mr P Spellman proposing and Mrs E Boyd seconding, the report was accepted by the Board.

148. **Any Other Business**

To familiarise Mr P Spellman with the application process, a meeting would be arranged with the Scheme Administrator to go through the various types of Skipton Fund claim and what supporting evidence is required in each case. The date would be decided outside of the meeting but would happen within the next week or so.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 10:40

GRO-C

11.03.2013