

THE SKIPTON FUND

Home About Us Stage 1 Payment Additional Payment Contact Us

The NHS Appointments Commission announces appointments of the members to the Skipton Fund Appeal Panel

The NHS Appointments Commission has announced the appointments of the Chair and members of the Skipton Fund Ltd Appeal Panel for the period from 1 September 2006 until 31 August 2009.

NOTES TO EDITOR

The Government (all four UK administrations) have collectively established a scheme to make ex-gratia payments to individuals infected with hepatitis C as a result of receiving NHS blood or blood products. A private company limited by guarantee (called the Skipton Fund) has been established to operate the scheme and make payments. The scheme has been in operation since 5h July 2004.

The scheme provides for two levels of payments, the first for individuals who develop chronic hepatitis C infection, with a further second payment for those who go on to develop cirrhosis or primary liver cancer, as a direct result of hepatitis C infection due to NHS blood or blood products.

Claims are assessed and decided by the Skipton Fund based on evidence submitted by the claimant. Where claims are not successful, claimants have the right to appeal to the independent Appeal Panel. The secretariat for the Panel is provided by the Skipton Fund.

Terms of Reference

The role of the Appeal Panel is to reconsider the cases of any claimants who appeal against individual decisions made by the Skipton Fund. The Panel will look at how the decision was reached and examine all available evidence, or seek further written evidence where necessary, in order to either confirm or change the Skipton Fund's decision. In considering the evidence the Appeal Panel will look solely at the written evidence and will not seek personal attendance. The Panel will not be able to consider appeals against the ex-gratia payment scheme itself, but only to examine the process to determine the claims within the terms of the scheme.

Appeals may be made against decisions concerning both stage 1 and stage 2 payments. For stage one appeals, the Panel will need to determine whether, on the balance of probabilities, chronic hepatitis C infection resulted from receipt of NHS blood or blood products, and for stage two appeals, the likelihood, on the information provided, that the claimant has developed cirrhosis or primary liver cancer.

The following rates of fees will be paid:

Chair	£200 per day
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Medical Member	£140 per day
Lay Member	£100 per day

Allowances for necessary travel and subsistence, at rates set centrally, are also payable.

These appointments have been made in accordance with the OCPA Code of Practice. All non-executive appointments are made on merit and political activity plays no part in the selection process.

Details of Appeal panel members:

Chair:

Professor Mark Mildred, aged 57, lives in London. He is Professor of Litigation at Nottingham Law School, Vice Chair of Wandsworth PCT and legal member of Family Health Services Appeal Authority (FHSA). He is also a member of various law-related committees and editorial panels. Professor Mildred is GRO-C and has not declared a disability. He is a member of the GRO-C party, having held offices such as Chair, Treasury or secretary of a local branch.

Ministerial appointments

Dept of Health, Non Executive Director – Wandsworth PCT until 31 December 2006, receives £5,700pa.

Dept of Constitutional Affairs, Member – Family Health Services Appeal Authority until 31 January 2007, receives daily fee of £438

Lay member:

Mrs Annie Hitchman aged 59, lives in GRO-C. Annie Hitchman has been appointed as Non-Executive member of North East Ambulance Services NHS Trust and is standing down as Non Executive Director, Durham & Chester-le-Street PCT. She is Vice Chair of Co. Durham & Darlington Research Ethics Committee and is also a Lay Member of several organisations including the Bar Council for England & Wales. Mrs Hitchman is GRO-C and has not declared a disability. She is not politically active.

Ministerial appointments

Dept of Health, Non Executive Director – newly appointed from 1 July 2006 no other details available

Dept of the Environment, Food & Rural Affairs – until 30 September 2008, receives £4,000pa

Hepatologist:

Dr David Mutimer aged 48 lives in Birmingham. David Mutimer is a Consultant Hepatologist at the Liver & Hepatobiliary Unit, Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham, since 2000 he has been the Clinical Service Lead in the department. He has advised several societies & groups in the field of viral hepatitis. Dr Mutimer is GRO-C and has not declared a disability. He is not politically active and holds no ministerial appointments

Haematologist:

Dr Patricia Hewitt aged 54 lives in London. She is a Consultant Specialist in Transfusion Microbiology, National Blood Service (NHS Blood & Transplant). She is chair of UKBTS/NIBSC Standing Advisory Committee

on Transfusion Transmitted Infection and a member of Standing Advisory Committee on Donor Selection for the same body. She is a Member of the CJD Clinical Incident Panel and also NBA National Claims Manager. Dr Hewitt is GRO-C and has not declared a disability. She is not politically active and holds no ministerial appointments

GP:

Dr John Dracass aged 62 lives in GRO-C, Hampshire. He is a part time Principal in General Practice, also part time GP Appraiser & GMC Performance Assessor. He is the current chairman of West Hampshire LMC. Dr Dracass is GRO-C and has not declared a disability. He is not politically active and holds no ministerial appointments

Glossary

GMC	General Medical Council
GP	General Practitioner
LMC	Local Medical Committee
NIBSC	National Institute for Biological Standards and Control
NBA	National Blood Authority
PCT	Primary Care Trust
UKBTS	UK Blood Transfusion Service

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