



# National Blood Transfusion Service

## Regional Transfusion Centre

Holland Drive, Barrack Road, Newcastle upon Tyne NE2 4NQ

Telephone (091) 261 1711  
Fax (091) 232 4554

Our Ref.

Your Ref.

XND^1211/HLL/pk

1st May 1991

Dr H H Gunson  
National Director  
The National Directorate  
Gateway House  
Piccadilly South  
Manchester M60 7LP



Dear Dr Gunson

Re: HCV Antibody Testing

When a common date of 1st July was circulated some time ago, I made a decision to start testing in April 1991 so that we could be assured that not only were all issues of blood and blood components negative for the antibody but that all units transfused from that date were negative.

I set up the internal arrangements and made it clear that testing would start in the Region in the early part of the year. The decision to start testing was based on a test that was not perfect, but nevertheless, it was available and it did detect a group of people who appeared to be positive for the Antibody. The comparative study of the Abbott and Ortho kits (first generation), was not going to influence my decision as to whether or not to start testing.

The next round of comparative trials which encompasses other manufacturers kits as well as second generation kits from Abbott and Ortho when started was not going to be completed in time to allow this Centre to meet the July deadline, even on the original schedule. The change in date based on a further delay in the completion of the next round of evaluations would have delayed the introduction of testing (all transfused units negative) by several months, possibly taking us to November of this year.

If during that period anyone becomes infected and subsequently takes action, in my opinion, I would have had no defence. We had the wherewithal to test, including kits, equipment and staff and we had agreed to start previously. The delay is thus administrative and that not only forms no basis for a defence or a mitigation but also I think aggravates the situation.

I have therefore proceeded on the basis that all units available for transfusion from 1st July will have been tested.

Yours sincerely

GRO-C

H L Lloyd  
Director/General Manager

HHG 5/12