

Department of Health

**PRESS
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DETAILS OF SCHEME TO MAKE PAYMENTS TO HIV BLOOD RECIPIENTS ANNOUNCED

Arrangements for making payments to recipients of HIV positive blood and tissue under the NHS were announced today. The Government's intention to offer help was announced on February 17 by the then Secretary of State for Health, William Waldegrave.

A small expert panel chaired by Mr Benet Hytner QC has been set up to help the Department to consider cases. He will be assisted by two medical assessors.

The Government's Chief Medical Officer, Dr Kenneth Calman, is writing to all NHS consultants and general practitioners asking for their help in identifying people who may be entitled to payments under the scheme. People who think they may be eligible, or the personal representative of a person who has died, are invited to apply for payment.

The Department of Health has drawn up a document which explains who is eligible for payment, the amounts, the conditions applying and undertakings to be given. It also sets out how applications can be made and how they will be considered. A copy is attached.

Notes for Editors

1. At the end of December 1991, there were 74 reports in the UK of HIV infection in people who received blood transfusions or tissue transfers in the UK. On the basis of the reported cases the Department of Health estimates the cost could be £12 million.

2. Payments will range between £41,500 and £80,500 each, according to family circumstances. Payments will also be made to recipients' infected spouses, partners and children.

3. The Department of Health will initially consider applications and decide them where possible. Where the Department is not in a position to decide these cases will be referred to the panel. If the Department turns down an application the applicant will have the right to ask for referral to the panel. The Secretary of State will be bound by the panel's decision.

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4. The scheme covers people treated in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The Scottish Office Home and Health Department has set up a similar scheme for people treated in Scotland.

5. Copies of the document and application form can be obtained from the Department of Health, Room 506, Eileen House, 80-94 Newington Causeway, London, SE1 6TE.

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