

Mr G W Murphy

GRO-C

Liverpool GRO-C

Our ref: BLO 4

1 March 1995

Dear Mr Murphy,

Thank you for your letter of 29 September 1994 to the Secretary of State about compensation for patients who have been infected with hepatitis C as a result of NHS treatment. I have been asked to reply and am sorry that I have not been able to do so earlier.

We have great sympathy with those who may have become infected with hepatitis C through blood transfusions or blood products. The Government does not accept that there has been any negligence and have no plans to make payments to such patients.

Most haemophilia patients were infected with hepatitis C before blood products were treated to destroy viruses. These patients received the best treatment available in the light of medical knowledge at the time.

On the more general issue of compensation, the Government has never accepted the case for a no fault scheme of compensation for medical accidents. It is unfair to others and still requires proof of causation which is often difficult to establish. Every individual case where a medical accident has occurred is a personal tragedy for both the individual concerned and their family. If the NHS is proved negligent in a court, it accepts its liability to pay damages.

Yours sincerely,

GRO-C

J P Nash

NHS
Executive

