



Jane Kennedy M.P.

*Member of Parliament for
Liverpool Broadgreen*

*House of Commons
London SW1A 0AA*

M.C. Malone

GRO-C

Liverpool

GRO-C

Tel
Fax

GRO-C

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Dear M.C. Malone

Thank you for your letter dated 16th July concerning the issue of compensation for haemophiliacs who have contracted hepatitis C as a result of using infected blood products and infected blood as part of their NHS treatment.

The Government's position with regard to the victims of contaminated blood appears illogical: those who contracted HIV receive compensation, whilst those with hepatitis C do not. There is a strong argument that the Government has a moral duty to compensate those who, through no fault of their own, have contracted hepatitis C.

Labour MPs have pressed the Government on this issue a number of times in the House of Commons - in debates and at Prime Minister's question time for example. I have contacted the Shadow Secretary of State for Health, the Rt Hon Margaret Beckett MP about this matter. She informs me that she has asked the Secretary of State for Health a number of parliamentary questions on this matter, all of which have met with unsatisfactory answers. Labour's health team is now consulting with the Haemophilia Society, amongst others, in order to decide how best to proceed with this matter.

When the consultations are completed, I will write again to let you know what Labour's proposals are regarding the compensation question.

Yours sincerely

GRO-C

JANE KENNEDY MP