

To: Mr Scofield CA-OPU

From: Mr Abrahams APS/M(H)

Date: 30 March 1995

Copies: Mr Holden PS/SoS
Mr Hollebon PS/PS(H)
Ms Woodeson PS/PS(L)
Ms Roughton PS/Perm Sec
Dr Metters DCMO
Dr Rejman HC(M)1
Mr Burrage CA-OPU2

PAYMENTS TO THOSE INFECTED WITH HEPATITIS C THROUGH BLOOD TRANSFUSIONS/BLOOD PRODUCTS

1. Following M(H)'s meeting earlier today with John Marshall MP, Sir Geoffrey Johnson Smith MP and Sir Terence Higgins MP the following action was agreed:

a) there was a need for the Department to give careful consideration to the issues raised:

- that those suffering from life-threatening complications (eg cirrhosis of the liver and liver cancer) caused by Hepatitis C contracted through blood transfusions and blood products might be granted 'ex-gratia' payments (such payments have been granted to those who contracted the HIV virus in this way)
- it would not be sensible to provide assistance to all those who have contracted the Hepatitis C virus since not all of those infected develop life-threatening complications
- consideration would need to be given to potential 'triggers' for Government assistance

b) M(H) wished to discuss the matter further with PS(H) and the Permanent Secretary either at TOTO or at a specially-convened meeting;

c) it would be necessary to move swiftly on this matter; it would be preferable for the Government to take the lead rather than be forced into action by a public campaign.

2. I would be grateful for further advice on 1(a) from you by 4pm on Thursday 6 April.

3. M(H) would also be grateful for PS(H)'s and Perm Sec's views.

David Abrahams

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