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**SCOTTISH HOME AND HEALTH
DEPARTMENT**St Andrew's House
Edinburgh EH1 3DE

Telephone 031-556 8400

ext.

GTN **GRO-C**

Telex 72202

Fax 031-244 2683

Your ref

Our ref

Date 9 January 1989

Dr Hilary Pickles
Department of Health
Alexander Fleming House
Elephant and Castle
London
SE1 6BY

Mr. Gunson
Mr. Gunstaff

Dear Dr Pickles

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON VIROLOGICAL SAFETY OF BLOOD

As you will know there has been correspondence between our Mr Macniven and Ms Elaine Webb of your Department concerning the setting up of this Advisory Committee. The most recent correspondence I have seen is a letter of 11 November 1988 from Mr Macniven to Ms Webb concerning the Scottish representatives on this Committee.

When I discussed this matter with you recently, when we met at the latest meeting of ACDP, I indicated that we felt there was a measure of urgency about setting up this Advisory Committee. I now enclose, IN CONFIDENCE, an extract from an unconfirmed draft minute of a meeting of the Directors of the Scottish National Blood Transfusion Service held in Edinburgh on 13 December 1988 at which Dr H Gunson and Dr W Wagstaff were present. This extract, you will note, suggests that the UK blood transfusion services should establish a group to advise the Departments of Health on policies relating to microbiological testing. This method of approaching the problem we consider to be unsatisfactory and we suspect that the decisions reached might be influenced to a considerable extent by the views of the Transfusion Directors. As this is a matter which has policy implications and will be of considerable interest to Ministers we feel that this Advisory Committee should be set up jointly by the Departments. In Scotland we are under considerable pressure from the SNBTS to fund the introduction of additional virological testing and as this is a matter which we feel should be addressed on a UK basis, I should be grateful if you could let me know what steps your Department intends to take in this matter as we would not like to be forced into a course of action which might have repercussions for the UK as a whole.

Kind regards.

Yours sincerely

GRO-C

DR A D MCINTYRE

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