

BY FAX

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HCV LOOKBACK

Thank you for your letter of 22nd December letting me know that Scottish Ministers were proposing to go ahead immediately with the look back programme.

Roger Scofield sent you a copy of his submission of the same date. Ministers here have accepted the recommendations of the MSBT and agreed to go ahead with a look back exercise in England. I have been instructed to establish without delay an ad hoc Working Party to draw up guidance on counselling and treatment options. I shall be sending out invitations within the next few days and would wish to include Scottish experts in the group. I hope to hold a first meeting within a week and shall press forward as quickly as possible.

Now that we have got this go ahead - and I would expect the Welsh and Northern Ireland colleagues to join us - there seems to me no reason for Scotland to go it alone. Indeed there is every advantage as MSBT recommended in our undertaking this task on a UK-wide basis making the most of our resources and taking advice from our National experts collectively. To undertake separate and parallel exercises would not only be wasteful but give all the wrong signals.

I should be most grateful if you would use your good offices to persuade clinical colleagues in Scotland to join in with my ad hoc Working Party and to make available the valuable research findings that you have already obtained. Perhaps we could have a word on the telephone about this.

I am copying this letter (by fax) to Deirdre Hine and Clifford Hall who may wish to suggest Welsh and Northern Irish experts to join the ad hoc Working Party.

J S METTERS



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Deputy Chief Medical Officer
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