

Miss V Brown

PUBLICITY BUDGET

My minute of 8 March to Mr R Windsor requested an allocation of £350k for 1985/86 to allow blood donor recruitment publicity to be stepped up to the necessary levels. In response, Mr Windsor asked for hard evidence of a drop in blood collection, prior to submitting to Mr Sumner of Finance Division. We had received anecdotal evidence that fear of AIDS was reducing supply.

Co-incidentally we received PQ 3465 1984-85, in which Mr Alfred Dubs (Battersea) asked "what has been the change in the number of blood donors since the recent publicity about AIDS". A copy of John Patten's reply and supplementaries is enclosed.

We asked all Regions for figures on the number of donors bled, (rather than numbers attending), because we are also involved in assessing how Regions are performing against the plasma procurement targets set in 1981.

We have now obtained the figures for the first quarter of this year and last year which are shown below. A Regional breakdown is appended to this minute.

January 1984	= 168,954	February 1984	= 167,104	March 1984	= 173,402
January 1985	= 167,125	February 1985	= 155,874	March 1985	= 165,658
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	- 1,829		- 11,230		- 7,744
	(1%)		(7.2%)		(4.6%)

We expected some decline but in a period when supply needs to outstrip demand so that plasma can be stockpiled, a fall of 20,803 donations over the same quarter last year is extremely serious. Many RDOs made the point that it has taken substantial local publicity efforts on their part to achieve even these 1985 figures. It is also worth recording that industrial action in Mersey Region in February/March 1984 reduced collections considerably. The actual fall is therefore probably well in excess of 25,000 donations. I hope you can now re-submit urgently to Mr Sumner.

GRO-C

26 April 1985

A J WILLIAMS

cc Mr M. Harris
Mr A. Smith

5-10

NUMBER OF DONORS BLED - BY REGION

	1/84	2/84	3/84	1/85	2/85	3/85
Northern	11,129	12,166	11,532	11,348	11,569	11,171
Yorkshire	11,633	12,818	13,400	12,628	11,756	11,996
Trent	14,575	14,662	14,917	14,155	14,798	14,578
East Anglia	7,355	7,735	7,978	6,961	6,797	7,450
North West Thames	15,801	15,875	16,439	16,644	15,202	15,683
North East Thames	12,539	13,367	11,903	11,996	10,554	11,537
SW + SE Thames	23,654	21,959	22,173	23,808	19,674	20,716
Wessex	8,008	8,121	8,711	8,282	7,624	8,125
Oxford	10,573	10,508	10,292	10,318	9,176	11,154
South Western	15,744	15,910	17,498	14,434	13,822	15,364
West Midlands	17,573	17,745	17,108	17,025	16,087	17,245
Mersey	10,075	5,149*	10,142	9,032	9,067	9,714
North Western	10,295	11,089	11,309	10,494	9,748	10,925

* Industrial Action

Tuesday 16 April 1985

PQ 3465/1984/85
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BLOOD DONORS AND AIDS

* **Q** Mr Alfred Dubs (La Battersea):

To ask the Secretary of State for Social Services, what has been the change in the number of blood donors since the recent publicity about acquired immune deficiency syndrome.

MR JOHN PATTEN

Figures for recent months on the number of donations are not yet available. However, enquiries suggest that there has been some reduction in donations in the past few months. It is not possible to distinguish how much of this is due to publicity on AIDS and how much to other factors such as the bad weather experienced earlier this year.

Our revised leaflet for blood donors concerning AIDS was of course deliberately designed to cause those in the high risk groups to refrain from donation. I would like to take this opportunity to reassure all members of the public that there is absolutely no risk of contracting AIDS through donating blood.

Mr. Dubs: Does the Minister agree that there is an acute shortage of blood for the transfusion services and that at least some of the shortage is caused by people's reluctance to go to blood transfusion centres for fear of being refused the chance to donate blood because of AIDS? Does the hon. Gentleman agree that he should take further action to encourage more people to give blood?

Mr. Patten: Preliminary figures show a drop in donations of 5 or 6 per cent. in the first three months of this year. People should not be inhibited from donating blood, because there is no risk of their contracting AIDS. All the equipment is sterile and it is all disposed of immediately after use; it is used only once. We are spending £250,000 in the current financial year to encourage more people to be blood donors.

Mr. Key: Does my hon. Friend agree that those of us who are blood donors have a responsibility to give a lead? Can he assure us that the HTLV 3 test, which is promised for July, is still on target, because that will give great hope to the regional blood transfusion authorities?

Mr. Patten: Yes, we hope to have a screening test within a few weeks.

Mr. Carter-Jones: Will the hon. Gentleman encourage the regions to send blood to the Elstree fractional unit to get the better and safer use of blood?

Mr. Patten: That is a very good idea, especially in the run up to the opening of the new blood products laboratory at Elstree which is on target for completion in January 1986 at a cost of £35 million.