

Ms Corrigan

from: Fiona Anderson PS/SofS

date: 14 July 1998

copies: Mr Lawrance
Mr Stevens
Mr McCrea
Permanent Secretary
CMO
Dr Metters
Dr Winyard
Mr Hewlett
Dr McGovern
Ms Grauberg
Mr Paley
Mr Brown
Mr Knight



HAEMOPHILIA SOCIETY AND HEPATITIS C

Secretary of State and MS(L) discussed the issue of ex-gratia payments early yesterday.

They have decided that they do not wish to agree to the Haemophilia Society's call for a special payments scheme for haemophiliacs infected with hep C, on the grounds covered in MS(L)'s note to the Secretary of State of 1 June. They recognise that there will be criticism of the choice not to follow the HIV/AIDS scheme but are prepared to defend the position on the grounds that the HIV decision was taken on the basis of the understanding of the disease progression at that time.

Ministers also decided that, given this decision, they wished to make a grant from any section 64 underspend to the Society to fund a project for its members with hep C. This would clearly be a much smaller sum than that requested from an ex-gratia scheme but was an important presentational factor. Secretary of State wants this request to take precedence over other claims on any underspend and thinks it vital that this money is found.

MS(L) will conduct her cross party meeting on the basis of this decision on Wednesday. MS(L)'s office with you and Paul Brown will wish to decide exactly when and how this decision is made public, through - I assume - a letter for us to send to the Society and the answering of the outstanding PQs.

FIONA ANDERSON