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# Health Redress

## Statement made on 6 March 2017

Statement UIN HCWS520

### Statement made by



**Nicola Blackwood** >

Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health

Conservative

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Oxford West and Abingdon

Commons

### Statement

On 13 July 2016 the Government announced its response to the January 2016 consultation on reform of the current ex-gratia payment schemes for individuals infected with HIV and/or hepatitis C following treatment with NHS-supplied blood or blood products before September 1991.

The Government recognises the suffering experienced by people as a result of this tragedy and the Prime Minister apologised on behalf of the Government in March 2015. Since 1988, successive Governments have set up five schemes to provide financial and other support to those affected. This Government committed further funding of up to an additional £125m over the existing baseline budget. This additional money more than doubles the Department of Health's annual spend on the scheme over the Spending Review period to April 2021. This is significantly more than any previous Government has provided for those affected by this tragedy.

On account of this increased allocation, July's consultation response set out a package of support measures for those infected and affected by the infected blood tragedy. For the first time, almost 2,500 beneficiaries with chronic hepatitis C infection were eligible to receive an annual payment of £3,500 per year. Those with advanced hepatitis C and HIV received an uplift in their annual payment to £15,500, and we introduced a new £10,000 payment to bereaved partners and spouses.

Since July, the Government has also worked on the detail of the measures proposed for 2017/18 for scheme beneficiaries infected in England such as the new special appeals mechanism for those with chronic hepatitis C infection and reformed discretionary support scheme. The special appeals mechanism, which is now called Special Category Mechanism (SCM) will be a significant new element of the infected blood reforms. Therefore, today the Government announces the launch of a new consultation on the details of the new SCM and our proposals for ensuring the scheme remains within its budget as a result of the new SCM. We invite beneficiaries and other interested parties to comment on our proposals.

The consultation published today and attached will run until 17 April 2017. This is a 6-week consultation to ensure that all those who wish to respond have time to do so. There are four elements of reform on which the Government would welcome views.

- The addition of a new condition to qualify for the higher financial support given to those infected with hepatitis C who have developed advanced liver disease.
- The new Special Category Mechanism (with appeal) (SCM) to identify hepatitis C stage 1 beneficiaries whose infection has a substantial and long term adverse impact on their ability to carry out normal daily activities, offering those who are successful the higher annual payment.
- Proposals to keep the scheme within budget in light of the increased annual payment for successful SCM applicants while preserving discretionary fund.

- The type of support the reformed discretionary scheme would offer that is fair to all groups of beneficiaries.

The Government understands that there has been uncertainty about how the SCM and reformed discretionary support will be implemented during 2017. The outcome of the consultation will be crucial to informing our final decisions about these elements. Informed by the consultation responses, the Government will implement the decisions as soon as possible in 2017/18. The Government does not anticipate that there will be any reduction in current spending as a result of the consultation proposals. No-one who currently receives an annual payment will be worse off than they are now as a result of the proposed changes to the annual payments.

This consultation does not affect any of the reform elements introduced in the financial year of 2016/17.

Finally, the Government has heard beneficiaries' feedback regarding our plans for a new scheme administrator. As a result, we announce today that the NHS Business Services Authority will become the new single scheme administrator during 2017. While this transition takes place, annual and discretionary payments and services will continue to be made by the current schemes to ensure a smooth transition to the new scheme administrator with minimum impact on the important financial and non-financial ex gratia services infected blood beneficiaries will receive this Parliament.

## Statement from

Department of Health and Social Care



## Linked statements

This statement has also been made in the House of Lords

### Department of Health



Health Redress



[Lord O'Shaughnessy](#)

Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health

Conservative, Life peer

Statement made 6 March 2017

HLWS522

Lords

## Attachments

Consultation Document



PDF (620.31 KB)

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