

From the Minister of State  
The Rt Hon Jane Kennedy MP



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Tel: **GRO-C**

14th June 2005

PO5015954

The Rt Hon Michael Ancram MP

*Dear Michael*

Thank you for your letter of 18 May to Patricia Hewitt on behalf of your constituent Mrs **GRO-A** of **GRO-A** about the vCJD compensation scheme.

You write further to John Hutton's reply of 14 December 2004 (our ref: PO5007253), raising additional concerns about Mrs **GRO-A**'s application for assistance under the vCJD compensation scheme. First, may I say I sympathise with her concerns and I am sorry for the continuing difficulties she is experiencing whilst she cares for her son **GRO-A**.

I am informed that the Local Authority Housing Officer for **GRO-A** District Council is working closely with the vCJD Trust, and is actively seeking alternative accommodation for Mrs **GRO-A** and her family, including suitable arrangements for **GRO-A**. I am sure that this will result in the best decision for all concerned.

As you may know, the Government set up the vCJD Trust in February 2002, with very substantial funding and a broadly drafted Trust Deed, so that it could deal independently with the sometimes agonising compensation needs of victims of vCJD and their families.

I believe it is important that we do not seek to second guess the independence of the Trustees in their handling of individual cases. That said, my officials have been briefed, in broad terms, on the background to this case, and I understand that the Trustees are indeed dealing with it properly and flexibly, within the terms of the Deed.

Of course, Ministers do keep in touch with the Chairman of the Trustees, and the Trust's solicitors keep Department of Health officials informed of general progress and trends. If it became apparent that some aspect of the compensation scheme needed to be reviewed, or that the Trust Deed required amendment to better reflect a changing situation, then we would certainly consider that possibility. However, I do not believe that we have reached such a position at this point in time.

I hope Mrs **GRO-A** finds this reply helpful.

*Yours ever*

**GRO-C**

**JANE KENNEDY**