

Department of Health
Castle Buildings
Stormont Estate
Belfast
BT4 3SQ

17 June 2020

Dear Mr Swann

It is with considerable frustration that I write to you again on the subject of the Infected Blood Payment Scheme for Northern Ireland.

Only two months ago, those infected as a result of contaminated blood products in Northern Ireland were led to believe that their calls for parity with the English support scheme had finally been accepted. Indeed, it appeared to put into practice the commitment in the New Decade, New Approach document published in January 2020.

We welcomed the back-dated uplift and the one-off extra payment of £5,000 to non-infected widows and widowers for the last financial year, which you had clearly worked hard to secure. Yet now, support payments have returned to their derisory and unfair levels, placing an intolerable burden of financial insecurity on our members, despite an extra £1m allocated by the Department of Finance specifically to help victims of contaminated blood.

At a time of huge pressure on your department, you appear to have brought this issue back to square one, causing confusion, upset and great anger to our community.

The Haemophilia Society and its members in Northern Ireland cannot understand why, having implemented an uplift in payments to match those made in England last year, you have not simply continued payments at this level for the current financial year.

I call on you to end the financial uncertainty that you have imposed on our community and allocate the extra £1m as uplifted payments immediately.

For everyone affected by a genetic bleeding disorder

President: Baroness Meacher Registered charity no. 288260. Charity Registered in Scotland No SC039732.

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While we welcome your longer term plans to consider and address other financial aspects of the scheme and to implement the Infected Blood Inquiry's recommendations in due course, I urge you to honour your first pledge to campaigners, including myself, which was to address the disparity in payments between Northern Ireland and England.

Please do not drag this issue out any longer, our community is tired of waiting for the financial support they deserve.

I look forward to receiving your reply.

Yours sincerely



Clive Smith
Chair of the board of trustees
The Haemophilia Society

CC:
Penny Mordaunt MP, Paymaster General and minister with responsibility for the Infected Blood Inquiry
Richard Pengelly, Permanent Secretary of the Department of Health
Sue Gray, Permanent Secretary of the Department of Finance
David Sterling, Head of NI Civil Service

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