



Baroness Twycross
Government Whip and the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for DCMS
Cabinet Office 70 Whitehall London SW1A 2AS

The Earl Howe GBE, PC
House of Lords
London
SW1A 0PW

15 August 2024

Dear Earl Howe,

During the repeat statement I gave in the House of Lords on 30th July, I committed to write with further detail on some of the points you raised.

Firstly I would like to reiterate my thanks to you for your hard work in progressing the Victims and Prisoners Act. I said that I hope that we can work closely together on this issue as we move forward, and that is something I am firmly committed to doing.

Secondly, I would like to correct my statement in response to your query on the bespoke psychological support for victims of the infected blood scandal. During the debate, said “I reassure the noble Earl that the NHS support is now in place in England”. I can confirm that in fact a bespoke psychological service, the Infected Blood Psychological Service, for people infected and affected by infected blood products, is being delivered by NHS England and will be ready to support its first patients later this Summer. All services across England are then expected to be fully operational by early next year. Please accept my sincere apologies. I have requested that the record is corrected.

On the question of the interim payments of £100,000 to the estates of the deceased people who were infected with contaminated blood or blood products and whose deaths have not yet been recognised, these will be made by the administrators of the existing Infected Blood Support Schemes, on behalf of the UK Government. The Cabinet Office is working closely with DHSC, the devolved governments and the administrators of the existing Infected Blood Support Schemes to establish the process for making these payments. We fully expect that applications will open across the United Kingdom in October.

Please also allow me to provide some further information on how the regulations will work given the statutory deadline falls within parliamentary recess. As you are fully aware, the regulations to establish the Infected Blood Compensation Scheme will be subject to the made affirmative procedure. The regulations to establish the compensation scheme will be made (signed by the Minister) and become law at that point. There is a statutory obligation on Government to deliver these by 24th August, and we remain committed to meeting this deadline. From this point, Parliament will have 28 sitting days within which the regulations are required to be debated in both Houses in order to remain law.

I note also your question in regard to engagement with all parts of the public sector ahead of the introduction of a statutory duty of candour. Establishing a duty of candour is a priority for this Government and we will announce our proposals on this in due course.

I hope this information is useful. I would be keen to meet you to discuss this work further, particularly ahead of the debate on infected blood in the Lords planned for later in the autumn. I look forward to working on a cross-party basis as we progress this important work.

I am copying this letter to all noble lords who contributed during the debate and will place a copy in the House library.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Baroness Twycross', written in a cursive style.

Baroness Twycross
Baroness in Waiting and the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for DCMS