

Improved arrangements to support those affected by contaminated blood announced

The new arrangements will provide broader assistance over and above financial support by offering a support service for every affected individual. This will help individuals with difficulties accessing healthcare services, home or travel insurance, other financial benefits or suitable public services. Arrangements will also address concerns about discretionary funding. All regular payments will be increased to include an amount towards additional expenses such as increased winter fuels, treatment (travel/overnight accommodation) and insurance (personal/travel).

More will also be done to support those who have been bereaved, especially important during the early years when distress and financial difficulty may be greatest.

The one-off payment will be retained and, in addition, spouses, civil partners or partners will receive 75% of the regular payments for three years after bereavement. For the newly bereaved, payments will reflect the regular payment rate at the time of death. For those bereaved in earlier years, the 2016-17 rate will be applied and one payment made in full.

Health Secretary Vaughan Gething said:

“Today’s announcement brings an end to the uncertainty about support in future and will introduce a new scheme that is supportive, transparent and as equitable as possible.

“We’ve taken account of the views expressed by those affected which have helped shape the new arrangements, giving us a deeper understanding of the impact of the tragedy on their lives and those of their families in many cases.”

The new scheme will be administered by Velindre NHS Trust through the NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership.

Wales’ beneficiaries will transfer to the new scheme that will operate from October 2017. Enhanced regular payments (annual, quarterly or monthly) will be backdated to April 2017.

Welsh Government officials will work with HM Revenue and Customs and the Department of Works and Pensions to ensure that future payments continue to be exempt from taxation liability or state benefits entitlement calculations.

They will continue to work also with the Department of Health and the current

scheme administrators to ensure the transition to the new scheme is as smooth as possible.