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Dr McIntyre

Copy to: Mr Wastle ✓

AIDS

Yesterday's meeting of the Scottish Transfusion Directors was attended by Dr Gunson and Dr Wagstaff from England. There was a very useful discussion about AIDS and Dr Gunson explained the involvement of DHSS at the end of last week.

It seems that the document intended to dissuade people at particular risk of AIDS from donating blood was obtained by Dr Gunson from a Council of Europe meeting. He gave this to Dr Walford and we were given the impression that it was eventually concluded at higher level in DHSS that the leaflet would need to be revised. Hence SHHD heard no more from DHSS.

Dr Gunson has re-written the leaflet, drawing to some extent on the document prepared by the Edinburgh RTC, but his draft appeared to be still in manuscript and not available for detailed discussion. However there is no doubt about the desire in the transfusion services to collaborate fully north and south of the Border and Dr Gunson has promised to let SNBTS have his latest version which may yet be modified in the light of yesterday's discussion. He will also try to ensure that DHSS consult SHHD in good time before there is ministerial involvement in going public on this subject.

All the Directors present are now more aware of the complexity of the issues involved particularly in relation to the views of the homosexual community, the scope for misrepresentation by the press and the public, and the diplomacy required in presenting the AIDS issue in donor centres. For example no one is now quite sure as to whether the proposed leaflet should be for "pick-up" or "hand-out". (DHSS were for hand-out) Nor is the matter of possible distribution through the homosexual community resolved or even the possibility that there is a need for two leaflets - one for donor centres in general and the other slanted more specifically to the homosexual community.

Apparently there were 18 PQs brewing at DHSS last week (although so far as I understand there were no MPs) so I don't think there is any doubt that SHHD will have to involve our Minister and that we cannot rely solely on the views of the SNBTS.


A E BELL
15 June 1983

Room 25
SAH