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Dear Mr Wright and Mr Rice

Thank you both for your letter of 25 July to the First Minister regarding the UK public inquiry into the events that led to people being infected with HIV and/or hepatitis C through NHS-supplied blood or blood products. I am replying as the Cabinet Secretary with responsibility for this area.

As you know, the UK Government is currently engaging with those affected before taking a final decision on the inquiry format and remit and to understand preferences for the style, scope and duration of the inquiry. I know you will advise them directly of your views on the Terms of Reference and the organisation and administration of the inquiry, but if you would like us to take a more proactive role in advising the UK Government of the views of Scottish stakeholders please let us know. We have already told them that we would be happy to facilitate this kind of engagement in Scotland if it would be helpful. I value the constructive relationship we have developed with Haemophilia Scotland and the Scottish Infected Blood Forum.

We expect to be consulted in relation to the Terms of Reference of the inquiry; I have already made this clear to the responsible UK Minister. If the inquiry is to encompass Scottish matters, evidence and witnesses, I agree with you that the hearings must be fully accessible to Scottish stakeholders. The Scottish Infected Blood Support Scheme has already forwarded information regarding the UK Inquiry to its beneficiaries on behalf of the UK Government and has invited them to comment to the Department of Health on the proposals.

We will provide all the assistance we can in supplying relevant information to the inquiry. The Penrose Inquiry considered how many of the historic decisions were taken in relation to blood safety across the UK, and I am sure those conclusions and that narrative will be of

interest to the UK Inquiry. National Records of Scotland (NRS) holds the record of the Penrose Inquiry which was transferred to NRS at the end of the Inquiry. The record includes all documents from the Courtbook evidence database.

We will of course stay in close contact with Haemophilia Scotland and the Scottish Infected Blood Forum as the UK Inquiry proposals develop. We have achieved a close and effective working relationship with those affected in responding to the Penrose Inquiry report and taking forward the Financial Review and its recommendations. I hope that the UK Government will see the benefits of the Scottish approach in taking this important matter forward.

I hope this is helpful.



**SHONA ROBISON**