



Department of Health & Social Care

Freedom of Information Team
Department of Health and Social Care
39 Victoria Street
London SW1H 0EU

www.gov.uk/dhsc

Ms Frankie Hammond
request-606420-922f6447@whatdotheyknow.com

4 December 2019

Dear Ms Hammond,

Freedom of Information Request Reference FOI-1197266

Thank you for your request dated 24 November, in which you asked the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC):

“Subject: Re: Freedom of Information request - HIV infected intimates Contaminated Blood

*Dear Department of Health and Social Care,
Please find attached my updated request.*

Correspondence between the department of health and EIBSS regarding HIV funeral plan payments between 2017-2019 Inclusive.”

Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

DHSC holds information relevant to your request. However, to comply with your request as it is currently framed would exceed the cost limit as set out in Section 12(1) of the FOIA. Section 12(1) states that a public authority can refuse a request if complying with it would exceed the appropriate limit of £600, which represents 3.5 working days. This represents the estimated cost of one person spending this time in determining whether the information is held, and locating, retrieving and extracting the information.

It may help if I explain that the Department's Infected Blood policy team has gone through a number of restructures and staff changes since 2017, and we consider that the processes officials would have to take in order to gain access to defunct email accounts, then search through a very large volume of files to establish whether they held information relevant to your request, would exceed the section 12 cost limit.

If you were to refine your request to correspondence from the last two months, we may be able to provide some information relating to your request. However, we cannot guarantee that Section 12 or any other exemptions will not apply to a reframed request.

Alternatively, you may wish to contact the England Infected Blood Support Scheme (EIBSS), a scheme set up to provide support and guidance to those infected and affected by contaminated blood, including families. This covers financial support, which extends to funeral costs.

EIBSS offers a phone helpline where people can ask questions or express concerns about infected blood directly and can also be contacted by email. More information can be found here:

<https://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/eibss-contact-us>.

Outside the scope of the FOIA, and on a discretionary basis, you may be interested to know that under current policy, EIBSS provides a one-off discretionary payment of up to £4,500 towards the funeral costs when an infected beneficiary has passed away.

If you are not satisfied with the handling of your request, you have the right to appeal by asking for an internal review. This should be submitted within two months of the date of this letter and sent to FreedomOfInformation@dhsc.gov.uk, or to the address at the top of this letter.

Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communication.

If you are not content with the outcome of your internal review, you may complain directly to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). Generally, the ICO cannot make a decision unless you have already appealed our original response and received our internal review decision. You should raise your concerns with the ICO within three months of your last meaningful contact with us.

The ICO can be contacted at:

The Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

<https://ico.org.uk/concerns/>

Yours sincerely,

Lauren Der
Freedom of Information Officer
FreedomOfInformation@dhsc.gov.uk