



Rt Hon Nick Thomas-Symonds MP
Minister for the Cabinet Office
HM Paymaster General
Cabinet Office 70 Whitehall London
SW1A 2AS

Professor Sir Jonathan Montgomery
Chair, Technical Expert Group

By email only

27 January 2026

Dear Sir Jonathan,

Thank you for your continued leadership of the Infected Blood Compensation Scheme Technical Expert Group (TEG), in particular for chairing the initial roundtable discussions on the Special Category Mechanism (SCM) on 15 and 17 December 2025. These sessions provided an important platform for targeted engagement with key organisations and charity representatives within the infected blood community. I understand the purpose was to ensure the advice the TEG provides to the Government is informed by the lived experience.

I welcome the TEG's commitment to transparency through the publication of background papers and meeting records. It is also encouraging to see the schedule for future roundtables in early 2026, which I understand will focus on:

- the recognition of severe psychological harm
- the recognition of harms caused by interferon treatment
- the supplementary route for affected people.

As you are aware, the Government's current proposal to compensate those eligible for SCM (or an equivalent) is through a Severe Health Condition award. The proposal sets out our intention that this award would be automatically available to current beneficiaries of the Infected Blood Support Scheme (IBSS) and equivalent four-nation schemes. For living applicants not registered with an IBSS, the proposal suggests using the England Infected Blood Support Scheme (EIBSS) criteria, as approximately 80% of current recipients were assessed this way. I am grateful to all those who have shared their views through the consultation, and who have provided thoughtful feedback to you and the TEG through the roundtables on this matter.

The proposal as it stands would not be accessible to applications on behalf of the estates of deceased people, as SCM criteria were originally designed for clinicians to assess the current impacts of infection and treatment on living individuals. Extending eligibility beyond living applicants would require a shift from current clinical assessments to establishing eligibility based on historical medical documents which could be challenging. I am aware that this is an issue that was raised at the TEG roundtables in December. Subject to the findings

of the consultation that has now closed, I would be grateful if the TEG could hold a further roundtable to examine whether it is feasible to extend the SCM award for the deceased so that your final advice can inform the Government's decision on this matter.

I hope that the sessions will enable you to ensure that the full range of stakeholders is able to engage directly with the TEG. I look forward to seeing the outcomes of these discussions reflected in the TEG's final advice.

Your sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nick Thomas-Symonds".

**RT HON NICK THOMAS-SYMONDS MP
MINISTER FOR THE CABINET OFFICE
HIS MAJESTY'S PAYMASTER GENERAL**