



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SECURITY
 HANNIBAL HOUSE
 ELEPHANT AND CASTLE LONDON SE1 6TE
 TELEPHONE 01-703 6380 ext.

Your reference

Our reference

REGIONAL GENERAL MANAGERS
 DISTRICT GENERAL MANAGERS
 GENERAL MANAGERS, SPECIAL HEALTH AUTHORITIES FOR LONDON
 POST GRADUATE TEACHING HOSPITALS
 REGIONAL SCIENTIFIC OFFICERS
 REGIONAL SUPPLIES OFFICER

REGIONAL MEDICAL OFFICERS
 DISTRICT MEDICAL OFFICERS
 REGIONAL TRANSFUSIONS DIRECTORS) For information

1 August 1985

EVALUATION OF SCREENING TEST KITS FOR HTLV III ANTIBODY

In his press release dated 27 June the Minister for Health announced that a test would be introduced to screen all blood given by blood donors for antibodies to the virus which causes AIDS. In his letter of 30 July, Mr Hart advised Regional General Managers of the need to provide alternative testing arrangements, outside the National Blood Transfusion Service, for people who fear they may have been exposed to the virus.

The first stage of the evaluation of commercially available test kits has now been completed on behalf of DHSS by the Public Health Laboratory Service. The outcome of that evaluation has been considered by a panel of experts and a summary of their recommendations is attached. The National Blood Transfusion Service is now undertaking its own 2nd stage evaluation covering aspects peculiar to the use of kits in the blood donation screening context.

A more detailed account of the PHLS evaluation will be available on request later this month. Any enquiries should be addressed to David Kennedy, Room 325, 14 Russell Square, London WC1B 5EP: Tel 01 836 6811; or Peter Lister, Room 1004 Hannibal House, as above, Tel: 703 6380 ext 3326.

The Department has funded the PHLS to set up laboratory facilities to confirm the results of any blood donations found positive in the National Blood Transfusion Service, and to test the samples taken in Departments of Genito-Urinary Medicine or elsewhere. However, recipients of this letter are asked to ensure that copies are passed to all those who might be involved in the supply and use of test kits.

Yours sincerely

M A HARRIS
 Health Services Division