



Department of Health

COMMON SERVICES AGENCY
GENERAL MANAGER
TRINITY PARK HOUSE

11-3152
1996

NHS Management Executive
St. Andrew's House
Edinburgh EH1 3DG
27 August 1996

Dear Colleague

PRIORITY TREATMENT FOR WAR PENSIONERS

Summary

1. This letter has been issued to advise of an extended definition of the term "War Pensioner", and as a reminder about the arrangements for priority treatment of such war pensioners. With effect from 29 July 1996 the term "War Pensioner" will include those people who were injured or disabled as a result of service in the Armed Forces of the Crown either before 4 August 1914 or between 1 October 1921 and 2 September 1939. NHS MEL(1992)58 refers.

Action

2. General Managers and NHS Trust Chief Executives should ensure that general practitioners and relevant hospital staff are informed of the new definition and reminded of the arrangements for priority treatment.

Background

3. A war pensioner was previously classed as someone who has a pension or who received a gratuity for disablement caused by armed service during the 1914-18 and 1939-45 wars and service since 1945. From 29 July this year the DSS will take over responsibility, from the Ministry of Defence (MOD), for what are known as "pre-1914 and inter-war year cases". As the MOD was hitherto responsible for these cases, they have never previously fallen under the definition of DSS "war pensioners". To avoid disparity the pre-1914 and inter-war year cases will become equally entitled to priority treatment. Merchant Seamen and civilians who receive pensions for wartime injuries are also war pensioners.

4. In 1953 hospitals run by the Ministry of Pensions for the treatment of war pensioners were transferred to the NHS. The Government gave an undertaking that there would be priority examination and treatment for war pensioners in NHS hospitals for the condition or conditions for which the war pensioners received a pension or gratuity.

This letter supersedes
NHS MEL(1994)67 dated 9/6/94

Addressees

For action:
General Managers,
Health Boards

Chief Executives,
NHS Trusts

General Manager,
Common Services Agency

General Manager,
State Hospitals Board for Scotland

For information:
Local Health Councils

General Manager,
Health Education Board for
Scotland

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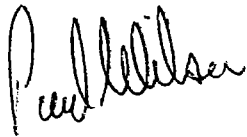
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5. In accordance with this undertaking, NHS hospitals, including NHS Trust hospitals, should give priority to war pensioners both as out-patients and in-patients for examinations or treatment which relates to the condition or conditions for which they receive a pension or received a gratuity (unless there is an emergency case or another case demands clinical priority). Priority should not be given for unrelated conditions.
6. Referrals for treatment should make it clear that the patient is a war pensioner and requires treatment for the condition or conditions for which the war pensioner was given a pension or gratuity.
7. NHS Circular GEN(1993)14 dated 24 November 1993, set out the position regarding travel expenses for war pensioners to receive treatment for an accepted war disablement.
8. Complaints about alleged breakdowns in the priority treatment undertaking should be resolved under the new Complaints Procedures which came into effect on 1 April 1996.

Yours sincerely



PAUL WILSON
Director of Trusts