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Plea for 'hospital victims of HIV virus'

LABOUR Health spokesman Harriet Harman last night called for action on the case of a 26-year-old man from Edinburgh who, she said, had been infected with the HIV virus after a successful bone marrow operation to treat leukemia.

"He said he felt as if he had been given another death sentence," she said.

Ms Harman was urging the Government to extend compensation to all the victims infected with HIV — the

virus which causes Aids — through contaminated NHS blood transfusions.

However, junior Health Minister Stephen Dorrell challenged the Opposition to say where the money to meet such a pledge would come from.

Ms Harman said during a Commons debate on parliamentary and health service commissioners: "The Government were right to give compensation to the haemophiliacs.

"But they were wrong to deny compensation to those who were not

haemophiliacs but who were infected with contaminated blood in exactly the same way."

She said: "Some are very ill, some have already died. None have received one penny compensation.

"These people don't want sympathy. They want justice."

Ms Harman said Mr Dorrell should explain why the Government was failing to provide compensation "to all those who got HIV through blood transfusions".