

# The Infected Blood Public Inquiry NEWSLETTER



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## Inquiry's autumn focus on pharma and blood services

The Infected Blood Inquiry has announced a busy autumn schedule as it moves on from politicians to hear evidence from blood services and pharmaceutical companies involved in blood products.

There will be nine weeks of hearings – usually involving four days of evidence – from 21 September to 17 December. The inquiry resumes with evidence from Lord Fowler, Secretary of State for the Department of Health and Social Security from 1981-1987, before looking at pharmaceutical companies and, in November, blood services such as national blood transfusion organisations.

Lord Fowler is the latest senior politician to appear at the inquiry – Lord Clarke, former health minister and Health Secretary, gave evidence before the summer break. Earlier in the year the health ministers of Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales as well as the UK government's then Health Secretary Matt Hancock also gave evidence.

Lord Clarke received a lot of criticism for the way in which he gave his evidence. He dismissed some questions as “pointless” and admitted he felt “exasperated” by the inquiry's probing. Some of those present described Lord Clarke's attitude as “arrogant, pompous and contemptuous”.

By contrast, all the health ministers who gave evidence in May agreed that government had a “moral responsibility” to address the injustice of the contaminated blood scandal.



Following Lord Fowler's evidence, the inquiry will look at the role of pharmaceutical companies, mainly using presentations from its lead counsel, Jenni Richards QC, but there are also expected to be some live witnesses. Armour, Hyland, Travenol, Immuno, Bayer, Speywood, Alpha, Abbott and Grifols are the companies Ms Richards will be focussing on.

Social distancing measures will continue to be in place at the inquiry, which has moved to new premises in London (more details later in this newsletter), and its policy of restricting capacity in the hearing room will remain.

Sir Brian Langstaff, inquiry chair, is determined to press on with inquiry hearings, despite the problems caused by Covid. He said: “Through these uncertain times we will endeavour to make progress no matter what challenges we might be facing. “

At the close of hearings in July, Sir Brian gave another sign that he is looking ahead to the end of the inquiry – due to be sometime in 2022 – by asking participants to start to think about what recommendations they might ask him to make in his final report. He is clearly keen to ensure the inquiry sticks to its timetable, if possible.

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## Compensation study gets underway this autumn



Compensation has been officially put on the agenda following the appointment of a barrister to carry out an independent review of schemes.

At the time of writing, the scope of the review had not been finalised, but Sir Robert is expected to look at areas including who should receive compensation, what form this should take, schemes adopted by other countries, such as Ireland, and how compensation would be administered.

The move came on the eve of former Health Secretary Matt Hancock's evidence to the Infected Blood Inquiry in May, when the government announced that Sir Robert Francis QC would carry out a study of potential compensation schemes. Sir Robert will report his findings to the Paymaster General in February 2022.

The compensation study is entirely separate from the inquiry, although Sir Robert is likely to be asked to give evidence once he has submitted his report to the government next year.

The inquiry was shown a letter from Penny Mordaunt, the minister with responsibility for the inquiry, to Chancellor Rishi Sunak from 2020 in which she said it was "inevitable" that the government would need to provide "substantial" compensation to those infected and affected by the contaminated blood scandal.

As part of his study, Sir Robert will consult widely with the infected and affected community. The Haemophilia Society will be making a submission to Sir Robert at the end of the year on behalf of our members and will be organising a series of virtual meetings to provide information and listen to your views. You can also contact Sir Robert directly at [ibcompframeworkstudy@cabinetoffice.gov.uk](mailto:ibcompframeworkstudy@cabinetoffice.gov.uk)

### What do you think about compensation?

Join us on Monday, 27 September at 6pm to discuss the independent review of compensation schemes for those infected and affected by the contaminated blood scandal.

We will be holding a number of meetings with our members in the autumn to ensure that your views are represented and everyone gets a chance to express their opinion on this issue.

Use this link to join the meeting on Monday, 27 September at 6pm:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86985084474?pwd=VUc2QlNYd1djaDg1UUdqOXZrUGg5dz09>

To find the link to the meeting go to [haemophilia.org.uk](http://haemophilia.org.uk) and click on our events page.

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## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Inquiry moves to new HQ

The inquiry has moved to new premises in London – about a 10 minute walk from its former base at Fleetbank House.

The new inquiry rooms are on the fifth floor of a large shared office building on Aldwych.

Its capacity is roughly similar to Fleetbank House and the inquiry team has gone to great lengths to try to make it feel the same – regular visitors will recognise the furniture and photographic murals.

Although Aldwych House is on a busy road, there are benches to sit outside in nearby Houghton Street.

The inquiry's new address is: Aldwych House, 71-91 Aldwych, London, WC2B 4HN.

### Annual Service of Remembrance and Thanksgiving

The annual service of remembrance and thanksgiving for all those people with inherited bleeding disorders who have died due to their treatment



with contaminated blood products takes place on Saturday, 30 October at 2.30pm.

The service will be held at St Botolph without Bishopsgate, London, where the book of remembrance and icon is kept. Refreshments will be available afterwards.

If you are not able to attend in person, the service will be live streamed. A link will be put on our website nearer the time. If you would like to attend the service please register using the link here: [haemophilia.org.uk/events/events-calendar/service-of-remembrance-and-thanksgiving/](https://haemophilia.org.uk/events/events-calendar/service-of-remembrance-and-thanksgiving/)

### Happy Retirement, Neil!

We're sure many of you will join us in wishing Neil Bateman a happy and relaxed retirement.

Through his work as a welfare adviser, Neil helped so many people from the contaminated blood community. When he gave evidence to the Infected Blood Inquiry earlier this year, Neil estimated that in the last decade he'd helped 945 people from our community claim £3m in benefits.

### Psychological support

The inquiry has set an intense pace this autumn which can be overwhelming to those of us following the hearings. The Red Cross offers psychological support on **0800 458 9473** or **020 3417 0280** and all infected blood support schemes offer specialist counselling or funding for counselling. If you need help getting support, contact our public inquiry team on [publicinquiry@haemophilia.org.uk](mailto:publicinquiry@haemophilia.org.uk)

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## Inquiry catch up – what’s been happening?

So far in 2021 there have been 16 weeks of public hearings, beginning in January with evidence from clinicians and ending in July with politicians.

In between, the inquiry has heard evidence from former staff and trustees of support schemes as well as from former staff and trustees of the Haemophilia Society (HS), pupils, parents and staff from Treloar’s College, the inquiry’s medical ethics panel and prominent campaigners.

The inquiry spent four weeks looking at the work of the Macfarlane Trust (MFT), the Skipton Fund, the Caxton Foundation and the Eileen Trust. At the MFT and later the Skipton Fund, a picture emerged of charities which, due in part to uncertainty about ongoing funding, were cautious about spending money and were unwilling to “rock the boat” by campaigning to get more money from government.

The criteria for getting grants was often unclear and some recipients felt those in charge of the purse strings were unsympathetic.



In evidence about HS, David Watters, who was general secretary from 1981-1994 was asked about the charity’s reliance on the opinion of Prof Arthur Bloom as the AIDS crisis emerged. Mr Watters said that at the time Prof Bloom was a world authority on haemophilia and it seemed “entirely reasonable” to accept his advice.

Former pupils of Treloar’s College in Hampshire, a boarding school for children with physical disabilities which had a haemophilia centre onsite in the 1980s told of their heartbreak and anger at the deaths of so many of their school mates. It is thought about 72 pupils have died as a result of the contaminated blood scandal.

One father, John Peach, described the loss of his two sons, Jason and Leigh within five months of each other. Looking at photos of them, he told the inquiry: “I miss these boys every day.”

## Inquiry Timetable

### September

**21-22:** Lord Norman Fowler, Health Secretary 1981-1987

**23-24:** Presentation on Armour

**28-29:** Presentation on Hyland, Travenol and Immuno

**30:** Presentation on Bayer

### October

**1:** Presentation on Speywood

**5:** Presentation on Alpha, Abbott and Griffols

**6-8:** Presentation on smaller haemophilia centres, including London

From **1 November** to **17 December** the inquiry will look at Blood Services.