

The Infected Blood Inquiry weekly summary

The
Haemophilia
Society

A summary of inquiry hearings: week of 4 July 2022

Lord William Waldegrave was appointed Health Secretary in 1990 at a time of crisis in Margaret Thatcher's premiership. Within a month she had been ousted and replaced by John Major. Thatcher wanted the HIV litigation to be settled in the courts, but Lord Waldegrave was open to a settlement and by the end of November 1990 he and Treasury Minister David

Mellor had agreement on how the £51m scheme could be financed, which was signed off by the new PM. However, Mellor attempted to 'renege' on the deal a few months later, causing a spat with Lord Waldegrave over who would fund legal costs. Eventually Mellor gave in, offering an extra £5m, saying having 'won the war' he didn't want to 'lose the peace'. Lord

Waldegrave faced strong opposition from civil servants and the Treasury to extending financial support to those infected with HIV through blood transfusions. They were concerned this would set a precedent and lead to no-fault compensation. A scheme was finally approved in February 1992. There was also a presentation on the role of the chief medical officer in the 1970s and 80s.

Inquiry focus: Carol Grayson's 30 years of campaigning

Carol Grayson's husband Pete and brother-in-law Stephen were infected with HIV and hepatitis C through treatment for their haemophilia. Pete attended Treloar's College as a teenager where he was first treated with factor concentrate. Stephen died, aged 20, in 1987 and the family's home in Hartlepool was daubed in AIDS-related graffiti. Carol and Pete met in 1991 and travelled before his health began to deteriorate. They campaigned extensively, with Colette Wintle and others, forming Haemophilia North. Initially they probed lack of awareness and support for hepatitis C and the need for recombinant treatment, but Carol went on to delve far deeper into the scandal through academic research which resulted in a dissertation. Pete died in 2005, aged 47. Although the couple planned a suicide pact, Pete asked Carol to fight on to deal with 'unfinished business'. Carol has lobbied successive governments for a public inquiry, compensation and 'gender justice' in the haemophilia community.

Quotes of the week

'We need to move quickly to avoid missing this opportunity. We will never again have the chance to settle for the sort of amount now on offer.'
Briefing document for Lord Waldegrave on the key points in favour of settling HIV litigation in November 1990

'There are always outliers in scientific advice and sometimes they are right, but many times they are not'.
Lord Waldegrave

'To argue that we are compensating haemophiliacs because their illness is hereditary but will not compensate others is bad morality, poor logic and bad politics.'
John Marshall MP on extending financial support to people infected with HIV through blood transfusion, January 1991

'The material was at times so alarming it was almost hard to believe myself and I did not want to be dismissed as an unreliable 'conspiracy theorist'.
Campaigner Carol Grayson on the documents she uncovered during her academic research on the politics of the contaminated blood scandal.