

The Infected Blood Inquiry weekly summary

The
Haemophilia
Society

A summary of inquiry hearings: week of 26 September 2022

This week the inquiry has brought together panels to talk about themes, such as trying to apply to the Skipton Fund with missing medical records, health problems despite clearing hepatitis C without treatment, living with hepatitis B, treatment at Alder Hey Children's Hospital and the experiences of people from ethnic minorities. Most panellists talked about how it felt to be

disbelieved and what a corrosive effect that has on someone's mental health and confidence. Gary McKelvey's father contracted hepatitis C through a blood transfusion, but despite having liver failure and viral hepatitis recorded on his death certificate, the Skipton Fund has rejected his application for support. Waqar Ahmad, who was born in Pakistan, described his fight

for treatment to clear his hepatitis C which only made headway when his white step-sister intervened. Ghufrana Qureshi's mother could not prove she'd had a blood transfusion in 1970/1, but despite remembering all the details with great clarity, the Skipton Fund asked for a friend to verify her account. 'Why didn't they just trust the patient?' she asked.

Inquiry focus: Alder Hey Children's Hospital

Sue Hallwood's 'lovely little boys' Stephen and Brian were diagnosed with HIV in 1985 aged five and eight respectively. In heart-breaking evidence, the inquiry heard that they'd both been given commercial factor from the age of two – in contravention of haemophilia director treatment guidelines. Sue was never told of the risks of factor concentrate nor offered the safer alternative of cryoprecipitate by Dr John Martin, an oncologist with no specialist knowledge of haemophilia, who was in charge of their care at Alder Hey Children's Hospital. Stephen's treatment was later found to be 'negligent' in a report in 1992. Sue was informed of her sons' HIV diagnoses by letter and described the 'terror' of fellow parents who'd been given the same devastating news. She said as the time wore on Alder Hey became a 'conveyor belt' of child deaths. Stephen died aged nine in 1989 followed by Brian aged 16 in 1994. Sue said: 'They had haemophilia. They shouldn't have died'. She was only able to carry on because of her surviving son Thomas, she said.

Quotes of the week

'I was outraged...when the system destroys my medical records how do you expect me to prove this? It seemed it was for the Skipton Fund to disprove that the NHS gave it to me, not for me to prove that the NHS did it – they had it the wrong way round.'

Andrew Bragg on being rejected by the Skipton Fund

'I used to hold the bottle in one hand and I was pushing the medicine into his vein with the other hand, just hoping it wasn't the one.'

Elaine Read on injecting her son with heat-treated factor concentrate which contained an HIV warning

'The lack of consideration and disregard of the then current therapeutic recommendations for the treatment of children under the age of four regarding the use of cryoprecipitate in this case was negligent.'

Prof Geoff Savidge on the treatment of Stephen Hallwood who was given commercial factor aged two at Alder Hey Children's Hospital

'I just ache for them to come back.'

Sue Hallwood, whose two sons Stephen and Brian died from contaminated blood products as children