



Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP
Chancellor of the Exchequer
HM Treasury
1 Horse Guards Parade
London SW1A 2HQ

2 February 2021

Dear Mr Sunak

We write to you on the urgent issue of financial support for people infected and affected by the contaminated blood scandal.

Sir Brian Langstaff, chair of the Infected Blood Inquiry, wrote to David Lidington in October 2018 highlighting calls for “for financial assistance which fully recompenses individuals and families for the losses they have suffered” and stating that “decisive action on this matter should be taken and communicated to those affected at the earliest opportunity”.

A year later in November 2019 Sir Brian described the “grinding hardship” experienced by so many affected by this scandal, which continues to devastate lives to this day. Sir Brian also commented that addressing this must “not be put on hold while the Inquiry continues”. Two years on, we ask you to take action to alleviate this hardship.

As you will be aware, the current levels of financial support offered by the Infected Blood Support Schemes of England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales vary significantly, depending on which viruses affect you, the severity of its impact, the country you were infected in, and in some cases income or country from which you first applied for support.

We believe this is unjust and must be rectified. Every recipient was infected with HIV and/or hepatitis C viruses as a result of NHS treatment, regardless of where they lived in the UK. Yet this geographical detail can result in differences of tens of thousands of pounds in financial support a year.

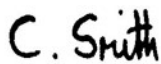
To move towards a levelling up between the four schemes within the UK as an interim measure ahead of the final report of the Inquiry, new money must be given to the Department of Health and Social Care with the resulting Barnett consequential giving the devolved governments the opportunity for the necessary improvement to be made to all four national support schemes. We have been lobbying for this for many years, but without additional funding across all four nations it is difficult to make progress.

In week beginning the 22 February 2021 the Infected Blood Inquiry will begin hearings looking on the trusts and schemes created to support people infected and affected. The success of the approaches taken by the Governments to provide just financial support will come under forensic scrutiny. The evidence will no doubt have a substantial impact on any recommendation for the future of financial support or compensation from the Inquiry. Only the Treasury is in a position to seize the window of opportunity to demonstrate a meaningful response to the calls to action from the chair of the Inquiry before that evidence is heard.

We appreciate that you currently have unprecedented demands on your time and resources, but we represent people infected and affected by the worst treatment disaster in the history of the NHS. They have waited for a compassionate and fair response for more than 40 years; they cannot wait any longer.

We look forward to receiving your reply.

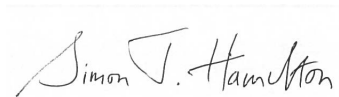
Yours sincerely



Clive Smith
Chair, The Haemophilia Society UK



Bill Wright
Chair, Haemophilia Scotland



Simon Hamilton
Chair, Haemophilia NI

Cc Sir Brian Langstaff, Chair the Infected Blood Inquiry
Penny Mordaunt MP, Paymaster General
Matt Hancock MP, Secretary of State for Health & Social Care
Jeane Freeman MSP, Secretary for Health & Sport
Robin Swann MLA, Minister of Health
Vaughan Gething AM, Minister for Health

