

6 May 2020

Dear Ms Dorries

I write to you in frustration at the lack of political engagement between your office and those campaigning on behalf of people infected and affected by the contaminated blood scandal.

On 28 January you and the then Cabinet Office Minister Oliver Dowden met with many campaigners, including myself, to discuss issues relating to the Infected Blood Inquiry. These included the desperate need for fair financial support as well as specialist psychological provision. We have heard nothing since that meeting.

On 4 March, The Haemophilia Society wrote to you asking for urgent action in funding specialist long-term psychological support for victims of the contaminated blood scandal and their families. We did not get a reply.

Three weeks ago, on 14 April, I wrote to you requesting clarification over Government advice on shielding people with HIV which appears to contradict the advice of expert HIV organisations. You have not yet responded.

Your predecessor, Jackie Doyle-Price, with whom we also had meetings in early 2019, also failed to act on our concerns about lack of mental health support. You can understand why this community feels let down by meetings with politicians which, time after time, fail to result in any meaningful action.

While this is clearly an extremely challenging period for your department, the Government and the country as a whole, the needs of those infected and affected by the contaminated blood scandal have not gone away. Indeed, the swift action taken by the Government in relation to COVID-19 and the huge sums committed to combat our current crisis reminds us that, if there is sufficient political will, it is possible to tackle problems very quickly.

For everyone affected by a genetic bleeding disorder

President: Baroness Meacher Registered charity no. 288260. Charity Registered in Scotland No SC039732.

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We now understand that Penny Mordaunt has been appointed lead minister for the Infected Blood Inquiry, although we have not had the courtesy of being officially notified of this development. She will be the fourth minister overseeing the inquiry since it was announced in 2017. The Haemophilia Society will be contacting her directly in the hope of moving forward on these issues.

In the meantime, I look forward to receiving a response to our letters. Your words at the meeting of 28 January were very warm, which makes my disappointment at your lack of action all the more acute.

I look forward to receiving your reply.

Yours sincerely

C. Smith

Clive Smith
Chair of the board of trustees
The Haemophilia Society

CC Penny Mordaunt, lead minister, the Infected Blood Inquiry

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