

# The Infected Blood Public Inquiry NEWSLETTER



THE  
HAEMOPHILIA  
SOCIETY

## A summary of remote inquiry hearings

This week haemophilia care for adults and children in Glasgow has come under the inquiry's microscope.

Dr Anna Pettigrew and Prof Ian Hann, who both worked at the Royal Hospital for Sick Children at Yorkhill in the 1980s gave evidence, followed by Prof Gordon Lowe, consultant and former co-director Glasgow Royal Infirmary 1984-2009.

The RHSC under Dr Willoughby was an

early adopter of home treatment and prophylaxis. In 1979, 99.9% of products used were concentrates—72% of them commercial products. When Prof Hann arrived in 1983 he stopped prophylaxis and switched immediately to Scottish concentrate. A total of 21 children were infected with HIV and Dr Pettigrew spoke movingly about telling mothers the diagnosis—their shock made worse because they

didn't know their sons had been tested. Prof Hann agreed that "unnecessary suffering" had been caused to families in the way they were told the results.

Prof Lowe defended the publication of research in Dec 1984 showing 12 out of 77 patients at GRI had been infected with HIV, before the patients had been told themselves. He said at the time of the AIDS "public health emergency" such research was vital.

## Inquiry news

The inquiry will hear evidence from campaigners and government witnesses, including ministers and civil servants from April 2021. In the Autumn it will look at evidence from blood services and pharmaceutical suppliers. More than 14 million pages have so far been reviewed for relevance by the inquiry team. Material dating back to the 1920s has come from over 600 document providers, including international, archives, trusts, haemophilia centres, individuals and government bodies. Sir Brian Langstaff said he has started to form a view about some aspects of the contaminated blood scandal. He said: "Overall, a broad picture of what happened, and why, is slowly beginning to emerge for me; and a foundation for concluding what might have been done is gradually being laid."

## Quotes of the week

"If we ignore history we are undoubtedly doomed to repeat it."

Prof Ian Hann

"I would never use the words 'absolutely safe' in relation to any pharmaceutical or blood product...There is no such thing as a fully safe product."

Prof Hann

"I know that any distress felt by those involved in treating patients with haemophilia pales into insignificance compared with the dreadful and enduring suffering of those families affected by this tragedy. This was a terrible tragedy and I am truly sorry for the suffering that they have endured and they continue to endure."

Dr Anna Pettigrew

"Is it [hepatitis C] all due to commercial concentrate? No. If commercial concentrate had never been used and it was NHS concentrate, would the problem still be of the same size? Yes. You could go further back and say, if concentrate was never invented and we'd carried on treating patients with plasma or cryoprecipitate, the end result would have been the same."

Prof Gordon Lowe on hep C