



THE
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SOC I ETY

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28 September 2018

The Rt Hon Theresa May MP
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London
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Dear Mrs May,

We are certain that, like so many people, you were shocked and distressed by the stories of both the infected and affected told to the Infected Blood Inquiry earlier this week. As a charity and as a community we are pleased that after so many years a full inquiry is now taking place, and would like to add our personal thanks to you for your support in making this happen.

But now the Inquiry is underway it is clear that it will take time, time many members of our Society and the community simply do not have. Already since you announced the inquiry a year ago, over 80 more people have died.

In her opening statement to the Inquiry, Counsel for the Department of Health and Social Care was clear in her acceptance that things happened that, in your own words, should simply not have happened. She committed the Department to assisting the Inquiry in every way possible. This is an incredibly welcome step as are the apologies by Government and the empathetic indications provided.

But given the urgency of the need of so many of those infected and their families, we are writing to ask that action is taken immediately to better support those affected by this devastating situation.

If Government remains inactive in the following areas at this point, and people continue to suffer, then the apology of Government and the empathetic indications, are hollow in the extreme.

Accordingly, The Haemophilia Society calls on your Government to provide immediate action in two key areas.

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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Financial Support

At present, differential financial arrangements exist depending upon where victims were infected in the United Kingdom. This postcode lottery in relation to entitlements to subsistence payments must cease immediately. At the very least, as an interim measure, all should be eligible for at least equivalent financial arrangements as exist in Scotland.

Such a concession is, however, only a start. The Government should begin now to address the need for fair and equitable compensation which successive governments have refused.

Time is running out for many of the infected and affected so it is crucial that compensation is addressed before the conclusion of this Inquiry and be considered, similar to the Irish settlement, on a moral responsibility basis pending the outcomes of the Inquiry.

Support and Counselling

This Inquiry will inevitably take the infected and affected on a rollercoaster emotional journey which will reveal old wounds and create new wounds. It will obliterate the coping mechanism of denial which means the re-experiencing of emotions connected to past traumatic events.

The Inquiry Team has provided counselling support during the opening days of the Inquiry which was welcomed and appreciated. However, a more permanent and indeed more comprehensive system must be set up as a matter of priority to provide an appropriate compassionate response to people's needs and requirements throughout the Inquiry.

It would be fundamentally wrong and potentially catastrophic to vulnerable people for this Inquiry to, through its necessary work, re-traumatise, the community and leave it to its own devices without appropriate expert support being provided.

Action by Government now to alleviate the healthcare and financial concerns of these victims, and the partners, parents and children of people who died, would not only enable them to live with some dignity, it would give substance and meaning to your and your Government's words of apology and empathy.

Yours sincerely,

Liz Carroll
Chief Executive

Barry Flynn
Chair

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