



Newsletter

April 2020
Issue 9

Message from Catherine Nalty, Deputy Secretary to the Inquiry

You will all understand that we have had to pause the local meetings, the visits to take statements, and to postpone the June hearings. We can assure you that the main work of the Inquiry - the investigation into the issues set out in the terms of reference - continues at pace. All of the Inquiry team, including Sir Brian, are working from home and fortunately we were already well equipped to do this.

It is too early to make new plans but we will keep you informed once we do so. This may be a particularly anxious time so please do remember that you can talk to the Inquiry's Red Cross team.

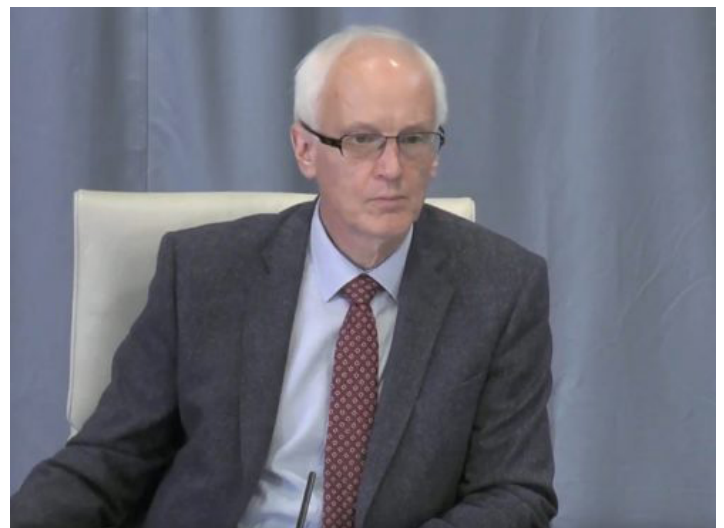
Expert Hearings from 24th to 28th February

Many Inquiry participants attended the expert hearings and commented afterwards that they felt "validated" to hear the experts confirming that their individual experiences were in line with impartial, scientific evidence. The press covered the intermediaries, the psychosocial experts and Sir Brian's call for psychological support.

The Guardian's report on the intermediaries' session described delays in diagnosis of hepatitis C, a reluctance to acknowledge that this infection came from blood transfusions, people feeling obliged to remain single for fear of infecting a partner, and the stigma of seeing signs reading 'no homosexuals, no haemophiliacs'.

The north London Ham & High paper focused on the psychosocial experts with this quote from Dr Nicky Thomas: "If you have a physical disabling illness you can put the plans in place but the rug is going to be moved from under your feet. People's inability to plan just takes away the sense of living life."

The Aberdeen-based Evening Express reported on Sir Brian's call for improved psychological support, including for families. "Those who have lost a partner, son, daughter, brother, sister, mother, father, grandparent or close friend must not be ignored. I hope to be able to acknowledge in the final report that proper support and follow-up will be in place across the UK."



Sir Brian Langstaff

Local Meetings

The meetings gave the Inquiry team helpful insight into the issues on the minds of Inquiry participants. As ever, there was a friendly and supportive atmosphere, which was especially welcome for people attending for the first time. Some of the points raised included:

- Widespread feelings of neglect that proper compensation is not being considered by the government and requests for the Inquiry to do what it can to support campaigners working for improved financial support
- Seeking reassurance that future hearings will all be live streamed so that people can follow the session from wherever suits them best, and that videos and transcripts will be available through the Inquiry website
- Suggestions that watching future hearings from a suitable local venue may help those who cannot travel. Others wanted reassurance that they could choose whether to watch locally or attend the hearings in person
- Some people had friends and family who believed it was too late to provide a witness statement or to speak to an intermediary but there is still plenty of time to do this
- A number of people had additional documents to add to a completed statement and this can be done without further changing the statement
- Concerns continue about follow up treatment for hepatitis C and there is now an item on the Inquiry website linking to the NHS statements on what should be available. You can read more [here](#).



A snapshot of a small selection of the local meeting venues. From top to bottom: Cardiff, Derry, Birmingham & Plymouth

Infected Blood Inquiry contact details

Tel: 0808 169 1377

Email: contact@infectedbloodinquiry.org.uk

Address:

Fleetbank House, 1st Floor, 2-6 Salisbury Square, London EC4Y 8AE

Twitter: @bloodinquiry

Website: www.infectedbloodinquiry.org.uk

British Red Cross Confidential Support line

Tel: 0800 458 9473 or 0203 417 0280 at these times:

Monday between 11am - 1pm;

Wednesday between 7pm - 9pm; and

Friday between 2pm - 4pm.

Or leave a message any time and you will receive a call back as soon as possible