

# THE HAEMOPHILIA SOCIETY

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## HAEMOPHILIA SOCIETY CALLS FOR INQUIRY INTO HEPATITIS C INFECTION OF THE UK HAEMOPHILIA POPULATION

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The Haemophilia Society is calling for a public inquiry on how thousands of people were infected with hepatitis C through treatment with contaminated blood products in the 1970s and 80s by the NHS.

In a letter to David Hinchcliffe MP, the Chairman of the Health Select Committee, the Society requests that the inquiry be held to address the "large number of unanswered questions that remain" and to ensure that "all the facts about this infection via contaminated blood products are brought to light".

The request comes in the wake of the Government's decision <sup>over the summer</sup> not to provide any financial assistance for people with haemophilia infected with hepatitis C through their NHS treatment.

Haemophilia Society Chief Executive Karin Pappenheim commented: "The Government's response to our request for financial assistance for those infected was issued by Frank Dobson on the last day of the last Parliamentary session and there was no opportunity given for debate or questions.

*Swap for there two sentence* → "Important public health issues are involved here. It is simply not appropriate for the Government to try to sweep this problem under the carpet in this way. At the very least the Government has a moral responsibility to provide answers and to acknowledge the extreme problems these viral infections have caused to haemophilia patients. The infection of haemophilic patients with the HIV and hepatitis C viruses in the 70s and 80s has been described as the worst treatment disaster in the history of the NHS. ~~The Government must accept its moral responsibility~~"

The Society is now seeking to broaden out the debate and to ensure that all of the facts about the infection of the haemophilia population are brought into the public domain.

Karin Pappenheim added: "There is a dearth of information available on how the infection came to be spread so widely in the blood products used by the NHS in the first place, the number of people who have died and suffered impaired health as a result of the infection and the impact that it has had on individuals and their families. We would like the Health Select Committee to investigate this matter fully so that the scope of this terrible virus can be made known publicly and addressed."

Ends

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