

## **Infected blood inquiry – briefing pack**

**Questions about the independent inquiry should be passed to the Cabinet Office to respond to.**

### **Line to take**

- The infected blood scandal of the 1970s and 80s is an appalling tragedy which should simply never have happened.
- An independent statutory inquiry under the Inquiries Act 2005 will ensure that victims and their families finally get the answers they have spent decades waiting for.
- The Government listened to the feedback in the consultation and has announced that the Cabinet Office is best placed to be the sponsor department.
- The Government will be fully transparent and Department of Health will cooperate with any requests from the inquiry.

### **What are the next steps for the inquiry?**

- The Cabinet Office will make an announcement on setting up the inquiry before the end of the year.

### **Is this an admission of guilt/ confirms there was a cover-up?**

- No – this is about listening and acting on the feedback in the consultation period.
- The Cabinet Office will now lead and make the decisions on the scope of the inquiry.

### **Did you request for the inquiry to be moved, or was this forced by Cabinet Office and Number 10?**

- It was the result of the government listening and acting on the feedback in the consultation.

### **Why has the Government changed its mind about holding an inquiry?**

- This Government has recognised the concerns that the previous inquiries and release of documents about this tragedy did not go far enough to provide the answers wanted by those affected.
- In light of these concerns, and of reports of new evidence, the Government has decided to set up an independent inquiry.

### **Is the issue of compensation included in the scope of the inquiry?**

- The scope of the inquiry is yet to be announced. It will be decided by the sponsoring Minister, working with the independent Chair, once appointed.

### **How will the current payment schemes be affected?**

- The current payment schemes will continue and are not changed by the progress of the inquiry.

**Will the inquiry establish its own timeline of events or rely on existing Government records?**

- The independent inquiry will consider all relevant evidence in order to establish the timeline of the events that surrounded the infection of thousands of people with HIV and/or hepatitis C through NHS-supplied blood or blood products.
- The Government will ensure all relevant records will be made available to the inquiry.

**How will you ensure all documents are kept for consideration by the inquiry?**

- The Department of Health has put processes in place to ensure that it does not destroy any relevant documentation relating to the events that led to people being infected with HIV and/or hepatitis C through NHS-supplied blood or blood products.

**If any question is asked that mentions the report ‘Self-Sufficiency in Blood Products in England and Wales: A Chronology from 1973 to 1991’, the following line should be used:**

- The report ‘Self-Sufficiency in Blood Products in England and Wales: A Chronology from 1973 to 1991’ is not a comprehensive chronology and is no longer used by the Department of Health. The Government has announced an independent statutory inquiry into the tragic events that surrounded the infection of thousands of people with HIV and/or hepatitis C through NHS-supplied blood or blood products.

**Background – For info only**

- On 11 July, the Prime Minister announced the Government’s intention to hold a full independent inquiry into the tragic events that surrounded the infection of thousands of people with HIV and/or hepatitis C through NHS-supplied blood or blood products.
- On 3 November the Government made a WMS announcing that the inquiry would take a statutory form, and be sponsored by the Cabinet Office.

**PREVIOUS PM STATEMENT: 11 July 2017**

Please also see below the lines we used when announcing the inquiry:

"The contaminated blood scandal of the 1970s and 80s is an appalling tragedy which should simply never have happened.

"Thousands of patients expected the world-class care our NHS is famous for, but they were failed.

"At least 2,400 people died and thousands more were exposed to Hepatitis C and HIV, with life-changing consequences.

"The victims and their families who have suffered so much pain and hardship deserve answers as to how this could possibly have happened.

"While this Government has invested record amounts to support the victims, they have been denied those answers for too long and I want to put that right.

"As Prime Minister, I am determined to stand up for victims and confront injustice and unfairness in our society at every turn.

"We will work with the victims and their families to decide what form this inquiry should take so their voices are heard and they finally get the answers and justice they have spent decades waiting for."

### **Reactive media lines for any enquiries**

#### **A Department of Health spokesperson said:**

"The infected blood scandal of the 1970s and 80s is an appalling tragedy which should simply never have happened.

A full inquiry will ensure that victims and their families finally get the answers they have spent decades waiting for. We have listened to the feedback in the consultation and the Government has announced that the Cabinet Office is best placed to be the sponsor department. We are committed to being fully transparent and will cooperate with any requests from the inquiry."

### **WMS laid by Damian Green on 3 November**

On 11 July 2017, the Prime Minister announced that a full, independent public inquiry would be held into the **contaminated blood** scandal of the 1970s and 1980s, and promised to work with the victims and families of those affected by this tragedy in order to decide what form the inquiry should take. Since then, we have been listening to views from the affected community and have received over 800 written responses to the consultation, which closed on 18 October.

I am keen for the inquiry to proceed as quickly as possible in order to provide those affected with the answers they deserve. Taking into account the views of those who responded to the consultation, I am announcing today that responsibility for setting up the independent inquiry will transfer from the Department of Health to the Cabinet Office with immediate effect. I am also announcing that this will be a full statutory public inquiry, created under the 2005 Inquiries Act.

The Cabinet Office has now taken receipt of all the response to the consultation, which it will analyse thoroughly. This work will be completed as quickly as possible, and a further announcement will follow before the end of the year on the setting up of the inquiry.

