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## Contaminated blood compensation 'still up in the air' say Newcastle and Northumberland campaigners

Infected and affected contaminated blood campaigners are still concerned about the shape of compensation.

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Carol Grayson and Sean Cavens (Image: Newcastle Chronicle / Sean Cavens)

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Contaminated blood campaigners say there are still too many unanswered questions after the Government's latest announcement on compensation.

The new [Labour](#) Government has picked up where its predecessor left off and published its response to more than 70 recommendations about the shape final compensation will take.

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The previous government had asked Sir Robert Francis, interim chair of the new Infected Blood Compensation Authority, to assess its proposals and make recommendations - and he has done so following engagement meetings held earlier this summer with those infected and affected. All but five of his recommendations have been accepted by Government and this will mean previously guaranteed monthly support payments will continue for life - which had been a key concern of campaigners.

- **Read more:** [Government plans for final Infected Blood compensation published - monthly support payments to continue](#)
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The scandal saw thousands of haemophiliacs given blood products tainted by viruses like HIV and hepatitis C beginning in the 1970s. Others were infected through transfusions and many passed on lethal viruses to their loved ones. Often described as the NHS's worst ever treatment disaster, upwards of 3,000 people have died and continue to do so on a weekly basis..

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For those like Carol Grayson and Sean Cavens who have spent years fighting for justice, battles husband Peter to HIV after he was given infected blood products for his haemophilia, believes are not currently recognised in the proposed scheme for compensation.

Meanwhile, both Carol and Sean - one of the youngest haemophiliacs infected with hepatitis C - share widespread anger at the figure that has been set out to specifically compensate for those who were subject to experimentation as children. The Government is currently proposing to



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Carol said: "It is still very much up in the air - and we still need details. we're beginning discussions with the lawyers who are the ones who can consider how we might fare."

She said she feared widows who like her may have given up potentially lucrative careers were not, it appeared, being appropriately recognised. The lost past earnings of those infected will be considered in compensation, but that is not currently the case for their loved ones.

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She said: "The assumption seems to be that the male would be the main wage earner. We have often been treated as appendages of our husbands." Carol also called the payments for experimentation were "insulting" and wanted to ensure that "dumped treatment" - where UK patients were given treatment that had been blocked from use elsewhere in the world - was recognised.

Sean, who lives in [Northumberland](#), added: "I'd like to thank [local MP] Ian Lavery for his support and commitment to fight for myself and all of us impacted by this scandal. I'm relieved that the new Government have seen sense and agreed to continue our support payments for life.

"We now wait for clarity on what the substantial lump sum will be for compensation. Currently the published £10,000 figure for unethical research is laughable."

Sean said this reminded him of a oft-quoted letter - which came to light in Carol's research dissertation about the scandal in the mid-2000s - which referred to haemophiliacs as "cheaper than chimps" in terms of their use in medical research - which took place in many cases without even the most cursory form of consent. He said those figures were "in no way a deterrent" to the pharmaceutical industry.

Sean added: "There's more to do, then we can concentrate on implementing the inquiry's other recommendations. One battle down, another to go."

On Friday, Cabinet Office minister Nick Thomas-Symonds MP, said: "This is an important milestone for victims and campaigners who have waited far too long for justice The Government has listened to the recommendations from Sir Robert Francis KC, heard the strong calls for change from the community and acted.

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"We are going to do everything possible to deliver compensation quickly, and in many cases deliver life-changing sums to people infected and affected by this scandal.

"We know no amount of compensation can fully address the damage to people who suffered as a result of this scandal. This is why alongside the compensation, we must drive forward the wider cultural changes to make sure nothing like this ever happens again."

Compensation will be constituted of five awards - an injury impact award, social impact award, autonomy award, care award, and a financial loss award. The award for future care is the only one which will take into account support payments.

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