

Witness Name: **GRO-B**

Statement No.: WITN0128003

Exhibits: WITN0128004

Dated: 28 April 2025

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

EXHIBIT WITN0128004

Matthew Field

From: Matthew Field
Sent: 25 April 2025 17:22
To: Matthew Field
Subject: FW: Re Feedback for Sir Brian Langstaff: Important

From: GRO-B
Sent: Friday, May 31, 2024 12:56:17 PM
To: contact@infectedbloodinquiry.org.uk <contact@infectedbloodinquiry.org.uk>;
alexandra.wills@ GRO-C <alexandra.wills@> GRO-C
Cc: GRO-B <GRO-B>; Roger Milburn
<roger.milburn@> GRO-C
Subject: Re Feedback for Sir Brian Langstaff: Important

Dear Sir Brian Langstaff,

I forwarded the email below to Catherine Nalty and received an email response to say GRO-C. I wanted to provide some feedback to you regarding the compensation scheme that has been outlined which is causing deep distress to me and other affected members of the community.

I would be so grateful if you would consider my thoughts and input that I have outlined below. I have reproduced below the email I sent to Catherine in the first instance.

Kind regards,

GRO-B

Dear Catherine,

I hope this email finds you well. First and foremost, I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to you, Sir Brian Langstaff, and every person involved in the inquiry. The final report has been of immense importance to my family, and I cannot emphasise enough how validating it is to feel that our concerns have been heard and acknowledged. Please convey my deepest appreciation to Sir Brian and all those who have worked tirelessly over the past years.

However, I am writing to you today because the recently released information regarding the compensation scheme has caused me deep distress. I have prepared a list of my concerns, which I have already shared with Kate Burt (see email correspondence below), and I feel compelled to raise these issues with you as well. It is my understanding that Sir Brian Langstaff will be, or has been, consulted about the compensation scheme, which is why I am sharing my thoughts and feedback with you.

Key Issue

In brief, the current compensation scheme for those affected by the contaminated blood scandal utterly fails to adequately reflect the findings of the inquiry, which clearly recognised the profound and lifelong impact on all family members, including siblings and parents. The proposed framework's insufficient recognition and compensation for the experiences of parents and siblings create a stark disconnect between the evidence presented in the inquiry and the scheme's provisions. To truly honour the suffering endured by all those affected and to align with the inquiry's terms of reference, I strongly believe that it is crucial for the compensation scheme to be revised so that it acknowledges the devastating impact on every individual affected by this tragedy.

I am sharing this with you because the events of the past week relating to the compensation framework have caused me great distress and pain, and I firmly believe that this is the last thing Sir Brian Langstaff would wish to happen.

I would greatly appreciate your feedback on my concerns and would welcome the opportunity to discuss this matter further.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

Kind regards,

GRO-B

SUBMISSION TO THE INQUIRY

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am writing to express my concerns and distress upon hearing the compensation scheme for the families affected by the contaminated blood scandal in the UK.

Whilst I greatly appreciate and welcome the Government's efforts to provide financial, I believe that the current framework does not adequately compensate those affected and potentially paves the way for new issues.

As someone who lost a brother to this tragedy over 30 years ago, I have experienced firsthand the profound and lasting impact on siblings. My brother and I shared 25 years of our lives together, forming a profound bond of love, which was further strengthened by the pain and suffering that he endured as a result of the suffering of his disabling medical condition and subsequent infections. The proposal that one family member (in our case his son, who was four when his father died) could receive a very large sum of £2.5 million or more, whilst I and my siblings, who spent a lifetime by his side supporting him, and would receive nothing, feels very unjust and fails to acknowledge our trauma and the pain of his loss on affected siblings and parents.

In brief, I see the following issues with the scheme.

1. **Overlooking the life-long trauma and impact on siblings/parents:** The current framework fails to compensate and recognise the **profound and lasting impact on siblings** who have lost a brother or sister in the most horrific circumstances. Siblings and parents share the longest relationships with the deceased, and their grief and emotional trauma persist throughout their lives. The maximum figure a sibling or parent can claim of £58k (if I have understood the rules correctly), feels deeply unfair compared to the extensive amounts given to the immediate next of kin. The sum does not recognise the significance of their loss and the lifelong trauma other family members have faced.
2. **Unfair Distribution in Deceased Estates:** My understanding is that the compensation aims to address two key needs:
1) ongoing financial needs and 2) compensate the suffering for all involved.

In cases such as my brother's, my adult nephew is set to receive the entirety of the £2.5 million or more, while my brother's siblings may receive a maximum of £58,000 each. This compensation feels very unjust, particularly as my adult nephew is not financially dependent on the compensation. I believe that the compensation should address the suffering of all affected family members, including siblings and parents. I don't understand why my nephew's suffering is being recognised and compensated in such a disproportionate manner, making my own suffering seem inconsequential. I want to stress that I am not trying to diminish my nephew's suffering or entitlement in any way. Instead, I am asking for a more equitable acknowledgment of the pain experienced by everyone, ensuring that the loss of parents and siblings is properly validated.

3. **Potential for Family Tensions:** Allocating vast sums to spouses or children while adult siblings and/or parents receive comparatively very little in comparison can lead to feelings of bitterness, resentment, and deep injustice, straining already fragile family relationships. A more balanced distribution is crucial to consider the long-term impact on family dynamics.

4. **Disregarding the conclusions of the inquiry:** The inquiry into the contaminated blood scandal clearly stated that its terms of reference included affected family members yet the compensation scheme does not adequately recognise this. The inquiry, led by Sir Brian Langstaff, repeatedly recognised the significance and trauma of parents' and siblings' experiences. Furthermore, the final report of the inquiry acknowledged the profound impact on siblings and the need for their inclusion in the compensation framework. It would be a disservice and failure to act upon the evidence presented if siblings were excluded or inadequately recognized in the final compensation scheme.
5. **Practical Challenges for Estates:** The proposed framework may lead to complications and challenges to estates, especially in cases without a will or where beneficiaries have moved on or become estranged, exacerbating emotional distress.
6. **Outdated Wills:** Wills made many decades ago under extremely distressing and highly fraught circumstances may no longer reflect the deceased person's wishes as family relationships and dynamics evolve. Relying on these outdated documents for compensation allocation could lead to misaligned outcomes with current family situations and the trauma endured by family members.
7. **Burden on Recipients:** Recipients may face stress in deciding whether to allocate funds to other family members, potentially leading to further stress and conflicts. A clear and equitable framework including siblings would alleviate this burden.
8. **Tax Position:** Clarification is needed on the tax position if a compensation recipient decides to share the money with other immediate family members.
9. **Lack of Recognition for Siblings' Caregiving Demands:** Siblings often took on immense responsibilities and faced significant personal challenges while supporting their parents and infected sibling during this tragic time. To provide some illustrations: in the case of my sister, she was 35 years old when my brother died and had just given birth to her third child. Her own experience of this lovely life event was completely overshadowed by the devastating loss of our brother and the need to support our grieving mother. Living closest to our mother, my sister shouldered the heavy burden of providing emotional support and practical assistance, all while navigating her own grief and the demands of a young family. The strain on her family life and well-being was immense. In my brother's case, he was training to be a doctor and had to manage all the medical knowledge and alarm emerging about HIV while experiencing this directly with his own brother. It would be deeply unfair and unjust if the sacrifices and trauma of siblings like my sister and brother were not recognised and adequately compensated in the framework as there is clear issue of fairness and proportionality.
10. **Time to Make Submissions:** The time allocated for submissions regarding the compensation scheme may be insufficient. An extension would be very helpful.
11. **Discrepancy Between Inquiry Terms and Compensation:** The inquiry into the contaminated blood scandal clearly stated that its terms of reference included affected family members. Being asked to contribute to the inquiry, reliving profoundly harrowing and traumatic experiences, only to be excluded from meaningful compensation feels like a slap in the face and a failure to validate the experiences and suffering of those involved and is causing further stress and distress to affected participants and families. It fails to validate the experiences and suffering of those who came forward to share their stories.

Possible Solutions

To address the above concerns and ensure a more equitable distribution of compensation, I would like to suggest that a clear and simple framework be considered, allocating a portion of the estate funds to the parents and or the siblings of the deceased, where they are not the immediate next of kin. Therefore, I would like to make two proposals to address the above point: -

1. a framework of allocating X % of the compensation paid to the estate to be shared between the next of kin and other close family members (parents, siblings) which offers a fair, inclusive, and practical approach to addressing the concerns raised regarding the current compensation scheme. It acknowledges the profound

impact of the tragedy on all close family members, validates their experiences, and provides a clear and fair distribution of funds.

2. Alternatively, or additionally, ensuring a minimum compensation level for family members (parents (if not deceased), or siblings (if not deceased), which is far more substantial than the maximum of £58,000 offered.

I believe that a reasonable approach would be to allocate a percentage of the compensation to the next of kin (which would be the spouse/offspring) whilst the remaining percentage would be shared among the immediate family of the parents and siblings. This proposed framework offers several significant benefits:

1. **Inclusivity:** Recognises the impact of the tragedy on all close family members, not just the spouse and children, ensuring no one feels forgotten or not meaningfully recognised and compensated.
2. **Fairness:** Balances distribution by acknowledging the unique relationships and roles within the family, considering the loss experienced by both children and siblings.
3. **Clarity:** Establishes clear percentages for compensation, minimising confusion, disputes, and resentment with a transparent formula.
4. **Validation:** Acknowledges the far-reaching impact of the tragedy, validating the experiences of all affected family members, not just the immediate next of kin.
5. **Alignment with Inquiry Findings:** Aligns with Sir Brian Langstaff's inquiry, demonstrating the Government's commitment to act on the evidence and honour the stories shared.
6. **Reducing Administrative Burden:** Simplifies the compensation process, reducing the administrative workload for both the Government and affected families.
7. **Alleviating Recipient Burden:** Removes the burden on individual recipients to consider allocating funds, preventing potential conflicts and additional emotional distress.
8. **Recognising Long-term Impact:** Acknowledges the ongoing emotional and personal challenges faced by siblings, providing long-term support.
9. **Promoting Family Unity and Healing:** Fosters unity and support among family members, promoting healing and preventing divisions due to unequal compensation distribution.

In conclusion, by adopting this framework, the Government can demonstrate its commitment to supporting all those affected by the contaminated blood scandal and helping them find a measure of solace and justice in the face of unimaginable loss. This approach ensures that no one is left behind, and that the voices and experiences of all affected family members are heard, respected, and addressed in the compensation process.

Yours sincerely,

GRO-B