



Newsletter

October 2019
Issue 6

Message from Catherine Nalty, Deputy Secretary to the Inquiry

This October, the Inquiry is holding further hearings about the experience of people infected and affected. As with all the other hearings, the testimony which witnesses share can trigger memories of people's own experiences. That's why we've asked Marilyn Hahn, who runs the Red Cross team, to explain a little more about their role. And that's also why we think it's extremely important that people who come to hearings are made to feel welcome, by our team but with comfortable rooms where people can choose whether to watch the hearings with others, or find a quiet spot. More on this below....

Inquiry hearing space

If you attended any of the London hearings earlier this year you will know that we had a lounge, cloakroom, quiet room on the ground floor, in addition to the lounge next to the hearing room.

This was only a temporary arrangement and once the Employment Appeals Tribunal moved out from the second floor we spotted an opportunity to secure additional permanent rooms for the Inquiry.

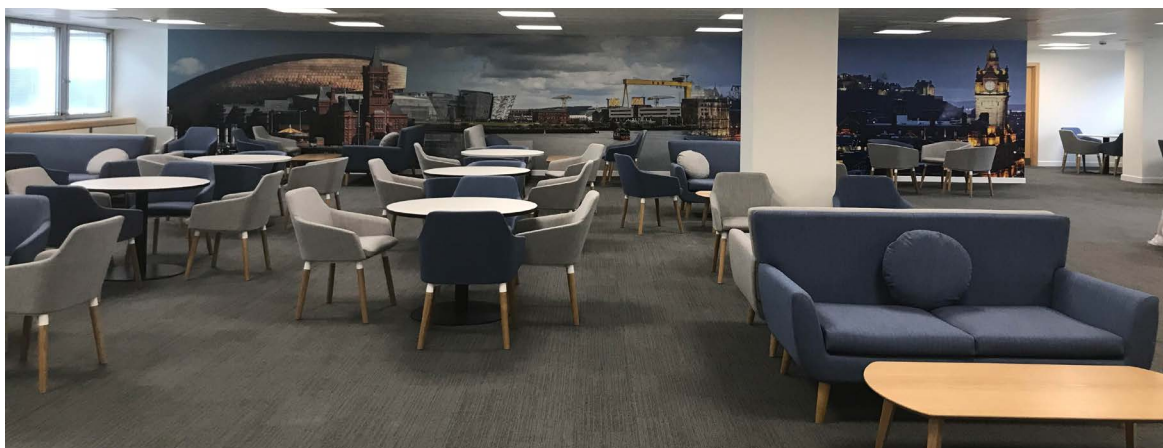
This is especially appropriate as the Inquiry chair, Sir Brian Langstaff, was the President of the Employment Appeals Tribunal from 2012 to 2015.

Work began in August to strip out the tribunal rooms and create a large, open lounge



where people attending can have lunch, tea and coffee, watch the hearings on TV screens, or simply sit and have a chat. In addition we now have a quiet lounge, two smaller quiet rooms, and a cloakroom.

We hope the new second floor at Fleetbank House will be a comfortable space for everyone attending Inquiry hearings.



British Red Cross Confidential Psychological Support Marilyn Hahn, British Red Cross



Last September I attended the Inquiry's preliminary hearings and since then I have been leading the team providing psychological support both at hearings and over the phone. In addition, our team provides training to Inquiry staff.

Many of you will know the British Red Cross from its reputation for providing practical support both here in the UK and overseas. Our experience in providing emotional support may be less well known. The team working with the Inquiry has many decades of experience, either providing training or supporting the public directly at incidents such as the London and Manchester terror attacks or extreme weather disasters.

While we can't change what has happened to people, it can help to talk to someone outside the circle of family and friends, who has the time and experience to listen. All my colleagues on the phone support line have learnt a huge amount from attending hearings and listening to the experiences shared. We cannot offer counselling sessions on a regular basis, but we help signpost people to other support organisations.

The support we provide is confidential, and we don't keep formal records of the conversations, apart from brief notes to help the caller if they call again (so that they do not have to repeat their story). The phone line details are below. Outside these hours or if the line is busy, callers can leave a voicemail, and we will call back as soon as we can. Our call will show as an unknown number or no caller ID. If this could be a problem, please include in your message possible times we could ring back and/or whether your phone will accept a message from us.

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.

Local Meetings

The Inquiry will be organising further local meetings next year for people affected by the Inquiry's work who would like to get an update from the Inquiry team. This is also an opportunity to meet other people in your local area who are following the Inquiry.

If you have already attended one of these local meetings, we would like to hear any thoughts you have about how these are organised. Please let us know if you felt the meetings were useful, in a good location or you thought we could have done something better. You can do this by contacting the team on 0808 169 1377 or contact@infectedbloodinquiry.org.uk