



🕒 4.39pm

The Minister for the Cabinet Office and Paymaster General >

(John Glen)

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With permission, I would like to make a statement on the Government's response to the infected blood inquiry. I made clear my intention to do so at Cabinet Office questions on 23 November, and the Minister of State at the Ministry of Justice, my right hon. Friend the Member for Charnwood (Edward Argar), reiterated this on the Floor of the House on 4 December.

First, and most importantly, the suffering of the victims must be recognised. The distress and trauma that each individual has faced as a result of this tragedy is unimaginable, and the Government understand that no measures can fully compensate for the losses and hardships that they have suffered. The priority here must be to ensure that victims get the justice they deserve.

With the interim compensation payments issued last October, the Government recognised the immediate and urgent needs of those most severely impacted. This was the start of the process, not the end. The Government have accepted the moral case for compensation, and I am fully committed to ensuring that we bring this matter to its long-awaited conclusion.

In April 2023, the Government welcomed the publication of the infected blood inquiry's second interim report, which set out a detailed framework for compensation for both those infected and those affected by infected blood, and it is a significant step towards the culmination of the inquiry's deeply important work.

The inquiry has taken a wide-ranging and innovative approach to compensation, and I was pleased to see that the Government's commissioning of Sir Robert Francis KC's compensation study assisted in the inquiry's work. It is now a year on from the Government's acceptance of the moral case for compensation, and I understand the calls for urgency. I know that, from many of those infected and affected, there is anger and frustration with the Government's response so far.

The inquiry's recommendations are not without complexity, and it would be inappropriate for the Government to prejudge the findings of the final report. For these reasons, the Government are not yet in a position to share any final decisions on compensation. However, Members on both sides of the House have made it clear that we must do right by the victims, and the Government recognise this. I am personally committed to making sure that we do that.

I also give enormous credit to the right hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull North (Dame Diana Johnson) on her continuing hard work to advocate for the victims of the infected blood scandal. The Government recognise the strength of feeling across the House on this matter and the importance of what the amendment seeks to achieve.

The Government are working through the implications of the amendment. Cabinet Office officials worked hard under my predecessor, my right hon. Friend the Member for Horsham (Jeremy Quin), to develop this policy, and we are reviewing this work in the light of the amendment made two weeks ago today.

I am also pleased to provide the House with an update on the wider progress we have made in this area, and on the steps we are taking to address the concerns of this House. First, I announce that the Department of Health and Social Care will fully implement a bespoke psychological service for people infected and affected by infected blood products, delivered by NHS England. Our intention

is for this service to go live in early summer 2024. We recognise the harrowing impacts of the infected blood scandal and the psychological impact this has had on many infected and affected individuals. This announcement is an important step for victims in England. The service will provide tailored support to meet the unique needs of infected and affected individuals.

The Government are also urgently appointing clinical, legal and social care experts to advise the Cabinet Office on detailed technical considerations early in the new year, which will ensure that the Government have the relevant expertise to make informed choices in responding to the inquiry's recommendations on compensation.

Finally, I reiterate the commitment that the Government will seek to provide an update to Parliament on next steps through an oral statement within 25 sitting days of the inquiry's final report being published. As my predecessor made clear both to this House and to the inquiry, there are a number of technical issues that must be considered as they will have a significant impact on public finances. It is important that any decisions on compensation funding are taken carefully, and the House should expect the Government to work through the associated costs to the public sector while, at all times, considering the needs of the community and the far-reaching impact that this scandal has had on their lives.

The victims of the infected blood scandal deserve justice and recognition. Their voice must be heard, and it is our duty to honour not only those still living and campaigning but those who have passed without recognition. This is my highest priority, and I will continue to progress this work with all the urgency it deserves. I commend this statement to the House.

🕒 4.44pm

Nick Thomas-Symonds >

(Torfaen) (Lab)

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I welcome the fact that this statement has been made, to which the Minister of State, Ministry of Justice committed at the Dispatch Box earlier this month. I am also grateful to the Minister for the Cabinet Office and Paymaster General for advance sight of his statement today.

The amendment to the Victims and Prisoners Bill passed by this House makes the will of this House, on a binding and cross-party basis, absolutely clear. I applaud the work of my right hon. Friend the Member for Kingston upon Hull North (Dame Diana Johnson), the campaigning and advocacy organisations, the all-party group on haemophilia and contaminated blood, the journalist Caroline Wheeler and all who have worked tirelessly to bring us to this point. I, too, pay tribute to the bravery of the victims of this scandal, who, over decades, have suffered for far too long.

The Government have repeatedly accepted the moral case for compensation, as indeed the Minister did today. On Report, the Minister of State in the MOJ was also definitive in committing that the Government will

“put in place the necessary legislative framework and timescales for a delivery body for compensation for the victims of infected blood to be established, in line with the overall objectives set out”—[\[Official Report, 4 December 2023; Vol. 742, c. 136-37.\]](#)

in the amendment tabled by my right hon. Friend. I say to the Minister: there is no need to wait for the Bill to come back or for the inquiry to publish its final report before making the required urgent progress on setting up the basis for the compensation scheme. The Government should make good on the spirit of that commitment and recognise the will of the House, not least because a commitment to act was also given in the King's Speech.

I am not suggesting for a moment that this is not a complex matter. However, as my right hon. Friend the shadow Chancellor and I have repeatedly made clear, we are open to working on a cross-party basis to shape a compensation scheme that can deliver justice urgently. The Government should now establish an arm's length body to deliver compensation payments, which will allow some of the preparatory work to be done while we wait for those final recommendations. As with any arm's length body, the Government will be responsible for appointing the chair and the members, and setting the budget and the rules for the scheme and its administration, including on decision making and accountability. I am also conscious that compensation will apply to those infected in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and that there is important work to do with devolved Governments. Of course, I welcome what the Minister said in his statement about psychological support, but will he please tell us why there is a need to wait until the summer of next year for it to go live, given how long this matter has been going on?

I would be grateful if the Minister would also address the following questions. Why can the Government not commit to beginning the steps in January, not just to take the technical advice that he has referred to, but to bring forward primary legislation early in the new year to enable the establishment of the compensation scheme, given that this House has shown its support for that? Will he also commit to continuing to work closely with all the victims' groups in the future, so that their voice is heard throughout the establishment of the compensation scheme? To the extent that he has announced a timetable today, when might people receive the final compensation? This is so pressing because, on average, one person dies every four days as a result of this scandal. Will he also give a commitment that the Government will act on each and every recommendation in the inquiry's report? He mentioned a statement 25 working days after the publication of that report, but he did not give a timetable for action on those recommendations—will he give that to the House in his response? Finally, will he confirm what preparatory work is being done by the Treasury? Will he commit to being as transparent as possible about that process? The Government have admitted both the case for compensation and the need for urgency. This House has shown strong cross-party support for action. It now falls to Ministers to deliver urgently.

John Glen >

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I thank the right hon. Gentleman for his constructive approach. There is consensus across the House that this urgent matter needs to be addressed as quickly as possible. As I said at Cabinet Office questions during my second week in post, this is the most urgent priority that I will face, whatever happens in this office, and I take my responsibility to bring forward the scheme very seriously. However, we need to examine carefully the amendment that was passed two weeks ago and how it interacts with work that is under way. I am doing everything I can to bring that work forward. Second Reading of the Victims and Prisoners Bill will happen today in the other place and the process that will follow from that will be clear in the new year.

The right hon. Gentleman asked a number of specific questions. I want to deliver psychological support as quickly as possible, working closely with NHS England on provision of support and allowing people to have direct access to it. I will do everything I can to bring that forward by June, at the latest, I hope. A few months ago, I made an announcement about clinical, legal and social care advisers. Contact has been made with individuals and there will be ongoing conversations to get those people in place as early as possible, so as much work as possible can be done along the lines I have set out.

The right hon. Gentleman asked about the 18 recommendations and when people will receive further clarification on Government compensation. Those are substantive matters that will be attended to as quickly as possible, in line with what I have already said. On 17 January, the inquiry will issue a notification about when that report is expected, which will give clarity on the timetable to which we are working. I assure the House that we are doing everything we can to work across relevant Departments, including the Treasury, to ensure everything is delivered as quickly as possible.

Mr Deputy Speaker >

(Mr Nigel Evans)

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I call the Father of the House.

Sir Peter Bottomley >

(Worthing West) (Con)

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Mr Deputy Speaker, I hope that you realise that after I have asked my question, and the SNP spokesperson, the hon. Member for North Ayrshire and Arran (Patricia Gibson), and another Conservative Member have asked their questions, the right hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull North (Dame Diana Johnson) will be the definitive person to put to Government what needs to be done.

I say to the Minister and, through him, to our right hon. Friend the Member for Horsham (Jeremy Quin), the Minister's predecessor, that we are not doing enough, fast enough. How many months have passed since Sir Robert Francis produced his report? I hope the Minister will confirm that it is about 20 months. How many months have passed since Sir Brian Langstaff produced his final recommendations on compensation? It is about eight months. Those are the relevant issues.

The fact that the Government will act 25 working days after Sir Brian's final report comes out next year does not deal with the issue of what the affected and infected need and should get now. If it is a question of money, how much and the cashflow for the Government, they should say so now. There is nothing that can be said on compensation 25 days after the report comes out that

could not be said now, so please will the Minister say it?

John Glen >

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I thank my hon. Friend for his questions. I could not agree with him more about the level of urgency that is attached to the Government's response. He is right about the publication dates; I think the whole House is aware of that. In the past five weeks, I have taken concrete steps, building on the work of my predecessor, to take the actions necessary to make those decisions as quickly as possible along the timescale I have set out. I cannot reiterate enough the Government's commitment to dealing with the issue as quickly as possible, and I am doing all I can to gain consensus across Government to move things forward as quickly as possible.

Patricia Gibson >

(North Ayrshire and Arran) (SNP)

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Most of what we have heard today is not new. All we are hearing from this Government are the same old delays, while those affected continue to feel let down and failed. The Government have been working at a snail's pace on the issue and were shamed when they voted against a new compensation body for those impacted by the scandal. Those affected and the bereaved will not forgive them for that callous act and the ongoing delays, and today they will have those feelings all over again at this non-statement.

On 5 April, Sir Brian Langstaff published his final recommendations relating to compensation. Crucially, he recommended that interim payments be made to bereaved parents and children in respect of deaths as yet unrecognised. To date, the Government have not responded in practical terms to any of those recommendations. The Government's position continues to be to wait for the full report expected next spring before considering whether to extend the compensation. That heaps insult upon injury to those affected and their families, as every four days another victim of this scandal dies. Time is of the essence for those affected. To delay this full compensation is to stand against justice and all that is morally and ethically right. To delay compensation to those who are literally running out of time is cruel and unnecessary. This Government need to rethink and listen to the will of this House, as expressed on 4 December in the face of shameful opposition from those on the Government Benches, and deliver justice and full compensation.

Where is the urgency? The Minister has used the words "urgency" and "urgent" several times today, but it does not feel to those who are affected that there is any urgency from the Government to address the great wrongs and losses that they have suffered.

Today, given the expressed will of this House, we were hoping for a timeline from the Government for when a full compensation body would be established and operational. Again, sadly, all we have is delay and obfuscation. Does the Minister feel no shame in coming here today to give a statement that says nothing?

John Glen >

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I do not accept that characterisation of what I have said today, as I have made a number of specific announcements on the progress that is being made. Neither do I accept the characterisation of the Government's position as a callous act. This Government launched a public inquiry, and last year we made interim payments. I accept that a substantive response cannot happen soon enough, but I am doing everything I can, working with colleagues across Government, to look at the best way of delivering as quickly as possible, and I will continue to do so.

Steve Brine >

(Winchester) (Con)

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I thank the Minister for what is now our traditional end-of-term statement on this subject, but, to be clear, this is one festive tradition that we need to see the back of, because people are dying without seeing justice. May I return the Paymaster General to a line in his statement where he talked about "clinical, legal and social care experts" to advise him on detailed technical considerations in the new year? Can he clarify when in the new year, because, clearly, that could cover 12 months of 2024. Moreover, further to the points made by the shadow Minister, how much can the Government do now to pave the way for serious progress and payment when the Government and the Treasury are in the position to move?

John Glen > [Share](#)

I thank my hon. Friend for his question. I have been in discussions on the appointment of clinical, legal and social care experts since my first week in office in November. We have identified individuals, and communicated with them last week. We want to get them on board with this work in the early days of the new year, so that that work can happen as quickly as possible. I wanted to avoid a situation where people were going out to compete for roles. What we want is the best people across those specialisms so that this work can make urgent progress, aligned with our intention to respond substantively later in the year.

Dame Diana Johnson >

(Kingston upon Hull North) (Lab)

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In April 2023, Sir Brian Langstaff said:

“I recommend that a compensation scheme should be set up now and it should begin work this year.”

What exactly does the Minister not understand in that statement? This statement today will cause huge anguish to victims of the 50-year-old scandal and, in noting that the Prime Minister whipped Conservative Members to vote down the new clause on 4 December, fuel their suspicion that the Government are still playing for time, even though they accept the moral case. This therefore is adding one final insult to injury. Will the Minister tell us why the Prime Minister can find what the Deputy Prime Minister said yesterday is unlimited funding for the Rwanda policy, but is still pushing back, after a five-year public inquiry, against compensation—and even interim compensation for the groups that have never received anything—for people who have suffered so much for so long after what the state did to them?

John Glen > [Share](#)

I recognise the right hon. Lady's frustration and disappointment with where we have got to. The work that she has done, and the work that was expressed in the amendment, is urgently being examined by me and my officials.

Dame Diana Johnson > [Share](#)

It was Sir Brian's recommendation.

John Glen > [Share](#)

I recognise Sir Brian's recommendations, and I have done what I can to move us to a place where we meet the expectations as quickly as possible in the new year. I said to the right hon. Lady when I met her and my hon. Friend the Member for Worthing West (Sir Peter Bottomley) that my officials were engaged in looking at the options for the delivery vehicle. I must now examine how that operates with the legislative vehicle, which has been amended by the House. I will do everything that I can to update the House as quickly as I can.

Kevin Foster >

(Torbay) (Con)

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I have some sympathy for the Minister, who I suspect might go slightly further in his comments if he had complete free rein at the Dispatch Box. I have experience of dealing with the Windrush compensation scheme, which similarly looked back decades at the impact on individuals, with records often incomplete and people having moved many times, and it brought home the complexity of

this type of compensation scheme, even when it gets to work. What is his timeline for people to start dealing with these cases, because that will be the first step in getting compensation finally paid to people who, as we have touched on, we are losing literally every day?

John Glen >

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That is what the experts will do—the calibration of tariffs and allocation of compensation, as per the excellent work that has been done by the inquiries. This is urgent, and work will begin in the new year on that aspect. As I said, on the legislative vehicle to establish the necessary mechanisms, that process is under way as well.

Stephen Doughty >

(Cardiff South and Penarth) (Lab/Co-op)

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The Minister has referred many times to urgency. I think that he is a good man, and I know that he will be trying to do his best, but I had a message this afternoon from the organisation Factor 8, which said:

“Today, one of our members has died. He was infected with Hepatitis C through infected Factor VIII blood products. Two weeks ago, he was diagnosed with cancer (caused by his Hepatitis C) and now has died without seeing justice. These stories are sadly familiar within our community.”

That is the reality for so many people who have been affected, including my own constituents; I spoke to them years ago and was convinced of their case for justice. Who else is holding this up elsewhere in the Government?

John Glen >

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The hon. Gentleman makes the right point, which we have all heard from our constituents; my constituents have made representations along those lines, too. All I can say is that there is nothing stopping me moving this forward. I am doing everything that I can to put in place the legislative mechanisms to set up the process and ensure that, when the Government respond, the response is as comprehensive as it can be. I acknowledge the distress caused to so many people. I will do everything that I can to bring this forward as quickly as I can.

Caroline Nokes >

(Romsey and Southampton North) (Con)

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Two weeks ago, I met a gentleman called **GRO-A** **GRO-A** had been a constituent of a former Member of this place, Alistair Burt, in North East Bedfordshire. **GRO-A** spoke to me of how hard Alistair had worked, alongside the right hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull North (Dame Diana Johnson), but of course Alistair Burt left this place before we ever found a resolution to the scandal. Can I ask my right hon. Friend, who I believe is going to do his best, whether we will see compensation before any more of us leave this place?

John Glen >

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My right hon. Friend is ingenious in her question, but I go back to what I said: I will do everything I can to put in place all the elements to allow us to respond substantively. We will know the date of the report, I believe, on 17 January, so we will have a definitive timetable in the new year. I recognise that she, Alistair Burt and many others across the House have campaigned on this issue for many years and I am determined to bring it to the conclusion that the House expects.

Barbara Keeley >

(Worsley and Eccles South) (Lab)

Like many hon. Members present, I have a number of constituents who were infected with HIV or hepatitis C through the scandal and several have lost family members. I want to echo what some of them are feeling. One of my constituents described her parent's diagnosis with HIV due to infected blood as

“a catalogue of soul destroying, humiliating neglect and ultimately alienating experiences”

and told me that it is now 30 years since her parent died,

“and the intense sense of loss and pain remains profound and is felt every single day.”

People infected and affected need tangible action now to help to alleviate that suffering. The question the Minister has to answer is when he will establish a full compensation body and when that will become operational.

John Glen >

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I am obviously going to have to repeat myself several times. I have set out clearly what is new today: the psychological support and the appointment of the necessary experts, in a matter of days, to take forward the work needed to get to the point where a comprehensive response can happen. We have committed to when the timetable will happen with respect to the final inquiry, and we are doing everything we can to reach that. While I recognise that that is a matter of three or four months further down the road, I am trying to make sure that, when the response comes, it is as comprehensive as it possibly can be, addressing all the dimensions of the misery that the hon. Lady movingly spoke about.

Martin Vickers >

(Cleethorpes) (Con)

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When the House debated the amendment by the right hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull North (Dame Diana Johnson) a couple of weeks ago, I gave the Government the benefit of the doubt and abstained. If I could turn the clock back, based on what I have heard today I would now want to vote for that amendment. In a couple of weeks I have a constituent coming to see me who is a family member of one of the victims. I am afraid that if I showed her this statement, she would immediately point out things such as “summer 2024” and say, “That is just too long.” Can the Minister give me some assurance that, by the time I see that lady, there will be a little bit more certainty?

John Glen >

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I am grateful to my hon. Friend for his question and I will happily talk to him privately. I am sorry that he draws that conclusion from what I have said today. In the past 35 days I have done everything I can to move the scheme forward, and I wanted to make an oral statement before the House rose for the recess. I recognise that there is a lot more that could be said, but a lot more needs to be done before we get to that point. The reference to June is to do with the psychological support. The comprehensive response that the Government have committed to will come at a defined moment after the publication of the final report, the date of which we will clarify on 17 January—it will be some time after the report's publication in March.

Margaret Greenwood >

(Wirral West) (Lab)

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Thousands of people across the country have been affected by this scandal, and constituents who have been in touch with me describe their quest for justice as “upsetting”, “frustrating” and “depressing”. The Haemophilia Society said after the recent vote on the amendment to the Victims and Prisoners Bill that the Prime Minister “should be ashamed” that he had been forced to do the right thing. Does the Minister agree with that assessment, and will he apologise to those affected for the excessive delays in delivering compensation to victims?

John Glen > [Share](#)

I reaffirm what I have said about my commitment to doing this as quickly as possible. Of course I regret the delays that have occurred over many years, and I want this to be brought to a conclusion as quickly as it can be. I think I neglected to answer the question from the right hon. Member for Torfaen (Nick Thomas-Symonds) about working with the various victims' groups, of which there are a large number. I undertake to work with them to give them as much clarity as possible about the timetable and the work that I am undertaking.

Sir Julian Lewis >

(New Forest East) (Con)

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Will the Government be making these payments within their own lifetime?

John Glen > [Share](#)

I will give a comprehensive response along the timetable that I set out earlier.

Munira Wilson >

(Twickenham) (LD)

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I pay tribute to the right hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull North (Dame Diana Johnson) and to the journalist Caroline Wheeler for their tireless campaigning on this issue.

I think we all know, as we have heard in a couple of questions from Conservative Members, why the Government have tried to delay compensation for so long; they are clearly hoping that it will be another Government's problem. Perhaps the Minister can help me to understand. He says that he recognises the

“distress and trauma that each individual has faced,”

so why has it taken until today to announce a bespoke psychological service for people infected and affected by infected blood products, and why will it take until the summer to set up that service?

John Glen > [Share](#)

The timing of the delivery of that service has been worked through with NHS England. I signed off the funding for it when I was Chief Secretary to the Treasury, and I am pleased that we can announce it today. I wish that it could have been sooner, but we are where we are, and I am pleased that we have made some progress. As with all these matters, of course I wish that I could accelerate it, but I have to work through all the deliberate steps needed to get the legislation in the right place to ensure that we can answer all the questions that so many people have—I recognise they have waited too long.

Anna Firth >

(Southend West) (Con)

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I thank the Minister for his statement, particularly his assurance that the scheme will cover the infected and affected. I have mentioned my constituent GRO-A in this Chamber before. He contacted hepatitis C in the '70s—over 40 years ago—not from a transfusion but from donating blood, as a needle was used multiple times. He gave evidence to the inquiry but is still waiting to hear whether his particular circumstances will be covered. Can the Minister help him?

John Glen > [Share](#)

I do not think that I can be expected to respond to individual cases here, but I have ensured that we have the right range of professional expertise—the very best available in this country—so that all those different cases of infected and affected, going off quite a range of experiences over a very long period, are properly interrogated as the details of the scheme are worked through.

Jessica Morden >

(Newport East) (Lab)

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The Government had to make this statement after losing the vote two weeks ago, but there is little in it for families like the **GRO-A**, who—please know this, Minister—finally saw hope in that vote. Campaigners have called for months and months for the preparatory work to be done. How long will victims now have to wait for what the House has asked for?

John Glen > [Share](#)

As I said, it will be 25 sittings days after the publication of the report. That is when the Government's comprehensive reply will be given.

Sir Mike Penning >

(Hemel Hempstead) (Con)

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From 2006 to 2010, I was a shadow public health spokesman on the Opposition Benches. I committed a future Conservative Government to compensating. That was easy to do in opposition, but I accept that it is much more difficult in government. I trust the Minister, but I know that a lot of people are sceptical. We need to build back trust by saying that we will compensate both those infected and those affected, because those families need the money—they needed it years ago. It is not just this Government who have been slow; previous Governments have been slow, too. This needs to be resolved now. We need to rebuild trust; I am sorry, but it is lacking.

John Glen > [Share](#)

My right hon. Friend makes wise and fair observations. This is complex, but it is urgent. My right hon. Friend the Member for Horsham (Jeremy Quin) did an enormous amount of work in getting us to today's statement and to a lot more, which will come to fruition as quickly as possible. But my right hon. Friend the Member for Hemel Hempstead (Sir Mike Penning) is absolutely right: this scandal has lasted almost two generations, and I am determined to do everything I can to bring it to a conclusion.

Mike Kane >

(Wythenshawe and Sale East) (Lab)

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The one tradition that has been upheld today is that of the Paymaster General coming to the House to make a statement that says nothing. He is the ninth Paymaster General since the inquiry was announced, and they keep saying nothing. In the past fortnight alone, he has had to face oral questions and has been defeated in the voting Lobbies, and the Prime Minister was asked a question about this on Wednesday, but we are still no nearer where we need to be. This is a cruel, cruel tease, is it not?

John Glen > [Share](#)

I am sorry, but I do not accept that characterisation. What I would say is that, as I think the hon. Member appreciates, there are deeply complex matters in relation to how to allocate funds in the right way and create the most effective and reliable way to honour the recommendations and deal with this comprehensively, and I am doing everything I can to make sure that is achieved.

Richard Graham >

(Gloucester) (Con)

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All of us here are unhappy about the fact that this has taken so long—the events actually took place up to 40 years ago—but, my right hon. Friend has reacted very strongly to the conversations I and others have had with him since the original statement. What he has outlined today about the final report, the bespoke psychological service and some technical issues, followed by serious announcements for those of our constituents who have suffered or had partners who have since died, and the personal commitment he has given to resolving this during 2024, are useful steps forward. I am grateful to him for making this statement before the Christmas recess.

John Glen > [Share](#)

I am grateful to my hon. Friend for his words. The right hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull North said at business questions last Thursday that she did not want a written statement on the last day. I do not think that having an oral statement on the penultimate day is that much better, but I was determined to at least address that concern. What I will commit to is doing as much as I can to update the House as early as possible. That commitment is there, and obviously we have Cabinet Office questions early in the new year—the day after the announcement of the date—and I will, I hope, be able to say more then.

Clive Efford >

(Eltham) (Lab)

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Sir Brian Langstaff came up with the recommendations that he did because he recognised that people were dying without getting justice. The amendment that was passed in this House two weeks ago, tabled by my right hon. Friend the Member for Kingston upon Hull North (Dame Diana Johnson), was Sir Brian's recommendation word for word. The Minister has come to the Dispatch Box sounding as though he has only just started work on this, and that there was no work done by his nine predecessors. Has he met Sir Brian Langstaff, and what does Sir Brian Langstaff say to him about this constant delay in paying compensation?

John Glen > [Share](#)

I have not met Sir Brian Langstaff yet, but of course I build on the work that my predecessors have done. As I indicated to the chairs of the all-party parliamentary group, as soon as I was in office I set up a meeting and I was aware of the ongoing work. I now have to work out the interaction of that amendment with the work that exists and bring forward a substantial response to it.

Chris Stephens >

(Glasgow South West) (SNP)

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This is a disappointing statement in some ways, but let me give the Paymaster General an opportunity to build trust and confidence. It is unclear in his statement whether the Government accept the principle of an independent compensation body—an arm's length body—so can he confirm that that is the case? Does he accept that, for the victims and their families, that is a prerequisite for building trust and confidence, and that they will not accept a Government Department involved in this scandal administering the compensation scheme?

John Glen > [Share](#)

I am very cognisant of the 18 recommendations, and the sensitivity about the trust needed in the delivery mechanism, whatever that is. That is one of several considerations on which we need to reach the right conclusion. As my right hon. Friend the Member for Hemel Hempstead (Sir Mike Penning) said, I recognise that restoring trust is a serious matter on which we have to deliver.

Holly Lynch >

(Halifax) (Lab)

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My constituent **GRO-A** lost her father in the infected blood scandal. She told me earlier this year:

“This lack of transparency is causing great stress and anxiety to those of us at the heart of this NHS treatment disaster, who have already waited decades for our loss and suffering to be recognised.”

When the Government committed to a statement before Christmas, there was an expectation that there would have been further progress on the compensation scheme, and I do not think that was an unreasonable assumption. In the absence of that, what assurances can I give **GRO-A** and her family that she will be recognised by this Government and that she will be compensated?

John Glen >[Share](#)

Today we are putting in place the expertise needed to deal with the recommendations and look at the distribution for compensation. The Government are committed to responding after those 25 sitting days from the day that the report is published, the date of which will be known on 17 January. What I have announced today is a milestone on that journey, and we are in that last lap as we get towards the day when the Government will respond substantively.

Debbie Abrahams >

(Oldham East and Saddleworth) (Lab)

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My constituent lost her brother and her sister-in-law, and her nephew was orphaned at a young age. Her mother, a pensioner, was left to raise her nephew. The family has not received a penny, and her nephew is in dire need of support. As everybody has said, this is already too late, so I urge the Minister to do everything in his power to ensure that something is done sooner rather than later. Will he explain exactly what new legislation he needs to bring in?

John Glen >[Share](#)

Some ex gratia payments have been made since 1992, but I recognise that a large number of people have been excluded in different ways. The work that will be undertaken and the experts who have been appointed will be designed to ensure that the fairest settlement is made, taking full account of the inquiry's recommendations. I cannot offer any specific assurances to the hon. Lady or her constituents, but I will be doing everything I can to bring this forward as quickly as I can.

Mike Amesbury >

(Weaver Vale) (Lab)

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My constituent **GRO-A** and so many more, will be disappointed by today's statement. The Minister rightfully spoke about urgency, yet there is no timeline that reflects that urgency. People still do not know when the independent compensation body will be set up, or when they will ultimately get justice, and get that compensation to victims of this infected blood scandal.

John Glen >[Share](#)

I recognise the hon. Gentleman's disappointment and that of many in the House today. I shall reflect carefully on that, and do everything I can to do better next time. The steps we are taking, deliberately and carefully, to work through what is required to make a substantive response after the publication of that final report in March, are serious. I will be having meetings over Christmas and early in the new year, week by week, to work through what is required to deliver on the Government's commitment.

Pete Wishart >

(Perth and North Perthshire) (SNP)

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Speaking about last, I could sort of reference some of the things the Minister has referred to—well, if only I could. I only wish I was able to, and could talk of complex matters. The victims want to hear a clear timeline for when final compensation payments will be made. They want to see the urgency that the Minister talked about. There is a view that the Government are trying to kick this issue into the next Parliament, and that the Treasury is dragging its heels. The Minister has been asked this a couple of times: will he confirm that this issue will be all resolved before this Parliament is dissolved?

John Glen > [Share](#)

That is my expectation. I am doing everything I can to bring this to a substantial conclusion after the publication of the final report. I am speaking to colleagues in many Departments, and working with officials across Government to get to the end point that I have set out several times this afternoon.

Jim Shannon >

(Strangford) (DUP)

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I thank the Paymaster General for his statement. I know he is an honourable gentleman, and his commitment will be to deliver what we wish to see. I also thank the right hon. Member for Kingston upon Hull North (Dame Diana Johnson) for the amendment that she tabled and won in this House by four votes. Those four votes were enough to show the mind of this Parliament, and where we want to be. During the last topical questions to the Cabinet Office, I asked the Paymaster General whether he had the figures for those who have sadly passed away this year, before compensation had been made available to them. The Minister committed to confirming those numbers so, two weeks later and with no reply, has he been able to access the figures I asked for, as we approach the rise of the House for Christmas 2023?

John Glen > [Share](#)

I am not aware whether those figures are available yet, but I will ensure that the moment I leave this Chamber, I will do everything I can to get the hon. Member a response on that. If I cannot give them, I will let him know why.

Mr Deputy Speaker >

(Mr Nigel Evans)

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I thank the Minister for his statement and for responding to questions for 45 minutes.

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