



Rt Hon Penny Mordaunt MP
Paymaster General
Cabinet Office 70 Whitehall London
SW1A 2AS

Jason Evans, Founder
Factor 8
International House
12 Constance Street
London, E16 2DQ

Our reference: MC2020/05373

23 June 2020

Dear Mr Evans,

Thank you for your letters of 23 April and 6 May regarding the Infected Blood Inquiry. I apologise unreservedly for the lack of communication you have received since the roundtable meeting you attended on 28 January. As you know, I have recently assumed responsibility for sponsoring the Inquiry, and my team are working with their colleagues in the Cabinet Office to ensure that this does not happen again.

First of all, I wish to reassure you that the Inquiry is a priority for the Government. Following the meeting in January, the previous sponsoring Minister, Rt Hon Oliver Dowden MP, wrote to the Prime Minister updating him on the Inquiry's progress, and the actions that he and the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Health, Nadine Dorries MP, had agreed to address some of the most pressing issues of support for people infected and affected.

Regarding the ongoing call for compensation which you support, as you know at the meeting in January, Ministers agreed to consider a request to look at a framework for compensation before the Inquiry reports. I want to assure you that I am committed to this, along with taking forward the actions agreed to address the disparities in financial and non-financial support for those infected and affected across the UK. I met with Minister Dorries last month to discuss this and am actively seeking ways to move forward with the actions agreed at the January meeting. My officials will update you in due course.

It is extremely important that all those who have suffered so terribly can get the answers they have spent decades waiting for, and lessons can be learnt so that a tragedy of this scale never happens again.

To provide you with an update on the Inquiry, it is making good progress and has been hearing oral evidence since 30 April 2019, with nearly four thousand others providing written statements. As you will know, at its most recent hearings in February, the Inquiry heard from a series of expert panels that include psychological, hepatitis, HIV, blood and bleeding disorders, statistics and medical ethics groups. Unfortunately, because of the Covid-19 outbreak, the Inquiry has

had to postpone its next hearings scheduled for June and July until after the summer. However, you will no doubt be aware that the Inquiry is working towards holding the postponed June and July hearings in the Autumn and Sir Brian has written to all core participants requesting they share their views with his Inquiry Team by Wednesday 24 June.

In the meantime the Inquiry's investigative work, its examination of the evidence and its preparations for forthcoming hearings, continues at pace. I am committed to providing the Inquiry with all the support it needs to complete its work as quickly as a thorough examination of the facts allows.

Please be reassured that as soon as I receive the Inquiry's recommendations, I will review them with the utmost urgency.

GRO-C

Rt Hon Penny Mordaunt MP
Paymaster General