



Newsletter

October 2023
Issue 22

Message from Catherine Nalty, Deputy Secretary to the Inquiry

As you probably know, the Inquiry has had to accept we cannot publish the final report this autumn. We held two online update meetings with participants after that decision and share below the key points covered. A number of people talked about experiencing increased distress so please remember that our Inquiry Red Cross team (who have been with us since the beginning of the Inquiry) are here for all of you and their details are over the page.

Discussion at Update Meetings 28 and 29 September

While there was some understanding of the reasons for the Inquiry's decision, participants were also clear that this further delay is a source of disappointment, frustration, distress and anger. Some of those emotions were directed at the Government as well as the Inquiry.

Some of the issues raised were:

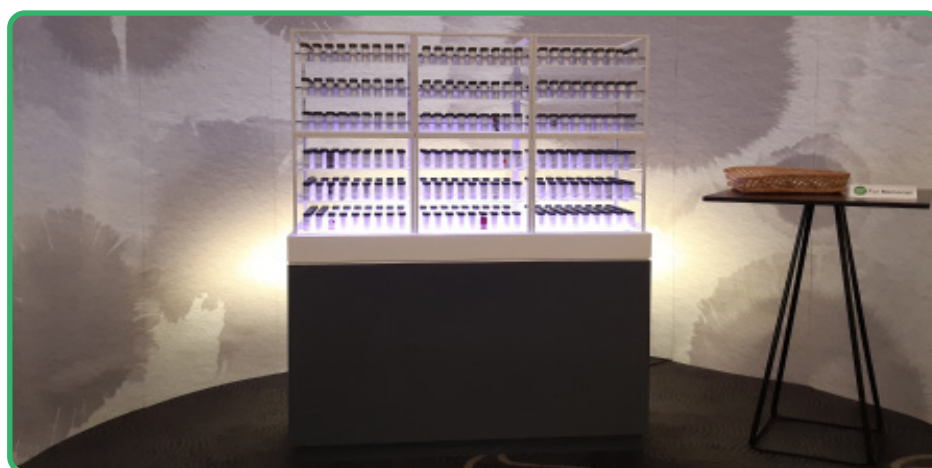
- The delay is not connected to significant criticisms made in the witness statements provided by participants - the process for sharing those criticisms with the people involved has been completed
- All Inquiries set up under the Inquiries Act ("statutory Inquiries") must follow the Inquiry Rules linked to that Act
- Rule 13 says that the Inquiry must inform anyone criticised of the nature of the criticism and the facts this is based on
- The warning letters issued about the final report are complex documents with detailed references to evidence
- With hearings continuing until February (and additional hearings in July) this year, this complicated process has taken more time than anticipated
- The person criticised is not obliged to respond, but the Inquiry must give them reasonable time to do that, if they choose
- Sir Brian will consider any response received but the Inquiry will not enter into correspondence on this matter.



In addition to the process for warning letters, participants talked about the lack of progress on setting up a compensation scheme, and the potential impact of the next general election. They also expressed a concern that, unlike in Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales, the funding for counselling or talking therapy through EIBSS is not well known. This is for people infected by blood and blood products and/or their families and there is more information on the EIBSS website.

Memorial

The memorial has been with the Inquiry since the opening hearings at Church House in September 2018. It travelled with us when we heard evidence from people infected and affected in Edinburgh, Cardiff, Leeds and Belfast, and messages continue to be added by participants. Everyone connected with the Inquiry is very welcome to contribute.



The memorial at the July hearings

If you would like to add a note to the memorial, please contact us by email or phone. Alternatively, you can post the note to us to the address below. The piece of paper is about 5 by 2 inches so it can be scrolled and put into a bottle, and you are welcome to write on both sides, or keep your message private.

Infected Blood Inquiry contact details

Tel: 0808 169 1377

Email: contact@infectedbloodinquiry.org.uk

Address:

Infected Blood Inquiry - 5th Floor
Aldwych House, 71-91 Aldwych, London
WC2B 4HN

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.

Or leave a message any time and you will receive a call back as soon as possible