

Witness Name: Julie Morgan

Witness No: WITN2438001

Exhibits: WITN2438002-WITN2438017

Dated: 23 September 2020

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

EXHIBIT WITN2438007



Department
of Health

07 MAY 2017

From the Lord O'Shaughnessy
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Health (Lords)

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Julie Morgan AM
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
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11 APR 2017

Thank you for your letter of 29 March to Jeremy Hunt on behalf of your constituent Ms Julie Morgan of National Assembly for Wales, Cardiff Bay, Cardiff CF99 1NA about a public inquiry for people with infected blood.

I appreciate your concerns, and am grateful to you for taking the time to raise these with me.

We want to apologise to all those affected by the tragic events that occurred and the impact they have had on so many families.

We are introducing significant reforms to the existing support schemes and have pledged up to £125 million in additional funding, which will more than double the Department's annual spend on the schemes over the next five years. This is significantly more than any previous Government has been able to provide for those affected by infected blood.

Under the increased budget, we will now be able to provide all those with hepatitis C stage 1 with an annual payment, and increase the amounts for those who already receive annual payments. Although the Government is aware that no amount of money can make up for the loss of a loved one, the payment is made in recognition of the financial impact during a difficult time.

As you may be aware, Diana Johnson raised the possibility of a public inquiry for those infected with hepatitis C or HIV through NHS-supplied blood products at Prime Minister's Questions on 14 September, and the Prime Minister asked that we consider this request.

You may also be aware that Lord Archer of Sandwell and Lord Penrose have already separately undertaken thorough, independent inquiries on this issue within the last decade. Neither inquiry found the Government at the time to be at fault and did not apportion blame. The relevant publications can be found on the National Archives website at www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/webarchive by searching for 'inquiry into contaminated blood and blood products'. It is unlikely a public inquiry would provide further information. We do not therefore believe that another inquiry would be in the best interests of sufferers and their families, as it would further delay action to address their concerns and would curtail plans to reform the existing support schemes.

Whilst I appreciate that this may be a disappointing reply, I hope you will understand why we have decided not to hold a public inquiry, and that the decision has not been taken lightly.

GRO-C

JAMES O'SHAUGHNESSY