

Witness Name: Theresa May
Statement No.: WITN7700001
Exhibits: Nil
Dated:

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

WRITTEN STATEMENT OF THE RIGHT HON THERESA MAY

I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9(1) and (2) of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 5 June 2023.

I, Theresa Mary May, will say as follows: -

1. My full name is Theresa Mary May. My date of birth is GRO-C 1956. My address is c/o The Government Legal Department, 102 Petty France, Westminster, London, SW1H 9GL.
2. Cabinet Office colleagues have assisted in providing relevant documents to me, where such documents exist. I confirm that I have had opportunity to review all documents. I have prepared this witness statement with support from the Government Legal Department. I shall endeavour to assist the inquiry as much as I can recognising the sensitive subject matter and importance of it.

Rule 9 Request

3. I have been asked questions relating to my time as Prime Minister. I was Prime Minister between 13 July 2016 and 24 July 2019. Specifically, I have been asked about the consideration which I gave to compensation for those who had suffered due to infected blood.

4. My Office was involved in communications concerning the correct form of inquiry (i.e. statutory or non-statutory), which department should sponsor the inquiry and how the inquiry should be constituted. My involvement with the question of compensation was relatively limited.
5. In July 2017 I announced an inquiry into 'the contaminated blood scandal [RLIT0001168]'. I stated at the time and continue to think that this was an 'appalling tragedy which should simply never have happened'.
6. I was aware that the Department of Health ("DH") (as it was at the time) had run a consultation on Infected Blood Support: special category mechanism between March and April 2017. I liaised with DH to request they reinstate components of the 2016 scheme sourcing the additional funding required for this from existing budgets, in order to ensure that the infected and affected continued to receive support.
7. Alongside this, a consultation was running seeking views on the form, scope and sponsorship of the inquiry. That process was due to come to an end on 18 October 2017 and shortly afterwards I confirmed that Cabinet Office would sponsor the inquiry.
8. On 08 February 2018 Sir Brian Langstaff was appointed as Chair of the inquiry and in March 2018 a consultation in respect of the inquiry's terms of reference launched. No doubt the inquiry is familiar with the timeline thereafter with hearing commencing on 30 April 2019. This announcement only applied to payments in England. The start of the hearings coincided with me announcing that the government would increase the financial support for those infected and affected by increasing the regular annual payments from a total of £46m to £75m.
9. A press release [RLIT0002051] on gov.uk on the same day included my comments:
"The start of the inquiry today is a significant moment for those who have suffered so much for so long, as well as for those who campaigned and fought so hard to make it happen.

I know this will be a difficult time for victims and their families – but today will begin a journey which will be dedicated to getting to the truth of what happened and in delivering justice to everyone involved."

The press release also indicated that in January 2019 the then Minister for Mental Health (Jackie Doyle-Price) and the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (David Lidington) met with the Infected Blood Inquiry team and 12 infected and affected representatives to discuss the need for improved financial support and the desire for equal support across the 4 UK nations.

10. Whilst the inquiry has asked me questions about compensation, I note that my intention when I announced the inquiry was for the victims to receive the answers they deserved about how the scandal happened. Since the inquiry started, my involvement was related to financial support, which is of course different to compensation.

11. I am aware of the then Minister for the Cabinet Office Michael Ellis KC's written ministerial statement [RLIT0002052] on 31 March 2022 in which he confirmed that the government had received the report of Sir Robert Francis KC, who had been appointed to carry out a study to look at options for a framework for compensation for people infected and affected by infected blood.

12. I remain concerned for those infected or affected by this appalling tragedy and hope that this statement will be of assistance to the Inquiry.

Statement of Truth

I believe that the facts stated in this witness statement are true.

Signed

GRO-C

Dated

6. July 2023