

Tuesday, 24 January 2023

(10.00 am)

SIR BRIAN LANGSTAFF: Yes, Mr Cory-Wright.

Closing Statement by MR CORY-WRIGHT KC

On behalf of NHS Blood and Transplant

MR CORY-WRIGHT: Thank you, sir. My name is Charlie Cory-Wright and, as part of a small team of solicitors and barristers, I represent NHS Blood and Transplant in this Inquiry.

It feels a bit strange to be introducing myself to everyone when we've worked together in the same room for nearly four years, but that's the way the Inquiry process works, and, I'm sure to everyone's relief, I've not said much publicly since 2018 in relation to this.

I should explain what I propose to do in my two-and-a-half or so hours. Five things, I hope. First, I'm going to make some opening remarks about the Inquiry itself, about NHBT's role in it, and about the infected and affected. I'm going to explain what we did in our written submissions, and, given that this is a separate exercise, essentially what I'm doing just now: explaining the purpose of these submissions.

I'm going to cover in this first section, and indeed amplify, a fair bit of the ground that we covered in the early part of our written submissions, which was

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when we come to it because it is integral to current approaches to safety.

Fourthly, I'm going to describe NHBT's position in relation to the future in the context of the recommendations that we have suggested for Sir Brian to make, and indeed that others have suggested.

And finally, to make some concluding remarks.

First of all, then, some thanks.

It's important, even though this has already been done by others and no doubt will continue to be done by more others, to pay tribute and to say thank you to the Inquiry and to all involved in it over the last four years while we've been here. Thanks and such tribute to the chair, to Counsel to the Inquiry, to all the Inquiry staff, and by that I mean Rhys, George and Sam, as well as Laura, Aemon, Angela and David, and all the others, who have looked after us while we've been here.

Quite apart from their work for us all, day-to-day, that last cohort, Laura and her team have been crucial in dealing with witnesses, many of whom were elderly and vulnerable, and without the assistance given to them to put them at their ease, the quality of the evidence given to the Inquiry would have been much less. So a really big thank you to them.

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intended specifically for Core Participants as well as for Sir Brian, and that may take a bit of time.

Secondly, I want to deal with some of the detailed past historical matters, in order to cover some topics that have been discussed in the written submissions but we think should be addressed by us orally as well, sometimes because they've been picked up by others in their submissions and we need to respond to that.

Thirdly, and importantly as well, I'm going to explain about the present position: what's changed, what's in place now. It's really important for us to be clear about that because the Inquiry can only make recommendations as to the future with full knowledge of the current position. And it's apparent to us that some of the present position isn't necessarily widely known. And that may be in part because much of it was based on evidence provided by Dr Mifflin to the Inquiry, which evidence was given in writing but to which she was never asked to speak.

A good example of this, perhaps I can just explain what I'm talking about, we've had number of suggestions from others that haemovigilance was something that needed to be adopted in the UK, by us. It is something that we've been doing for many years and that's all set out in that statement, but I'm going to deal with that

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Thanks to all the other participants, but most particularly, of course, thanks to the infected and affected cohort who have been here throughout and alongside whom we have immersed ourselves in the Inquiry process. I will pay a proper tribute to them in a moment.

At the preliminary hearing on 26 September 2018, I gave, on behalf of NHSBT, a commitment to the Inquiry and to the infected and affected. I hope no one will mind if I remind us all what that commitment was. I said this:

"It goes, we hope, without saying that NHSBT fully supports the Inquiry in all of its terms of reference. Our primary concern is for those who were given infected blood or infected blood products, and for their families and others who have been affected by this. We do know that we can never truly understand the impact this has had on the infected, their families and loved ones, however we do of course know that impact has been devastating. One only has to have paid attention to what's been said over the last three days ..."

This was on the final day of that preliminary hearing.

"... to be aware of that.

"We understand that our job is to provide the

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1 Inquiry team with all the help that we can in fulfilling
2 its terms of reference. We will do whatever we can to
3 assist the Inquiry in order that answers can be provided
4 to the questions asked by those infected and those
5 affected. We will be open, constructive and honest.
6 Our motivation is to get to the truth for those infected
7 and affected to the best of our abilities.

8 "In that sense we share, we hope, the same approach
9 as the Inquiry itself. Indeed, we understand that this
10 Inquiry is above all things a search after truth, the
11 unvarnished truth about all of the many disquieting
12 things that we have been hearing about over the last
13 three days. We do get it, that if the Inquiry is able
14 to do that job properly then that is likely to include
15 the uncovering of facts that are seriously unpalatable.

16 "Whatever those truths may be, we want to say, loud
17 and clear at the outset, that we too are very sorry for
18 what happened to all those infected, all those affected,
19 all who are victims.

20 "We also understand that actions speak louder than
21 words. We hope that we are demonstrating that in our
22 co-operation with the Inquiry, both thus far and as it
23 continues, as well as in the terms of the safety
24 measures we now apply in screening protocols and the
25 like, which I will outline in a moment.

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1 all the evidence for the purposes of writing our written
2 submissions. It was very worthwhile. It was also,
3 frankly, a humbling exercise. It's easy to lose sight
4 of the Inquiry's achievement over these years of present
5 gathering and presentation at hearings when one has been
6 deep in the Inquiry process throughout that. That
7 achievement has been remarkable.

8 First and foremost, it's been in honouring the
9 Inquiry's commitment to put the infected and affected
10 and their terrible experiences at the heart of its
11 investigation. But beyond that, it has also been in
12 ensuring that those experiences, for so long unheard or
13 ignored, are now woven into the fabric of all of the
14 evidence the Inquiry has called, from whatever quarter,
15 from that of the individuals who suffered and also from
16 that of the politicians and civil servants, scientists,
17 clinicians and experts who have given evidence to it.

18 It goes without saying that many have said it
19 already, and I say it again: that the evidence the
20 Inquiry has heard over its five years from the infected
21 and affected has been particularly and profoundly
22 moving. Witnesses have given detailed accounts of great
23 suffering. They've spoken of losing their children,
24 siblings, parents and partners to terrible diseases; of
25 suffering tremendous ill health, both physically and

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1 "We do understand and embrace the need for the
2 Inquiry to apply current clinical science and current
3 standards and norms to its scrutiny of what went wrong.
4 It's only by doing that that the lessons that need to be
5 learnt will be clear.

6 "Finally, I hope I can help by mentioning this
7 morning's invitation by Steven Snowden QC, who raised
8 Bishop Jones' six-point charter for public bodies and
9 invited those here involved to sign up to that charter.
10 That question having been raised, NHSBT has considered
11 the charter and its six points. We do not see these six
12 points as any different to the commitment we were
13 already making to the Inquiry, and in those
14 circumstances we confirm our intention to be guided by
15 and to strive to follow those principles."

16 I do very much hope that we've demonstrated by our
17 actions since then that we meant it when we gave that
18 commitment and that we've sought to honour our pledge
19 throughout.

20 Now turning to the Inquiry and its task, it is an
21 important discipline in all significant and long-term
22 endeavours for those involved to be able on occasion to
23 step away from what's being dealt with in the moment so
24 as to be able to review the exercise as a whole. We as
25 a team obviously had to do that when we were reviewing

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1 mentally; of stigma and discrimination; and of a lack of
2 assistance and support so that many have had to face the
3 world isolated.

4 For those who have attended over the five years,
5 it's been moving and humbling to hear and to read that
6 evidence.

7 We did not, in our written submissions, wish to
8 identify any particular individual account or any
9 particular witness in seeking to pay tribute to the
10 infected and affected. That was because we thought it
11 might suggest we were valuing one person or a few
12 people's experiences over those of others. But having
13 thought about this a bit more, we think that's wrong,
14 because it might seem -- or feel like -- we were
15 maintaining a distance or being indifferent to what
16 we've heard. So we do want to mention a couple of
17 individuals in the hope that this can be seen as
18 a proper medium by which we can express our feelings
19 about, if that's not too awkward a phrase, and pay
20 tribute to, the wider cohort of all the many infected
21 and affected from whom or about whom we've heard.

22 We've chosen these ones because they're striking,
23 but also particularly given that they've been
24 specifically singled out by their own representatives
25 already.

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1 At the conclusion of his closing submissions, Steven
 2 Snowden KC referred to Lee Turton, born with
 3 haemophilia A, diagnosed at the age of 4 with HIV after
 4 treatment with a contaminated batch of Factor VIII, and
 5 died in January 1992 at the age of 10. I know that that
 6 terrible summary won't remotely do justice to him, but
 7 those were the raw facts. We watched a series of video
 8 clips relating to Lee, concluding, I think, with a clip
 9 taken at Christmas just one month before he died.
 10 No one who watched that video will ever forget it.
 11 I don't think I need to, or I ought to, say more
 12 than that, save only to say thank you to Lee's family
 13 for being able to share those deeply private and
 14 poignant moments with the world. And, as I say, I hope
 15 that tribute can stand as a thank you to everyone else
 16 who has shared in some way in order to shed light on
 17 these terrible events.
 18 Brian Cummins, Steven Snowden's colleague in the
 19 team, made specific mention of the evidence of
 20 John Peach.
 21 Mr Peach and his first wife Susan, who died in the
 22 early 1980s, had two sons: Leigh and Jason, born in 1966
 23 and 1969. Both had haemophilia A. Both went to
 24 Treloar's. Mr Peach told the Inquiry how they thought
 25 Lister concentrate was a godsend. They had no idea when
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1 being: the patients' groups, whose efforts ensured that
 2 the Inquiry has taken place. It has taken too long. We
 3 hope that this Inquiry has been, and we hope it will
 4 continue to be, an important trigger for collective
 5 efforts to ensure the quality of care offered across the
 6 whole services. We hope that this Inquiry delivers
 7 answers that the infected and affected have campaigned
 8 for and deserve.
 9 These experiences have been with us throughout, and
 10 it's not just that, as a quick review of the witness
 11 list over the years would confirm, the Inquiry both
 12 commenced and then concluded by giving the infected and
 13 affected the opportunity to tell the stories of these
 14 experiences.
 15 What's also really striking, to those who have had
 16 the opportunity to attend the hearings throughout, is
 17 that it has achieved something that in prospect would
 18 have been surprising. It has given all taking part
 19 a strong sense of collective endeavour. This is
 20 certainly so from the point of view of NHSBT, which has
 21 tried throughout to deliver on its own promise of
 22 fulsome engagement and assistance. It's also so, we
 23 detect, across the range of Core Participants, whether
 24 infected and affected or not.
 25 The seeds and indeed shoots of this sense of

1 the boys left Treloar's that they had tested positive
 2 for HTLV-III and they found out both were infected at
 3 the same time. He told us how, after their diagnosis,
 4 their world fell apart. He told us how they tried to
 5 make the best of things and how they died just
 6 five months apart, at the ages of 23 and 27, and of how
 7 he misses them every day. All he wants now is the
 8 truth.
 9 Once again, no one who heard his evidence and saw
 10 the courage it took for him to give it will ever forget
 11 it. Once again, I hope that it's appropriate to make
 12 mention of him, to pay tribute to him and his family,
 13 and to use that memory as a symbol for the suffering of
 14 others that we all ought to recognise.
 15 All those who shared their stories gave to all of
 16 those of us who have been at the Inquiry day-to-day or
 17 followed it online an invaluable insight into the
 18 suffering of the infected and affected, into their
 19 grief, and as to how their lives have been transformed
 20 from what they were entitled to expect. We've heard of
 21 the impact of stigma and discrimination and the
 22 difficulties faced by those living with HIV and HCV in
 23 many cases alongside haemophilia.
 24 It's against this backdrop that we must acknowledge
 25 the strength of those who brought this Inquiry into
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1 collective endeavour have been there all along. They
 2 were evident even at that preliminary hearing in Church
 3 House in September 2018. It was plain that there was
 4 a desire on the part of the participants as a whole for
 5 a positive approach. The atmosphere in the hearing room
 6 was initially, and perhaps inevitably, palpably tense.
 7 But even at that stage, there was a striking generosity
 8 of spirit, which included a positive response in the
 9 room to what was said by those speaking for
 10 institutional CPs, such as myself, once those CPs had
 11 demonstrably committed themselves to the Inquiry's task.
 12 That spirit has continued throughout the last four
 13 years. Attendance at the hearings has been
 14 characterised on all sides by friendliness at
 15 an individual level and the gradually gathering sense of
 16 a common task in the job of getting to the truth and
 17 ensuring that this sort of thing can never happen again.
 18 That this is so is itself perhaps the best testament to
 19 the task undertaken by the Chair and the Inquiry team,
 20 who have been assiduous in ensuring that the experiences
 21 of those who have suffered is woven into its proceedings
 22 in the way described above.
 23 Now, NHSBT has throughout both understood and
 24 welcomed the fact that this scrutiny of past events has
 25 taken the experiences of the infected and affected as

1 its starting point and then gone on to weave them into
2 the fabric of the Inquiry's work. But given that that
3 is the approach, it is, we submit, vital for the Inquiry
4 to bear in mind the extent here of the potential
5 consequences, unless guarded against, of seeing only
6 through this lens.

7 This applies particularly to the examination with
8 hindsight of the events as they took place in real time
9 and, in that context, to any explanations given to the
10 Inquiry of why things were done the way they were or why
11 they were not done differently. I'll come on to deal
12 with that more fully in a moment.

13 I'd like to say more, a little more, about the
14 infected and affected themselves. They have been the
15 touchstone of this Inquiry. All with individual stories
16 that come together to map a tragedy that has run for
17 many decades and, as we have said, we cannot do justice
18 to all the individual stories here but we have no doubt
19 that the Inquiry can and will be able to do so. Without
20 their evidence, the depth of the experiences of the
21 infected and affected would have been obscured or lost.
22 Thus, again, NHSBT wishes to express its gratitude for
23 their evidence, in circumstances where the stories told
24 were of great pain and suffering, and to recognise the
25 dignity and courage with which that evidence has been

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1 worse, any sense of an adversarial approach on the
2 various common tasks in hand. It's important
3 nonetheless for all, for NHSBT, other CPs and, most of
4 all, the Inquiry and its team to bear in mind the
5 ramifications of this approach on the mindset of all
6 concerned.

7 The starting point is, of course, that these matters
8 have all to be considered in the context, ever present
9 in the mind of all involved in the Inquiry, that we are
10 largely dealing with matters between 50 and 30 years
11 ago, and it's obvious that this passage of time not only
12 represents delay in the detailed investigation of what
13 happened and thus injustice for those who have suffered,
14 it also prejudices, at least to some extent, the search
15 for truth, something which affects all participants.

16 For those of us who were alive and aware in the
17 1970s and 1980s, our memory works well, but only in very
18 specific ways. We can remember events that were
19 particularly important to us personally, and we've heard
20 much about that, both that they did happen and how they
21 made us feel. But even in the case of such events, we
22 may well be unable to remember the precise chronology or
23 the detail of what happened.

24 As to more public events, it's not difficult for us
25 to summon up their general historical sweep: in the

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1 given.

2 I would add that we heard loud and clear what Roanna
3 Maharaj said in her submissions on behalf of The
4 Thalassaemia Society on Friday. I include that now
5 because what she says is equally something important for
6 us to acknowledge and act on. Although her own role is
7 a very specific one, it seems to us to have a resonance
8 that goes back beyond that of the thalassemia sufferers.
9 I will come back to that when we deal with
10 recommendations below.

11 Most importantly, we wish to restate what we hope
12 has been clear throughout: that we recognise the hurt,
13 pain and suffering of those who have been infected or
14 affected by such infection through blood and blood
15 products. We express our deepest sympathies and, for
16 any respect in which it is found that the blood services
17 or the blood that they supplied was the cause of that
18 suffering to any person, we apologise unreservedly.

19 Now, I would like to say something about reviewing
20 the past and the Inquiry's approach to that. The
21 approach of seeing things through the lens of the
22 infected and affected has made the task of NHSBT and its
23 representatives that much easier to undertake in terms
24 of both of the spirit in which it is done and of the
25 ability to focus without unnecessary distraction or,

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1 1970s, the three-day week and its associated power cuts;
2 the winter of discontent; the appointment of Margaret
3 Thatcher as Prime Minister; and, abroad, the end of the
4 Vietnam War and Watergate; in the 1980s, HIV and AIDS;
5 the Falklands War; the Iran-Iraq and Soviet-Afghan Wars;
6 and the beginning of the Internet and of emails as
7 correspondence; all, of course, among many others.

8 So again, we can remember them happening but we do
9 not necessarily remember when or even in what order. We
10 are relying upon the archives for that.

11 What is much harder for us to do is to recall the
12 social and the practical day-to-day context in which
13 these things happened. This is made clear to us
14 whenever we see archive film of the times, as we have
15 done in this Inquiry. We get a slight jolt of surprise
16 when we're reminded of what people looked like, or their
17 clothes, or their cars, or some of what they used to
18 say. This slight jolt demonstrates to us how ingrained
19 the habit is of seeing the past through the lens of the
20 present and, related but separate, of projecting the
21 present along with all its assumptions back into the
22 past.

23 Both the sweep of underlying societal and
24 technological changes, and their practical day-to-day
25 manifestations are important to the Inquiry for all

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1 sorts of reasons: they're relevant to society, they're
2 relevant to governments, to the NHS and other public
3 health services in the UK; they're relevant to the
4 practice of medicine which has changed fundamentally,
5 because of progress in medicine itself, in science, in
6 the culture and in technology; and they are relevant to
7 the users of those services, and their lived
8 experiences.

9 We hope that some further exploration of this is
10 helpful.

11 First of all, societal differences. It's necessary
12 to bear in mind the wide social and legal
13 transformations of the last 40 years. As well as the
14 landmark events referred to above, there are major
15 differences between expectations and habits, then and
16 now, and between attitudes then and now.

17 First of all, expectations and habits, day to day.
18 It's striking and often surprising at first to be
19 reminded about the changes there have been over this
20 time in the nuts and bolts of people's lives. One
21 obvious and important difference relates to the normal
22 methods and the normal speed of communications and
23 information gathering. Instant communication was
24 emphatically not the norm. Obviously, there were
25 telephones, but there were no mobile phones, no texts,

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1 by letter or postcard, rather than by phone call or
2 text.

3 I should stress, we do not wish to make too much of
4 all this. Obviously, there were many decisions to be
5 made or actions to be performed that were urgent and
6 that had to be effected immediately. However, the
7 default position in that era was one of less speed and,
8 bluntly, some might say, less impatience. That must be
9 at least part of the explanation for the surprise that
10 we all do now feel at the apparently slow response times
11 on ostensibly important matters. Even where this does
12 not excuse them, and in many cases it doesn't, it does
13 in part explain them.

14 Attitudes. There were many commonly held social
15 attitudes during the '70s and '80s which would now seem
16 anachronistic and some that now seem to have been wholly
17 inappropriate, even making allowances for the different
18 social context of those times. We stress we mention
19 this now not in any way to excuse them; it's rather to
20 identify them as factors that would have represented
21 obstacles to relevant action or change at the time.

22 In particular, there was very commonly a real
23 discomfort with any honest or serious discussion about
24 sex. This was present in most households and even
25 extended, as the Inquiry has heard, to some clinicians.

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1 no emails and only limited access to the Internet, at
2 least until the very end of this period.

3 The point here is not that instant remote
4 communication was impossible; it was not. You could
5 communicate by telephone or by telex. The point is that
6 it was not the norm. The expectation was that anything
7 that was not either an emergency or immediately personal
8 business would be dealt with on paper, and this took
9 time. This meant that expectations as to communications
10 over distance were completely different then. Such
11 communications took days at least, and the expectation
12 was often for them to take weeks. In most cases, no one
13 regarded that as strange or problematic.

14 Perhaps the best example of this is the terms on
15 which bills were to be settled at that time, which seem
16 really quite remarkable to all of us now. The standard
17 wording on most bills stated that they should be paid
18 within a month or sometimes four weeks. Often, they
19 would, as a matter of pride on the part of the customer,
20 be dealt with more quickly than that, but that's not the
21 point. The point is that the general, social
22 assumption, the expectation, was that that was
23 an acceptable period for responding.

24 This was emblematic of attitudes more generally
25 about communication. Families kept in touch but often

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1 It's been reflected in the evidence that the Inquiry has
2 heard from all sorts of quarters, including the evidence
3 from the highest echelons of politics and the evidence
4 from those who were the subject of unfair stigma and
5 abuse. It's a discomfort which constrained public
6 consciousness and discourse, and possibly for many in
7 private as well, in a strange hinterland between
8 comedy -- the Carry On shows and Dick Emery --
9 prurience, and, hidden behind those things and most
10 relevant to this Inquiry, simple disapproval, for some,
11 shading into disgust, if not at the idea of sex itself,
12 at least at the idea of discussions about it.

13 The consequence was that there was very little
14 public debate about sex and very little by way of forum
15 in which to have any serious discussion about it. Even,
16 when the need arose, apart possibly in academia and
17 medical circles. This feature of the times, ignorance,
18 combined with socially-enforced silence about sex was
19 inevitably a fertile breeding ground for homophobia:
20 widespread, on occasions express and acute, otherwise as
21 low-level but ever present background noise.

22 People were presumably aware of homosexuality but
23 many refused to acknowledge it or accept it. It's
24 treatment in popular culture was often by demeaning
25 stereotypes designed to ridicule and with the effect,

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conscious or otherwise, of bolstering and enforcing an othering of homosexuality and homosexuals.

Evidence heard by the Inquiry has confirmed that the inability freely to discuss matters relating to sex during the '70s and even the '80s created real difficulties in putting necessary initiatives into effect. For example, generally, those relating to public awareness of HIV/AIDS, and more specifically here, those relating to donor selection. The idea of public or, in many cases, even private discussion of whether sex was of a particular sort or not would have been unthinkable during the '70s and '80s and such discussion would have run a high risk of being counterproductive.

This was essentially for two reasons. First, because of a squeamishness in addressing it on part of decision-makers but, secondly, also because of a real and probably justified concern on the part of decision-makers that addressing these matters directly with the public would not achieve the desired result: sections of the public would recoil rather than take in the evidence.

Of course, at one level we know all this. The point is, though, we don't always factor it into our thinking as much as is appropriate.

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policy initiatives emphasising patient choice. These changes were then in turn reflected by changes in societal and legal norms, as well as by professional regulation.

This effect was something that the ethics experts recognised as part of their oral evidence. As Professor Savulescu said, there's another distinction which I think is very important in this debate and that's between moral relativism and context specificity. So what can be right in one context can be wrong in another, and that doesn't mean you don't have some universal or moral objectivity -- objectively principles in both of them -- sorry, that doesn't mean you don't have some universal or moral objectively true principles in both of them. It means that the facts are different.

And Professor Kerridge. In medicine, as in many other spheres of life, we can see examples in practices and behaviours that, at one particular point were deemed acceptable but subsequently, with further thinking sometimes -- and it's just with further thinking it becomes clear -- that these are just not acceptable and were actually never acceptable.

The importance of context specificity means it's relevant in terms of understanding the past and in terms of assessing the conduct decisions and actions of people

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Changes over the years. We've already said on some of the technological advances -- talked about some of the technological advances since the '70s and '80s. As well as their general societal impact, those advances have changed the management and operation systems of the health services, including the blood services. They represent very significant improvements in the creation and dissemination of research material, created new possibilities for record keeping, testing and patient information services, and have increased the speed of adaptation to new changes.

In the '70s and '80s themselves, by contrast, clinicians were working with tools that were rudimentary: no email or Internet or, indeed, access to computers. News and research journals travelled by post. Conference attendance was comparatively rare. MS-DOS was not even in general use until the mid-to-late '80s and so, in the '70s and '80s, early '80s, doctors, in common with the rest of the population, were relying on some combination of typewriters, fax machines and handwritten notes.

There have been transformations in the practice of medicine. These include changes in the doctor-patient relationship in respect of sharing information, views on medical paternalism and consent, multiple legal and

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in the past to take into account the mores, standards, and customs of the time.

The changes in the organisation of the Blood Service during this period are described in the written submissions that we provided and I'll touch on those in the next section. These changes transformed the organisation capabilities and practice of the Blood Service. They introduced new levels of consistency in practice, for example through the centralisation of the organisation and the transformation of the relationship with Central Government. The evidence that the Inquiry has heard makes it plain that the Blood Service professionals were trying to maintain the supply of blood and make it as safe as it could be in the context of the times and the systems within which they were working.

Detailed accounts of the history of the English Blood Services, which are helpful in demonstrating the degree to which it was initially a patchwork operation, are set out in the witness statements of Dr Angela Robinson and Dr Gail Mifflin. It was explored in our written submissions in detail in the section "The Blood Service and its Role", and "Running the Blood Service". It may be an obvious point but it is only so once identified that the context here also includes all the

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other important life-enhancing and life-saving services and functions being provided by the Blood Services.

I'd like now to turn from contextual changes since those times to other factors relevant to our own consideration of the past, relating more to us than to the events that we're assessing. Nothing, can I stress, that I'm about to say is intended to be taken as undermining the lived experience of the infected and affected as described by them or suggesting that the accounts that they've given are in any way not correct. That is not the purpose of these submissions.

What we say we do simply because these are relevant factors which the Inquiry, we say, should bear in mind when weighing the evidence it's heard from others as well.

So, first of all, reliance upon memory of recent events. Much of the evidence heard by the Inquiry consists simply of personal recollection, often assisted by relevant documentary recorded itself, often incomplete. When I say "simply" there, I don't mean "merely", I mean unassisted by other things.

Memory is, of course, a powerful evidential resource, whether that evidence is given to the Inquiry in writing or orally. Those who have given evidence have done a remarkable job of recollecting events that

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Thirdly, this is further complicated by the way that the Inquiry's knowledge has developed over its duration. With each additional batch of documents and questions to the witnesses, the Inquiry's own understanding of events has developed organically. That's inevitable. The questions posed and the answers given reflect the developing nature of this undertaking.

Finally, there's the problem of memory of one aspect of the past without the context of the others. Recall prompted by the Inquiry's investigations lacks that context, and there is therefore a risk that the other priorities that were part of the picture back then, but are no longer part of the picture, are not remembered.

We have no doubt at all that all concerned in the Inquiry are well aware of these points. Once again, none of them is intended to represent criticism of the way in which the Inquiry has performed its function. They're made simply in the interests of fairness and in the hope that they will help the Inquiry to keep them in mind when undertaking its consideration of the events.

Hindsight. There are a number of points here. I've already dealt with the question of the review of past events being seen through the lens of 21st century thinking and norms, and I'm not going to go back over that now.

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happened 30 or 40 years ago, however that evidence is, by definition, difficult to test now.

Furthermore, the timescales involved mean that there are important limitations as to its reliability. Those limitations should be considered when the Inquiry assesses this evidence. There are number of distinct points here. First, what is encoded in a witness's memory is determined by what they attend to and what they've stored as important and, one might add, in relation to the accounts given by infected and affected, often what is seared on to their memory in the way described by Ms Monaghan in her submissions late last week. As I say, I am not in any sense seeking to undermine that.

Secondly, a huge amount of material has been disclosed to the Inquiry. For many of our mostly elderly witnesses, reviewing and scanning potentially relevant material has been necessary to prompt memories and clarify events of many years before. That process of presenting witnesses with selected contemporaneous written documentation after a significant period has elapsed, would itself have had an impact on the evidence to the Inquiry. Invariably, in refreshing witnesses' memories, looking at these documents may also itself alter the witnesses' memories.

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It may, on the face of it, seem to us all that it should be a relatively straightforward exercise to keep the fact that we are now significantly better informed than people at the time in mind. However, the practicalities of excluding hindsight in these circumstances where it should be excluded are more complex than they might appear.

We know that we know many of the answers to the questions that were back in the day unanswered. For example: what was the nature of NANB? How serious was it? In relation to HIV/AIDS: what is the nature of this infection? Is it a virus? Is it one or a number of viruses? We can attempt to put ourselves in the position of those who did not know the answers to those questions. In doing so, we can imagine not knowing them. But it's much harder to give due colour or weight to the significance back then of what we now know to be wrong answers but didn't know then, or wrong lines of inquiry that led nowhere, scientific blind alleys or worse.

This applies most particularly in the context of the cutting edges of scientific progress. Why did it take so long to discover X or Y? But it's equally important in steps dependent to and subsequent to that scientific endeavour which are necessary to make practical progress

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in the real world in the light of it. Thus, it can be acutely relevant to understanding, for example, the explanations for delays in the implementation of scientific or other steps, which steps have been subsequently proved obviously sensible.

The danger, put shortly, at these steps may seem with hindsight always to have been obviously sensible when, at the time, they were not.

The particular danger here is that in considering decisions as to what should be done to minimise risk. For example, it's not obvious, viewed in prospect only, to be sure of the ramifications of taking or not taking any particular step. Indeed, for this reason it's not always obvious what would be the cautious approach. The right answer is often, by definition, not obvious. Or even apparent.

A useful analogy for the review, now, of such situations is the challenge of the cryptic crossword puzzle. We don't know the answer to a clue until we have solved it. Similarly, we don't know until then how long it's going to take to do so. Once we have solved it, it often seems to us that it was completely obvious, and that it's hard to understand why we didn't identify it before. It feels like we must have been being stupid in taking so long to solve the problem.

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HIV, non-A, non-B (hepatitis C), HIV look-back, HCV look-back and vCJD. Other related matters, a section dealing with consent, a section dealing with recordkeeping, a section dealing with teaching and transfusion practice, and a section dealing with minimising the risk of transfusion-transmitted infection. And then concluding section on recommendations that the Inquiry might make.

So now I turn to the historical section. This is dealing with only a very few topics which seem to us particularly important to raise now, either because they weren't covered in our written submissions, because they've been raised since then by others, or because we feel they need to be emphasised in particular.

The central role of the Blood Service has been and remains to obtain a reliable supply of blood from voluntary, unremunerated donors and to make that supply available for transfusion and for use in blood products. When we say reliable, we mean a supply which is safe for all recipients, including prospective recipients, and a supply which is sufficient for all recipients, including prospective recipients.

At the outset of our oral submissions we began with an apology. That apology is because we failed in this role. Numerous of our witnesses have recognised

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That reaction, understandable but in fact often wrongheaded, is, we submit, an important one to bear in mind in this context. There is a danger here that in assessing the conduct of those tasked with finding answers back in the day, or deciding on strategy, we are distracted by our hindsight, our knowledge of those answers. We're distracted into missing or ignoring the fact that these things were often emphatically not obvious to those people dealing with the problem at the time. Again, almost by definition, they didn't become obvious until science advanced so as to mean that that was so.

In short, the problem is twofold: we cannot unlearn what we now know; and while we may know that fact, we don't always bear it in mind.

I'm going to mention very briefly the contents of our written submissions in case anyone hasn't had a chance to look at them and would like to know the topics that are covered in there. The specific topics with which we deal, in relation to the Blood Service and the blood supply, there's a topic on the Blood Service and its role, decision making and reliability of the blood supply, running the Blood Service, self-sufficiency. Dealing with particular infections and responses to them. Sections on hepatitis generally,

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failings in what we did in the past, and we apologise for those wholeheartedly. We deal with those apologies in detail in our written submissions, and I certainly don't want to go through the task of listing what we've said sorry for in the written submissions. They're there for people to see.

I will give one example now, and that is the taking of donations of blood from prisons and other correctional institutions. Simply put, the Blood Service made the wrong decision.

Once it was recognised that the blood of those donors was at highest risk than those of the general population, those donations should have ended. In not ending those donations, people will have been infected by blood that we took. We sincerely apologise for that.

In making our written submissions and these oral submissions, we don't seek to row back from any of these apologies for the things that we got wrong. We've also made apologies for making decisions that were the wrong decisions to make, often difficult decisions which had complex, competing circumstances. However, where we took the wrong decision, we are sorry.

The purpose of these submissions, I hope it's clear already, is not to avoid blame. It's to assist the Inquiry and the infected and affected in understanding

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1 what the Blood Service did and why. We've hoped
 2 throughout that that is so, and we continue to do so.
 3 We've said a lot in our written submissions on the
 4 historical matters, as I've said, but there are three
 5 topics that I want to deal with orally: structure and
 6 function of the Blood Service, donors, and testing.
 7 Now, first of all, structure and function of the
 8 Blood Service. From its inception in around '93, '94,
 9 the Blood Service operated as a loose federation of
 10 independent Regional Transfusion Centres. Instead of
 11 being bound together as an organisation, they were bound
 12 to their Regional Hospital Boards, later regional health
 13 authorities. There was no -- sorry, Health Boards.
 14 There was no executive control within the Blood Service,
 15 nor over those who received our blood, be that
 16 fractionation laboratories, hospital blood banks, or
 17 clinicians.
 18 While the Advisory Committee in the early 1980s and
 19 the National Directorate from the late 1980s gave some
 20 internal direction, it was only in '93/'94 that
 21 centralised and executive control was established in the
 22 National Blood Authority.
 23 This was not for a lack of desire on the part of the
 24 Regional Transfusion Directors to be a centralised
 25 service. The CTI team has produced a very helpful

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1 made significant difference in achieving
 2 self-sufficiency at an earlier stage.
 3 In respect of executive control -- that's the second
 4 topic -- over other practitioners, the Inquiry has heard
 5 about the weight placed on clinical freedom for
 6 practitioners. The remit of the Blood Service did not
 7 include direction of clinicians outside the service.
 8 Indeed, even when the service direction was diffuse
 9 between RTCs.
 10 We did issue guidelines, including *Notes on*
 11 *Transfusion* in the 1960s, through to the 1980s. The
 12 1973 *Notes on Transfusion*, if anyone wants to look at
 13 it, are at HCDO0000861. The Red Book was issued after
 14 that.
 15 A number of our witnesses also spoke of being
 16 involved in teaching. Whether in the context of the
 17 times and in our state, with a diffuse set of RTCs with
 18 no executive authority nor centralised funding, going
 19 beyond this would have been possible or feasible is
 20 unclear. We say it was a great difficulty, considering
 21 our status.
 22 The second topic was donors. The Blood Service
 23 would not be able to fulfil its core role without
 24 donors. We know that all are aware of that fact.
 25 Without sufficient donors to meet the demand for blood

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1 presentation -- that's INQY0000307 -- which sets out the
 2 various requests made and the views expressed of
 3 Regional Transfusion Directors. We've referred to this,
 4 and indeed relied upon it in our written submissions at
 5 paragraphs 5.4 to 5.8.

6 Neither was it for a lack of perceived benefit from
 7 a centralised service. Such would have provided hope
 8 for a unified approach to policy internal to the
 9 Service, for a unified approach with the fractionation
 10 laboratories, centralised funding, which was not
 11 regionally determined by RHAs, executive authority to
 12 issue directions to other healthcare providers. Indeed,
 13 this is what eventuated when the NBA was established.

14 The result of the lack of this centralisation and
 15 executive control is set out in detail in our closing
 16 submissions.

17 Two things to highlight just for present purposes.
 18 In respect of self-sufficiency, the situation is
 19 a complex one. The CTI have again produced a helpful
 20 analysis which goes through the issue in detail, and
 21 this is INQY0000333, and we have made submissions in
 22 this in detail at our section 6.

23 At this stage we wish simply to say that
 24 a centralised service had significant benefits over
 25 a diffuse one, and that a centralised service would have

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1 components, including specific components such as the
 2 immunoglobulins and rarer blood groups, sufficiency of
 3 supply would be compromised. Such a failure of supply
 4 would itself be a significant safety risk.

5 The question of supply in each RTC, over the decades
 6 focused on by this Inquiry, is a complex one. Shortages
 7 occurred and the risk of shortages was an ever-present
 8 consideration. Indeed, where the introduction or not of
 9 a new policy potentially impacted sufficiency of supply,
 10 then that consideration was a risk which had to be
 11 understood and accounted for in any analysis of whether
 12 to introduce the policy.

13 Furthermore, the extent of the risk of a novel
 14 policy to the donation numbers was by its nature
 15 unknown. In those circumstances, the question then
 16 arose as to whether a cautious approach to quantifying
 17 that risk should have been taken before factoring in the
 18 risk to supply into the overall decision to adopt the
 19 new policy. Might have militated against that.

20 We deal with much of the matter of donors in
 21 section 3 of our written submissions and section 5,
 22 that's "The Blood Service and its role" and "Running the
 23 Blood Service". However, to assist specifically on the
 24 issue of donors and donor shortages, it's worthwhile
 25 looking at two specific topics: blood shortages and

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1 donor goodwill, and the reluctance or potential
2 reluctance of donors to donate.
3 First, on blood shortages. A number of witnesses in
4 the blood services spoke of shortages of blood. To take
5 one example, in late 1984, in her oral evidence
6 Professor Contreras spoke to blood shortages being quite
7 common when she took up her role as director in
8 North London. That's INQY1000165, at 71/19. She spoke
9 of importing O groups from Oxford, with whom they had
10 a contract. Correspondence from Dr Cash also indicates
11 Scotland was providing blood to North London at this
12 time and that numerous elective operations were being
13 postponed in London because of the chronic shortage of
14 blood. That's PRSE0002549.

15 Now, at this point I'm going to refer to the first
16 of seven documents. I'm only proposing -- with
17 Lawrence's -- and I'm very grateful to Lawrence for
18 this, his help -- to refer to seven documents during
19 these submissions. And the first one is a discussion
20 paper for the meeting in November 1984 of the Advisory
21 Committee on the NBTS. The reference is CBLA0001914.

22 Now, in this paper is a useful pen portrait of blood
23 use, donor sensitivities and approaches to managing
24 shortages and I'm just going to -- this the only
25 document I'm actually going to read out in full but I am

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1 complaint about the introduction of Blood Handling
2 Charges, and letters to provincial newspapers reflect
3 an equally critical reaction by donors. Some Directors
4 and RDOs have fielded criticism locally by appearances
5 on local radio etc.

6 "More recently there was adverse publicity connected
7 with the imposition of blood handling charges for
8 a hospice in South Western Region. A Dear Administrator
9 Letter ... was issued on 31st October, drawing health
10 authorities' attention to their discretionary powers to
11 make [Section 64] grants. It is hoped that the DA
12 letter will help diffuse this particular criticism."

13 Just to be clear, the perception on the part of the
14 donors who were critical of this appears to have been,
15 wrongly, that what these blood handling charges
16 represented was a desire on the part of the Blood
17 Services to make a profit out of the gift that had been
18 made by the donors. That is not what was happening. It
19 was more a question of accounting, as between services.
20 But it's understandable that that false impression could
21 have arisen in the circumstances.

22 "Other factors

23 "A decline in the number of industrial sessions,
24 because of the economic recession, has exacerbated the
25 situation; to a lesser extent so too has the adverse

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1 going to read this document out in full because it is
2 useful for this very purpose throughout.

3 So it's not for publication, "Advisory Committee on
4 the [NBTS] Service, Blood Shortages", that's the
5 heading:

6 "Background

7 "Reports have been reaching the Department over the
8 past few months, and from a variety of sources, that
9 regular blood donors are not attending sessions in the
10 usual numbers. In the London area in particular this
11 has resulted in shortages in blood supply, and on two
12 separate occasions recently the shortage of Group O has
13 reached critical levels. On the first occasion no other
14 Region was able to offer help and London RDOs had to
15 resort to publicity in the London 'Evening Standard' and
16 via Capital Radio etc; this publicity found its way into
17 other daily papers also. One London hospital cancelled
18 elective surgery as a result of the shortages.

19 "On the second occasion London Regions accepted
20 an offer from the Daily Express to run a front page
21 article, and Mr Dawson, RDO at Brentwood, appeared on
22 the 'Jimmy Young Show' on BBC Radio 2 to promote the
23 same message via that medium.

24 "Blood Handling Charges.

25 "The Department received a number of letters of

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1 publicity attracted by the recent Old Bailey
2 convictions. The ever present problem of holiday
3 absences of donors no doubt precipitated the recent
4 crisis in London.

5 "Consultation on publicity

6 "There has been some criticism of London RTCs for
7 having used national publicity to overcome local
8 shortages. Unless carefully orchestrated, this can
9 result in embarrassingly large numbers of donors turning
10 up at sessions and having to be turned away. This too
11 reached the Press and produced adverse comment.

12 "Such locally initiated publicity can also reduce
13 the effectiveness of organised campaigns produced by the
14 Publicity Subcommittee and could leave few practical
15 options in the event of a national shortage of major
16 proportions. Accordingly the matter will be discussed
17 by the Subcommittee on the 7 November, and an oral
18 report will be made to the Advisory Committee members at
19 the meeting. The Subcommittee will consider the need
20 for an enlarged publicity campaign.

21 "Members may have to consider what further steps
22 might be taken to improve donor attendance."

23 So that minute shows the delicate balancing act that
24 has to be made between too much publicity about
25 shortages, which can result in unbalanced provision, but

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the main point being identified is that there were shortages and that they had to be managed and prevented.

In the meeting itself, a 20 per cent uptick in demand was also attributed to cardiac surgery, and it was noted that media publicity required to restore London supplies had caused problems in the provinces. That's the same point again.

Secondly, on donor goodwill and the reluctance of donors to donate. This is relevant generally but also important as part of the understanding of the impact of non-specific testing. Donor perception of donation was an important feature of ensuring sufficiency. The example of 1984 is pertinent, as blood handling fees had an impact on donor attendance. In essence, donor perception of the meaning of blood handling fees undermined the goodwill of donors to donate.

Aside from blood handling fees, another example of donor perception was the persistent belief that donation could lead to infection with HIV. A study from Newcastle of 1991 of college, university and polytechnic students at three higher education institutions provides an example of this. In 1991, 20.9 per cent perceived a risk of acquiring HIV on giving a blood donation. The report concluded that these findings call for a new educational initiative to help safeguard the efficient

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donors due to a drop in goodwill is different in nature to one due to merely an increase in demand. When demand increases, this does nothing to dissuade donors from responding to calls for additional donations. Indeed, if anything, as we learnt last year it has the opposite effect.

When a drop in goodwill is the cause of the shortage, that is also a factor which dissuades donors from responding to calls for additional donations. If the drop in goodwill is large enough, say because donors are concerned about the unsubstantiated threat of being infected with HIV from a donation or indeed a false positive test for such a TTI on a donation, there is a real risk to there being sufficiency of supply -- there being a sufficiency of supply. Indeed, we submit the relationship between donor goodwill and specificity of testing is an important aspect of a decision to introduce a test.

To bring together these ideas in 1984/1985, it's useful finally to consider the answer to some Parliamentary Questions from 16 April 1985. This takes me to my second document, which is CBLA0000042. If we go through, please, to page 7 of that document, and this is questions in the House. At -- left-hand column under "Blood Donors (AIDS)", so --

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gathering and use of blood. That's NHSBT0015573.

Donor goodwill was and is built on donors' understanding, correct or mistaken, of the safety, ethics and probity of the donation process. Professor Tedder commented on this in his oral evidence on 14 October 2022 at 59/25 -- that's the reference in the transcript -- in the context of HCV testing, and the reference is INQY1000256:

"Well, everything is a balance of risk and benefit, and I don't in any way step back from the sadness that people may have been infected with HCV during that time. The introduction of a screening test, when you're uncertain of its specificity and its sensitivity, could do more harm. It could reduce -- it could reduce the availability of blood because of donors being unprepared -- not prepared, to subject themselves to this. I can understand why there might have been concern in the transfusion services not to risk introducing something which could do more harm through rendering blood unavailable for use, rather than making people safer in the sense of removing people out of the donor panel that you don't want."

We comment on this from paragraph 5.20 in our written submissions.

It's important to recognise that a shortage of

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SIR BRIAN LANGSTAFF: It's 00003, _00003. _057_00003, third page.

MR CORY-WRIGHT: I've got a different reference.

SIR BRIAN LANGSTAFF: It's not on the screen at the moment, what you're looking for.

MR CORY-WRIGHT: Yes.

SIR BRIAN LANGSTAFF: I think you're looking, are you, for a --

MR CORY-WRIGHT: I see --

SIR BRIAN LANGSTAFF: -- question by Sir --

MR CORY-WRIGHT: -- what's happened and the bit immediately above has been extracted. I'm very grateful.

"Mr Dubs asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what has been the change in the number of blood donors since the recent publicity about [AIDS]."

John Patten responds:

"Figures for recent months on the number of donations are not yet available. However, inquiries suggest that there has been some reduction in donations in the past few months. It is not possible to distinguish how much of this is due to publicity on AIDS and how much to other factors such as the bad weather experienced earlier this year.

"Our revised leaflet for blood donors concerning AIDS was of course deliberately designed to cause those

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1 in the high risk groups to refrain from donation.
 2 I should like to take this opportunity to reassure all
 3 members of the public there is absolutely no risk of
 4 contracting AIDS through donating blood.

5 "Mr Dubs: Does the Minister agree that there is an
 6 acute shortage of blood for the transfusion services and
 7 that at least some of the shortage is caused by people's
 8 reluctance to go to blood transfusion centres for fear
 9 of being refused the chance to donate blood because of
 10 AIDS? Does the [honourable] Gentleman agree that he
 11 should take further action to encourage more people to
 12 give blood?

13 "Mr Patten: Preliminary figures show a drop in
 14 donations of 5 or 6 per cent in the first three months
 15 of this year. People should not be inhibited from
 16 donating blood, because there is no risk of contracting
 17 AIDS. All the equipment is sterile and it is all
 18 disposed of immediately after use; it is used once. We
 19 are spending £250,000 in the current financial year to
 20 encourage people to be blood donors.

21 "Mr Key: Does my [honourable] Friend agree that
 22 those of us who are blood donors have the responsibility
 23 to give a lead? Can he assure us that the HTLV 3 test,
 24 which is promised for July, is still on target, because
 25 that will give great hope to the regional blood

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1 turn.
 2 Many of the Core Participants have made submissions
 3 on the introduction of testing. We have written on this
 4 in detail in our submissions and we don't think it would
 5 be sensible to restate the detail of those submissions
 6 orally as well. However, we did think it would be
 7 useful to draw together some of the common threads as to
 8 what goes into a decision, whether in introduce a test
 9 or not. This is not with the intention of making
 10 submissions about whether steps taken historically were
 11 right or wrong. It is more fundamentally because it
 12 might be of assistance to restate how the Blood Service
 13 makes a testing decision, and also to provide
 14 an overview of this topic to those who may not have had
 15 an opportunity to review our closing in detail.

16 The decision to introduce the test has many factors,
 17 often in competition, and often uncertain.
 18 Fundamentally, however, the decision is one of ensuring
 19 that it produces a safe outcome for all recipients now
 20 and in the future. As a starting point, the transfusion
 21 of blood components is not, and is unlikely ever to be,
 22 risk free. Thus, of all the factors in the analysis,
 23 the safety of the individual recipient from a risk is of
 24 the most weight. NHSBT has had a longstanding
 25 responsibility, as we've said throughout, for the safety

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1 transfusion service authorities.

2 "Mr Patten: Yes, we hope to have a screening test
 3 within a few weeks."

4 That's all I wanted to take you to.

5 Shortages and their relevance to decision making
 6 continued in the 1990s. In 1998 and 2001 the Advisory
 7 Committee on the Microbiological Safety of Blood and
 8 Tissue for Transplantation noticed in the context of
 9 managing vCJD that proposed deferral of all those who
 10 had been transfused in the past would remove in the
 11 region of 15 per cent of donors. The 1998 paper said 15
 12 to 17 per cent would be impacted, the 2001 paper said up
 13 to 14.5 per cent of donors. The reference there is
 14 NHSBT0008129.

15 Shortages also remain a concern today. In our
 16 written submissions at paragraph 5.42 we address the
 17 amber alert declared between 12 October and 8 November.
 18 Attached to Dr Mifflin's statement are the current policy
 19 on red cell shortages and platelet shortages.

20 This is absolutely not to disregard or take weight
 21 away from the duty that the Blood Service has always
 22 owed to recipients. However, we add this to generally
 23 explained approaches to decision making in the Blood
 24 Service and because it's specifically relevant to the
 25 issue of the introduction of testing, to which we now

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1 and supply of blood, organs, stem cells and tissues.
 2 These responsibilities all relate back to the service's
 3 operational function and the need to maintain the
 4 reliability of the blood supply.

5 To do that, when introducing a test, the Blood
 6 Service must ensure that the supply is reliable
 7 through: safety in quality, that is it's free from TTIs;
 8 and safety in quantity, that is that there must be
 9 a sufficient supply; and that the recipient and donor
 10 impacts must be balanced.

11 Therefore, there is a multiple stage process which,
 12 is to be considered, prior to the introduction of
 13 a test. These include the following stages:

14 Step 1: determination of whether the virus or
 15 disease warrants a test. This decision might be whether
 16 to introduce generally or for specific diseases -- I'm
 17 so sorry -- or for specific classes of recipient. There
 18 are diseases, the Inquiry has heard, whose effect is so
 19 mild that it may not be necessary to test for them.

20 Step 2: whether a test exists.

21 Step 3: whether a test is sufficiently reliable for
 22 use. Crucial here is the issue of sensitivity and
 23 specificity, which I'll turn to in just a moment.

24 Step 4: whether a step can be scaled for high
 25 throughput, in other words, in respect of vCJD, brain

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1 biopsy as a test was not viable for this reason.
 2 Step 5: whether there is a confirmatory test.
 3 Focusing on step 3, that's whether a test is
 4 sufficiently reliable for use, and sensitivity and
 5 specificity. The sensitivity of a test is the extent to
 6 which a test correctly identifies those with a disease.
 7 This is also known as the true positive rate. The
 8 specificity of a test is the extent to which the test
 9 correctly identifies those without a disease. This is
 10 known as the true negative rate. The sensitivity of
 11 a test operates as a function of the population of
 12 individuals truly positive for a disease. In other
 13 words, you compare it with the numbers of the population
 14 who are truly positive. So for a test that is
 15 80 per cent sensitive, 10 per cent of the true positives
 16 will receive false negatives.
 17 The specificity of a test operates as a function of
 18 the entire population tested. So, for a test that is
 19 90 per cent specific, 10 per cent of the entire
 20 population tested will receive false positives.
 21 The proportion of false negatives or positives to
 22 true negatives or positives for a given test will depend
 23 on the underlying incidence of a disease in the
 24 population. And this is a crucial point which we do
 25 want to stress. The performance of a test in
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1 incorrect is higher.
 2 That is the key point, because false positives are
 3 a proportion of the overall population. Thus the number
 4 of incorrect results is, as a starting point, much
 5 higher. In contrast, false negatives are a proportion
 6 of the infected population and thus, as a starting
 7 point, much lower. However, for completeness, it's
 8 worth recognising that, generally, as the prevalence of
 9 a disease in a population increases, the likelihood that
 10 a negative result on a screening test is incorrect
 11 increases.
 12 In this way the underlying incidence of a disease is
 13 key to understanding the effectiveness of a test.
 14 Indeed, omitting to consider prevalence in the general
 15 population is often called the base rate fallacy. This
 16 is because a consideration without the prevalence in the
 17 general population fails to consider the positive and
 18 negative predictive values of a test. This is a key
 19 reason why a decision concerning the introduction of
 20 a test may vary between countries. Variance in base
 21 rate can significantly change the positive and negative
 22 predictive value of a test.
 23 So, looking at specific situations, the explanation,
 24 is, we think, important in understanding one aspect of
 25 a decision to introduce a test. It also reflects why
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1 a particular population is shown by the positive and
 2 negative predictive value of the test. This is
 3 a technically difficult area, and we go into it in
 4 slightly more detail -- much more detail, actually -- in
 5 our written submissions, and we didn't think it was
 6 sensible to try to go through it all in detail now,
 7 because it's there already and in writing and people can
 8 read it slowly and I won't mess it up, with any luck.
 9 But in that section, paragraph 4.82 to 4.87, in that
 10 section we have addressed the idea of the positive
 11 predictive value -- that is the percentage chance that
 12 a positive test result correctly identifies an infected
 13 person -- and the negative predicted value, that is the
 14 percentage chance that a negative test result correctly
 15 identifies an uninfected person.
 16 We commend that section to you, sir, because it's
 17 key to understanding the effectiveness of a screening
 18 test from our point of view. The key point, however, is
 19 this: generally, as the prevalence of a disease in
 20 a population increases, the likelihood that a positive
 21 result on a screening test is correct likewise
 22 increases. This means that the proportion of true
 23 positives increases when compared with false positives.
 24 Thus, for populations with low prevalence of a disease,
 25 the likelihood that a positive result on a test is
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1 it's important to assess a test generally. That is, to
 2 identify its sensitivity and specificity and any steps
 3 that can be taken to improve these by changing cut-off
 4 points on an assay, and, in the specific population, to
 5 ensure positive and negative predictive values are
 6 satisfactory, and to ensure that the test works in the
 7 field with low human error.
 8 In our submission, these considerations are relevant
 9 to all of the decisions on testing that you, sir, have
 10 to consider over the decades.
 11 Further, we would note the following: the paper on
 12 the assessment of the HIV test by PHLS is available at
 13 DHSC0000486, and the assessment by the blood services is
 14 at DHSC0001607.
 15 For HCV screening the timeline is more confused but
 16 assessment of both first and second generation tests did
 17 occur. Examples of such assessments are available at
 18 NHBS5073 and 0000 -- sorry, NHBT000044, although there
 19 are others on HCV tests. We would invite you,
 20 Sir Brian, to consider these in detail as we say they
 21 provide important analysis of whether tests generally
 22 and some specific models of tests produced by companies
 23 were appropriate to be introduced.
 24 Overall decisions. And sir, I'm coming to the end
 25 of this section, and I will then be moving on to dealing
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1 with the present, and that will, I hope, be after
 2 another minute or so. That will be a suitable moment
 3 for a break with your approval.
 4 **SIR BRIAN LANGSTAFF:** Yes.
 5 **MR CORY-WRIGHT:** Overall decisions. Sensitivity and
 6 specificity are important parts of a decision to
 7 introduce a test. They're key to ensuring the safety of
 8 the recipient. They're also key to ensuring the
 9 goodwill of donors, including their mental wellbeing.
 10 However, they were not the only factors that go to the
 11 decision whether to introduce a test. These are factors
 12 we address at sections 4 and 5 of our written
 13 submissions. But the establishment document for the NBA
 14 gives a good précis of some of the considerations
 15 involved derived from its statutory aims:
 16 Maintaining and promoting blood and blood products
 17 supply, based on the outstanding system of voluntary
 18 unpaid donors; cost effective strategy of ensuring
 19 an adequate supply of blood and blood products to meet
 20 national needs; high standards of safety and quality in
 21 the blood supply are maintained throughout the Blood
 22 Service; blood products meet a consistent standard of
 23 safety and quality; cost-efficient operations at the
 24 transfusion centres and the Bio Products Laboratory,
 25 both individually and together as parts of the national

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1 So, having dealt with those few but important
 2 historical points, I now move to the present position:
 3 how things have changed and how things -- they are now.

4 It's particularly important to do this for perhaps
 5 obvious reasons, so that everyone is aware of the
 6 current position before we go on to consider what
 7 recommendations you, sir, might wish to make and what
 8 suggestions and submissions we make about them.

9 The NBA was established in 1993, when the Regional
 10 Transfusion Centres all came under its control in 1994.
 11 From that point, to today, the Blood Service in England
 12 has been a combined and centralised service.

13 I leave to one side just for a moment the question
 14 of the relationship with Wales, which is somewhat
 15 complex in terms of the history and how responsibilities
 16 have been allocated as between them.

17 But today, as NHSBT, it also has UK-wide control of
 18 transplant.

19 Many witnesses have provided evidence on aspects of
 20 all this. Most notably for the Blood Services, live
 21 evidence was given by: Professor Neuberger, on the
 22 Advisory Committee on the Safety of Blood, Tissues and
 23 Organs, that's SaBTO for short; Professor Mark Bellamy
 24 on the Serious Hazards of Transfusion, that's SHOT for
 25 short, and the haemovigilance scheme; and Professor

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1 service.

2 These principles flow through the statutory
 3 underpinnings of NHSBT today. They are also factors
 4 which ministers, both historically and still today, take
 5 into account in making their decisions.

6 While we provide this to assist the Inquiry, Core
 7 Participants and the infected and affected in
 8 understanding testing decisions made by the Blood
 9 Service, we do wish to make clear the following: we do
 10 not row back from our position that the Blood Service
 11 should have introduced HCV testing earlier than it did
 12 and that the criticisms advanced toward Dr Lloyd at the
 13 time were incorrect. We apologise unreservedly for
 14 that.

15 That concludes the first half of my submissions,
 16 sir, and I have now to come onto the present position
 17 and recommendations, and I hope that's a convenient
 18 moment to pause.

19 **SIR BRIAN LANGSTAFF:** Yes. Well, we'll take a break until
 20 11.50. 11.50.

21 (11.19 am)

(A short break)

22 (11.50 am)

23 **SIR BRIAN LANGSTAFF:** Yes.

24 **MR CORY-WRIGHT:** Thank you, sir.

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1 Derek Manas on transplant practice.

2 Critically, someone who gave extensive evidence on
 3 the current position but wasn't called to give oral
 4 evidence, so some may be unaware of her evidence, is
 5 Dr Gail Mifflin, medical director of NHSBT, and Dr Mifflin
 6 is here in this room today.

7 Given the importance of some of her evidence and its
 8 relevance to the present position, and therefore also to
 9 possible recommendations, as I've said, we think it is
 10 important to summarise some of it very briefly now. And
 11 obviously, if anyone wants to look more closely at these
 12 questions, they're all there in the written submissions.
 13 They're also all there in her witness statement.

14 The topics which I would like to look at now are --
 15 there are four of them: decision making and the
 16 risk-based decision making framework; haemovigilance,
 17 horizon scanning; and recipient-directed focus.

18 Now, first of all, decision making and the
 19 risk-based decision making framework. I begin with how
 20 decision making within the Blood Service has changed to
 21 the way it is today. It is addressed in Dr Mifflin's
 22 statement and in our suggestions for recommendations.
 23 We draw attention to the Alliance of Blood Operators' --
 24 that's ABO for short -- risk-based decision making
 25 framework.

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1 The ABO is a network of over 90 blood operators from
2 North America, Europe and Australia. It aims to be
3 a high performing international collaboration of blood
4 operators which drives local performance improvement,
5 knowledge exchange, and resolution of global strategic
6 issues for the benefit of patients and health systems
7 served by its members. The membership includes the
8 American Red Cross, the Australian Red Cross, Lifeblood,
9 the Canadian Blood Services, and NHSBT.

10 A useful explanation of this framework for blood
11 safety is given in a minute to the NHSBT board attached
12 to Dr Mifflin's statement. This document was produced by
13 Dr Williamson, from whom the Inquiry heard, recommending
14 the framework to the board.

15 This is at document WITN0672100, and it's the next
16 document I'm asking Lawrence kindly to put up on the
17 screen. It's only five pages and I'm going to be
18 looking at only -- well, actually, only four of them.
19 Four of them, but only very briefly.

20 This is a minute for a board meeting in 2015,
21 November 26, 2015, prepared by Dr Williamson, and it's
22 headed "A risk-based decision making framework for blood
23 safety". And I'm going to read out the first paragraph
24 because it summarises it -- it does what it says on the
25 tin, a summary:

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1 countries, and blood services reorganised to provide
2 more central decision making and stronger links to
3 government.

4 "In the 1990s/early 2000s, much more sensitive tests
5 became available for blood screening, along with
6 techniques for inactivation of viruses and bacteria in
7 plasma and platelets. These advances led to a belief
8 that blood could one day become a 'zero risk' product,
9 and led to adoption of safety steps with very low
10 cost-effectiveness compared to other parts of
11 healthcare.

12 "5.3. In 2010, the Canadian Blood Services (CBS)
13 held an international Consensus Conference on Risk-Based
14 Decision Making ..."

15 And that's the start date for the development of
16 this framework.

17 If we go down to 5.6, describing the framework,
18 which as you'll see at 5.5 is actually 80 pages long:

19 "The objective of such a framework is to provide
20 Blood Services with a structured, rigorous process by
21 which decisions affecting blood safety can be taken.
22 This is considered to be important in achieving
23 transparency, consistency between decisions, involvement
24 of stakeholders, and evidence for regulators, government
25 and, if appropriate, suppliers. Although different

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1 "The ... (ABO) has developed a new framework for
2 decision making on blood safety issues, which was
3 approved by the ABO Chief Executives in spring 2015.
4 A web-based tool to enable use of the framework is now
5 available. This contains all the elements within our
6 current safety framework, being suitable for both
7 implementation and removal of safety steps. It places
8 more emphasis on stakeholder engagement and links better
9 with overall risk assessment processes, and therefore
10 offices improvements to the current framework.

11 "If approved, its first 'live' use will be in the
12 platelet bacterial screening/pathogen inactivation
13 project. Once we have experience with its use for blood
14 safety decision, we will also wish to assess its
15 suitability for decision taking on organ safety.

16 "JPAC will also consider this framework for
17 suitability, as well as SaBTO, which plans to review the
18 current framework in 2016."

19 If we then go down the page to "Background" please,
20 5.1:

21 "Blood transfusions in the 1980s and 1990 resulted
22 in many transmissions of HIV and hepatitis C. These had
23 profound impacts, not only on affected patients, but on
24 public and government confidence in blood services
25 internationally. Public inquiries were held in several

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1 jurisdictions may reach different decisions on the same
2 issue, a consistent framework across countries will add
3 weight to its validity.

4 "The framework is designed to operate in situations
5 of incomplete evidence, and a 'small-scale' assessment
6 process is included for low impact decisions."

7 Then the "Proposal for its use by NHSBT" is
8 section 6. If we go over the page to 6.4, please,
9 Lawrence, page 3, "Risk management principles". That's
10 the focus I want to try to achieve for now:

11 "Our corporate risk management processes do not
12 currently define underlying principles. However, the
13 suggested principles of beneficence, fairness,
14 transparency, consultation, practicality,
15 proportionality, vigilance and continuous improvement
16 underpin much of our activities already, and are
17 expressed in various strategies and assurance documents.

18 "6.5 Risk communication and stakeholder
19 participation. We have a strong programme of
20 stakeholder engagement and good processes for
21 consultation on service reconfigurations. It is
22 recommended that each project involving a safety
23 decision produces at its outset a plan for stakeholder
24 engagement. This is lacking in the current safety
25 framework.

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1 "Assessment principles. The proposed principles
2 underpinning safety assessments are sensible:
3 assessments should be proportional to the risk, timely,
4 based on as good quality of evidence as possible,
5 document any uncertainties, be transparent and
6 appropriately confidential. Care should be taken to
7 integrate assessments with other safety decisions with
8 which there are cross-impacts.
9 "Risk tolerability. This is defined in our risk
10 management processes using the standard 5 x 5 matrix of
11 probability versus impact."
12 Then over the page at 4:
13 "Points for consideration.
14 "It should be noted that the framework is not
15 a 'black box' which automatically generates a clear
16 answer from a series of inputs. Blood safety
17 decision-making will continue to require considerable
18 internal and external discussion, involving judgement in
19 terms of proportionality.
20 "It is recognised that major
21 recommendations/decisions on blood safety are taken by
22 SaBTO/health ministers, and I have presented this
23 framework to members of the DH Blood Policy Team and the
24 Health Protection Analytical Team. The SaBTO framework
25 is due for renewal in 2016."

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1 UK, also from the documents, from the Council of Europe
2 and the SHOT steering group. We can map how the
3 haemovigilance was also developing across Europe in the
4 1990s in response to the events focused on by this
5 Inquiry.

6 Certainly, in our submission, a big positive step
7 towards establishing SHOT was, as we say, the
8 establishing of the NBA. Similarly, the mandatory
9 haemovigilance scheme in France arose around the time
10 that its new national agency was established.
11 Certainly, sir, you'll be able to look at how the idea
12 of haemovigilance developed in the early 1990s and
13 became a number of the schemes that we can see around
14 the world today. In these circumstances, whether
15 a defined haemovigilance scheme was a realistic prospect
16 prior to the early 1990s and should have been advanced
17 by the Blood Service in the UK, as some have suggested,
18 is, we would submit, doubtful.

19 Considering SHOT itself, the first steering group
20 was held on 21 December 1994. SHOT was launched in
21 November 1996, with the first report being for the
22 1996-1997 year. Both Professor Bellamy and Dr Mifflin
23 commented on the SHOT scheme in their written
24 statements, with Professor Bellamy also giving oral
25 evidence to the Inquiry about it. A key function of the

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1 Now, I'm going to leave that document there but I am
2 going to come back to a couple of pages within the
3 framework itself when we deal with recommendations,
4 because it's important to see the extent to which what
5 we in the Inquiry, all of us, have been aware of as the
6 precautionary principle -- which can mean a number of
7 different things to different people, but leave that
8 aside for a moment -- is itself enshrined within this
9 risk management policy.

10 So what that framework does is to make systematic
11 the identification of relevant risks and the exclusion
12 of irrelevant risks; provides for an approach to
13 engagement and identification of stakeholders; provides
14 a toolkit of principles to be applied, including the
15 precautionary principle to which we'll come, as I say.
16 It's not a black box from which decisions emanate,
17 rather it is, as it says on the tin, an internationally
18 recognised structure for decision making.

19 The full framework, if anyone wants to look at it,
20 is on RLIT0001989.

21 The second topic is haemovigilance. Haemovigilance
22 is, of course, a topic referred to in evidence,
23 recommendations are also made by many of the Core
24 Participants on this in their submissions. The Inquiry
25 has documents on the history of haemovigilance in the

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1 SHOT scheme is to record the wide range of transfusion
2 hazards which present, including newly identified TTIs.

3 It might assist briefly to go to the most recent
4 2021 report, which is at SHOT0000032. The first --
5 again, there's the tin, and that's what it is. It's the
6 "Annual SHOT Report" for 2021. If we go to the next
7 page, please, Lawrence.

8 Now, this -- I'm sorry -- and I say the next page,
9 it's the next page in my file but of course it's page 9
10 of this document, because I've only got the ones I'm
11 referring to. My apologies.

12 So this is a page that was referred to by Professor
13 Bellamy, one of the questions that has been raised by
14 Core Participants in their submissions was the extent to
15 which there was cross-reporting between haemovigilance
16 schemes, et cetera, and this is a helpful diagram
17 showing the reporting relationship between SHOT and the
18 MHRA. There is a combined reporting scheme.

19 If we then go forward to page 15, please, Lawrence.

20 Now, it's the first paragraph on this page that
21 I wanted to draw attention to. This is "Key SHOT
22 messages":

23 "Transfusion in the UK continues to be safe and SHOT
24 data for the last 10 years show the risk of death from
25 transfusion as 0.92 per 100,000 components issued. This

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1 includes all deaths reported with imputabilities ranging
 2 from possible, probable or confirmed."
 3 What that shows, therefore, if my mathematics is
 4 correct, and I hope it is, is that the risk of death in
 5 relation to all transfusion risks over the course of
 6 that 10-year period is 0.00092 per cent.
 7 One then goes, Lawrence, please, to page 21. Thank
 8 you.
 9 Now, because these charts are in black and white,
 10 not colour, it's slightly less easy to navigate one's
 11 way around them but I'm going to give it a go.
 12 These show the summary data for the top -- the top
 13 chart is for the last year. The lower chart is for the
 14 period since SHOT commenced. So it's a cumulative
 15 chart. And it shows a whole series of different things,
 16 near misses, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera.
 17 The particular thing I wanted to draw attention to,
 18 for reassurance really, is the extent of TTIs
 19 (transfusion-transmitted infections) which appears --
 20 it's the third last on the top chart and it's nought.
 21 So in the last year there have been no reported examples
 22 of TTIs. That's not just deaths, that's no reported
 23 examples of TTIs there.
 24 And the second chart, the equivalent is the third
 25 one down, this is reports since SHOT started, so in
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1 a bigger risk but it's still of a low incidence in the
 2 year leading up to the report in 2021.
 3 **MR CORY-WRIGHT:** Yes.
 4 **SIR BRIAN LANGSTAFF:** Thank you.
 5 **MR CORY-WRIGHT:** Thank you. I shouldn't have said anything
 6 about my mathematics earlier on. But anyway apologies
 7 for that.
 8 What this report demonstrates is the combined
 9 approach to reporting between SHOT and SABRE, which is
 10 the Serious Adverse Blood Reactions and Events body
 11 that's referred to on page 9, and we've looked at the
 12 data for '21 and cumulative.
 13 It's important, we respectfully suggest, sir, that
 14 these data are borne in mind when you consider the
 15 extent to which recommendations may be necessary that
 16 might change the way this operates. But I'll come back
 17 to that in a moment.
 18 There's much evidence in Dr Miflin's statement.
 19 NHSBT has processes broader than SHOT reporting alone
 20 and we draw your attention to the management process
 21 description for serious incident management, among other
 22 documents, at WITN0672074.
 23 That paper also provides important information about
 24 NHSBT's approach to the duty of candour, which is
 25 a crucial aspect to any response to a serious incident.
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1 1994, '95, '96, and we see the third one down,
 2 "TTI: Transfusion-transmitted infection", and the
 3 figure -- I haven't got my ruler out, but my guess is
 4 that that looks like around somewhere between 100 and
 5 150 in the whole of that period.
 6 That is cumulative data for SHOT categories --
 7 sorry -- I think I gave the wrong date just a moment
 8 ago, 1996 to 2021. So that's a 5-year period there.
 9 We would also note --
 10 **SIR BRIAN LANGSTAFF:** Sorry, what's a 5-year period?
 11 **MR CORY-WRIGHT:** I'm so sorry. I knew I shouldn't go off my
 12 track. It's not a five-year period; it's a 20 --
 13 **SIR BRIAN LANGSTAFF:** Five?
 14 **MR CORY-WRIGHT:** Yes, thank you. 26-year period, I think,
 15 1996 to 2021, 25 years. Absolutely right.
 16 **SIR BRIAN LANGSTAFF:** If we just go back to the previous
 17 page that you had up, I was puzzling to myself why the
 18 last three items on the list were ordered as they are,
 19 why it is that TTIs are first, which might suggest they
 20 were regarded as a potentially greater risk. The answer
 21 might be perhaps on the next page, if you go back, that
 22 compared with PTP, post-transfusion purpura, it's
 23 a greater --
 24 **MR CORY-WRIGHT:** They had been greater in the past --
 25 **SIR BRIAN LANGSTAFF:** -- incidence. So potentially it's
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1 Now I turn to horizon scanning. Forward-looking
 2 scanning, identification of upcoming risks, is an
 3 important part of the Blood Service's roles. It's key
 4 in JPAC. You may have heard that acronym before. Just
 5 to be clear, what it's short for is Joint United Kingdom
 6 (UK) Blood Transfusion and Tissue Transplantation
 7 Services Professional Advisory Committee. So it's
 8 a useful acronym because it saves a lot of time.
 9 The key high policy documents provided in
 10 Dr Miflin's statement are the JPAC position statement,
 11 arrangements in place for monitoring threats to the UK
 12 blood supply from new emerging infectious agents --
 13 that's at WITN0672141 -- and the JPAC management process
 14 description on preparedness for emerging infectious
 15 agents. That's at WITN0672070.
 16 The approach is a joined-up one which takes
 17 information monthly from the NHSBT, PHE (Public Health
 18 England) epidemiology unit emerging infectious agents
 19 report and other sources from the EU rapid alert system.
 20 There is then an assessment of emerging risks
 21 undertaken by the Joint UK Blood Transfusion Service --
 22 JPAC, and its Standing Advisory Committee on Transfusion
 23 Transmitted Infection (SACTTI).
 24 Once a recommendation is agreed through JPAC, these
 25 issues are taken through to the individual blood
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1 services.
2 In respect of horizon scanning, you may also be
3 assisted by a further document attached to Dr Mifflin's
4 statement. In August 2021 the Government Internal Audit
5 Agency produced a report on NHSBT, on blood safety and
6 detecting emerging infections. That report makes
7 a recommendation in respect of the current approach of
8 the Blood Service concerning formal processes to review
9 the effectiveness and efficiency of the horizon scanning
10 process. However, the overall conclusion reached by the
11 report was that there was a finding that substantial
12 assurance that the framework of governance, risk
13 management and control in respect of detecting emerging
14 infections is adequate and effective.

15 This document is provided, reference WITN0672071.

16 Finally, the question of recipient focus. That is,
17 focus by NHSBT on recipients as opposed simply to
18 donors.

19 We've already addressed above the point that
20 recipient involvement is a key part of the decision
21 making by the Blood Service. The ABO framework provides
22 for such key stakeholder involvement in decision making,
23 which is something that was recently undertaken in
24 NHSBT's work on the FAIR initiative: for the
25 individualised assessment of risk initiative concerning

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1 public; 5) proactively seeking and considering safety
2 measures relevant to NHSBT."

3 And the "Remit of TPSG":

4 "The remit of the Group is limited to products
5 manufactured by NHSBT (blood components, stem cells and
6 tissues). It includes the safety of the donor only
7 where this could impact upon patient safety; donor
8 safety is a specific responsibility of the CARE groups
9 and the clinical governance arrangements in blood,
10 tissue and stem cell donation.

11 So the point about that is that this group is
12 specifically focused on patient safety, and is not
13 concerned with donor safety except to the extent that
14 donor safety itself is something that impacts upon
15 patient safety.

16 And the group reports to CARE. As we see from the
17 bottom of the page:

18 "Accountability

19 "The group is accountable to the NHSBT CARE
20 committee ...

21 "The group will meet two monthly in advance of the
22 NHSBT CARE committee."

23 If you go over the page, you see the membership,
24 medical and research director, that's Dr Mifflin.

25 These terms of reference are important and, we say,

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1 a more individualised approach to donor selection and
2 you may recall the FAIR initiative was touched upon
3 a little by Ms Maharaj in her closing statement on
4 Friday.

5 However, recipients also have an important place in
6 some of the structural aspects of the Blood Service.
7 Particularly pertinent is the NHSBT Therapeutic Product
8 Safety Group, one of a large number of groups which
9 reports to NHSBT CARE Committee, upon which I'll comment
10 in a moment.

11 The role of the NHSBT Therapeutic Product Safety
12 Group is important because of its key position on
13 patient safety, and it's useful to consider the first
14 page of the terms of reference in full, and that's at
15 WITN0672102.

16 Here we have the terms of reference for NHSBT
17 Therapeutic Product Safety Group:

18 "Aims of the TPSG

19 "To ensure that NHSBT is coherently engaged in the
20 developing safety agenda within and beyond NHSBT;
21 including 1) shaping the safety agendas of external
22 bodies (eg SaBTO and JPAC); 2) responding to emerging
23 threats to safety; 3) providing advice to CARE and
24 external stakeholders on safety matters;
25 4) communicating safety matters to stakeholders and the

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1 speak for themselves but they do however prompt a point
2 worth repeating. Products manufactured by NHSBT here is
3 directed to blood components, stem cells and tissues.
4 As has been repeated many times during this Inquiry,
5 sir, the role of the Blood Service has been distinct in
6 respect of blood product, on the one hand, and blood
7 components, on the other. Indeed, with the advent of
8 recombinant products, this distinction is more acute as
9 many products are no longer derived from blood. This is
10 not expressed to excuse, but merely to flag once again
11 how this distinction can be relevant to recommendations,
12 for example, the fact that, broadly speaking, NHSBT is
13 self-sufficient in components.

14 The TPSG reports to NHSBT Clinical Audit Risk and
15 Effectiveness Committee -- that's CARE, we've dealt with
16 that -- and NHSBT recognise the setting out of the terms
17 of reference is not determinative of the conduct of
18 an institution. Some of that current conduct is
19 addressed through Dr Mifflin's statement, in those
20 sections addressing the current position. However, we
21 do say that these committees play an important role in
22 ensuring the safety of recipients and ensuring that
23 recipients are in the core of any decision making on
24 clinical audit, risk and effectiveness.

25 Now, sir, I turn to the question of your

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1 recommendations, what suggestions we make for those
2 recommendations and any comments we have on the
3 recommendations suggested by others.

4 Having considered some of the current work of NHSBT
5 and the bodies associated with it we now turn to
6 recommendations. But we begin by thanking all the Core
7 Participants for their recommendations in respect of --
8 insofar as they concern the Blood Service. These have
9 been read and considered by Dr Mifflin and others within
10 the service. This process provides a valuable
11 opportunity for the Blood Service to continue to improve
12 and meet its core aims.

13 As I say, I'm going to start by the recommendations
14 suggested by NHSBT itself. That was, of course, as part
15 of the process -- we started this in May or June last
16 year when we put in interim submissions on this and
17 those interim submissions were then swept up into our
18 written submissions that we provided back in December.

19 Now, some of these recommendations, which I'm going
20 to read out, I'm not going to add very much more to but
21 I think it's important publicly to state what it is that
22 we suggest the recommendations might be.

23 The first relates to risk-based decision making.
24 We've been talking about that just now in the context of
25 the ABO framework. The suggested recommendation is

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1 sections, and could we go Lawrence, please, to
2 RLIT0001989. Now, I've already said that this
3 document -- there's the front page -- is 80 pages long
4 and I'm only going to be referring to two of those pages
5 but, of course, anyone who wants to examine this
6 framework in more detail can do so by reference to the
7 reference I've just given.

8 So if we could possibly go first to page 44, please,
9 Lawrence, thank you, "Guiding Principles".

10 I don't want to read through all of these, but the
11 principles are -- I should say, this section, just to be
12 absolutely clear, is headed "Chapter 7, Health,
13 Economics and Outcomes Assessment", and the "Guiding
14 Principles" are in accordance with that heading. So
15 number 1:

16 "Health economic analysis is not static ...

17 "2. Societal perspective ..."

18 Over the page to 45:

19 "3.context ...

20 "4. Transparency and best practice ...

21 "5. Estimation ...

22 "6. Precaution ..."

23 This is what's said at this stage about precaution:

24 "While precaution remains a strong force in blood
25 safety, health economic analyses support concepts of

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1 this: that the approach to blood safety policy making in
2 the UK by those concerned with blood policy is based on
3 the risk-based decision making in accordance with
4 international best practice, that the appropriate
5 international practice is the risk-based decision making
6 framework developed by the ABO, that the levels of
7 appropriate risk tolerability and cost effectiveness
8 parameters are defined for transfusion safety policy
9 making by an expert body independent from the UK
10 Governments and UK Blood Services. That body should
11 advise the UK Governments which will make the ultimate
12 decision on risk tolerability.

13 This suggestion broadly reflects current practice in
14 the involvement of SaBTO as an independent advisory body
15 which applies the ABO framework referred to earlier and
16 gives advice to ministers who then make final decisions.

17 As we've already stated, the ABO framework is
18 an internationally recognised framework used across the
19 globe. The risk -- this framework includes many
20 principles which are relevant to decisions, one such
21 principle, which has been an important part of the
22 evidence in the Inquiry is the precautionary principle
23 and the proper approach to unknown or poorly defined
24 risk.

25 The ABO framework deals with this at two important

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1 proportionality and consideration of the impact of
2 actions to reduce risk and increase overall safety
3 because of the presence of a wide diversity of risks."

4 If we then go over to page 49, please -- I'm sorry,
5 perhaps we should go to 48 first, which I -- thank you.

6 So as part of step number 3, "Conduct the analysis",
7 remember this is a systematic slightly mechanistic
8 approach to ensure consistency across decision-makers.
9 This is conducting the analysis. So this is the heart
10 of the process and, over the page, under
11 "Considerations":

12 "Models are simplified representations of a broad
13 range of possible outcomes. The best model for a given
14 question should be only as complex as is necessary to
15 answer the question it was designed to address. Overly
16 complex models are difficult to work with and even more
17 difficult to find appropriate data for entering into the
18 model."

19 So that is advice about the way to undertake this
20 analysis. But the important bit is by the magnifying
21 glass or whatever it is, immediately below that in
22 italics:

23 "The use of these techniques can lead to insights
24 that may support precaution. In situations where
25 uncertainty is very high, it may be appropriate to adopt

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1 an intervention that favours precaution rather than
2 a proportional intervention."
3 Now, that is the precautionary principle in
4 practice. Where you are uncertain about some aspect of
5 a proposed decision or step that you might take, or
6 something of that sort, and that uncertainty carries
7 with it risks which you don't know the extent of, then
8 you should apply a precautionary approach to it as
9 opposed to what's referred to here as simply
10 a proportional intervention.

11 That is the precautionary principle in practice, and
12 that's embedded within this framework.

13 The position remains, as stated before, that the
14 framework is not a black box into which information is
15 put and an answer provided. Decisions in respect of
16 risk tolerability, cost effectiveness and the whole
17 range of other relevant considerations are all taken
18 into account.

19 Thus, on the setting of risk tolerability and what
20 represents the lowest practical level of risk, NHSBT's
21 submission is that an expert body with remit to advise
22 ministers is appropriate. That role is currently
23 fulfilled by SaBTO and thus NHSBT suggests any
24 recommendations maintain that body as the appropriate
25 body to advise ministers and blood services as

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1 advice would be specifically helpful in the context of
2 large national look-back, as opposed to a small specific
3 patient related look-back. In such cases, the
4 principles to govern the approach to look-back,
5 including issues such as when donors no longer attend
6 blood services, look-back beyond the donations where
7 samples are kept identifying the roles and
8 responsibilities of parties involved would be helpful.

9 As a starting point, the current policies on
10 look-back are provided for in Dr Mifflin's statement at
11 WITN0672126 and WITN0672132. As Professor Neuberger
12 also explained, the issue of look-back is something
13 which has been before SaBTO and is currently being
14 considered by a working party led by Dr Sue Brailsford,
15 who is also in the room today.

16 As with our last recommendation, concerning the ABO
17 framework, NHSBT is of the view that SaBTO is the
18 appropriate expert body with experience of this field to
19 be able to make meaningfully forward-looking
20 recommendations on future look-back.

21 It is important to recognise, particularly in
22 respect of new or emerging diseases, that look-back may
23 well take a different form dependent on the specific
24 characteristics of the disease. That's important in
25 recognising the role of the expert body to advise

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1 appropriate on these issues. The evidence of Professor
2 Neuberger is -- I'm sorry, he was Neuberger, in fact,
3 thank you -- is particularly important in understanding
4 how SaBTO is properly placed to undertake that role and
5 his evidence is commended to the Inquiry.

6 The framework is an important document. We are
7 aware that the Inquiry may feel it does not have all the
8 information it requires on it. For one reason or
9 another we're not entirely sure about, we're not certain
10 that the full framework document got onto the Inquiry
11 system in the way we thought it had when we submitted
12 Dr Mifflin's statement. There was a link that went with
13 it and the link may not have worked, we don't know. But
14 the point I'm making now is, quite simply, that NHSBT
15 would be happy to respond to further Rule 9 requests if
16 that seems appropriate in relation to this framework.

17 We also submit that for major recommendations,
18 SaBTO, which applies the framework and then provides
19 recommendation to ministers, may be helpful as well.

20 The second recommendation concerns future look-back.
21 An independent expert body advised the UK Governments on
22 whether a look-back exercise should be undertaken across
23 the UK in respect of a transfusion transmitted
24 infection. That an independent expert body advised on
25 the appropriate approach to look-back exercise, such

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1 prospectively, considering the importance of the context
2 of any new disease.

3 The third suggestion for recommendation is consent
4 to transfusion, and the recommendation that we suggest
5 is that patients receiving blood transfusions are
6 properly consented in compliance with NICE, SaBTO and
7 professional regulator guidelines.

8 As a starting point, NICE, SaBTO and professional
9 regulators each represent a different but important
10 source of guidelines on ensuring proper consenting as
11 part of the transfusion process. Professor Murphy noted
12 in his written evidence that there is no shortage of
13 guidance on this issue. The problem is with its
14 implementation. There is still much work to be done to
15 achieve proper implementation of guidelines.

16 The 2021 national comparative audit of NICE Quality
17 Standard, QS138, demonstrated that only 64 per cent of
18 transfused patients had evidence of receiving written or
19 verbal information about risks, benefits and
20 alternatives to transfusion.

21 Professor Murphy pointed to two tools which might
22 drive further improvements to implementation. First,
23 the Commissioning for Quality and Innovation -- that's
24 CQUIN -- patient framework which provide a financial
25 incentive to hospitals to provide a certain standard of

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care, and, second, an electronic alert system which provides a prompt when a prescription of blood is made to secure compliance. That's WITN7001001.

NHSBT is of the view that Professor Murphy's evidence is overall key in this area and commends it to the Inquiry. It's been recommended that NHSBT be given a role in ensuring consent for blood transfusion. By that, I mean it's been suggested as part of the suggested recommendations.

This may be freestanding or part of its obligation pursuant to NHSBT directions issued by the Secretary of State to promote the appropriate use of blood. In NHSBT's submission the appropriate use of blood is an important part of NHSBT's role in transfusion expertise. It's centred on giving blood only when necessary and only to the extent necessary. On the other hand, the issue of consenting is broader matter based on regulatory guidelines, including GMC, *Good medical practice*.

NHSBT's submission is that clinicians must ensure they undertake consenting in line with their regulatory and ethical obligations and as imposed by their own professional bodies, including those mechanisms identified by Professor Murphy to progress consenting.

It's those bodies which have the appropriate

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within a system that has an inbuilt monitoring framework. This must not absolve healthcare providers of a separate obligation to monitor the implementation of the recommendations.

Professor Bellamy gave evidence that tasking SHOT with making mandatory recommendations changes the dynamic of the organisation itself and it may impair its ability to come up with the right recommendations. "So I think there's a trade-off to be had", he said. Making recommendations professionally mandated strikes the right balance and it is in line with other guidance which is produced to improve NHS services. This also permits appropriate flexibility in that a healthcare provider can choose to depart from a recommendation with good reasons and an appropriate risk assessment.

The next five recommendations, that's at 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 -- I'm being really careful to get my maths right now -- are all based on a particular document, which I'd like to turn to now, this is a document called "Transfusion 2024", it was exhibited to Professor Murphy's witness statement. It's an important paper of which Dr Mifflin is one of the authors and it's at WITN001031.

Thank you, Lawrence.

This, you'll be glad to hear, is the last document

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management, regulatory and ethical control positively to achieve positive change for patients. NHSBT has limited mechanisms through which to implement the kind of recommendations Professor Murphy suggests, thus placing this in the remit of NHSBT would not be an effective way to secure an improvement in proper consenting.

So the recommendations are good, Professor Murphy's suggestions are good suggestions but there's a limited amount that NHSBT itself can do about them, or some of them.

SHOT. The SHOT scheme, Serious Hazards of Transfusion. The suggested recommendation is that all NHS organisations have a mechanism in place for implementing recommendations of the SHOT reports and for monitoring such implementation.

The position about implementing recommendations is a complex one. Professor Bellamy gave evidence that reporting to SHOT is professionally mandated, thus, among other mechanisms, the regulatory framework operating around clinicians, ie good practice enforced by the GMC, acts to require such reporting. We submit that implementation of SHOT report recommendations should similarly be professionally mandated and monitored by healthcare regulators.

This will produce a requirement for implementation

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to which I am going to be asking Lawrence to take you.

So just again, looking at it from the top. This is "A 5-year plan for clinical and laboratory transfusion in England". You'll see that Dr Mifflin, Gail Mifflin, is one of the authors. It's essentially an NHSBT supported document. It isn't -- it doesn't have the force of -- it isn't practically implemented in full but it is the plan that NHSBT wishes to see implemented.

This document is a summary of the full Transfusion 2024 document. As you'll see, it's an article about that document. Sorry I didn't make that clear.

The abstract says this:

"The Transfusion 2024 plan outlines key priorities for clinical and laboratory transfusion practice for safe patient care across the NHS for the next 5 years. It's based on the outcomes of a multi-professional symposium held in March 2019, organised by the [NBTC] and NHS Blood and Transplant ... attended and supported by Professor Keith Willet, Dame Sue Hill on behalf of NHS England and Improvement. This best practice guidance contained within this publication will facilitate the necessary change in pathway design to meet the transfusion challenges and pressures for the restoration of a cohesive, and functional healthcare system across the NHS following the COVID-19 pandemic."

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1 So that's the context. What I want to take you to
 2 is the table that appears on page 2 and following.
 3 That's table 1, which covers the next three pages. I'm
 4 only actually going to take you to it over the first two
 5 of those pages. In short, this table sets out the Blood
 6 Service's own freestanding recommendations, which it
 7 adopts for the purposes of suggesting to Sir Brian what
 8 his recommendations might be.
 9 As you see, "Table 1, Summary of transfusion 2024
 10 recommendations", section A, "Patient blood management",
 11 and there are three items under that. Under 2:
 12 "Resources to support clinical transfusion practice
 13 "(a) Strengthen support within hospitals and NHSBT
 14 for clinical transfusion practice.
 15 "(b) Develop and implement a national competency
 16 framework for transfusion practitioners.£
 17 There's then a column that deals with how
 18 deliverable this is, and then importantly, we would
 19 submit, there is a column for "Key responsibility, other
 20 stakeholders", and who might be responsible for
 21 delivery, therefore.
 22 These recommendations here are also developed in
 23 Dr Mifflin's witness statement -- I'm sorry, these are
 24 the basis for the written submissions that we make about
 25 recommendations.

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1 That people working in the NHS are adequately trained in
 2 transfusion and that accountability for this is defined.
 3 Recommendation 7: transfusion and governance.
 4 That NHS Trusts have appropriate structures in
 5 governance for delivering safe blood transfusion
 6 practice. These are originally defined in Health
 7 Service Circular 2002, No. 9, Better Blood Transfusion,
 8 but are now part of the work of NHS England National
 9 Blood Transfusion Committee, with further guidance
 10 contained in the document *Transfusion 2024*.
 11 That's obviously the document to which I've been
 12 referring.
 13 Information technology is adopted where it has been
 14 shown to improve patient safety in relation to
 15 transfusion, including that relevant NHS bodies
 16 implement electronic systems for identification, blood
 17 sample collection, and labelling.
 18 In relation to that, we would note that this derives
 19 from *Transfusion 2024* and is in accordance with the NHS
 20 long-term plan. We ought to add one comment, though, on
 21 the question of vein-to-vein tracking:
 22 *Transfusion 2024* includes development of a system of
 23 vein-to-vein tracking. The plan notes that
 24 implementation of these significant schemes would be
 25 subject to finding a funding solution. However, it

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1 So then 3:
 2 "Inclusion of transfusion in national patient
 3 quality and safety initiatives
 4 "Aim to include where feasible transfusion data in
 5 national databases of diseases/outcomes for which
 6 transfusion is regularly used."
 7 Then there's a section under "Transfusion laboratory
 8 safety", a section under "Laboratory staffing" over the
 9 page, and then, at the bottom of the page, a section
 10 under "Information technology": "Transfusion IT",
 11 "Vein-to-vein electronic tracking", and "Recommendations
 12 for further research and development".
 13 Having looked at that, I'll briefly, therefore,
 14 refer to those recommendations as they appear in our
 15 written submissions that I've just referred to.
 16 Staffing levels -- this is recommendation 5,
 17 relating to staffing levels in clinical haematology and
 18 laboratory areas within NHS Trusts. The suggested
 19 recommendation is that transfusion laboratories are
 20 staffed and resourced adequately to meet the
 21 requirements of their functions.
 22 Just to make it clear, we're talking about hospital
 23 transfusion laboratories.
 24 Recommendation 6: education of healthcare
 25 professionals in the field of transfusion medicine.

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1 seems a reasonable recommendation that robust systems to
 2 understand the outcomes of people undergoing transfusion
 3 and blood components, together with one that allowed
 4 clinical audit and research, should be an aim of the
 5 NHS. This is likely to be best achieved using IT
 6 systems that have appropriate interfaces between the
 7 existing systems. Simply trying to take data out of
 8 many existing systems into a new registry would be
 9 fraught with data transfer risks and potential errors
 10 and would be extremely difficult to set up and costly to
 11 maintain.
 12 Furthermore, if this were done correctly, it should
 13 allow NHSBT to manage the blood stocks throughout the
 14 system and for experts to audit the appropriate use of
 15 blood components using simple analysis tools rather than
 16 complex timely audits.
 17 Then, 9, the recommendation is -- this is monitoring
 18 outcomes for recipients of blood and blood components --
 19 that a framework be established for recording outcomes
 20 for recipients of blood components, that these records
 21 be used by NHS bosses to improve transfusion practice,
 22 including by providing such information to
 23 haemovigilance bodies.
 24 Having dealt with these recommendations arising out
 25 of *Transfusion 2024*, we make a brief comment on the

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question of accountability and responsibility. For a framework of those things, which function successfully, it's key that the body invested with accountability and responsibility have the necessary powers and expertise properly to ensure implementation of rules and policy. Clearly, in some situations, this will be NHSBT. Indeed, of particular note is the ongoing role for NHSBT in collaborating with the National Blood Transfusion Committee to develop guidance and influence best practice and the role of NHSBT supporting clinical transfusion and patient blood management initiatives across the NHS.

Transfusion 2024 provides important guidance on the key responsibilities for the recommendations and stakeholders necessarily involved in taking actions forward. In considering your recommendations, sir, we would suggest that this document provides guiding context when you consider accountability and responsibility.

However, we would also flag the importance of any such recommendations being informed by the expertise and powers of bodies currently and whether as part of the recommendation the extension of powers should similarly be recommended.

Finally, the question of allocation of livers for

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system. And when they decompensate, they get it. They're not disadvantaged at all. The system makes sure of that."

In NHSBT's submission, the current approach to transplantation decisions for this class is the appropriate one. It's been made based on expert clinical knowledge. It's a much safer route, which ensures a transplant is given at the appropriate time. Insofar as any recommendation is going to be made on this issue, it should be one to endorse the current approach, we would respectfully suggest.

It's been suggested that the current framework omits to consider the curative element of liver transplantation and that this matter should be recognised as a positive in favour of the transplantation.

NHSBT's position is that this argument is difficult. While it may possibly be curative, there are significant risks associated with transplantation, including the ongoing need to suppress the immune system. We maintain the appropriate approach is that advanced by Professor Manas.

Insofar as you, sir, are of the view that the current framework does not properly consider the matter of the curative infect of liver transplantation, we

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transplantation. The suggested recommendation is this: that the principles and protocols currently applicable to the allocation of livers for transplantation in respect of patients with a history including infection with a TTI through blood, blood components or blood products, are appropriate, and be maintained.

Our final recommendation was to suggest the affirmation of the principles and protocols currently applicable to the allocation of livers for transplantation. The Inquiry heard evidence on this from Professor Manas. In respect of those recipients infected as a result of infected blood and focusing on liver transplantation he explained the following in his oral evidence, and this was at INQY1000259.

"What I suggested in my report was, if we were going to look at a way of trying to give some advantage, then the system has the variant syndrome list, or you could say: well, every centre could use the DCDs that they have that are allocated to them, and in their list, that they give to us, they could itemise which patients have been co-infected and why they're on the list and why they're getting priority.

"But I think the NLOS system gives -- it's much safer because it monitors them all the time, and they will -- every time there's an offer, they'll be in the

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would suggest obtaining further evidence of competing benefits and risks of such an approach from Professor Manas or another appropriate specialist.

Finally on this, recommendations of others. I'm not going to deal with all the recommendations that have been suggested that have relevance to the Blood Services, but I'm going to deal with a few of them.

We've responded to a number of the recommendations already advanced by Core Participants. We hope that our views on our recommendations, including those in the written submissions, are of assistance. In addition, we hope that the current practice section of our written and oral submissions, along with the evidence particularly of Dr Miflin, is of some assistance in setting out how many of the recommendations are already met by the Blood Service. We do, however, comment on this small number of recommendations now.

We hope this doesn't in any way appear to detract from the recommendations we don't comment on. It's not our intention and instead we hope reflects the position we've already addressed.

First of all, quality of recordkeeping.

NHSBT agrees that inadequate recordkeeping has hampered look-back exercises and hampered the ability of the infected to understand the pathogens to which they

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1 have been exposed and to seek justice and recompense.
2 It has been a regulatory and legal requirement since
3 2005 to have full traceability, which clearly is
4 important and beneficial.

5 However, many trusts still use the manual record,
6 which are labour intensive. NHSBT is of the view that
7 the best way to resolving this matter is to achieve the
8 introduction of vein-to-vein software in trusts, as was
9 already commented on in respect of recommendation 8.
10 This would allow an integrated approach which would
11 provide more benefit to patient safety, understanding
12 and traceability than, for example, a separate registry
13 of transfusions.

14 In respect of the proposed recommendation that
15 blood, tissue and organs should never again be collected
16 in prisons, borstals and other such correctional
17 institutions, NHSBT agrees, and is of the view it would
18 not do so.

19 A number of Core Participants have commented on the
20 current position concerning self-sufficiency in England
21 and Wales. In respect of blood components, which the
22 core of NHSBT's role, we are self-sufficient.

23 Finally, as we noted at the beginning, we've heard
24 loud and clear what Roanna Maharaj said in her
25 submissions on behalf of the Thalassaemia Society on

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1 Now, those of us sitting in the room when she said
2 that -- I mean, it rang loud and clear as a concern
3 which was emblematic of the concern of many infected and
4 affected at this Inquiry, even though they weren't
5 thalassaemia sufferers or requiring regular or frequent
6 transfusions of the sort that she was describing.

7 We've heard this. We understand the point. The
8 issue of messaging to donors on the safety of blood and
9 its impact on recipients is an important one. NHSBT
10 will continue to consider how best to improve our
11 messaging and communication with donors.

12 Before I come very briefly to my concluding remarks,
13 there's one matter I want to raise on behalf of the
14 Welsh Blood Service and, for this purpose, I'm speaking
15 on their behalf and not just that of NHSBT.

16 I'm asked to say the following on their behalf: as
17 traversed in the evidence received by the Inquiry,
18 there's historically been no neat separation between the
19 Blood Services in England and Wales for the periods the
20 Inquiry has been considering. For much of it, the Welsh
21 service was, in effect, operating as a region of the
22 English service. The Welsh Blood Service has put in
23 brief written submissions which endorse the submissions
24 and recommendations advanced by NHSBT, and has therefore
25 taken the decision not to add to those submissions in

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1 Friday, which seemed to us to have a pertinence that
2 went more widely than simply those whose interests she
3 was formally representing. What she said -- and I'm
4 going to read it all out if I may -- this part of it:

5 "I think that a recommendation should be given to
6 the NHS Blood and Transplant, I think more people -- and
7 donors for example -- I feel sometimes they don't
8 understand the risks that they bring to the recipient.
9 It is great to donate blood. I'm alive because of the
10 blood I have received throughout my life. But I think
11 when people donate blood they don't understand really
12 that, while you are giving this great gift, we can't
13 deal with any more health conditions because it is
14 really difficult to deal with the one that we were born
15 with.

16 "So I think there needs to be more emphasis on the
17 communication to the general public, to donors, about
18 how important it is to protect the recipients and to
19 take that responsibility in filling out and answering
20 correctly, honestly on the questionnaires, disclosing
21 information. I do think there needs to be more emphasis
22 on that and I don't think that the communications that
23 I have been seeing is sufficient, and it is a worry to
24 me every time I have a transfusion: am I going to be
25 protected?"

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1 closing, on the basis it endorses the position taken by
2 NHSBT.

3 The Welsh Blood Service has also confirmed that, in
4 collaboration with the other UK Blood Services through
5 the Blood Services UK Forum, which is the vehicle for
6 coordination and promotion of consistency and
7 collaboration between UK services, it looks forward to
8 reviewing and working on any recommendations made by the
9 Inquiry.

10 I know, sir, that the motivation for asking us to
11 say that was to ensure that no inadvertent offence was
12 given by the fact that they weren't making oral
13 submissions themselves.

14 Some concluding remarks on behalf of NHSBT, then.

15 We have set out in written submissions the
16 impression that we have of the conclusions that should
17 be drawn from the evidence the Inquiry has heard,
18 whether on events or on other more individual aspects of
19 that evidence. Some of that has been expanded upon
20 today. There are a small number of overarching
21 conclusions that we do wish now finally to emphasise.
22 We do so simply because they might otherwise remain
23 unstated in the submissions heard by the Inquiry stated
24 in this room.

25 We stress that nothing we say here is intended to

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1 detract from what we've said already as to the terrible
2 suffering caused by the events that have prompted this
3 Inquiry nor is it intended to excuse any conduct of
4 anyone which caused or contributed to such suffering.

5 The first is that the evidence made available
6 throughout the Inquiry makes it plain that NHSBT's
7 predecessors were significantly hampered in their
8 response to the infected blood tragedy because of the
9 funding and the structure of the Blood Service. Both of
10 these factors are fundamental context to the actions of
11 the service, ie what it did and what it did not do.

12 They weighed heavily as limitations upon the
13 response that could be mustered to avoid and mitigate
14 infections.

15 While the resolution of problems with structure and
16 funding would not have been the complete answer to the
17 questions of the Blood Services posed by this Inquiry,
18 NHSBT maintains they were significant frustrating
19 factors amounting to a common theme that appears
20 throughout the story of blood in England and Wales.

21 As such, NHSBT wishes to recognise the service of
22 the clinicians, scientists and other staff concerned,
23 past and present, and undertaken in difficult
24 circumstances and without the tools we take for granted
25 today, with their duty to recipients and donors in their

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1 evolution of the service to its modern state.

2 Today, all the services in the UK operate
3 an internationally recognised risk-based decision-making
4 framework, which I've described, which appropriately and
5 transparently manages risk with the benefit of expert
6 clinical advice. NHSBT looks forward to the report of
7 the Inquiry and will study it carefully to take forward
8 learning and recommendations further to improve the
9 service that it provides.

10 Fourthly, NHSBT wishes to recognise the work of
11 donors who, over the years, have given tens of millions
12 of donations and made a Blood Service possible. Without
13 their trust and goodwill, it would not have been, and
14 would not now be, possible to provide a supply of blood
15 to meet clinical needs.

16 Fifthly, we express the hope on behalf of NHSBT that
17 it has been able to deliver on its promise to assist in
18 the Inquiry's endeavour in every way that it can and
19 that it is obvious to the Inquiry and to all others
20 concerned that that approach was shared by the witnesses
21 who have given evidence on behalf of NHSBT. It seems so
22 to us, we hope it was to everyone else.

23 Finally, we return to where we began. To the
24 infected and affected, many of whom have suffered for
25 decades without acknowledgement or recognition of what

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1 minds.

2 It also wishes to pay tribute to those of its own
3 staff, past and present, many of them very elderly, who
4 responded to Rule 9 requests and, in many cases, gave
5 evidence orally to the Inquiry.

6 Secondly, the evidence also makes it plain that the
7 position of NHSBT's predecessors, essentially occupying
8 a place behind treating clinicians, was one into which
9 it had little or no input, let alone control over
10 treatment decisions. Specifically, the requirement for
11 the service was to provide a safe and sufficient supply
12 of blood to meet clinical needs. By definition, it had
13 very little control over how that supply of blood was
14 used. That was an inevitable corollary to the overall
15 position of the Blood Service in the structure and of
16 its focus upon providing a reliable supply of blood.

17 Thirdly, lessons learned. NHSBT hopes that the
18 information it has provided to the Inquiry demonstrates
19 the learning that has already been taken from these
20 terrible events. The service in England and Wales has
21 been transformed from a loose federation of RTCs to
22 a Special Health Authority which ensures high standards
23 across its practice. Its response to vCJD and the
24 creation of SHOT, were responses informed by the
25 experiences of the past and ones which show the

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1 happened to them. It's impossible to imagine the hurt
2 and suffering caused and compounded by these events and
3 the failures to respond to them. NHSBT repeats that it
4 wishes to acknowledge each individual tragedy, and we
5 hope that the Inquiry and the report soon to be issued
6 will bring answers that have not been provided in all
7 the decades that have gone before.

8 Perhaps most importantly of all, and unequivocally
9 and without caveat, we also recognise the part the Blood
10 Services have played in that harm and suffering, so we
11 would like to say again to all those infected and
12 affected, for all they have had to endure, we are deeply
13 and truly sorry.

14 Thank you, Sir Brian.

15 **SIR BRIAN LANGSTAFF:** Now, just a question, if I may. The
16 predecessor of NHSBT, the National Blood Authority, was
17 a party to the *A v NBA* case, which Mr Justice Burton
18 decided. He made various findings of fact. One of the
19 findings he did not have to make was by way of
20 concession from NBA, as I understand it, that screening
21 for HCV should, at the latest, have been introduced by
22 the 1 April 1991. Your submissions on paper take
23 a different and later date. Why?

24 **MR CORY-WRIGHT:** The simple answer -- and I hope this
25 doesn't seem mean spirited in some way or to go against

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1 what I've been saying all morning -- the simple answer
 2 is that we, looking at the evidence now, we don't accept
 3 that there was fault in going right the way back to that
 4 date; we take a later date. The fact that that
 5 concession was made, I think, in evidence doesn't
 6 necessarily mean that that is the correct answer and
 7 what we would say to you, sir, is that when you're
 8 examining this issue, it wouldn't be right for you
 9 simply to say "Well, that concession was made, then,
 10 that's an end to the matter". What you would need to
 11 do, we respectfully submit, is to look at all that
 12 evidence, and come to your own conclusion about it.

13 You've heard many, many submissions about that which
 14 are based on a range of factors, a range of bits of
 15 evidence, all we're saying is we would respectfully ask
 16 that you come to your own conclusion about it, rather
 17 than simply adopting it because it was adopted by
 18 Mr Justice Burton in that case.

19 **SIR BRIAN LANGSTAFF:** So if I haven't misread the judgment,
 20 it was a concession made by counsel, then instructed,
 21 that, be that as it may, you're not telling me there's
 22 anything specific that you had in mind, just the general
 23 considerations that you've made reference to.

24 **MR CORY-WRIGHT:** That, sir, and the factor relevant to that
 25 case, which is that, in order -- what was relevant in

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1 hearing room as a factor which would explain why that's
 2 all wrong and we're taking this position. We have set
 3 out our case on this in detail in the written
 4 submissions and there's a range of factors referred to
 5 in there and I would comment them to you, and that's all
 6 I can say.

7 **SIR BRIAN LANGSTAFF:** Well, thank you very much and thank
 8 you for your submissions.

9 Now, I think we have to hear from Ms Richards in
 10 a moment as to what is in store for us not tomorrow, but
 11 on Thursday.

12 **MS RICHARDS:** Yes. So we are no longer sitting tomorrow.
 13 I hope that's a message that everyone has received and
 14 for unavoidable reasons. So we will resume on Thursday
 15 at 10.00 when we hear, first of all, from Mr Johnston KC
 16 on behalf of the Scottish Government, and then a closing
 17 statement by Nicola Leahey, an unrepresented Core
 18 Participant.

19 Can I just invite people to keep an eye on the
 20 timetable and any updates because I have been informed
 21 by Mr Johnston in the course of this morning that he
 22 does not think he'll be in the whole morning. So it may
 23 be that we make some adjustments to the timetable, but
 24 it may not. But if people just keep an eye on the
 25 website in that regard. But we should be starting at

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1 terms of strict liability in that case was the nature of
 2 the cause of action for product liability, which did not
 3 itself depend upon fault. So it's -- again, this is the
 4 last thing I want to say last, if you see what I mean,
 5 but there are complexities from a strict liability point
 6 of view and in terms of the fault, which I think is what
 7 you're putting to me.

8 **SIR BRIAN LANGSTAFF:** Well, I'm simply putting to you the
 9 date at which he said it should have been introduced.
 10 Now, that, the judgment was saying, was an agreement or
 11 rather a concession formally made during the course of
 12 the hearing, no doubt looking at the evidence before
 13 him -- and of course the evidence was different from the
 14 evidence which there has been here -- as to the pros and
 15 cons of the situation in that context.

16 So in the context in which as you point out, fault
 17 was to be assumed on a certain basis, the date was as it
 18 was.

19 **MR CORY-WRIGHT:** May I speak to the organ grinders for
 20 a moment?

21 **SIR BRIAN LANGSTAFF:** Yes, of course. Of course.

22 **MR CORY-WRIGHT:** The answer to your question, sir, is --
 23 sorry.

24 The answer to your question is there's nothing else
 25 now that I wish to draw to your attention in this

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1 10.

2 **SIR BRIAN LANGSTAFF:** We were due to hear tomorrow from
 3 Ms Scolding KC on behalf of the Leigh Day clients --
 4 Leigh Day cohort. That is now going to be heard next
 5 week.

6 **MS RICHARDS:** That's correct.

7 **SIR BRIAN LANGSTAFF:** And the date for that for those who
 8 might be interested?

9 **MS RICHARDS:** It's next Tuesday afternoon and then running
 10 on, if necessary, to ensure that she has the full time
 11 that was originally scheduled, into Wednesday morning.

12 **SIR BRIAN LANGSTAFF:** Very well. So, if you hadn't picked
 13 that up, there you have it. Thank you very much.

14 Until tomorrow -- Thursday, there you go -- Thursday
 15 at 10.00.

16 **(1.06 pm)**

17 **(The hearing adjourned until Thursday at 10.00 am)**

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I N D E X

Closing Statement by MR CORY-WRIGHT KC	1
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