

# The Infected Blood Public Inquiry NEWSLETTER



THE  
HAEMOPHILIA  
SOCIETY

## Inquiry hearings start this month

The Infected Blood Inquiry will begin its hearings in London at the end of this month.

As promised by Inquiry chair, Sir Brian Langstaff, it is the people infected and affected by the contaminated blood scandal whose voices will be heard first.

Personal testimonies are due to be heard throughout the first phase of the Inquiry hearings, which will last until October 2019.

The Inquiry will initially sit at Fleetbank House in London for two weeks before moving to Belfast, Leeds, Edinburgh and Cardiff to hear evidence from around the United Kingdom.

The Inquiry will sit four days a week and hopes to hear evidence from three people a



day. There will also be the chance for those infected and affected to give evidence at the end of the Inquiry.

Sir Brian has confirmed that he is reading every written statement submitted to the Inquiry and says he has little doubt that the testimonies will help to “get to the truth” of what happened.

## Join us at our pre-Inquiry social event

We know many of you will be travelling to London to be present at the first day of the Infected Blood Inquiry and we would like to mark this occasion by getting together beforehand.

The Society will be holding an informal social event on April 29 from 6pm – 8pm where there will be a chance to meet members of The Society and its legal team as well as an opportunity to share experiences over light refreshments.

The event will be held at The Society’s office at Willcox House, 140-148 Borough High Street, London, SE1 1LB. If you would like to come, please let us know by [emailing](#) or by phoning Debra Morgan on 0207 939 0780.

All members and their families are welcome. We look forward to hearing from you.

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## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Register your place

If you plan to attend any of the Inquiry hearings you need to register your attendance with the Inquiry team. To register online follow this link: [www.infectedbloodinquiry.org.uk/witness-hearings](http://www.infectedbloodinquiry.org.uk/witness-hearings)

You can write to the Inquiry at Fleetbank House, 1st Floor, 2-6 Salisbury Square, London EC4Y 8AE or telephone 0808 1691377.

### Keep up to date with Inquiry news

You can get all the information you need about the Inquiry through our [website](#) The Society will be posting a weekly update online to keep you up to date with the Inquiry hearings.

You can also watch the Infected Blood Inquiry proceedings live through our [website](#) which is also where you will find our weekly public inquiry newsletter.



The site will also have a calendar where you can follow where and when the Inquiry is sitting.

### How to give evidence

If you are infected or affected by the contaminated blood scandal it is not too late to give evidence.

The Inquiry will hear personal testimonies until October, but has indicated that more people will be able to give evidence at the end of the hearings too. Inquiry chair, Sir Brian Langstaff, has pledged to read every witness statement.

If you would like advice about how to ensure your voice is heard please contact Debra Morgan, our Inquiry lead on [020 7939 0780](tel:02079390780) or [email us](#)

### Emotional support

Psychological support will be available at all hearings, provided by the British Red Cross team who have been working with the Inquiry since September, and its confidential phone line will also continue.

To access phone support, call [0800 458 9473](tel:08004589473) or [0203 417 0280](tel:02034170280). The lines are open on Monday from 11am – 1pm, Wednesday from 7pm – 9pm and Friday from 2pm – 4pm.

The Society wants to ensure that anyone who needs emotional support during this period receives it. If you have views on this subject or are having any difficulties in accessing this psychological support please let us know by [emailing](#) or phoning us on [020 7939 0780](tel:02079390780).

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## Inquiry must flush out the truth, says chair of trustees



The Society's chair of trustees, Clive Smith, has urged The Infected Blood Inquiry to stop at nothing to uncover the truth about the contaminated blood scandal.

In an open letter to members, Clive calls for a light to be shone on government, pharmaceutical companies and public health organisations so that the truth can finally be uncovered. He said The Haemophilia Society also accepted and welcomed scrutiny of its role.

He said: "Everything must be exposed, because only then can our community begin to look to the future, rather than backwards at a dark past."

Clive, who plans to attend as many of the Inquiry hearings as possible, described growing up with severe haemophilia A in the shadow of the contaminated blood scandal.

He said: "Like many of you, I have lost friends and peers to this treatment disaster that should never have happened and for which no one has ever been held accountable."

In his letter Clive said that the scandal had torn apart thousands of lives and that it was important this was recognised by the Inquiry.

He said: "We know that for many, both living and dead, justice will never be achieved. No apology will ever suffice and no recompense can take away the heavy burden that has been carried by so many, for so long. The anger at the lies that had to be told and the shame that had to be endured cannot be washed away."

Clive, who joined The Society's board of trustees in 2015 and became chair last year, also said that the scandal had made the haemophilia community more cautious about new developments in treatment.

He stressed the need to learn lessons from the findings of the Inquiry to ensure that any risks associated with new treatments are fully understood.

He concluded: "The outcome of this Inquiry cannot undo the past, but it can and must expose the truth behind this scandal and bring those responsible to account."

Read Clive's letter in full [here](#).

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## The Society's legal team grows

The Society's new legal representatives, Eversheds Sutherland, continue to work closely with us to ensure a speedy and smooth transition into their role.



Any members who have chosen to be represented by Eversheds Sutherland will now have received information about giving evidence and the organisation will be responding quickly to all paperwork returned.

There is a dedicated phoneline of [0800 085 6486](tel:08000856486) and email: [mail@esinfectedblood.com](mailto:mail@esinfectedblood.com) for any queries on this issue.

Peter Jones, who will be leading The Society's legal team at the Infected Blood Inquiry, has been a partner in Eversheds Sutherland for more than 30 years. He is supported by Angharad Shurmer, Principal Associate at Eversheds Sutherland. Peter set up the firm's Inquiries and Investigations Team more than 20 years ago and has been involved in many of the UK's most high profile public inquiries.

He said: "My team goes into this public inquiry with an understanding of the process that's going to unravel the facts of the contaminated blood scandal and, we hope, provide those infected and affected with the answers for which they have waited so long.

But we start by listening. We weren't there, we need to be told."

Peter and his team have worked on a number of public inquiries in the UK, including the Bloody Sunday Inquiry, the Shipman Inquiry and the Jersey Care Inquiry, into child abuse.

He believes this gives them an invaluable insight into how public inquiries work. He said: "What we bring to The Society is an experience of knowing what the Inquiry will expect of it and an understanding that an inquiry will be best served by an approach of openness, accountability and assistance. I hope we will enable The Society to engage meaningfully with the Inquiry in a way that recognises the history of what it has done and advised in the past. It is history, it can't be undone, but lessons can be learnt."

The Society is also pleased to announce that we have instructed Katie Gollop QC. Katie has specialised in healthcare law for more than 20 years and is well known for clinical negligence cases and representing families at high profile inquests. She is described by a former client as "charming and deadly".

Meet Katie Gollop and Angharad Shurmer at our social event on 29 April, details of which are on this newsletter.

• **To read more about Peter Jones and his thoughts on the Infected Blood Inquiry visit [our website](#).**