

The Infected Blood Public Inquiry NEWSLETTER



THE
HAEMOPHILIA
SOCIETY

A summary of Inquiry hearings from Leeds

The second week of hearings from the Infected Blood Inquiry in Leeds produced more personal illustrations of the devastation that the contaminated blood scandal has caused.

Suresh Vaghela, who has severe haemophilia A, was infected with HIV, Hep B and Hep C. He described how in 1985 he attended 70 funerals of members of the haemophilia community including his brother, Praful who died of HIV.

This week has had a high number of anonymous witnesses, a reminder of how difficult it continues to be to speak out. Mr O, who has mild haemophilia and was infected with HIV in 1986 as a result of being given a batch of heat-treated factor

VIII that should have been withdrawn following evidence of contamination, said he led a "double life".

He told the Inquiry that he not only keeps his HIV status secret, but that he rarely tells people he has haemophilia for fear of them making the connection with contaminated blood.

Susan Harrison described how she had her passport confiscated and was threatened with deportation when a blood test taken in Northern Cyprus revealed she had Hep C. Susan became infected when she was injected with factor VIII in 1976 as part of a test to see if she had inherited her mother's Von Willebrand Disease bleeding disorder.

Regular attenders of the Inquiry have come to recognise a number of the Red Cross team who are on standby to offer psychological support. The counsellors make themselves available at any time during the hearing session to give support to those infected and affected by the Inquiry. Their phone support is also available on 0800 458 9473.

The Haemophilia Society is keen to ensure psychological support is available for anyone who needs it, and the Inquiry has also indicated that if there is more demand for its services it will review them. Please let us know if you have any views on this. You can email Debra Morgan on publicinquiry@haemophilia.org.uk

Quotes of the week

"Listening to the witness statements I feel lucky that it was only hep C, that only one of my children were affected and that I found out when I did because of the benefits of my treatment and I haven't had the side effects that others did."

"I just wish, if I had a magic lamp, that every single person that's been infected with hepatitis C or HIV, that they could receive the quality of care that we received and continue to receive"

Anonymous Witness referred to as Shirley

"I shan't do anything silly because I'm not that way inclined, but I want to go to bed and never wake up again"

Susan Harrison about the side effects of the interferon and ribavirin treatment for her hepatitis C

"When he died, everything stopped. I wouldn't be here if I hadn't had the children. All the caring stops and you feel like you don't have any purpose anymore. I couldn't read, write or put a sentence together"

Ms Q – Anonymous Witness talking about the death of her husband

"I continue to fear for my children at school. I fear that when the inquiry is in the news they will experience repercussions from their peers"

Ms N – Anonymous Witness

Inquiry news

The Inquiry hearings now move from Leeds to Edinburgh where they resume on Tuesday 2 July. The Edinburgh hearings, which take place at the city's International Conference Centre, run from July 2-5 and then July 8-11. After that, the Inquiry will sit in Cardiff at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama from July 23–26 July. There will then be a long break over the summer before the hearings resume in London on October 8.

If you would like to register to attend any of these hearings please contact the Inquiry directly on contact@infectedbloodinquiry.org.uk or call on 0808 169 1377.