

The Infected Blood Public Inquiry NEWSLETTER



THE
HAEMOPHILIA
SOCIETY

A summary of Inquiry hearings from Cardiff

The Inquiry moved to Cardiff for its final week of hearings before the summer break.

Sitting in the modern theatre hall of the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama, the Inquiry heard very moving testimonies from more brave witnesses.

Many of the witnesses brought photos of their loved ones which made the testimonies even more poignant.

Colin and Janet Smith, who have campaigned so courageously for justice following the death in 1990 of their son Colin from HIV at the age of 7, spoke powerfully of their family's ordeal. At the end of their evidence they played a short video featuring their family, Colin and fellow cam-

paigned, which brought almost everyone in the room—and beyond—to tears.

Monica Summers, the widow of Paul Summers, who died aged 43 after being infected with HIV and Hep C, told the Inquiry about the physical pain of her grief and the impact of the bereavement on their daughter. She said her daughter, who was only five when Paul died, could no longer remember his voice. She asked: "How can you give somebody the impossible?" In an emotional concluding statement, Monica said that "grief was the price of love".

Witness Gerald Stone was infected with Hep C as a result of treatment for his haemophilia B. He told the Inquiry that

for 26 years his diagnosis had been a closely guarded secret. He chose to end that secrecy this week, by openly telling his story to the Inquiry.

Every single witness since the Inquiry opened back in April has given their evidence with courage and dignity. Although harrowing to experience, many in our community have been brought together in mutual support and understanding as the stories from the Inquiry have unfolded. In order for Sir Brian Langstaff and his team to do their work, so many people have relived the most terrible times of their lives. Thank you all for your bravery and your determination to achieve truth and justice.

Quotes of the week

"What you might have expected with a seriously ill child was sympathy and help. What you got was rejection, vilification and abuse. It takes a very special kind of resilience to be able now to talk to everyone about what happened to you... and to tell us in the most moving of ways how you have managed to keep Colin alive, for you. All I can do is say thank you."

Sir Brian Langstaff, to Colin and Janet Smith who gave evidence about their son Colin.

"We want people to ... know it was children taken away. It took lives, maimed people, crippled with such horrible things. We need justice. We need something done about this. It's just so wrong and I get really angry about it. We feel maybe we're getting somewhere for the first time in all these years."

Janet Smith

"He didn't blame any one for his HIV and Hep C. His focus was to live life."

Monica Summers on her husband Paul who was infected with HIV and Hep C and died aged 43.

"I was frightened to die. I'd been in hospital watching people die - I didn't want to die this way."

Mr AE on going off the rails at 19, when he was diagnosed with HIV.

"I cannot believe I am here today giving testimony against my Government for knowingly infecting me with dirty blood. "

Elaine Huxley, infected with Hep C

Inquiry news

Although the witness hearings will now take a break over the summer, the work of the Inquiry's 130-strong investigative team based in London continues. As well as sifting through millions of documents at the Inquiry's HQ at Fleetbank House, a team is also based at the National Archives in Kew working through historical records.

The Infected Blood Inquiry witness hearings will resume in London on 8 October for another three weeks of personal testimonies. Further investigations will then follow. If you would like to give a witness statement you can contact the Inquiry directly on 0808 1691377. For advice or support please contact our public inquiry team on publicinquiry@haemophilia.org.uk.