



Fleetbank House  
1<sup>st</sup> Floor, 2-6 Salisbury Square  
London  
EC4Y 8AE

Rt Hon. David Lidington CBE MP  
Minister for the Cabinet Office and Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster  
70 Whitehall  
London SW1A 2AS

15<sup>th</sup> October 2018

Dear Minister,

### **Infected Blood Inquiry**

Thank you for attending the commemoration before the Inquiry's preliminary hearings. The commemoration set the tone by ensuring that the impact on individuals and their families was at the forefront of people's minds during the preliminary hearings.

I heard from the 1,288 core participants both through their legal representatives and directly from those unrepresented.

You should be aware that there were considerable concerns during the preliminary hearings about access to (and variations in) financial support, psychological support, and also concern that not everyone who was infected has been identified.

During the commemoration people were heard asking "Where is the compassion?" and describing how they "lost everything", "had to live on the breadline" and "feel betrayed". Throughout the preliminary hearings there were repeated calls for financial assistance which fully recompenses individuals and families for the losses they have suffered. One of the legal representatives said, "recently there have been changes to the way in which these funds are

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administered, but any suggestion that this represents proper compensation for the hurt they have, they are and will continue to suffer is met with anger and indignation”.

Counsel representing the Department of Health and Social Care undertook to convey back to those she represents the words, the emotions and the aspirations for this Inquiry and to reflect about current steps that are needed. Decisive action on this matter should be taken and communicated to those affected at the earliest opportunity.

You have deferred making a decision on the matter of panellists and this was open to participants for discussion. There was no demand that I should sit with them. To the contrary, the Welsh and Northern Irish core participants have said – “firmly” – that they are happy for me to sit without them; the largest represented group said through their Counsel that they support the idea of me sitting without assessors; and Counsel for the Scottish core participants said they could see the advantage of the role of expert groups, and his submissions mirrored my own desire for “received wisdom” to be open to challenge. (As you know from our earlier exchange of letters, I see the role of expert groups in this Inquiry as being to inform me openly and transparently, across a range of truly expert opinion, of their views, and by doing so to displace the need for single experts, whose views would neither be openly expressed nor open to public challenge, to sit with me as panellists).

The general feeling conveyed was that participants had faith in the Inquiry’s approach. In the light of this, and following on from the considerations expressed in my earlier letter to you on this subject, I recommend that you do not appoint panel members to share in my determination of the issues raised by the terms of reference.

I was grateful for the full participation of everyone who attended the preliminary hearings and watched online. There was a palpable spirit of cooperation, togetherness and cautious optimism that the Inquiry will get to the truth. As I said to those attending, I will do my very best to make sure it does and I should be grateful if you could continue to ensure that resourcing and supporting the Inquiry is a priority for your Department.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Brian Langstaff". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Sir Brian Langstaff

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