

The Infected Blood Public Inquiry NEWSLETTER



THE
HAEMOPHILIA
SOCIETY

A summary of this week's Inquiry hearings

The second week of the Infected Blood Inquiry continued to hear evidence from the infect-ed, but also began to hear from those affected too.

The hearings opened on Monday with moving testimony from Lauren Palmer, whose parents died within eight days of each other of HIV.

Lauren's father, Stephen was infected as a result of his treatment for haemophilia.

The Inquiry heard heart breaking stories of loss including the experiences of parents whose sons became infected as children through factor concentrate treatment.

Della told the Inquiry that a friend from the US had sent her

information about the un-folding scandal in 1978 and she fought to keep her son off factor VIII treatment. When her hospital refused to con-tinue with cryoprecipitate, she then insisted its source was BPL Elstree. Despite this, Nick contracted Hep C and died aged 35 in 2012.

Another mother, who had kept her two sons' HIV diagnosis secret from all but close family members, spoke for the first time in public about learning of their infection when they were young boys. Her younger son died of HIV aged 15 and her older boy survived. She said speaking about her son at the Inquiry was important—a reminder that he existed and that he mattered.

Her determination to share the memory of her loved one is shared by all those participating in the Inquiry, and by many who have come to watch.

Everyone has spoken out bravely about very difficult and traumatic times, so that Sir Brian Langstaff, the Inquiry chair, and the wider world can start to un-derstand the pain and suffering that so many families endured, and continue to do so. Going back to those times has been terrible to watch at times, but the strength of all witnesses means the true horror of what has been experienced is now a matter of public record and cannot be ignored. Thank you for your courage.

Inquiry news

The Inquiry now moves to Belfast. After a one week break, the witness will begin again on Tuesday 21 May at The International Confer-ence Centre, Waterfront Hall and continue until Friday 24 May. De-tails of participants will be published by the Inquiry next week.

The Haemophilia Society's public inquiry team will be at the hearings and would like to invite any members attending to join them after the first day of hearings to get together and offer support and companionship to each other. For more details, please email Debra Morgan on publicinquiry@haemophilia.org.uk or call 020 7939 0780.

Quotes of the week

"Nobody's ever told me how this happened, why it happened, or just said to me, 'we're sorry'."

Mrs C on the death of her son aged 15 from HIV, who had severe haemophilia A

"Not only did I lose my parents, I lost my brothers who were the next closest thing to me and it would rip me apart every time I would go and visit them and have to come back."

Lauren Palmer, who was separated from her brothers when both her parents died of HIV

"We do not think time will heal our pain, because we forever think of what might have been."

Alan and Christine Fowle on the death of their son, Christopher of HIV aged 22

"Our community has been divided by the Government. Well, not anymore. We are united as one and together we stand tall. We are not going away."

Michelle Tolley, who was infected with Hep C after a blood transfusion

"This [Inquiry] is the start of the end for many people and I really, really appreciate being here."

Andy Evans, infected with HIV and Hep C