



Rt Hon. John Glen MP
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To: All MPs

19 December 2023

Dear Colleagues,

UPDATE ON THE GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO THE INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

I am sending this letter as the Minister responsible for the Government response to the Infected Blood Inquiry in recognition of the recent amendment to the Victims and Prisoners Bill on 4th December 2023.

The Infected Blood Inquiry ('the Inquiry') is an ongoing Inquiry looking into the circumstances in which individuals treated by national health services in the UK were given infected blood and blood clotting products sourced from the USA, in particular since the 1970s and 1980s, and contracted HIV, Hepatitis C and/or Hepatitis B viruses. The establishment of this Inquiry in 2017 was an important step towards understanding the truth and giving families and victims the answers they deserve.

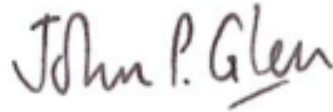
I am writing today to update colleagues on some key areas of progress in this work. Firstly, to support this work the Government is appointing clinical, legal and social care experts to advise the Cabinet Office on detailed technical considerations in the New Year. This will ensure the Government has the relevant expertise to make informed choices in responding to the Inquiry's recommendations on compensation.

Secondly, DHSC will fully implement a bespoke psychological service for people infected and affected by infected blood products, delivered by NHS England. Our intention is for this service to go live in early Summer 2024.

And finally, I can assure colleagues that within 25 sitting days following the publication of the final report (expected in March 2024), the Government will provide an update to Parliament through an oral statement on next steps.

These are important steps, and not the first the Government have taken. In 2022, the Government accepted the moral case for compensation, and in doing so, acknowledged that justice needs to be delivered. The Government has also made interim payments of £100,000 to infected individuals and bereaved partners registered with Infected Blood Support Schemes across the UK. The Government has paid over £400 million in interim compensation towards easing the short-term needs of those infected. In taking these actions, we are working to put things right for victims.

Yours sincerely,



**THE RT HON JOHN GLEN MP
HIS MAJESTY'S PAYMASTER GENERAL AND
THE MINISTER FOR THE CABINET OFFICE**

Further Information for colleagues

Government actions to date

- In 2017, the Government established the Infected Blood Inquiry ('the Inquiry'), chaired by Sir Brian Langstaff. This is an ongoing statutory Inquiry to examine the circumstances in which individuals treated by national health services in the UK were given infected blood and blood clotting products sourced from the USA, in particular since the 1970s and 1980s, and contracted HIV, Hepatitis C and/or Hepatitis B viruses.
- In 2021, the Government appointed Sir Robert Francis KC to carry out a study looking at options for a framework for compensation. The report was published in June 2022.
- Following the publication of the Compensation Study, the Inquiry published its first interim report, recommending the Government paid interim compensation payments to those infected individuals and their bereaved partners already registered with the Infected Blood Support Schemes. The Government accepted this recommendation in full and began making these payments in October 2022.
- Subsequently, in April 2023 the Inquiry published its second interim report, setting out 18 recommendations on how a compensation scheme should be set up and delivered.
- The Government has been carefully working through the practical and financial implications of these recommendations to ensure any solution is deliverable for the Government. The publication of the final report is expected in March 2024.

Support offered to victims of Infected Blood

- Ex-gratia support payments made to those infected, in various forms, since 1992.
- Following a consultation reviewing these schemes, a decision was taken for these support payments to be centralised and delivered through the Infected Blood Support Schemes, managed separately across the devolved administrations. The

Infected Blood Support Schemes continue to provide ex-gratia payments and support to victims of infected blood, and some of those affected as identified by the second interim report.

- Last year, the Government made interim payments of £100,000 to support those infected and bereaved partners registered with the existing UK Infected Blood Support Schemes, as recommended in the first interim report.

Government response to the Inquiry

- The Inquiry has undertaken extensive and meticulous work since 2017 to ensure that the circumstances around the Infected Blood scandal is fully understood. Those infected and affected have shared their deeply moving personal experiences to support the development of this report. We expect the final report will give the Government a clear understanding of where lessons must be learned and how this tragedy came about.
- The Government does not wish to pre-empt the findings of the final report into infected blood, which is due in March 2024. It is right that these findings are published and considered in the round.

Victims and Prisoners Bill, Victims and Prisoners Bill, Amendment NC27

- The Government recognises the strength of feeling across the House on this matter and the importance of what this amendment is seeking to achieve. The Government is working through the implications of Part 3 of the Victims and Prisoners Bill as drafted.