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Dear campaigners,

Thank you for your letters to the Prime Minister of 1 August and 16 October. The Prime Minister has asked me to take on responsibility for the Infected Blood Inquiry, and to reply substantively on his behalf.

The Inquiry is a priority for this Government. The Prime Minister takes a strong interest in its work, and I will be regularly updating him on progress regarding this critical issue.

The Inquiry is making good progress and has been hearing oral evidence since 30 April 2019. I am committed to providing the Inquiry with all the support it needs to complete its work as quickly as a thorough examination of the facts allows. The people infected and affected have waited too long for answers, and I am determined that Government will give urgent consideration to the Inquiry's recommendations as soon as it completes its work.

On the matter of financial support, the relevant government departments are working closely together to resolve the immediate and pressing disparity between the English support scheme and those in Northern Ireland and Wales. At the same time, I have asked my officials to consult urgently with the governments of the four nations of the UK to achieve comprehensive parity across the broader issues of support for all those infected and affected.

I would like very much to meet you to discuss these issues and learn from your experiences. My office will be in touch soon to arrange a convenient time for us to meet.

Yours sincerely,

Rt Hon Oliver Dowden CBE MP