

UK's biggest Public Inquiry ever begins hearings in London next week as Infected Blood victims will finally be heard

Tuesday 30th April will mark the start of the hearings which will hear testimony from Haemophiliacs infected with HIV / Hepatitis C and their families.

LONDON, UK, April 25, 2019 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Infected Blood Inquiry which was announced by Prime Minister Theresa May in 2017 will finally begin hearings evidence from those infected and affected next week in London.

An Inquiry was announced following a succession of Press, Political and Legal pressures – notably, a Group Litigation against the Department of Health & Social Care. The litigation was brought by over 500 people with Haemophilia (represented by [Collins Solicitors](#)) who received a plasma-derived medicine known as "[Factor VIII](#)" in the 1970's and 1980's, which infected them with Hepatitis C and in many cases HIV as well.

Victims and families say the Department of Health was negligent in allowing the importation and use of the dangerous Factor Concentrate medicines. They say it was well known to health officials and pharmaceutical companies, before the products were even licensed, that they carried a high risk of viral transmission and that profits were put ahead of lives.

In September 2018 the Inquiry held its Opening Hearings over three days. QC Steven Snowden, speaking on behalf of the victims, said "The shift from voluntary single donors to buying factor concentrates, in effect commoditising blood products, had what we consider, and what we believe this Inquiry will establish conclusively, to bring with it entirely foreseeable risk".

In terms of the number of Core Participants, the Infected Blood Inquiry is the single largest Public Inquiry the country has ever seen with over 1,700 and more expected. Most of the Core Participants are individuals who were infected with Hepatitis C and/or HIV through Factor Concentrate medicines or family members. Other Core Participants include the Department of Health & Social Care, NHS Blood & Transplant and the victim campaign organisation '[Factor 8](#)'.

Jason Evans who lost his Father to the scandal and is the Founder of the campaign group Factor 8 said "Although the Inquiry must go on and the truth must be put on record, I believe the Government must now accept its legal liability for what happened - they should also take the pharmaceutical companies who irresponsibly manufactured the products to task".

Approximately 3,891 people in the UK (mostly Haemophiliacs) were infected with HIV and/or Hepatitis C by a commercial plasma-derived Medicine known as Factor VIII.

Factor VIII was made by pooling, or, mixing together many thousands of plasma donations, the plasma was processed, boxed and shipped as Factor VIII Concentrate. Most of it came from abroad and there were various US pharmaceutical companies who sold these products during the 1970's and 1980's including Bayer.

The tragedy of infected Factor VIII is the largest loss-of-life incident in modern Britain with total Haemophiliac deaths confirmed as surpassing 1,500.

The hearings beginning next week will go on until the end of the year and will take place in other cities around the UK including Leeds, Belfast, Edinburgh and Cardiff as well as London. Between September 2018 and now, those infected and affected who wish to, have been working with their legal representatives to provide written statements to the Inquiry. A portion of those who have been providing written statements have been selected to give Oral Evidence to the Inquiry.

The Government has never paid compensation to the victims or their families. Health Minister Jackie Doyle-Price committed to review the limited support that is available months ago. Tweaks to the minimal welfare benefits that some of those impacted can receive are expected, however victims say that anything short of a full acceptance of legal liability will be "another piecemeal gesture" by the Government to buy off bad press while more victims die.

Speaking in September 2016, former Health Minister Lord David Owen said "Government has doled out as little money as they can get away with, in public opinion at the time, so that it takes it off the headlines of the newspapers, and then it comes back again and they do a little bit more".

JJ Evans

Factor 8

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