

UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak and Senior Ministers to testify at Infected Blood Inquiry this week

Senior members of the British Government, including Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, will testify under oath at the Infected Blood Inquiry in London this week.

LONDON, UK, July 23, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Chaired by former high court judge Sir Brian Langstaff, the [Infected Blood Inquiry](#) is the largest ever held in the UK. Since 2017, it has been investigating how thousands were infected with Hepatitis C and HIV through the use of infected Factor VIII blood products in the 1970s and 1980s. The deadly products were manufactured by companies such as Bayer and Revlon Healthcare.



Infected Blood Scandal Campaigners outside The Cabinet Office

In April this year, the Inquiry published its final recommendations on compensation for victims and bereaved families. However, the Government still hasn't responded to Langstaff's recommendations despite one victim dying every four days and most bereaved families having received no compensation at all.

First to give evidence on Monday 24th July will be House of Commons Leader Penny Mordaunt, who in a letter to Rishi Sunak (then Chancellor) in 2020 said "I believe it to be inevitable that the government will need to provide substantial compensation".

On Tuesday 25th, the Inquiry will hear from Paymaster General Jeremy Quin and Department of Health & Social Care Permanent Secretary Shona Dunn. Prime Minister Rishi Sunak will give evidence, under oath, on Wednesday 26th and Chancellor Jeremy Hunt on Friday 28th.

Over the last five years, the Inquiry has uncovered shocking evidence showing that haemophilia

patients were given blood products known to be infected with deadly viruses. Even though the risks were well known in government and medical circles, they remained in use for over a decade. Documents have shown that some patients were subject to product infectivity studies without their knowledge and had infection test results withheld from them. Some victims subsequently infected their partners.

Of the 1,250 patients known to be infected with both Hepatitis C & HIV, only a fifth are thought to be still alive, with most having died of AIDS in the early to mid-nineties.

When running to become Prime Minister in July last year, Rishi Sunak told the Sunday Times: "The contaminated blood scandal is a tragic injustice and we must now match words with action, just as we did with those affected by the Thalidomide scandal. "Survivors and their families need to have certainty now..."

Despite Sunak's strong words last year, victims and bereaved families are yet to see him take action. Written ministerial witness statements published ahead of the hearings indicate the Government may seek to refuse to answer particular questions on "public interest" grounds, with the Inquiry saying that matter may be dealt with in an open hearing on Monday should it be necessary.

Jason Evans (Director of the campaign group [Factor 8](#)) said: "The Infected Blood Inquiry, under the diligent leadership of Sir Brian Langstaff, has tirelessly sought the truth and delivered its final recommendations on compensation in April this year. However, the Government's lack of response to these recommendations is profoundly concerning and reflects a disregard for the suffering endured by the victims and their loved ones. We want the Prime Minister to accept the recommendations fully and lay out a timetable for implementation."

Collins Solicitors represent more than 1,500 victims and family members impacted by the scandal. Des Collins (Senior Partner) said: "The innocent victims of this scandal are simply at their wit's end. The Government has already accepted the moral case for compensation. In his Second Interim Report Sir Brian Langstaff found that "wrongs were done at individual, collective and systemic levels" across Government, leading to appalling outcomes for victims. He also concluded that compensatory relief was both "necessary and urgent" – yet still most of those affected have not received any compensation at all."

All hearings will be streamed live on the Infected Blood Inquiry's YouTube channel from 10am on Monday.

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