



Cabinet Office

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Our Ref: CDL/1922

Sir Brian Langstaff
Infected Blood Inquiry
Fleetbank House
1st Floor
2-6 Salisbury Square
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2 July 2018

Thank you for your letter of 7 June, advising me of the outcome of the consultation and providing me with your recommendations for establishing the terms of reference for the Infected Blood Inquiry. This reply is being sent to meet my obligations under section 5(1) of the Inquiries Act 2005 (the Act).

I am grateful to you for carrying out the consultation about the Inquiry's terms of reference. The number of responses received shows consultation has been an important process. I note the clear desire among respondents for speed; lives continue to be lost because of the tragedy, and you will clearly wish to report as quickly as a thorough examination of the evidence allows.

The terms of reference you set out in your letter address the crucial issues of what happened and why; the impact; the response of Government and others; consent; communication sharing; treatment and support; whether there was a cover-up or lack of candour from the authorities; and responsibilities and recommendations. The Geographical scope of the Inquiry is UK-wide, and having consulted as required by section 27 of the Act with the devolved administrations in Scotland and Wales, and (in the absence of a Northern Ireland Executive) with the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, I am happy to accept your recommendations for the Inquiry's terms of reference without any amendment, and to confirm that the setting up date for this Inquiry will be Monday, 2 July 2018.

I note your proposed approach to the Inquiry. You are right to place emphasis on a transparent process, and regular meetings across the UK will enable the largest possible number of people to engage with and contribute to the Inquiry. You plan to establish groups of experts to provide expertise to the Inquiry that is transparent and subject to scrutiny. You are planning to consult core participants to the Inquiry about whether, in the light of the establishment of expert groups, there is any desire for the appointment of co-determining panel members. I will therefore defer any decision on panel members under the Inquiries Act 2005 until core participants have engaged with the proposed approach. I would be grateful if you would report back to me as soon as possible

after you have taken the view of core participants. As you know, section 7 of the Act allows me to make further appointments to the Inquiry panel at any time during the course of the Inquiry, with your consent.

I hope that as many people as possible will participate in this Inquiry so that you gain as accurate a picture as possible and that the lessons are learned to prevent a similar tragedy happening in the future.

I am grateful for the work that you and your team have put in to the consultation, and I am also grateful to the many people, campaign groups and professional bodies that contributed to the consultation, and most particularly those people directly affected by the tragedy; it is of paramount importance that their views are taken into account by the Inquiry.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of several fluid, connected strokes. The signature is positioned above the printed name.

Rt Hon David Lidington CBE MP