# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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| **TITLE**  | **Infected Blood Inquiry: Initial Response to its Report**  |
| **DATE**  | **20 May 2024**  |
| **BY** | **Eluned Morgan MS, Cabinet Secretary for Health & Social Care**  |

The Infected Blood Inquiry was set up to investigate the scandal of infected blood, blood products and tissues which were supplied by the NHS in the 1970s and 1980s and used as part of NHS treatment across the UK during that time. Tragically, thousands of people were infected with Hepatitis C and HIV as a result. Many people have died; others have suffered a lifetime of ill health.

Sir Brian Langstaff, chair of the inquiry began taking evidence in 2019 and has today published his final report and recommendations into this tragedy. [The Inquiry Report | Infected Blood Inquiry](https://www.infectedbloodinquiry.org.uk/reports/inquiry-report)

This was the worst treatment scandal in the NHS. While it pre-dates devolution, as the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care in Wales, I want to apologise to all those who were infected and have been affected by this terrible tragedy.

I want to place on record my thanks to Sir Brian for his time and compassion shown during the inquiry. I also want to express my admiration for the strength shown by all those who gave evidence about their personal experiences and their families, many of whom campaigned for a public inquiry to take place for decades.

It is right that their voices have been heard and I hope that survivors and their families feel assured that the inquiry has taken account of their evidence and provided answers to their questions and concerns.

The Welsh Government provided access to our records as part of the inquiry and current and former officials and Ministers provided written and oral evidence as required.

We are today receiving a copy of Sir Brian’s report and recommendations, which we will consider carefully, and in detail. We remain committed to working on a four-nations basis to respond to the inquiry’s recommendations, with a view to achieving the best possible outcomes for beneficiaries and their families in Wales.

The debate in the Senedd on 7 May confirmed our position in relation to the UK Government’s proposal to set up an arm’s length body to provide the vehicle by which compensation could be paid. Welsh Government officials will work with the UK Government to ensure Welsh beneficiaries and their families are recompensed in keeping with the inquiry’s interim report on compensation.

Our Wales Infected Blood Support Scheme (WIBSS) continues to provide support for known beneficiaries and their families. For people who believe they may have been infected before 1992, we have worked with the Welsh Blood Service to help answer any queries they may have.

They can also access a home testing kit from the Public Health Wales website.

I will provide further updates to the Senedd once we have had an opportunity to consider the inquiry’s recommendations.