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The Rt Hon Theresa May MP
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
Westminster
London
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11 October 2018

Ref. Infected Blood Inquiry

Dear Prime Minister,

We write as charities who support those affected by infected blood and blood products in Scotland. We were strongly represented at the Preliminary Hearings of the Infected Blood Inquiry, including at the moving Commemoration Ceremony which the Minister for the Cabinet Office the Rt. Hon David Lidington CBE MP attended. We are writing regarding two issues that arise from those three days.

Firstly, we were disappointed that while you were, correctly, responsible for calling the Inquiry itself, you were not present at any part of the Inquiry Preliminary Hearings or opening Commemoration.

Secondly, we have made clear to Scottish Government the reasons why we believe they should be a core participant. We have left them in no doubt of our disappointment that they have not yet signed up or agreed with the Inquiry and the Cabinet Office the arrangements under which they will participate.

RESPECTING THOSE SURVIVORS FROM THE BLOOD PRODUCTS DISASTER.

We have viewed your personal attendance and involvement in other disaster memorials and note the UK Governments statement that the Inquiry is a priority. Therefore, it was a considerable disappointment to those Scots following the Inquiry that you did not attend the Infected Blood Inquiry Preliminary Hearings or Commemoration.

When Haemophilia Scotland initiated and hosted a Memorial for those in Scotland who had been infected and affected, it was attended by the First Minister, Deputy First Minister, Cabinet Secretary for Health, and the Minister for Public Health. Indeed, the First Minister spoke at it. Therefore, we trust you will appreciate why we believe a similar demonstration of support from you personally was necessary. After so many years of campaigning in the teeth of opposition from Central Government, infected and affected people need reassurance that there is sufficient political will to make the Inquiry the priority it needs to be and respond adequately to any recommendations it makes.

While the opportunity afforded by the Commemoration in Church House has passed, we suggest that other opportunities are available to demonstrate your interest. For example, you could issue an invitation to some of the key campaigners and charities to meet with you in person, as you have in



the case of other disasters. No previous Prime Minister has done so despite the long decades of opportunities throughout the campaign. The sheer scale of the numbers affected, compared to other disasters, or in your own words 'scandal that should never have happened', surely justify affording those affected this opportunity.

The timing of such a meeting might coincide with the first evidential oral hearings. A meeting would allow you to hear first-hand of what immediate steps might be possible to assist those affected and affirm the Government's expression of 'priority'.

We have been in touch with other haemophilia charities based in Wales, Northern Ireland, and England in this respect.

RESOLVING THE INVOLVEMENT OF THE SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT AS A CORE PARTICIPANT.

We were very surprised and shocked to learn last week that Scottish Government had not yet signed up as a core participant. This despite the Scottish Government Minister for Health writing to you on October 27th 2017 confirming their wish to become core participants.

On our return to Scotland we immediately met with the Scottish Minister for Public Health, Sport and Wellbeing, Joe Fitzpatrick MSP, and put to him in person our deep disappointment at the Scottish Government's failure to sign up as a core participant despite Welsh and Northern Ireland Governments having done so. We have discovered that since October 2017 there has been subsequent correspondence with the Cabinet Office. We are continuing to press and work with Scottish Government to secure their full involvement and now have their written assurance that they will become a core participant of the Inquiry. We view very dimly any possibility of a dispute between Scottish Government and UK Government over the financing of Scottish Government involvement resulting in infected and affected people being treated disrespectfully or being used as a political ping-pong ball. We expect the UK Government to do everything in its power to resolve any outstanding differences and to facilitating the positive involvement of the Scottish Government in the Infected Blood Inquiry as a Core Participant as soon as possible.

We have welcomed the inclusive approach taken by Sir Brian Langstaff and his Inquiry team to date. In the spirit they have established we trust that you will respond positively to the constructive proposals we have set out above.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bill Wright".

Bill Wright
Chair, Haemophilia Scotland

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John Rice".

John Rice
Convener, Scottish Infected Blood Forum