



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Rt Hon Theresa May MP
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London
SW1A 2AA

7th July 2017

Dear Prime Minister,

In light of recent revelations about alleged criminal conduct, we are writing as leaders of all the main UK political parties to urge you to call a Hillsborough-style inquiry into the contaminated blood scandal.

You will know that it has now been over 45 years since the first people were infected with HIV and Hepatitis from NHS-supplied contaminated blood and blood products. The latest estimates suggest that the scandal has taken the lives of at least 2,400 people. It has caused untold suffering to the loved ones of those affected, many of whom have been left devastated by loss. In terms of deaths caused, it is one of the worst peacetime disasters in our country's history.

We believe those affected have a right to know what went wrong; and why. Whenever public disasters of this kind take place, Government has a fundamental duty to support those affected in getting the answers they need; to disclose everything they know; and to ensure that officials are called to account for their actions. We regret that for many decades the victims of the contaminated blood scandal have been denied this right.

The meagre efforts at investigating this scandal in the UK pale in comparison to those carried out in other countries – where we have seen fines, and even prosecutions, of the officials and companies held responsible. The 2009 Inquiry by Lord Archer of Sandwell QC was not Government-backed, and no Department of Health witnesses gave evidence to it. Its author explicitly stated

that it was no substitute for a full, state-supported inquiry. The 2015 Penrose Inquiry into the scandal in Scotland was also insufficient, because it could not have the power to compel witnesses from outside Scotland and people in the rest of the UK also deserve answers.

As a result, concerning allegations about what officials knew at the time, and when, have been left unaddressed. Amongst many other considerations, it is alleged that victims' medical details were tampered with to hide the cause of their infections; that documents relating to the scandal were destroyed by Department of Health officials as part of a cover-up; and that patients were not told of the risks, with contaminated products not removed from the blood supply, once the dangers became known. It is perhaps telling that the first victims were only promised financial support as an out-of-court settlement following legal action – and then only on condition that they signed waivers preventing them from making further legal challenges.

The revelations in recent months have only added to a long list of concerning allegations, but they now indicate criminal behaviour on the part of at least some officials. These allegations only serve to underline the need for a full public inquiry into the scandal. We therefore urge you to commit to such an inquiry before the Summer Recess.

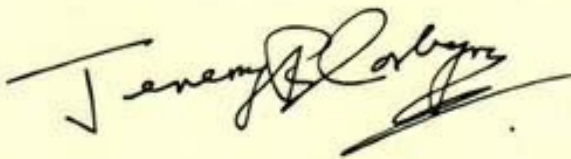
As with the Hillsborough Independent Panel, we ask that this inquiry commit to disclosing any and all documents related to the disaster, through a process managed by the victims of the scandal. It should also compel all parties involved in the scandal to participate fully in the disclosure process, by providing oral and written evidence. It must investigate not just the events leading up to individuals' infection, but the aftermath – including whether individuals' medical details were tampered with; whether people were tested for viruses without their knowledge; and whether enough was done to identify those at risk of infection. Finally, it must also investigate the role of profit-making American firms in supplying blood factor concentrates to people with haemophilia.

As the Home Secretary, and as Prime Minister, you have previously shown commendable support for inquiries to address a range of historic injustices – from the tragedy at Hillsborough to the ongoing investigation into historic child

abuse. Quite rightly, you have always put aside party politics in doing so, focussing instead on what is necessary to achieve justice for those affected.

We ask you to do the same with this scandal. Given the recent revelations, it is now time for all political parties to come together, and give those affected by this scandal a basic right they have long been denied: the right to answers.

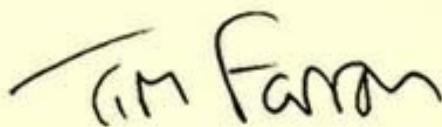
Yours sincerely,



Rt Hon Jeremy Corbyn MP
Leader of the Labour Party and Leader of Her Majesty's Official Opposition



Ian Blackford MP
Leader of the Scottish National Party in the House of Commons



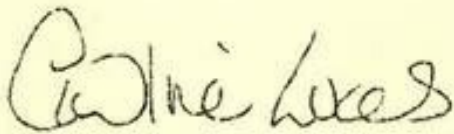
Tim Farron MP
Leader of the Liberal Democrats



Rt Hon Nigel Dodds MP
Leader of the Democratic Unionist Party in the House of Commons



Liz Saville Roberts MP
Plaid Cymru Westminister Leader



Caroline Lucas MP
Co-Leader of the Green Party in England and Wales