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Sir Brian Langstaff
Infected Blood Inquiry
Fleetbank House
1st Floor, 2-6 Salisbury Square
London EC4Y 8AE

15 October 2018

Dear Sir Brian,

Thank you for your letter of 15 October. I was glad to be able to attend the commemoration before the Inquiry's preliminary hearings. The moving and powerful testimony from the infected and affected brought home the terrible human cost of the infected blood scandal. The unprecedented number of core participants to the Inquiry highlights the scale of the tragedy, and underlines the importance of the work you are doing.

Your letter addresses the issue of an inquiry panel. As you know, I deferred making a decision on whether to appoint a panel to sit with you until you were able to take the view of core participants. You did so at the preliminary hearings, and you have now confirmed that there was no demand for such a panel. The expert groups you are establishing will provide openness and transparency across a range of expert opinion, and I therefore accept your recommendation that I should not appoint co-determining panel members.

Your letter also highlighted the concerns expressed during the preliminary hearings about access to and variations in financial and psychological support. The Government will consider these comments and your recommendations carefully and will respond to you as soon as possible.

Rt Hon David Lidington CBE MP