



STATEMENT OF APPROACH: EXPERT GROUPS

Introduction

1. This note sets out the way in which the Inquiry intends to receive expert advice so that all expertise provided to the Inquiry is transparent and subject to scrutiny, and that diverse experts are encouraged to participate, with their work helping to shape its recommendations.
2. Where expertise is relevant to the work of the Inquiry, the Chair of the Inquiry will invite individuals with recognised experience in those particular fields of expertise to accept appointment as experts to the Inquiry.
3. The purpose of experts is to inform and support the Inquiry's work, both to ensure that its factual conclusions are soundly based and to ensure that any recommendations it makes are supported by the weight of the best expert opinion. It is also to provide a resource to participants in the Inquiry as set out below.
4. Experts to the Inquiry will be grouped according to their expertise. The fields of expertise to be covered will include medical ethics, psychosocial impact, statistics and public health and administration as well as clinical specialisms including virology, general medical practice, haematology, hepatology, and transfusion medicine and practice.
5. The Inquiry will operate in a transparent and open way, with expert reports and input given to the Inquiry open to public scrutiny. Such reports will, as evidence, be shared with core participants and will be published on the Inquiry's website, subject only (where relevant) to any redaction necessary to respect patient confidentiality. Where there are significant

Infected Blood Inquiry

Fleetbank House, 1st Floor, 2-6 Salisbury Square, London EC4Y 8AE
contact@infectedbloodinquiry.org.uk
Freephone 08081691377

differences of view or emphasis among the members of a Group these will be tested during oral hearings, with the proponents of the different views responding to questions.

6. Individuals who are appointed as experts are commissioned by the Inquiry to give it their unvarnished, independent, dispassionate, professional opinion. Whoever may have suggested their appointment, the Inquiry looks to receive the best available input each is able to give. None will be expected to act as spokesperson for or representative of any individual or organisation interested in the Inquiry. The Chair will ask a member of each Group to act as its convenor, to coordinate the Group's work and contributions to the Inquiry. In every other respect the convenor will have the same status as the other members in a Group.

How Expert Groups will assist the Inquiry

7. The Expert Groups will be asked to assist the Inquiry in three principal ways; by providing (i) written reports and opinions; (ii) attending oral hearings to give evidence in person, if required; and (iii) responding to specific questions asked of them by the Inquiry or (through the Inquiry Team and convenor) by core participants.
8. The Inquiry Team will provide administrative and other support to the Expert Groups. Initially, the Groups will be expected to propose areas for investigation in line with the terms of reference and list of issues, but will have the freedom to look into or express a view upon any matter they judge may be of importance to the Inquiry.
9. A letter of instruction will detail the parameters of the work the experts have been asked to undertake and the principal questions for their consideration. Each letter of instruction will be published. Experts will also of course be free to raise, and comment on, any matter they believe the Inquiry should consider.

Appointment to Groups

10. Appointment of experts to the Expert Groups will be by invitation from the Chair. The Chair welcomes suggestions, in particular from core participants, as to the experts he should invite to join the Groups. Similarly he welcomes any offers of assistance from individuals who have expertise to offer. In any event, those appointed will need to demonstrate they meet the following criteria:

- Be recognised as a leading member of their profession and be an active practitioner or commentator in their field of expertise;
- Be a good communicator;
- Be willing to facilitate the work of the Inquiry and to assist it in formulating its recommendations;
- Be prepared to express their own independent views.

The UK-wide nature of the Inquiry will be respected in making appointments to the Inquiry as far as practicable.

11. Experts to the Inquiry will be remunerated on a similar basis to expert advisers to parliamentary committees. In addition to covering fees in this way, experts will be reimbursed for any reasonable expenses, such as travel, and, with the advance approval of the Inquiry Team, the Inquiry will cover the reasonable costs of relevant support provided. If called to give oral evidence a daily fee will be paid.

Commissioning of research

12. Where an Expert Group thinks it necessary or desirable in order to assist the Inquiry that original research be conducted, the Inquiry may commission and/or fund this, subject to the obligation of the Chair to have regard to the need to avoid unnecessary cost.

Publications

13. The results of research commissioned in the course of the Inquiry may be published after the research has been provided to the Inquiry itself. Certain material held by the Inquiry, which is confidential in nature, such as personal data, will be restricted and not for publication.

Time commitment

14. These are not full-time appointments. The Chair anticipates that a currently active professional would be able to carry out this work alongside their substantive role: in a similar way to an active role on a professional committee or pursuing personal research interests. Appointment is for the duration of the Inquiry (unless agreed otherwise).

Immunity

15. Experts will report their findings and views at public hearings as required and their written reports will be published on the Inquiry's website. Their responses will be covered by section 37 of the Inquiries Act 2005, which provides immunity from being sued in connection with their work on the Inquiry.

Confidentiality

16. Experts will have such access to the Inquiry database, as they consider necessary or appropriate for their work. The same obligations of confidentiality apply to them in this respect as apply to core participants and their lawyers.