

## **FAQs**

### **What is the Infected Blood Inquiry?**

The Infected Blood Inquiry is an independent public inquiry established to examine the circumstances in which men, women and children treated by the National Health Service in the United Kingdom were given infected blood products between 1970 and 1992.

Publication of the Inquiry's Final Report will take place at Central Hall, Westminster, on 20th May 2024.

You can find out more about the Inquiry on the Infected Blood Inquiry website [here](#).

### **How did this happen?**

Before 1992 some blood donors had HIV and/or Hepatitis C and this resulted in some recipients being infected.

Since 1985 all blood donated in the UK has been routinely tested for HIV and since September 1991 all blood donated in the UK has been routinely tested for Hepatitis C.

### **What should I do if I have an inherited bleeding disorder and require support or advice?**

If you are concerned that you or a loved one may be infected by contaminated blood products or are worried about your risk you can access a free and confidential home test via the Public Health Wales [here](#).

The Bleeding Disorder Network Wales team at the Haemophilia Centre in Cardiff have set up a dedicated phonenumber and email address to support patients and families infected or affected by contaminated blood products in Wales. These will operate Monday to Friday between 9am and 4pm.

To contact the Bleeding Disorder Network Wales team, you can:

Email: [BDNW.InfectedBloodInquiry.Cav@wales.nhs.uk](mailto:BDNW.InfectedBloodInquiry.Cav@wales.nhs.uk)

Telephone: 0800 952 0055

Alternatively, you can contact Haemophilia Wales via [info@haemophiliawales.org](mailto:info@haemophiliawales.org) or through their online contact form [here](#).

### **Who was affected and could I be infected?**

Please be reassured that the risk remains low even if you had a blood transfusion before 1992. However, there is a small chance you may have been infected if you:

- Received a blood transfusion or blood product before September 1991
- Received an organ transplant before 1992

**I received a blood transfusion or blood product before September 1991, or an organ transplant before 1992. Do I need to take any action?**

The risk is low if you:

- Received a blood transfusion or blood product before September 1991
- Received an organ transplant before 1992

However, if you are concerned that you or a loved one may be infected by contaminated blood products or are worried about your risk you can access a free and confidential home test via the Public Health Wales [here](#).

**I am worried about a blood transfusion I received before 1992. What should I do?**

The risk of contracting an infection following a blood transfusion is very low but if you are concerned about your risk you can access a free and confidential test for Hepatitis C and HIV from Public Health Wales [here](#).

Further information about Hepatitis C is available on the Public Health Wales website [here](#).

You can also check your symptoms on the NHS 111 Wales Symptom Checker [here](#).

**I have recently received a blood transfusion. Am I at risk?**

All blood donations in the UK are routinely tested for a range of potential infections, including Hepatitis B, C and E, and HIV. This means the likelihood of contracting an infection from a blood transfusion is extremely low.

Since 1985 all blood donated in the UK has been routinely tested for HIV and since September 1991 all blood donated in the UK has been routinely tested for Hepatitis C.

You can find out more information on the safety and screening of blood on the Blood Health National Oversight Group website [here](#) or NHS Blood and Transplant website [here](#).

### **Is it safe to receive a blood transfusion, blood product or donated organ now?**

Blood and blood components are donated by healthy, unpaid volunteers and the risk of an infected unit getting into the UK blood supply is extremely low.

Donors complete a health questionnaire every time they donate and blood donations are tested every time for a range of potential infections. This makes the chance of transmitting any infection extremely low.

Since 1985 all blood donated in the UK has been routinely tested for HIV and since September 1991 all blood donated in the UK has been routinely tested for Hepatitis C.

You can find out more information on the safety and screening of blood on the Blood Health National Oversight Group website [here](#) or NHS Blood and Transplant website [here](#).

Before 1992 donated organs were not routinely screened for Hepatitis C and there is a very small risk a donated organ from someone with Hepatitis C could spread the infection.

### **Myself or a loved one is infected or affected. What support is available?**

#### **Bleeding Disorder Network Wales**

If you would like support regarding any issues raised by the Infected Blood Inquiry, please contact the Bleeding Disorder Network Wales team at the Haemophilia Centre in Cardiff and Vale University Health Board.

They have set up a dedicated phone line and e-mail to support patients and their families affected and infected by contaminated blood products across Wales. These will operate Monday to Friday between 9am and 4pm.

Email: [BDNW.InfectedBloodInquiry.Cav@wales.nhs.uk](mailto:BDNW.InfectedBloodInquiry.Cav@wales.nhs.uk)

Telephone: 0800 952 0055

The team will respond to your call and provide as much help as possible tailored to your individual needs. You will be directed accordingly to appropriate services to include psychological support, social support and

wellbeing support. They will also be able to signpost you to access medical records.

Alternatively, you can contact Haemophilia Wales via [info@haemophiliawales.org](mailto:info@haemophiliawales.org) or through their online contact form [here](#).

### **Wales Infected Blood Support Scheme (WIBSS)**

The Wales Infected Blood Support Scheme (WIBSS) aims to provide support to people who have been infected with Hepatitis C and/or HIV as a result of NHS treatment with blood in Wales.

It aims to provide a streamlined financial payment service, a welfare advice service and a psychology and wellbeing service for Welsh beneficiaries and their families.

England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales run their own individual registered schemes. In Wales, anyone who was administered with infected transfusion in a Welsh hospital, regardless of current residence, can apply to be on the Wales Infected Blood Support Scheme.

To be registered on a scheme, you will have:

- To complete an application form which you can find on the WIBSS website;
- To have had the application endorsed by a medical professional;
- To have demonstrated evidence of a transfusion delivered by the NHS in Wales prior to September 1991;
- To provide evidence of Hepatitis C and / or HIV infection.

If you think you may be eligible to apply for support, please contact the team on 02921 500 900 or email [wibss@wales.nhs.uk](mailto:wibss@wales.nhs.uk).

The UK Government is establishing a single Infected Blood Compensation Scheme to oversee all relevant compensation claims for England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

As the work to establish the single scheme progresses, the Wales Infected Blood Support Scheme will continue to manage the service and is there to support you. Please follow the WIBSS website for further updates [here](#).

### **Infected Blood Inquiry**

The Infected Blood Inquiry is also funding a confidential support service for anyone affected by treatment with infected blood or blood products. This is run by a team from the British Red Cross who have been working with the Inquiry since September 2018.

You can contact the confidential support service directly by calling 0800 458 9473 or 0203 417 0280 at these times:

- Monday between 11am and 1pm
- Wednesday between 7pm and 9pm
- Friday between 2pm and 4pm

More information can be found at on the Infected Blood Inquiry website [here](#).

### **Should I continue to give blood?**

The Welsh Blood Service oversees services in Wales and donating blood is one of the most selfless gifts you can give to another person.

By giving blood, you are potentially saving lives and helping patients with specific conditions recover and lead a normal life.

You can find out more about giving blood at the Welsh Blood Service website [here](#).