

➤ INTRODUCTION



I took up my appointment as Chair of the Inquiry in January 2009. At the end of March, there was a preliminary hearing, where I outlined how I intended to approach the work of the Inquiry.

We are currently in the first phase of our work and this phase will culminate with the publication of my preliminary report. The aim will be to establish as much as possible of the factual history, to identify the developing state of medical and scientific knowledge and to identify the controversial facts and issues requiring further investigation. Over recent months, the Inquiry team has been gathering together documents from various sources and, due to the volume of materials involved, this process will continue to take some time.

The team has also been taking statements, both from people who have been affected and from their relatives. I am grateful to those who have come forward. It is only through the participation of those who have been affected and their relatives that I will be able fully to examine the particular adverse consequences of infection with HIV or Hepatitis C for those treated by the NHS

in Scotland. The invitation to come forward to make a statement is still open. If you are someone who contracted Hepatitis C and/or HIV through receiving blood and/or blood products administered by the NHS in Scotland, or if you are a relative of someone who has been affected, I would encourage you to come forward and make a statement as soon as possible. As a practical matter, this phase of evidence gathering will have to be concluded by the end of May 2010. I intend to publish my preliminary report during 2010. We will then seek a response to its findings before proceeding to hold public hearings into the issues that have been identified as requiring further investigation.

The purpose of this bulletin is to provide you with a progress report and an insight into the work of the Inquiry team. Over the course of the Inquiry I will issue bulletins from time to time. The latest news is posted on the website. Meanwhile, if you have any questions, I encourage you to contact Maria McCann, the Secretary to the Inquiry. Maria's contact details are at the end of this bulletin.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'C. Penrose'.

The Right Honourable Lord Penrose

➤ TERMS OF REFERENCE

The terms of reference for the Inquiry set out the scope and detail of Lord Penrose's investigation. The full terms of reference can be found at: www.penroseinquiry.org.uk/terms-of-reference. Or by contacting the Secretary to the Inquiry. Please see contact details at the end of the bulletin.

➤ INQUIRY TEAM



Laura Dunlop QC
Senior Counsel



Euan Mackenzie
Junior Counsel



Nick Gardiner
Junior Counsel



Douglas Tullis
Solicitor to the Inquiry



Louyse
McConnell-Trevillion
Deputy Solicitor to
the Inquiry



Maria McCann
Secretary to the Inquiry



Diane Barr
Deputy Secretary
to the Inquiry



Neil MacFarlane
Document and
Evidence Manager



Oliver Stempt
Deputy Document
Manager



Professor
Oliver James
Medical Assessor

There are currently fourteen paralegals and two administrative support staff within the Inquiry Team.

➤ SPECIFIC DEATHS

As part of the Inquiry, Lord Penrose will investigate five specific deaths. The names of the deceased are: Reverend David Black; Mrs Eileen O'Hara; Mr Alexander Black Laing; Mr Neil Mullen and Mr Victor Tamburrini. The investigations into these deaths are ongoing.

➤ WITNESSES

In June 2009, Lord Penrose invited those patients who contracted Hepatitis C and/or HIV through receiving blood and/or blood products administered by the NHS in Scotland, or family members of such patients, to come forward and contact the Inquiry to provide written witness statements. Lord Penrose has emphasised the dependence of the Inquiry on the support and help of those affected and their families to provide him with evidence. Their contributions will be the best way the Inquiry will have to assess the impact and consequences of infection to individuals. So far 85 witnesses, who fall within the Inquiry's terms of reference, have come forward and have provided, or are in the process of providing, a written statement. 49 of those witnesses are patients, with approximately 50% of those identifying their source of infection as blood products and 50% identifying their source of infection as a blood transfusion. If you have been affected, or are related to someone who has been affected, please come forward as soon as possible if you wish to make a statement. Lord Penrose intends to conclude this phase of evidence gathering by the end of May 2010. Please see contact details below.

➤ CONFIDENTIALITY

If you contact the Inquiry, or make a statement, your personal data will remain confidential. If you have any concerns on this issue, the Inquiry Team will be happy to discuss these with you. Making a statement does not mean that you have to appear at the public hearings. Appearance at the public hearings for those who contracted hepatitis C and/or HIV through receiving blood and/or blood products administered by the NHS in Scotland, or their relatives, will be on a voluntary basis, and only if invited to appear by Lord Penrose. If you would like more information, please contact the details below.

➤ DOCUMENTS

The records of the Scottish Government and the NHS in Scotland form an important part of the evidence available to the Inquiry. The Scottish Government and the Scottish National Blood Transfusion Service have both produced substantial quantities of documents in response to Orders issued by Lord Penrose.

Reading and analysing this material is one of the main tasks in this first phase of our work. To help with organising the volume of documents we have received, the Inquiry is using a secure database that has been specifically designed to support this kind of work. Scanned images of all documents are loaded into our database, which can be searched for documents of a particular type or containing specific words or phrases. Documents can be tagged and put into sets for sharing with participants or for publication at later stages of the Inquiry. The tools provided by the database are a great help to the Inquiry Team, however they are only a support to the essential task, which is actually reading and analysing every individual document.

So far nearly 40,000 documents have been loaded into the database and over 25,000 of these have been given at least a preliminary reading by members of the Inquiry Team. Our current estimate is that the database will eventually contain at least 65,000 documents.

Contact us

If you would like to make a statement, or have any questions, please contact:

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Penrose Inquiry
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Edinburgh
EH3 7SW
Telephone: 0131 528 5221
E-mail: Maria.Mccann@penroseinquiry.org.uk

The Penrose Inquiry is an independent public inquiry under the Inquiries Act 2005, chaired by the Rt Hon Lord Penrose.