

Infected Blood Inquiry

[Prof Brian Edwards](#)

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Divergent Voices.

Two House of Lords ministers, who had blood in their ministerial portfolios, give evidence.

Lord Horam had been in favour of some form of support for patients but, in the words of Counsel, had been sent to the headmaster's study for pressing too hard.

Gerald Malone another minister also had *“over spoken and got a bit carried away and to be put back in his box”*. Clearly there were divergent views within the ministerial team although all toed the government line in public.

In October 1996 Lord Horam had told the Haemophilia Society that whilst he had great sympathy with patients who had been injured, he had had to conclude that the funds available to the NHS were best spent on direct patient care.

Patients had received the best treatment available in the light of the medical knowledge at the time. Behind the scenes Lord Horam continued to explore the possibilities for support [including Lottery funding]. He managed to get a letter reiterating the standard line that no

compensation could be contemplated when no negligence could be shown to add the phrase “we are always ready to listen to further evidence. He had secured a small crack in an otherwise rock-solid policy. Or perhaps the civil servants, who approved this addition, could see that the government line was increasingly unsustainable!

The Chair intervenes at one point as evidence is presented about government, and particularly Treasury, concerns of creating an uncomfortable precedent.

“In general flood gate arguments are the last refuge of a desperate defendant”.

Lady Hooper is taken across much of the same ground. She had stuck to the government line. When *ex-grata* payments had eventually been agreed it was a special arrangement that was to be strictly ring fenced. She had been briefed on the conclusions reached by expert committees but not about any divergent voices.

Next Lord Waldegrave.