# Andy Burnham criticises slow compensation rollout for UK contaminated blood scandal victims



The ongoing plight of victims of the UK's contaminated blood scandal has drawn renewed attention as the Mayor of Greater Manchester, Andy Burnham, expressed deep concern over the slow rollout of compensation. More than a year has passed since a comprehensive inquiry report lamented the “chilling” cover-up surrounding the scandal, yet many victims remain uninformed about their compensation status. This devastating chapter in healthcare history saw over 30,000 individuals infected with HIV and hepatitis C through contaminated blood products supplied by the National Health Service (NHS) between the 1970s and early 1990s. Over 3,000 have died as a result, leaving survivors grappling with significant and lifelong health challenges.

Burnham, who has been a strong advocate for the victims, highlighted the frustrations felt by those awaiting compensation during a recent appearance on BBC Radio 4’s Week In Westminster. He stated, “It pains me” to witness the ongoing delays and growing uncertainty for victims who initially hoped that the inquiry's conclusions would trigger swift action from the government. The Infected Blood Compensation Authority (IBCA), responsible for disbursing compensation, reported only 106 payments totalling over £96 million as of early May. The mayor described the current compensation process as a “lottery,” suggesting that awards should instead reflect individual needs and the severity of health conditions.

The inquiry's findings were stark. It revealed systemic failures within the NHS, including inadequate donor screening and an alarming culture of defensiveness. Historical knowledge of the risks associated with contaminated blood products was known long before the crisis escalated, yet assurances of safety persisted well into this dark period. Other countries, such as Canada and Japan, have implemented compensation measures and reforms in similar circumstances, but delays in the UK have exacerbated the toll, leaving many victims and families without necessary support. The estimated cost of compensation in the UK could eventually reach £10 billion, reflecting the scale of the injustices faced.

Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's administration has acknowledged the moral failures of the past, with promises of unlimited compensation for victims. An initial interim payment of £210,000 is set to be distributed to priority victims within a 90-day timeframe. However, despite the government's efforts to announce the compensation scheme, many families continue to experience anxiety over delays. Burnham urged for a criminal investigation alongside compensation efforts, asserting, “It has got to be the case that alongside the compensation, there has to be criminal investigation.” He further noted that misleading assurances and untrue briefings were given to him during his tenure as health secretary, perpetuating the systemic failures that characterise this disgraceful chapter in the NHS's history.

As the government attempts to move forward, complications remain. With plans to extend compensation to the families of those who have died from the disease, there is hope for greater inclusivity in the compensation schemes. Yet, anger persists among victims and their families over the pace of these developments, especially after the inquiry's recommendations for immediate action were inadequately addressed by the government. The newly formed IBCA is making strides, but the stark reality remains that, nearly five decades after this catastrophic chapter began, too many victims continue to suffer the consequences of historical negligence.

In conclusion, the long-awaited resolution for victims of the infected blood scandal remains a contentious issue. As advocates such as Burnham push for expedited and fair treatment for all affected parties, the government faces mounting pressure to ensure that the lessons learned from this tragedy lead to a genuine commitment to accountability and justice.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/infected-blood-victims-left-in-dark-over-compensation-andy-burnham-warns-4IGFZF7CDNO4VKXK4AJEWYEKYY/), [[2]](https://www.ft.com/content/a174bd70-0bc3-460b-b4bb-3a6a7e2cc712), [[4]](https://www.ft.com/content/7a2e16f2-9e84-402c-9f5e-741ffbd84755)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/infected-blood-victims-left-in-dark-over-compensation-andy-burnham-warns-4IGFZF7CDNO4VKXK4AJEWYEKYY/), [[3]](https://apnews.com/article/4ca631d06569230d905711b21dab33cb), [[5]](https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/uk-announces-compensation-package-blood-scandal-victims-2024-05-21/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[2]](https://www.ft.com/content/a174bd70-0bc3-460b-b4bb-3a6a7e2cc712), [[5]](https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/uk-announces-compensation-package-blood-scandal-victims-2024-05-21/), [[6]](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/first-compensation-offered-to-infected-blood-victims-after-decades-of-injustice)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/infected-blood-victims-left-in-dark-over-compensation-andy-burnham-warns-4IGFZF7CDNO4VKXK4AJEWYEKYY/), [[3]](https://apnews.com/article/4ca631d06569230d905711b21dab33cb), [[6]](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/first-compensation-offered-to-infected-blood-victims-after-decades-of-injustice)
* Paragraph 5 – [[2]](https://www.ft.com/content/a174bd70-0bc3-460b-b4bb-3a6a7e2cc712), [[4]](https://www.ft.com/content/7a2e16f2-9e84-402c-9f5e-741ffbd84755), [[7]](https://www.theguardian.com/society/2025/feb/02/payouts-for-victims-of-uk-infected-blood-scandal-to-be-extended-to-families)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/infected-blood-victims-left-in-dark-over-compensation-andy-burnham-warns-4IGFZF7CDNO4VKXK4AJEWYEKYY/), [[5]](https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/uk-announces-compensation-package-blood-scandal-victims-2024-05-21/), [[7]](https://www.theguardian.com/society/2025/feb/02/payouts-for-victims-of-uk-infected-blood-scandal-to-be-extended-to-families)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/infected-blood-victims-left-in-dark-over-compensation-andy-burnham-warns-4IGFZF7CDNO4VKXK4AJEWYEKYY/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.ft.com/content/a174bd70-0bc3-460b-b4bb-3a6a7e2cc712> - An article from the Financial Times discusses the UK's contaminated blood scandal, describing it as the worst therapeutic disaster in NHS history. Between the 1970s and early 1990s, over 30,000 individuals were infected with HIV and hepatitis C due to contaminated blood products. The inquiry revealed systemic failures, including inadequate donor screening and exposure of patients to unacceptable risks. The report calls for appropriate compensation, a review of NHS culture to prioritize patient safety, and government reforms to eliminate 'institutional defensiveness'. Similar measures were taken earlier in countries like Canada, Ireland, Japan, and Denmark. Delays in the UK have amplified infections, deaths, and costs, with compensation now projected to reach £10 billion.
3. <https://apnews.com/article/4ca631d06569230d905711b21dab33cb> - The Associated Press reports that victims of the UK's infected blood scandal are set to begin receiving final compensation payments this year. The government announced these payments following a report revealing that officials and doctors exposed patients to risks by providing contaminated blood products between the 1970s and early 1990s. Approximately 30,000 people were infected, and 3,000 died due to this negligence. Prime Minister Rishi Sunak apologized for the decades-long moral failure and allocated £11.8 billion for compensation. Priority victims will receive an additional interim payment of £210,000 within 90 days, with families and friends also eligible for compensation. Some families have yet to receive payments, despite an initial £100,000 interim payment made in 2022.
4. <https://www.ft.com/content/7a2e16f2-9e84-402c-9f5e-741ffbd84755> - The Financial Times reports on the UK's contaminated blood scandal, highlighting a public inquiry's findings of a 'chilling' and 'pervasive' cover-up. Between the 1970s and early 1990s, approximately 30,000 people were infected with HIV and hepatitis C due to contaminated blood products. The inquiry revealed that knowledge of infection risks dated back to World War II, yet misleading assurances continued. It also uncovered unethical experimentation on patients without consent and delays in informing patients of their test results. The final report condemned the culture of defensiveness within the NHS and government, including deliberate document destruction. It called for a comprehensive victim compensation scheme within a year and acknowledged the government's previous interim compensation of £400 million. Prime Minister Rishi Sunak issued an apology and promised details on compensation soon. Despite the government's support for the inquiry, the report highlighted uncertainty about the lessons learned from the scandal.
5. <https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/uk-announces-compensation-package-blood-scandal-victims-2024-05-21/> - Reuters reports that the UK government announced interim payments of £210,000 for victims of a contaminated blood scandal, which infected over 30,000 people with hepatitis and HIV through the National Health Service in the 1970s and 1980s. The interim payments precede a comprehensive compensation scheme set to commence later in the year. A recent public inquiry, led by Brian Langstaff, highlighted grievous failures by the state and medical practitioners, responsible for over 3,000 deaths. Prime Minister Rishi Sunak issued an apology, promising unlimited compensation. A new administrative body, chaired by senior lawyer Robert Francis, will manage the process, which is expected to ultimately cost over £10 billion. Compensation extends to deceased victims' estates and their caregivers.
6. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/first-compensation-offered-to-infected-blood-victims-after-decades-of-injustice> - The UK government has reached a historic milestone by offering the first compensation payments to victims of the infected blood scandal. Ten individuals have been offered compensation totaling over £13 million, with 25 more invited to claim. Payments are being made by the Infected Blood Compensation Authority (IBCA) as part of a new compensation service. This follows commitments to deliver compensation after allocating £11.8 billion in the Budget. The IBCA continues to work with the infected blood community to improve and grow the compensation service, aiming to open up the compensation service wider in the New Year.
7. <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2025/feb/02/payouts-for-victims-of-uk-infected-blood-scandal-to-be-extended-to-families> - The Guardian reports that payouts for victims of the UK's infected blood scandal are set to be extended to families. More than 3,000 people who were infected have since died. There is anger at the delays in awarding compensation to people who were infected and their families after Sir Brian Langstaff, who chaired the public inquiry into the scandal, recommended in April 2023 that a compensation scheme should be set up immediately. The Tory government rejected the advice, waiting for Langstaff’s final report in May last year before announcing the scheme. The new laws due to be laid in parliament shortly and passed by the end of March will mean that the compensation scheme is extended to enable partners, parents, children, and siblings of an eligible infected person to apply for compensation. The amount of the payouts will depend on the individual’s relationship with an infected person and the severity of the infection. The Infected Blood Compensation Authority (IBCA) was set up last May and is on track to pay out more than £100 million to claimants by the end of March. This is, however, less than 1% of the £11.8 billion allocated in the autumn budget to compensate the infected and the affected.