

Wales Infected Blood Support Scheme

Annual Report 2024-25









Wales Infected Blood Support Scheme (WIBSS)

VELINDRE UNIVERSITY NHS TRUST

THROUGH

NHS WALES SHARED SERVICES PARTNERSHIP (NWSSP)

AND

VELINDRE CANCER CENTRE (VCC)

ANNUAL REPORT 2024/2025











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Introduction

Established in October 2017, the Wales Infected Blood Support Scheme (WIBSS) aims to provide support to people who have been infected with Hepatitis C and/or HIV following treatment with NHS blood, blood products or tissue.

Taking over from the existing UK schemes (Eileen Trust, Macfarlane Trust, MFET Ltd, Skipton Fund and Caxton Foundation), now referred to as the Alliance House Organisations (AHOs), WIBSS aims to provide both a streamlined financial payment service and personalised support for Welsh beneficiaries. WIBSS also offers a dedicated Welfare Rights Service and a Psychology and Well-being Service.

As of 31 March 2025, WIBSS supports 231 beneficiaries, including bereaved spouses and partners. The welfare team and wellbeing and psychological team support is also provided to wider family members of our beneficiaries.

The Purpose of the Report



To provide an update on the finance and support services provided during 2024-25 as part of the Wales Infected Blood Support Scheme.



To detail the proactive work carried out by WIBSS during 2024-25



To look ahead to WIBSS priorities relating to 2025-26.

Key matters arising during 2024-25

The way in which WIBSS services are provided returned to normal during 2023-24 following some required adjustments, resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. Although staff continued agile working, home visits and face-to-face appointments were reinstated. There were no major changes to the service, but the publication of the Infected Blood Inquiry Report on 20 May 2024, resulted in significant additional work for the team, including payment of additional interim compensation payments and the introduction of the Infected Blood Interim Estates Payments in October 2024. The setting up of the Infected Blood Compensation Authority (IBCA) by the UK Government, to administer the compensation payments, also involved significant involvement of the team.

Public Inquiry - The Infected Blood Inquiry

This is an independent public statutory 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 and infected blood products, since 1970. The Inquiry is Chaired by Sir Brian Langstaff.

WIBSS co-operated fully with the inquiry and responded to all Rule 9 requests within the required timeframe.

On 5 April 2023 the Chair published an interim report on compensation. The UK Government and devolved administrations stated that they would consider the recommendations in this report, alongside the recommendations made in the final report.

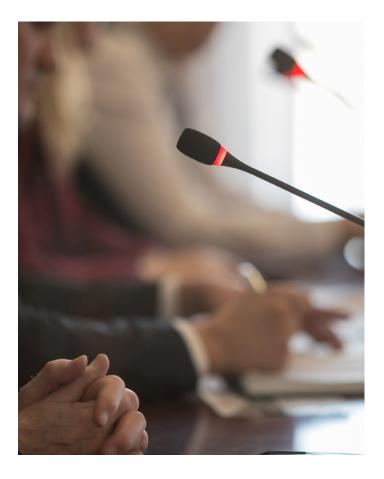
Second Interim Report | Infected Blood Inquiry

On 3 February 2023, the Inquiry Chair closed the Inquiry's public hearings, explaining that he would now be focused on writing his report. Some additional hearings were held in July 2023.

The Inquiry's final report was published on 20 May 2024.

The Inquiry Report | Infected Blood Inquiry

On 21 May, the UK Government announced a Compensation Scheme and the setting up of a new Arm's Length Body (ALB) to administer the compensation scheme, called the Infected Blood Compensation Authority (IBCA).





Infected Blood Compensation Scheme Summary - GOV.UK

The WIBSS website was updated with a link to the Infected Blood Compensation Authority landing page, the Final Report of the Infected Blood Inquiry Report and a link to information for the "worried well".

Publication of the final report and the announcement about the compensation scheme resulted in a significant increase in the number of calls to the WIBSS team from people known and unknown to us.

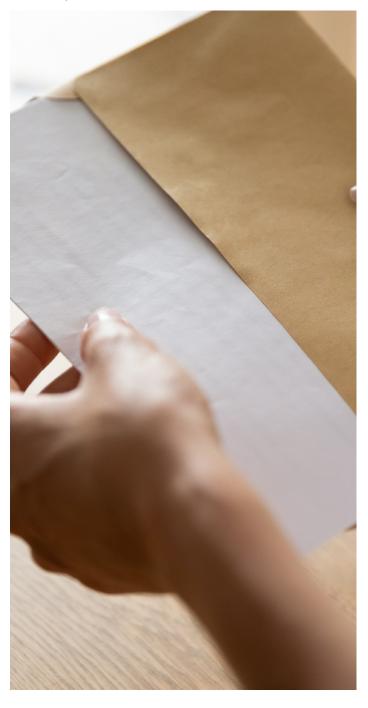
A Senedd debate was held on 4 June, in response to the Inquiry report and to discuss how it would apply to Wales. During the debate, there was a call for Welsh Government to agree to continue to make the regular payments to beneficiaries, even after they have received compensation, as some of the younger Hep C Stage 1 beneficiaries feel they may be worse off after the compensation is paid.

On 21st May, the Welsh Government, on behalf of the UK Government, asked WIBSS, to make further interim compensation payments of £210,000 before the end of June. These payments were to living "infected" beneficiaries only. Letters were sent to those affected.

Before the payments were made a second letter was issued to beneficiaries to explain what the payment was for and how it will impact any future compensatory amount. The payments were not to be means tested or carry any tax implications.

Payments relating to Hep B were to be picked up by the new Compensation Authority. The Welsh Government confirmed no changes would be made to the current criteria of WIBSS. WIBSS continued to consider applications from those who met the criteria of the scheme. As agreed, across the 4 UK Governments, all the support schemes closed to new applications on 31 March 25.

In August, the UK Government laid regulations to establish the Infected Blood Compensation Scheme, as required by the Victims and Prisoners Act 2024. These regulations will give the Infected Blood Compensation Authority (IBCA) the powers to pay compensation through the Core Route to infected persons, both living and deceased, as set out in the Infected Blood Compensation Scheme Summary: August 2024. The Government expected the IBCA to begin making payments to infected persons by the end of 2024, and this expectation was achieved.

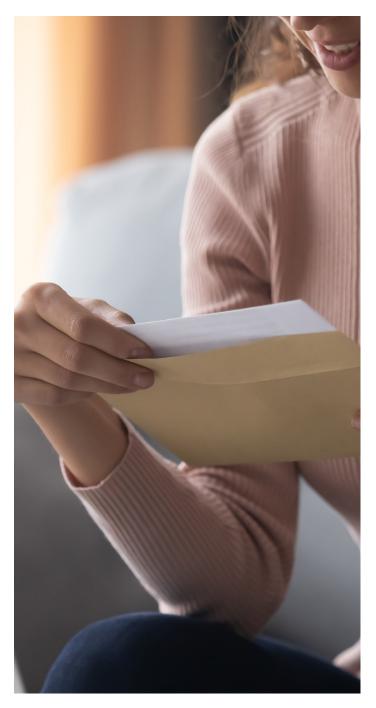


On 24 October, IBCA launched the Infected Blood Interim Estates Payments (IBIEP). This was for estates of people who died when registered with a current Infected Blood Support Scheme (IBSS) or an Alliance House Scheme on or before 17 April 2024; the person who died, their bereaved partner or their estate had not already received an interim compensation payment of £100,000, and the person was living in the UK or Republic of Ireland at the time of their death. The Welsh Government, on behalf of the UK Government, asked WIBSS to administer these applications for those estates where the infected deceased was infected in Wales.

A total of 37 Estates applications were processed to 31st March 2025. 23 were successful, totalling £2,300,000, 6 were rejected due to ineligibility and a further 8 were in progress as at the year-end date.

In addition to this, WIBSS has regular meetings with Welsh Government, UK Cabinet Office and IBCA regarding the setting up and administration of the new body. Three data sharing agreements have been put in place to allow us to access the legacy data, the probate data and to share our data with IBCA, to enable it to start processing the compensation payments. In November, we wrote of all our beneficiaries to inform them that to enable the compensation service to be as simple as possible, WIBSS would share all the information we hold about recipients of WIBSS payments with IBCA. We stated the information we would share with IBCA would include details such as: name, address and contact information, the type and severity of infection, and payments received to date. We also offered them the option to notify us if they did not want their data to be shared.

WIBSS is a member of the Welsh Government's IBI Oversight Group which is tasked with ensuring that the recommendations are implemented in Wales where necessary. This includes 4 nations working. As part of this work WIBSS and Welsh Government meet with Haemophilia Wales regularly to hear firsthand the issues and concerns of our beneficiaries and work together to resolve these or escalate to the 4 nations policy meetings.





Governance Group

The Governance Group monitors the operational management of WIBSS and provides governance, leadership and accountability for the scheme, on behalf of Welsh Government (WG), through Velindre NHS Trust.

The WIBSS Governance Group (VCC and NWSSP) is authorised to:

- Investigate or have investigated any activity within its Terms of Reference, and in performing these duties, shall have the right, at all reasonable times, to inspect any books, records or documents of the Trust, relevant to the Governance teams' remit, subject to any restrictions imposed by General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).
- It can seek any relevant information it requires from any employee, and all employees are directed to co-operate with any reasonable request made by the Board.

It is empowered with the responsibility for:

- Reviewing and advising on the management of the WIBSS budgets, including running costs, the annual beneficiaries' budgets and provisions.
- Advising Welsh Government on rate changes and the potential financial and service implications of policy changes, both within Wales and other areas within the UK.
- Implementation of Welsh Government policy.
- Ongoing negotiation and partnership with Welsh Government to ensure the smooth running of the service.

The membership of the WIBSS Governance Group is as follows:



Director of Corporate Governance Velindre University NHS Trust (Chair)



Welsh Government Finance Representative



Director of Operations

Velindre Cancer Centre



Welsh Government Policy Representative



Director of Planning, Performance and Informatics NWSSP



Senior Welfare Rights Manager and Deputy WIBSS Manager



WIBSS Service Manager



Consultant Psychologist

During 2024-25 the Governance Group met twice on 6th June 2024 and 30th October 2024.



Financial Support

The scheme recognises that individuals living with hepatitis C and/or HIV face extra costs for things like insurance, travel insurance, care costs and travel costs to attend hospital appointments etc. Financial support is available for:

- Current members of the scheme
- Members of previous legacy schemes

There are varying levels of financial support available to beneficiaries of the scheme. These are set out in the Finance Section of this report and are also published on our website.



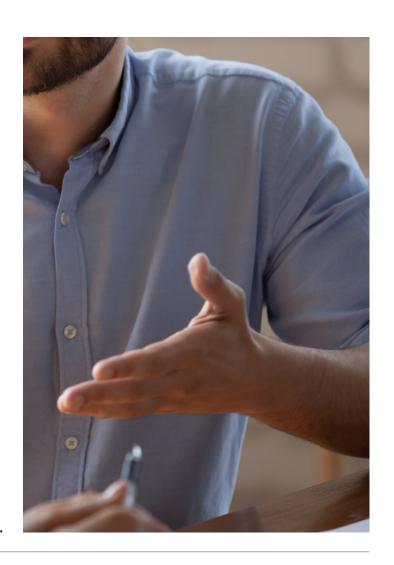
Home - WIBSS (wales.nhs.uk).

Appeals Process

If an application to join the scheme is unsuccessful, an applicant can appeal if they disagree with the outcome of their application. Appeals are heard by a panel of independent medical experts with relevant clinical or similar experience in the field.

An appeal will not be considered in cases where it is acknowledged that the applicant is not eligible under the current eligibility criteria, but the applicant disagrees with those criteria (in such cases, the application could only be reconsidered if the Welsh Government agreed to amend the eligibility criteria).

During 2024-25, one appeals panel was convened. It considered 4 appeals. The panel considered all the documentation received by WIBSS from the applicants and scrutinised the decision-making process of WIBSS. The panel then considered all the evidence. The panel also spoke to the appellants. Two of the appeals were successful and two were not.



Appeal 1

In the first case the panel felt the evidence around the receipt of a blood transfusion was unfortunately circumstantial, and the alleged reason for need for transfusion would be considered a low probability. The panel also considered the issue of receipt of Anti-D. The consensus was it could not uphold the appeal, based on the current criteria of WIBSS. The panel understands the use of Anti-D as a means of infection is currently under review by IBCA, and therefore, the appellant may be eligible for compensation from them.

Appeal 2

This appeal could not be upheld because there was insufficient evidence of a blood transfusion, and the panel did not feel that the procedure that allegedly led to a transfusion would routinely require a transfusion. In addition, the evidence that the appellant had been told by a Dr that a blood transfusion had taken place was considered by the panel to be unfortunately circumstantial. The panel did recommend that WIBSS try to locate the Dr in question, and if she was found and was willing to make a statement supporting the assertion that a blood transfusion took place, they would reconsider this appeal.

Appeal 3

The panel was of the unanimous view that the mechanism and type of injury, was highly likely to have resulted in a blood transfusion and that the appeal should be upheld.

Appeal 4

Again, the panel was unanimous that the mechanism and type of injury sustained gave rise to a reasonable probability of a blood transfusion having been required and the new witness statement was considered as additional supportive evidence. The appeal was, therefore, upheld.

All appellants were notified of the decision made by the panel.

Beneficiaries' activity 2024-25

There are 231 beneficiaries & bereaved partners registered for support through the scheme. This is broken down into the following groups. (Valid as at 31st March 2025).

Beneficiary Group	Number of registered Beneficiaries
Hepatitis C Stage 1	36
Hepatitis C Enhanced Stage 1+	92
Hepatitis C Stage 2	35
HIV	2
HIV & Hep C Stage 1 (Co-infected)	1
HIV & Enhanced Stage 1+ (Co-infected)	13
HIV & Hep C Stage 2	2
Bereaved Spouse/Partner	50*
Child Payments	20

^{*2} beneficiaries are classified as both existing beneficiaries and as bereaved spouse/partners.

Payment Rates 2024-25

The levels of payments available to beneficiaries in 2024/25 are set out in the table below.

Beneficiary Group	Annual Payments
Hepatitis C Stage 1	£22,905
Hepatitis C Enhanced Stage 1+	£34,736
Hepatitis C Stage 2	£34,736
HIV	£34,736
HIV & Hep C Stage 1 (Co-infected)	£47,150
HIV & Enhanced Stage 1+ (Co-infected)	£54,590
HIV & Hep C Stage 2 (Co-infected)	£54,590
Child Payment; 1st Child	£3,000
Child Payment; 2nd & Subsequent Children	£1,200

WIBSS pay annual payments monthly or quarterly, depending on beneficiary preference. Payments are made on the 20th of the month. Where the 20th falls on a bank holiday or weekend, payment will be the nearest working day prior to the 20th.

One-off non-discretionary lump sum payments are also paid to successful new applicants to the scheme. Under Parity, a new applicant who is Hep C Stage 1 would be entitled to a £50,000 lump sum payment.



A beneficiary who moves from Hep C Stage1 to Hep C Stage 2 would receive an additional £20,000 lump sum payment.

A new applicant who had already progressed to Hepatitis C Stage 2 would receive a £70,000 lump sum payment.

A new applicant who has HIV would be entitled to a lump sum payment of £80,500. If they were co-infected HIV and Hep C Stage 1, the lump sum would be £80,500 + £50,000 = £130,500 and Stage 2 would be £80,500 + £70,000 = £150,500. A one-off non-discretionary lump sum payment of £10,000 is also paid to the bereaved spouse/partner/dependant relative or estate of a deceased infected beneficiary to assist with funeral costs.

WIBSS also make regular payments to bereaved spouses/partners/dependant relatives, of an infected beneficiary who has passed away. These payments are equal to 100% of the rate the deceased beneficiary was on at time of death for one year and 75% of the rate thereafter.

Child Payments 2024-25

Child payments were introduced by Welsh Government, via WIBSS, with effect from 1st January 2023.

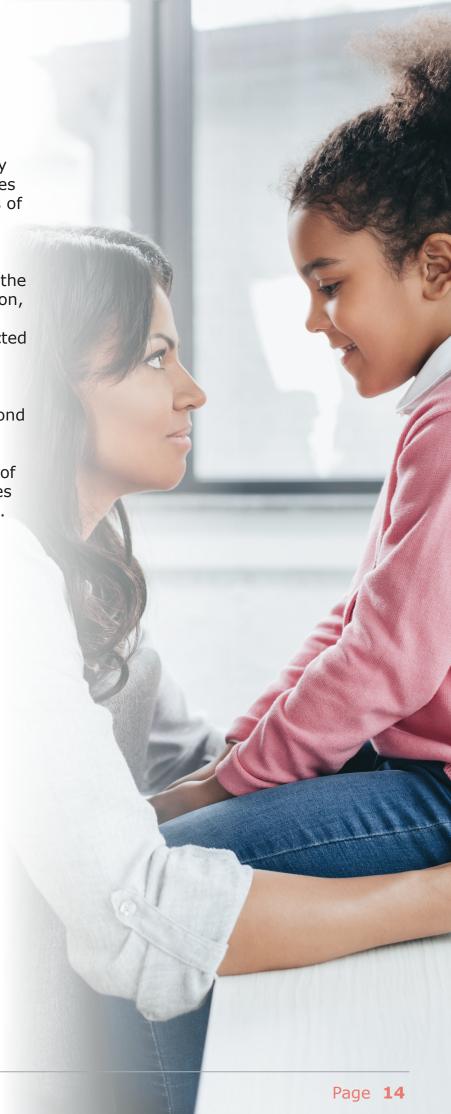
These discretionary payments are only available to those beneficiaries in Wales and via means testing to beneficiaries of EIBSS.

The payment is intended for the care and support of a child/children, up to the age of 18 or 21, if in full-time education, who are either the biological child or form part of the household of an infected beneficiary.

WIBSS child payments are £3,000 for the first child, and £1,200 for the second and subsequent children.

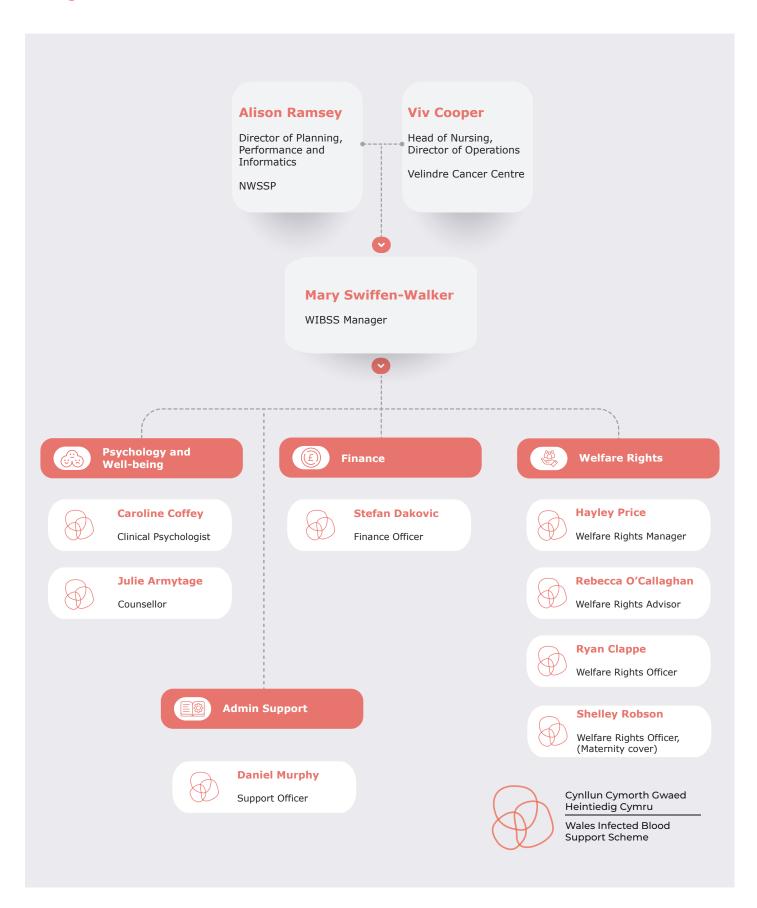
As at 31st March 2025, the total cost of child payments is £72,000. This relates to 30 children paid to 20 beneficiaries. Payments are being paid monthly or

quarterly.



WIBSS Structure

The day-to-day WIBSS team consists of eight members of staff, led by the WIBSS Manager.



Financial Report

The table below summarises the claims expenditure for 2024-25, the comparative 2023-24 figures does not include the additional living infected or estates interim compensation payments that were announced in 2024/25.

The first announcement by UK Government on 17th August 2022 confirmed that an interim compensation payment of £100,000 would be paid to registered infected and bereaved partner beneficiaries of the UK Infected Blood Support Schemes. Following the publication of the Infected Blood Inquiry report on 21st May 2024, an additional £210K interim compensation payment was announced and would be paid to all the living infected beneficiaries.

These costs include widows and small grants payments.

Total Payments to Beneficiaries	£51,098,687	£8,489,334
Estates Interim Compensation Payments and Legal Cost Reimbursement	£3,100,609	£0
£210K Additional Living Infected Compensation Payment	£38,850,000	£0
£100K Interim Compensation Payments	£800,000	£700,000
Regular Payments	£8,348,078	£7,789,344
No. of Beneficiaries	231	225
WIBSS Claims Expenditure	2024-25	2023-24

Please note the figures above have been subject to in year movements i.e., new applications, deaths in year, moves from one stage to another, ad hoc requests etc.

NWSSP provide the Health and Social Services Finance Team within Welsh Government with regular updates on forecasts throughout the year. The administration of the scheme i.e., claims expenditure, is cost neutral to both NWSSP and Velindre Cancer Centre, with Welsh Government funding the scheme in full.

Running Costs for 2024/25

A summary of the running costs for 2024-25 is set out below with a 2023-24 comparative:

WIBSS Running Costs	2024-25	2023-24
Pay	£297,177	£223,919*
Expenditure	£13,131	£13,880
Total	£310,308	£237,799

^{*}The increase in pay costs for 2024/25 is due to the NHS pay award in October 2024, and due to savings in 2023/24 from vacant posts and maternity leave.



Performance Report

WIBSS performance against Key Performance Indicators is set out below.

Descriptor of Key Performance Indicator	2024-25 Target	Status
Responding to Welsh Government & General correspondence within set time limits	Within 4 working days	100%
Responding to Freedom of Information requests within required deadlines	In line with Trust policy	100%
Dealing with applications within required timescales	Within 28 days from receipt of complete information	100%
Dealing with appeals within set time limits	Within 4 months of notification of intention to appeal. 4 appeals were lodged. Due to pressures within NHS Wales, it took longer than usual to convene an appeal panel due availability of the medical professionals required, so 1 of the appellants waited longer than the required timescale. She was, however, contacted regularly to keep her informed of progress.	75%
Payments made on a timely basis	100% of payments to be made 0-2 days before the due date	100%



Description of Key Welfare Rights Incidents

Status

Total Welfare Rights Cases opened in previous 12 monts

» 51

Income Generated for beneficiaries (1 April 2023–31 March 2024)

» £31,481

Outstanding outcomes March 2024

- » 1 Universal Credit
- » 2 PIP renewal
- » 1 PIP
- » 1 Mandatory Recon

Appeals and onward Referrals

- » 8 Referrals to WIBSS Wellbeing Service
- » 8 Mortgage Support letters
- » Referral to Southwest Advocacy Network
- » 1 PIP Appeal
- » 2 Social services referrals

New Applications for Financial Support

WIBSS received 33 applications in 2024-25.

Application Type	Applications Received	Outcome
Hepatitis C Stage 1	18	7 Accepted, 11 Declined
Hepatitis C Stage 1 (Deceased)	10	1 Accepted, 4 Awaiting further information, 5 Declined
Hepatitis C Stage 2	1	1 Declined
Hepatitis C Stage 2 (Deceased)	2	2 Awaiting further information
Hep C Stage 1+	2	2 Accepted
Total	33	10 Accepted, 17 Declined & 6 Awaiting further information

Where an application is declined, it will be because it does not meet the criteria set out in Wales Infected Blood Support Scheme Directions, or insufficient evidence has been provided to support the application.

To access the Directions, please visit the WIBSS Website:

The announcement regarding the interim compensation payments and the media coverage surrounding it, led to an increase in the number of queries about the service and new beneficiaries, who had been registered with one of the legacy schemes, but had not transferred to WIBSS in 2017 when the scheme was established.



Home - WIBSS (wales.nhs.uk).



Support and Assistance Grants Scheme

In 2024-25 we received 5 applications for support compared to 6 applications in 2023-24.

The level of small grant applications has remained consistent across both years.

Welfare Rights Service

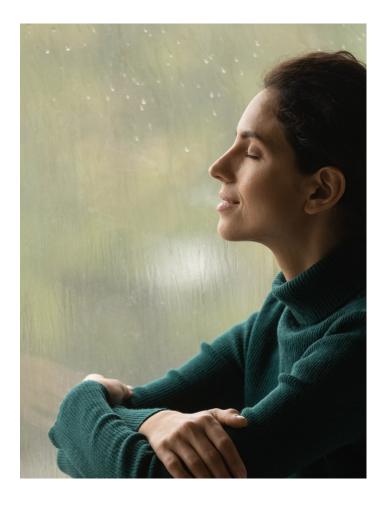
Estates Applications

As stated above, in October 2024 the UK Government introduced a scheme to make interim compensation payments to estates of people who had been registered with a support scheme but passed away before receiving any compensation payment. The welfare team assisted with processing these estate applications by checking the application was completed properly, all the required evidence was included, recording the application onto a monitoring spreadsheet, checking the infected deceased was registered with a legacy scheme or IBSS, checking the with the probate office the probate matched and issuing the appropriate letters.

The welfare team also dealt with requests for support on how and where to find the application forms, how to apply for probate and what evidence was required to support an application.

Infected Blood Compensation Authority (IBCA)

The welfare team also received regular calls regarding IBCA. Beneficiaries were feeling frustrated about the perceived lack of information on what was happening, and some were concerned about the amount of compensation they might be offered, based on the calculator on the IBCA website. Beneficiaries also called us about IBCA updates they received, as they felt the updates were not always easy to understand. Some individuals were also calling regarding WIBSS "closing in" in January 2026. They were feeling very anxious about the changes and what it would mean for them. Where appropriate, the welfare team reminded people about the psychology service and recommended that people contact them if they needed support.



Key working

The welfare team continued to receive calls from individuals wanting help or advice on issues including the switch to Universal Credit, general benefit checks to ensure they are receiving benefits they are eligible for, with support to obtain medical records, and emotional support. If someone wanted emotional support, they would be signposted to the wellbeing and psychology service.

Newsletters

Newsletters are sent out quarterly to all beneficiaries unless they have opted not to receive them. These are sent out electronically or by post, depending on preference.

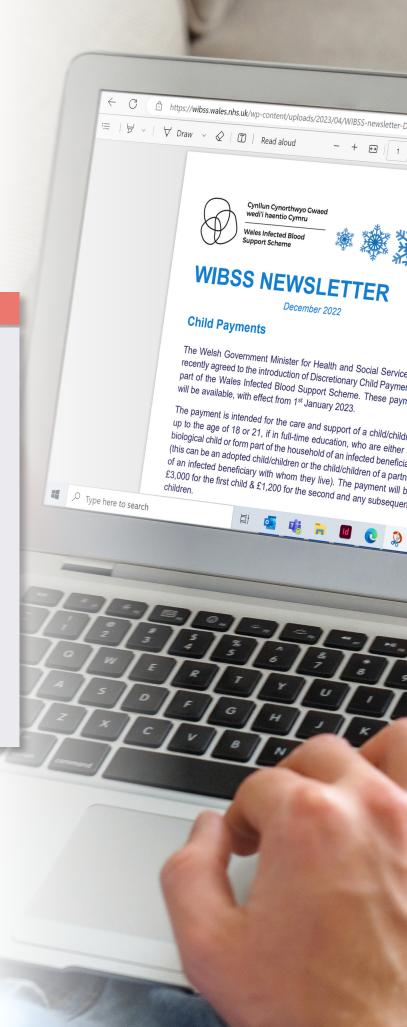
They are also available on the WIBSS website.



Home - WIBSS (wales.nhs.uk).

Newsletters this year covered:

- Revised Payment Rates
- Help with Energy and Water Costs
- Welfare Rights Support
- Psychology & Wellbeing Service
- Infected Blood Compensation Authority Updates
- WIBSS closing date
- Fraud and Scams Information
- Pension Credit
- Money Safety Information





Beneficiary A contacted WIBSS to discuss his support payments and winter fuel allowance.

We supported A in understanding his payments from WIBSS. We offered to complete a Quick Benefit Calculation. Following the completion of the calculation, A was advised that he could claim; Pension Credit, further Council tax reduction, as the current claim was incorrect, and Housing Benefit. A advised that he had attempted to claim Housing Benefit but was unsuccessful.

We supported A to put in a new Council Tax claim and a new Housing Benefit claim. Obtaining all the relevant evidence from A took time due to A's physical and mental health issues. Being in contact with A regularly meant that the team were able to identify that A seemed to be a likely

target for financial abuse and required further assistance in the home. The Team advised A of their concerns and that they would make a referral to social services due to their concerns. A was advised on how to protect himself from further abuse and gained additional support to live in his own home.

Whilst the application for Pension Credit claim was successful, the Housing Benefit and Council Tax claims were discontinued due to A passing away before they were assessed.





Case Study B

Beneficiary B contacted WIBSS about a change in circumstances

A change in circumstances for Beneficiary B resulted in a change to Universal Credit (UC). The welfare team helped Beneficiary B to navigate the change. B was moving in with their partner. WIBSS supported the client emotionally as they were very anxious about the change to UC. They were worried about the WIBSS payments causing issues and about being worse off on UC.

The welfare team undertook a benefit check to inform B how much they would receive. A home visit was carried out to complete the application online.

The welfare team made sure DWP staff dealing with the UC were aware of the WIBSS payments and that they should be disregarded when assessing the application.

B was extremely anxious about attending the job centre due to limited available parking and being unable to walk very far. The welfare team supported B to get a home visit.

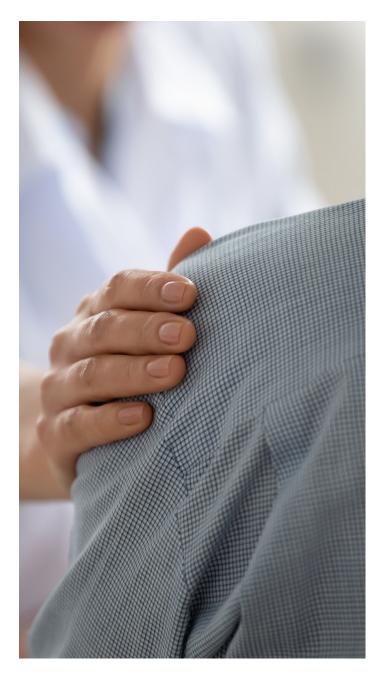
Psychology and Emotional Well-being Service

The team consists of a consultant clinical psychologist and a specialist counsellor who are highly experienced at working with those infected and affected by contaminated blood products. Since the scheme was established, they have worked hard to engage as many beneficiaries as possible of WIBSS, and those close to them, to access the psychology and counselling options that the service provides.

The team continue to receive self-referrals for emotional help and enquiries from external services and health care providers. We have easy to access referral routes and respond in a timely way. Post referral beneficiaries and those close to them, are offered an initial appointment to assess current emotional need and appropriateness for the service. We currently offer open ended intervention which is offered in a collaborative way, either in person, by telephone or video call.

The clinical priority in the previous year has been to support clients emotionally and psychologically through the conclusion of the Infected Blood Inquiry. Also, to forecast what the service can offer clients, and on a wider scale, beneficiaries and those close to them, on a group / community level if required, as we recognise the peer support that the process of the Inquiry has provided for some. We are currently in the process of considering how we can best capture ideas and thoughts from those infected and affected about the next steps regarding their emotional needs considering the proposed recommendations from the Infected Blood Inquiry, plans for compensation alongside the establishment of the IBCA.

Welsh Government are considering the continuation of the psychology and wellbeing part of the service post the closure of WIBSS. There is a strong recommendation from the scheme for this aspect of the service to remain in operation due to the lack of specialist psychological support offered by IBCA and the ongoing relationship that beneficiaries and those close to them have had with WIBSS.



Things we will do in 2025-2026

The workplan for 2025-2026 will include the following:



- Continue to deliver a responsive WIBSS service to existing beneficiaries.
- Keep beneficiaries informed of any decisions arising from the Inquiry recommendations that may impact on them.
- Work with the Welsh Government, Cabinet Office and IBCA to inform decisions regarding the expanding up of the new body and to facilitate the operation of the compensation process and the smooth transition of WIBSS into IBCA.
- Continue to administer the Infected Blood Estate Interim Payments on behalf of the Infected Blood Compensation Authority (IBCA), and administer the additional payments, to the estates, announced by UK Government on 21 July 2025.
- Infected Blood Inquiry Additional Report: Oral Statement to Parliament - GOV.UK



Cynllun Cymorth Gwaed Heintiedig Cymru

Wales Infected Blood Support Scheme

Thank you for reading our Annual Report. If you would like to find out more, please visit our website, our social media channels, or use the contact details provide below:



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