



Witness Name: Kim Law (Ashby)

Statement No.: WITN0013001

Exhibits: WITN0013002-005

Dated: 21st August 2018

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF Kim Law (nee Ashby)

I, Kim Law, will say as follows: -

1. My name is Kim Law, my maiden name was Ashby. My date of birth and home address are currently known to the Inquiry. I am married and have one son. I work for my husband in an administrative role.
2. My mother was a carrier of the Haemophilia gene. She wasn't aware. When I was born I was infected with mild Haemophilia A. It became apparent when I was about 18 months old when I had prolonged bleeding from an umbilical hernia.
 - 2.1. At this time I was living in the GRO-C area and my local hospital was in Lewisham where I was treated with Factor 8 products. I was only ever treated on an as and when basis and then only if I had a fall. I never self-regulated.
 - 2.2. Around 1976 to 1978 I transferred to Guy's Hospital near London Bridge for the care of my Haemophilia and any routine operations that I required. I had teeth extracted at Guy's in the late 70's and early 1980's at Guys hospital.
 - 2.3. Sometime after 1985 we moved from GRO-C out to GRO-C in Essex. I then fell off the system as far as Guy's was concerned and I

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heard nothing further. I didn't need the assistance of a Haemophilia Centre as I didn't apparently have any further issues.

- 2.4. In 1991 following my marriage [GRO-C]
[GRO-C]
The [GRO-C] referred me to The Royal London Haemophilia Centre as I was a Haemophiliac. I was placed under the care of Dr Colvin a senior lecturer in Haematology. On 2 October 1991 Dr Colvin informed me at a Haematology Clinic that I was infected with Hepatitis C (HCV).
- 2.5. I was tested for HIV in 1985 at Guy's Hospital. I was aware of this but not provided with any real explanation as to why I might have been exposed to this. I was informed of the results but have no record of this, for this reason Dr Colvin attempted to access my medical records, he was informed by Guy's that these were missing, therefore a subsequent HIV test was performed by Dr Colvin whilst under the care of the Royal London. I have been left wondering how this record could be tracked down but the rest of my records appeared to be missing.
- 2.6. Subsequently I was treated with Interferon and Ribavirin and eventually cleared around 2004.
- 2.7. I have only ever been treated with Factor 8 blood products at Lewisham and Guy's Hospital. I was never transfused with whole blood until much later in life and after my HCV was cleared. I was never a drug user or had tattoos. I consider the only possible means of my infection with HCV was via the blood products.
3. I have been asked if my infection could be associated with my relationship with another infected person. As I am a Haemophiliac the issue over infection by another person is not relevant to me.
- 3.1. Lewisham nor Guy's hospital ever contacted me or my parents regarding infection of HCV. The risk of infection by blood products as far as I am aware was never explained. I was not ever offered any alternative treatment for my Haemophilia.
4. I am clear in my own mind that my infection with HCV was via the blood products supplied as treatment for my mild Haemophilia.
5. I eventually discovered I had HCV in October 1991 while attending one of Dr Colvin's clinics. He was very kind and helpful. I cannot praise his work and assistance enough. However, I was horrified to find out that Guy's and possibly Lewisham had known all this time, from at least 1985 and had not informed me or made any attempt to locate me.

- 5.1. The Royal London Clinic were great, they supplied clear information and guidance on HCV. However, I was concerned at spreading the infection with my family.
- 5.2. Dr Colvin was very caring in his approach to informing me of my infection.
6. As a result of the letter from Dr Colvin I know that Guy's tested me for HIV. I do not know if they tested me for anything else. All subsequent testing undertaken by Dr Colvin and The Royal London Clinic was clearly explained including the process and the reason for the test to be undertaken.
7. Once I became aware of the issues with being infected by HCV I became considerably anxious. I would wake often at night sweating and agitated. I didn't suffer any further medical symptoms or complications resulting from the infection. Physically I feel I was OK until the treatment with Interferon and Ribavirin started.
 - 7.1. The treatment for HCV impacted me quite hard. I was fatigued with flu like symptoms and had to give up my part time role with a local supermarket. I didn't experience any difficulty in getting treatment for HCV and I feel what was given was correct for my needs.
 - 7.2. However, being infected with HCV impacted considerably with my dental care. I was obliged to inform them of my infection and as a result they would only allow me to attend as the last patient of the day. Both the dentist and the nurse were fully gowned and wore a protective hood. The treatment room had all the equipment covered in plastic sheeting. I felt like a leper and traumatised especially when my son was sitting in the waiting room with me. This practice continued for some time even after I was cleared of HCV
8. Having HCV didn't really impact on family life apart from when undergoing treatment as it made me feel so ill.
9. As a family we felt there was a stigma associated with having HCV. As stated earlier I felt like a leper. I would not share my personal details with family or friends unless it was really necessary. Both my husband and son found it hard to discuss and as such wish to remain anonymous.
10. There weren't any educational effects due to the infection however, I certainly struggled with work once treatment started.
 - 10.1. Before I became aware of my infection I had trained as and was working as a State Enrolled Nurse at a local hospital. I choose to leave this profession for reasons other than the infection, my employers were supportive.[]

- 10.2. Financially we didn't really suffer. Fortunately my husband continued working and was able to provide for the family. I had to pay prescription charges for the Interferon and Ribavirin.
11. I don't believe I was every infected with anything other than HCV due to contaminated blood products. I was worried about the HIV test undertaken by Guy's in 1985 and was tested again by Dr Colvin just to be sure. In September 2004 I was contacted by Barts and The London NHS Trust over the possibility of infection with Variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease (vCJD). However, I found it all too much at that time and choose not to pursue this line of investigation. I just could not face any more tests having just been cleared of HCV.

(WITN0013002)

12. I have been asked if there was any impact on family and friends due to any further infections. As I wasn't further infected I feel the impact on family etc is not relevant to me.
13. In January 2003 I became aware of a HCV payment scheme being announced by the Department of Health (DH), followed up by a letter direct from them. A year later the Secretary of State for Health, Dr John Reid MP identified eligible claimants could be awarded an initial lump sum payment of £20,000. I subsequently applied to the Skipton Fund in June 2004 and was successful in my application.
- 13.1. I clearly remember as part of the payment being required to sign a legal waiver which stated something along the lines of full and final payment and declare that I wouldn't make any future claims for infection of HCV.
- 13.2. However, I note on a document issued by DH on 3 June 2004 reference 2004/0211 titled 'Hepatitis C ex-gratia payment scheme to launch, under the sub heading 'Notes to Editor' at paragraph 16 it clearly states:
- Applicants will not need legal advice when completing the application form and they will not be asked to sign any waiver. (WITN0013003)*
- 13.3. I subsequently received £20,000 from the Skipton Fund in 2004. I have since also been awarded an annual payment of £3,500 which started in 2016. I have not received any other payment from any other Trust or Fund.
- 13.4. The process of applying for the payments were quite straight forward. Dr Colvin was incredibly helpful and assisted in completing my application form which was accepted on first application. I did not need to fight for the payment. The additional payment in 2016 was similarly an easy process.

14. I have never faced difficulties or obstacles in obtaining treatment, care and support in consequence of being infected with HCV, once it was properly diagnosed and I was informed.
15. I was offered counselling by my GP for depression in the early stages of my infection. I felt what was offered was adequate.
16. I wish to raise other issues that I felt impacted me adversely during my infection with HCV and subsequently being cleared. In 1998 I suffered a miscarriage of what would have been our second child. This occurred at Basildon Hospital. I was virtually quarantined due to my HCV to the extent that nursing staff would throw towels at me from the door way to avoid any contact. As can be imagined this was a horrendous experience especially as I was already traumatised by the loss of my child.
 - 16.1. In 2013 we applied for a new life insurance policy. As I had been clear of HCV for some considerable time I didn't think there would be any complications. The insurance company contacted my GP for details of my medical conditions. They completed the form stating I was still infected with HCV and supplied copies of letters to the effect dated 1999 and 2000 which quite correctly stated I had HCV. They failed to send on any of the letters from late 2004 that clearly stated I was now negative or the 2011 letter which stated I was clear with no relapse risk.
(WITN0013004)
 - 16.2. I subsequently entered a complaint process with the GP Practice which resulted in a letter of apology.
 - 16.3. However, I believe I was subsequently discriminated by the Insurance Company. This also happened with another Insurance Company in 1996 when I had loaded premiums for life insurance. I believe I continue to be discriminated against with regards to insurance companies, despite being declared clear of HCV since 2004, the wording of forms often includes phrases such as 'have you ever been tested for HIV/HCV' I feel this is particularly prejudicial and never allows me to be free from the past infection.
17. I have never been involved in any litigation for the HCV infection. I did once consult a solicitor around 1994 but decided I couldn't afford the costs.
 - 17.1. In January 1996 in a moment of anger I wrote to my MP Teresa Gorman regarding assistance from the Government over the contaminated blood issues. I received a reply indicating an Early Day

