

Witness Name: Judith Anne Tebbutt

Statement No.: WITN0266001

Exhibits: NIL

Dated: 7 November 2018

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

WRITTEN STATEMENT OF JUDITH ANNE TEBBUTT

I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 7th November 2018.

I, JUDITH ANNE TEBBUTT, will say as follows: -

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is name is JUDITH ANNE TEBBUTT. My date of birth and address are known to the Inquiry. I am married and the mother of three children (two of them born at the time of the infected blood transfusion). I am working as a registered nurse, part time. I intend to speak about my infection with Hepatitis C. In particular, the nature of my illness, how the illness affected me, the treatment received and the impact it had me and my family.

Section 2. How Infected

2. I was infected on the GRO-C 1988 with Hepatitis C. I required a blood transfusion after giving birth to my twins (my 2nd and 3rd children).

This took place at Kettering General Hospital and I received three units of blood.

3. I had been a blood donor since the age of approximately 22. I then made a donation about 3 years after the birth of my twins. Sometime later, I received a letter from the Blood Donation Service, telling me that I had been exposed to the Hepatitis C virus and that I should visit my doctor for a blood test to check my liver function GRO-C
GRO-C There was no mention of the possible ramifications of the 'exposure'.
4. I mentioned this letter to a fellow nurse who had not heard of this, visited the doctor, got told my liver function was normal GRO-C and that was it. I heard nothing more until about 2-3 years later. I had a letter from the Blood Transfusion Service with a questionnaire asking about my care. I filled it in, stating that I had not had any follow up care and knew nothing about the virus. I was asked if I would like a hospital follow up and in due course I was given an appointment to go to the John Radcliffe Hospital (a 2 hour drive away). The doctor I saw there told me about the risk of liver cancer and cirrhosis and that in 5-10 years I would probably have either/both of these.
5. At the time I had three young children and had to face the fact that I would probably not see them grow up to adulthood. I had lots of blood tests and was told that I could have infected my twins - I had breast fed them for approximately 10 days. They had yet to start school and I needed to know if they were a health risk should they bleed at school.
6. The way I was informed was awful. There was no help, explanation or support and if I had not been a blood donor I do not know how or if I would ever have found out.

7. There was very little information given and at each follow up appointment it seemed to feel worse. I left every visit in tears. I was advised that I could infect my husband and to be aware of my infected state around others.

Section 3. Other Infections

8. I do not believe I have received any other infections other than the Hepatitis C.

Section 4. Consent

9. I do not believe that I have been treated or tested without my knowledge or consent and I was happy to donate blood for the research project that the John Radcliffe was conducting at the time. I have done this many times, even having the team visit me at home to take further samples.

Section 5. Impact

10. The impact of this infection has been great. I cannot adequately express the effect this has had, not only on me but on my husband, children and extended family and friends.

11. I have spent the time since I was infected operating below par. It has meant that work has been difficult. The treatment I have received has made me very unwell and left me with permanent side effects. The last lot of treatment I received (Interferon, Teleprevir and Ribavarin) was horrendous and has left me with altered taste, peripheral neuropathy and lower energy levels than I feel someone of my age would have. It took two years of my 'normal' life (one year for the treatment and one year to recover).

12. I had previously had an unsuccessful course of Interferon which took 18 months of my life at a very busy time with young children. I had to travel to Oxford for treatment and appointments and biopsies, which meant my

husband had to take a day's holiday each time and this went on for many years. The second course of treatment was able to be undertaken at Kettering General Hospital, which helped a lot. But, as I work there, it was difficult meeting co-workers who did not know what I was having treatment for.

13. When I was first infected, I was open with friends and family because I knew nothing about the infection and the stigma attached. As time has gone on, I have become very reticent about being infected, especially with my co-workers. Most of them know nothing about it and assumed I was being treated for cancer when I was off sick for so long.

14. My private life has been impacted. I feared infecting my husband. I would have liked another child but feared infecting them and not living long enough to see them grow up.

15. My children have had to grow up with the knowledge that my time with them may be limited.

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16. I am now very aware of the stigma of HCV. I work in a hospital as a nurse and am aware of the precautions we take during surgery for infected people and have heard comments made about the patient's lifestyle (in a negative way). That has made me even more inclined to keep my infection secret. This has been very difficult whilst receiving/recovering from treatment and even in chance conversations about why I can't do things such as organ/blood donations.

17. I have only been able to work part time, even when my children were grown up, due to low energy levels. I have been told that it is amazing that I work at all in such a physically demanding job but I feel a failure for not managing to contribute more to our family budget. This has had a knock on effect financially as my pension is obviously smaller due to smaller contributions. Initially, this did not concern me as much, as I did not expect

to be alive to collect my pension but I'm now approaching pension age (good to still be alive) and I am now realising the difference this has made.

Section 6. Treatment/Care/Support

18. I have faced obstacles in obtaining treatment, initially as I have explained in not knowing I should be having follow up care and then the travelling to Oxford Hospital for many years. I have only had some counselling when I was having my last lot of treatment when the drug company provided a BUPA helpline and someone phoned me from time to time.

19. I have never been offered any other support and fear that this has left me scarred for life. I still find it upsetting to think about what happened and have an internal battle trying to tell myself to get on with life and I should not still be affected nearly 30 years later.

20. I also had problems with a dentist. When I objected to being treated 'last on the list', with 'double gloves' and with other restrictions (he should have been as sterile with anybody), my dentist then told me if I did not like it, I could go to a specialist unit where they treated "people like me". A friend's husband is a dentist and he was happy to treat me the same as anyone else.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

21. At one of my visits to Oxford, I was told that I could probably register with the Skipton Fund. After paying for my maternity medical records (these have since been lost) I was awarded £20,000. This was around the late 1990s I think.

22. I was then told I could register with the Caxton Fund and received a winter fuel payment of £500 each year. These funds are now amalgamated and initially I received £150 (I think) a month and then I applied for the enhanced rate and now receive £1,500 a month. This was not an easy

process. I appreciate that one has to meet certain criteria but I had to jump through hoops to collect the information and pay for my General Practitioner (GP) to fill in the forms after the hospital consultants' form was rejected.

23. No amount of financial aid will ever make up for going through this but I do feel that compensation should be paid at some greater level to signify that a wrong was done.

Section 8. Other Issues

24. I have no other issues I wish to address in my statement.

Statement of Truth

I believe that the facts stated in this witness statement are true.

Signed GRO-C

Dated 7.11.18