

Witness Name: Christopher Munn

Statement No.: WITN0691001

Exhibits: **WITN0691002 - 005**

Dated: 18 February 2019

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

WRITTEN STATEMENT OF CHRISTOPHER MUNN

I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 07 January 2019.

I, Christopher Munn, will say as follows: -

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Christopher Munn. My date of birth is GRO-C 1955 and my address is known to the Inquiry. I am currently unemployed and receive an Employment and Support Allowance. I was divorced over 20 years ago and have two sons from that marriage. I now live with my partner, Maria McGrath. I intend to speak about my infection with Hepatitis C ("HCV") following a blood transfusion in 1981. In particular, the nature of my illness, how the illness affected me, and the treatment I received.
2. I am not legally represented and I am happy for the Inquiry to take my statement.
3. I have chosen to not identify some medical professionals, as including their details may prejudice any further treatment I receive.

Section 2. How Infected

4. On 16 November 1981 I attended my cousin's engagement party at an address in Liverpool. As I had work the next day, I left the party around midnight. While walking home I was the victim of an attempted mugging and was stabbed, although at that time I hadn't realised it. I managed to get a taxi and when I got home I asked my mum to wake me for work the next day.
5. On the morning of 17 November 1981 my mum came into my room to wake me up for work. When I got up from bed I noticed there was blood all over my mattress. I have never seen my mother in so much shock.
6. I went to the Accident and Emergency Unit ("A&E"), Walton Hospital, Liverpool. This hospital has now been demolished.
7. I was seen by two doctors in A&E who confirmed I'd been stabbed above my left kidney. They couldn't establish whether it was by a knife or screwdriver.
8. I was kept in hospital for a week. During that time I was given an intravenous infusion ("IVI") to stop the bleeding. I know from my medical notes that I was type-tested for two units of blood and I recall being administered at least one bag of blood. My sister, Marilyn Munn visited while I was in hospital and she can confirm that I was being administered whole blood. I exhibit my hospital records from 17 November 1981 as **WITN0691002**.
9. Shortly after my discharge I moved to Preston and worked for some years at Whitbread Brewery. I had a building background and knew some people with similar backgrounds, so we then established a window-replacement company. Everything was going great and we had quite a few orders on

our books and three fitting teams. Then I started feeling unwell. I was lagging behind others and was felt tired and fatigued and seemed to lose my drive. This was around 1994.

10. Initially I thought my ill health was asthma related, as I have been a diagnosed asthmatic since I was a child. I attended Dr Evan's asthma clinic who was my consultant. I was lethargic, couldn't get out of bed, and was sleeping a lot. I also attended my GP. I remember being frustrated with the doctors as I knew something was wrong. I knew Dr Evans had undertaken several tests but I didn't know what they were. He certainly didn't tell me they were going to be testing me for HCV. This was around September 1994. Sometime later I received a letter to see Dr Gilmore, a liver specialist.

11. I have reviewed my medical records and can state on 19 January 1995 Dr Gilmore had identified abnormalities in my liver function test, so he arranged for full liver screening. On 9 March 1995 they identified that I had HCV and they were going to undertake a liver biopsy. I know by May 1995 I had been informed that I had HCV. On 12 May 1995 my partner Maria was also tested for HCV and my records show that they were considering treating me with Interferon. On 1 June 1995 I underwent a liver biopsy and on GRO-C 1995, my birthday, it was told that I was HCV positive.

Section 3. Other Infections

12. I was not infected with anything else as a result of my whole blood transfusion. Although it would be fair to say that as a consequence of that day in 1981, my health has been destroyed.

Section 4. Consent

13. While I do not remember ever being consulted over what tests were going to be undertaken, I am sure I would have given consent had I known what they were looking for. I do not recall being asked permission or consenting

to a blood transfusion in 1981. I accept that whatever they did was at the time was considered to be in my best interest and potentially saving my life.

Section 5. Impact

Health

14. My health in general has deteriorated since infection. From 1994 when I started feeling lethargic I have never properly recovered. The HCV, once diagnosed, resulted in a full liver transplant. Although I am very thin, and potentially underweight, I have type 2 diabetes and have glaucoma in my right eye.
15. I remember well when I was informed I was HCV positive. On 12 May 1995 I was called into to see my consultant at the time and two other medical professionals. They questioned me in some detail of my lifestyle, whether I was a heavy drinker, intravenous drug user or had ever had a homosexual relationship. At that stage they made no connection with my illness and treatment in 1981. The doctor didn't refer to me ever having had a transfusion although my medical records from 1981 clearly show that I was type-matched for two pints of blood and given an IVI. Instead I was questioned about my lifestyle. I felt like I was being interrogated and that I was not believed. I cannot understand why the initial cause of HCV is always blamed on the victim, citing lifestyle and never considering that they, medical professionals, themselves could ever be to blame.
16. I have been under the care of a psychiatrist. I suffer with memory loss and mental health issues. I have major on-going anxiety issues, my behaviour can be challenging in social situations and I always seem to be apologising to people. I fear for my future as well as my partner's. The pressure of the Inquiry, including giving a statement and having to relive the madness of the past, has been really hard for me and my family. Psychologically I have been very affected by the infection and have most probably seen several different psychiatrists, finishing with Dr Hagen.

17. One of my concerns during my treatment was I felt I was not believed by the psychiatrists regarding the impact the infection was having on my mental health.
18. Following the successful liver transplant I had to learn to walk again and had extensive treatment from a physiotherapist. Since the transplant I now have to take the anti-rejection drug (Tacrolimus) daily, which suppresses my immune system and subsequently I seem to catch every cold and flu. I now try to avoid large crowds and public places. Although a keen Liverpool football supporter, I can no longer go to the matches for fear of catching something. To a massive degree, this has decimated my social life. Even after the trauma of spending several years on the transplant list, and then having a successful transplant, I was still left with HCV including all the stigma that is attached to the condition.

Family

19. By the time I was diagnosed, I was already divorced and was living with my current partner. I informed my ex-wife, Kim and told her she should be tested. Having to go through discussing my infection with my ex-wife was a trauma that lasted many years. She was of the opinion that I had infected the whole family. I have a good relationship with my two sons from my marriage, and my four grandchildren.
20. My current partner, Maria is not in good health at the moment. I feel the strain of my health has also taken its toll on her too.
21. Maria and I have had to move house several times because of my infection. Once was because I was unable to cope with inoperative lifts in a high-rise block of flats resulting in me having to use the stairs which was impossible after my transplant.

Stigma

22. I found it very difficult to keep my infection private. Once it was known I had HCV, people I once thought of as my friends would cross the road to avoid me. Their perception was that I was a 'junky' and had a serious contagious disease. The connection of HCV also seemed to link with HIV. The behaviour of others also resulted in me having to find new places to live. The way my neighbours would react and question how I was infected with HCV made me feel 'unclean'. When I lived in GRO-C, Liverpool my neighbours never returned to visit once they had found out I was HCV positive. This feeling that I was 'unclean' was enough to convince me to move again with an attempt to start afresh.

23. When I was first put on Interferon I was shown how to inject, but was given no further support or explanation on what I had to do with the used needles. I was given a sharps disposal box and told to take it to the chemist. I remember attending my local chemist and being told to go and queue with the junkies. I was humiliated as I had an illness but was being treated like a drug addict. I complained to the doctors and afterwards they told me I could dispose of my needles at the hospital. I was angry that they didn't tell me that I could do this in the first place as I could have avoided being humiliated.

24. I remember around this time that I would see billboards on the side of buses that indicated that if you have HCV or HIV that you were nothing more than an alcoholic, drug addict or homosexual. The stigma attached to my illness was at that time being perpetuated by the health authorities and in no way was helping in my recovery. There was no information available from the NHS that we could draw on to help people like me deal with this infection and its consequences.

Work

25. I've not been able to work since my diagnosis. Certainly during the initial treatment with Interferon I was unable to work due to the adverse side effects. This treatment failed and I was put on the transplant list, but my

health has never improved sufficiently for me to return to employment. The allowances I receive from the Government include disability.

Section 6. Treatment/Care/Support

26. On 25 August 1995 I commenced my first course of treatment of Interferon to combat the HCV infection. This was a course of three megaunits of Interferon injected into my stomach three times a week with a review to be undertaken in six months time.
27. Early December 1995 consideration was being given that I would most probably require a 12-month course of Interferon. However, by the end of December 1995 it was becoming apparent that I wasn't responding to the treatment but the decision was made for me to continue for a further two months and then review again.
28. On 2 February 1996 my treatment ended as it had not been effective and I was told no further treatment was available. I requested whether I could receive combination therapy of Interferon and Riberviron, but was informed that this treatment was currently in trial and was not suitable for somebody who had already been non-responsive to Interferon.
29. I remember when I started taking Interferon, I would get shaky, had a feeling of nervousness, headaches and mood-swings and wasn't coping very well with flu-like symptoms. These feelings continued during the full course of my treatment. I complained to my doctor about these side effects, but I wanted to complete the full course of treatment.
30. I was not offered any further treatment, however, it was apparent that my liver was deteriorating and I was put on a transplant list with continuous monitoring. Over the next few years my overall health continued to deteriorate and was occasionally jaundiced. I had one false alarm when I was called to hospital for a transplant, but unfortunately the liver wasn't suitable and I was sent home.

31. On 21 May 2001 I eventually underwent a full liver transplant at Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham and was discharged on 27 May 2001.
32. Although I had a new, clean liver, I was still infected with HCV. Doctors continued to monitor my health, however they kept re-iterating there was no suitable treatment available for me.
33. I fought for many years to be given the combination therapy. I was prepared to endure the side effects just to be free of the disease. Doctors kept informing me that I didn't fit the criteria. I remember being told by the Hepatology Sister, that decisions were based on expense and this was coming from the Department of Health.
34. Eventually on 11 May 2017, I was approved to be treated with a new combination of Harvoni and Ribavarin. The treatment commenced on 8 June 2017 and was for three months. This treatment was successful and I am now free from HCV. During the course of this therapy I lost 2.5 stone as it took away my appetite, however, the side-effects were no where near as bad as when on Interferon.
35. After 36 years of being infected with HCV, to eventually be free from the disease was a huge relief, however, my health will never improve. This has been an all-consuming period of my life from which I will never fully recover.
36. Prior to diagnosis I never had an issue in receiving dental treatment. However, prior to being cleared of HCV, I experienced difficulties receiving dental treatment. Most of my dental treatment was done through the hospital whereby you had to make an appointment with the liver clinic to get treatment from the dentist at the hospital. However, around 2015 a local dentist had done a leaflet drop in the community offering a free dental health check-up. I attended the local practice where I saw a female Polish dentist who examined my teeth and told me that one of my top molar teeth

needed extraction. I told her I had to go to the hospital to get my teeth extracted and I told her the reason why. I believe this should all be recorded in the files kept at the practice. The Polish dentist then left the practice and I then began seeing a nice dentist called Simon. I told Simon about my infection and that I had HCV. The response from the practice was then very negative and they refused to treat me further.

37. Following my successful HCV treatment in 2017, I requested a letter off one of the doctors at the Hepatology clinic that I could take to my local dental practice to show that I was clear of HCV. Within a few days a letter arrived at my home. It was a two-sided letter, one side stated that I was HCV negative and the other side, to my surprise, it stated that I was HIV negative. I really cannot get my head around why a test was needed for HIV, and why that information needed to be included with the letter. I find it distressing and frustrating that even now medical professionals seem to link somebody with HCV with the potential to have HIV.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

Skipton

38. After my transplant I continued to be treated at Birmingham Queen Elizabeth Hospital. During this time I became aware of information on a notice board that mentioned support for HCV infected persons. I spoke with the doctor at Birmingham who advised me to apply to the Skipton Fund.
39. I commenced my application to Skipton in January 2005. I was required to compile evidence of my treatment and obtained a copy of my medical records. My GP at the time, provided assistance and eventually in August 2005 I was able to submit my application with copies of my medical records.

40. My application was initially, and very quickly, rejected by Skipton. This was based on the fact that my medical records were incomplete and there was no reference to a blood transfusion in 1981.
41. I sought further assistance from my GP and consultant, who both wrote to Skipton. The Hepatology nurse at the Royal Liverpool Hospital, also assisted by contacting Aintree Hospital to see if my records could be found. Her letter dated 10 November 2005 shows that records were only retained for 11 years, as was required at that time. Unfortunately mine had been destroyed. A copy of this letter is exhibited as **WITN0691003**.
42. I appealed Skipton's decision and submitted additional information. Eventually a review followed and I received correspondence on 22 February 2006, which resulted in agreement for payment.
43. On 22 February 2006 I received my first payment of £20,000 (stage 1). This was followed in March 2006 of an ex-gratia payment of £25,000 (stage 2, part 1). In March 2011 I applied for an additional ex-gratia top-up payment of £25,000, which was paid in April 2011 (stage 2 part 2). Subsequent to this I have been receiving an index-linked annual payment, which started at £1100 per month and is now currently £1863 per month.

DWP

44. In 2002 I was receiving disability allowance and income support I had been receiving this since 1995. This was taken away from me following a home visit from DWP and required a considerable fight to get it reinstated. Bearing in mind at this time I was still recovering from a liver transplant and was still infected with HCV. It took additional input from my GP for DWP to recommence my payments for disability.
45. Issues with DWP have continued. In 2011 I was again threatened to have my benefits withdrawn. This was based on the payments I was receiving from Skipton. DWP had in their wisdom decided that I was receiving private health insurance payments. It took several meetings, and

arguments, providing them with Skipton documents which they initially ignored before my payments were again re-introduced.

46. Again, in 2016 DWP pursued me due to payments from Skipton. Even though I again provided evidence from Skipton regarding my finances I wasn't believed. Eventually in December 2017 I received a letter of apology from DWP blaming the distress caused to me was the result of a computer system error, which had been corrected.

47. This was stress that I could have done without and all goes towards the feeling that I was not being taken seriously or believed regarding the impact of my HCV.

Section 8. Other Issues

48. I have a letter from Gillian Merron, MP from the Department of Health dated 22 July 2009 which recognises the issues with the historic safety of blood supply. The letter emphasises that lessons have been learnt. It quite clearly states that doctors did not know what they know now. I exhibit the letter as **WITN0691004**. I refute the contents of this letter. I believe the Government was well aware of issues with contaminated blood in the early 1980s, yet they chose to allow its use and the subsequent contamination of patients.

49. I have always been concerned that my medical records from 1981 were incomplete. I understand that the hospital had a destruction policy, however, parts of the records have been supplied to me. From my research and discussions with other people within my local area, it is possible that my previous GPs were both present at the Walton Hospital A&E on 17 November 1981. These GPs treated me for a time in the 2000s.

50. I remember discussing my illness with my GP sometime in 2001. I had asked him for help in obtaining my medical records, he informed me he

would apply for them but it is quite apparent that this never occurred. Since 2016 my subsequent GP has declined to treat me further, which I think is due to me asking too many questions about my treatment in 1981. I recall conversations with this GP where he would respond, "I will speak to Simon," whenever I was discussing my treatment from 1981. I now know 'Simon' was my GP in 2001.

51. My records from 27 November 1995 from the Royal Liverpool Hospital show that my medical records from 1981 were incomplete with no explanation of how I was infected with HCV. I exhibit the extract from my record as **WITN0691005**. I genuinely believe that both my previous GPs were more aware of what had happened to me in 1981 and as such passed my treatment on so as to avoid awkward questions.

52. I have been campaigning for the last 20 years. I am a member of the 'Contaminated Blood Products' group. As a group we have always been concerned that haemophiliacs were treated preferentially, with the whole blood infected group being put on the backburner. We actively campaign to get recognition that we are all infected and should be treated the same. We just want equality.

53. I was campaigning alongside haemophiliacs during the Archer Inquiry, but was not allowed to physically attend. Even though infected I felt the Archer Inquiry was totally ineffectual regarding whole blood victims.

54. I am happy that the Infected Blood Inquiry is finally happening and want to assist in any way possible.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed

GRO-C

Dated

1 20/2/2019.