

25 FEB 2019

Witness Name: Patrick John Short

Statement No.: WITN0799001

Dated: 8th February 2019

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

WRITTEN STATEMENT OF PATRICK JOHN SHORT

I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 23rd January 2019.

I, Patrick John Short, will say as follows: -

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Patrick John Short. My date of birth is GRO-C 1950 and my address is known to the Inquiry. I am a retired engineer. I intend to speak about my perception of my wife Jean Short's long battle with her illness. In particular, the nature of her illness, how the illness affected her, the treatment received and the impact it had on her and our lives together.

Section 2. How Affected

2. I have been married to Jean Paton Short for 46 years. Jean was diagnosed with Hepatitis C 25 years after being infected by contaminated blood. This was during a transfusion at Burnley General Hospital, which she needed following the birth of our youngest son in GRO-C 1983.

3. From my knowledge, neither Jean nor I were given any information before the transfusion with regards to the risk of being exposed to infection.
4. Jean was told she had hepatitis by Dr Green at Burnley General Hospital. I am not sure what information was provided to her as I was not there when she found out. I know that the specialist Nurse, Sharon Frayne, provided most of the information to Jean. She was very good.
5. I was not provided with any information personally. Jean passed on everything she was told. I was advised by Sharon that myself and my son should have a test to make sure we hadn't contracted hepatitis.

GRO-C

 I thought that it was people who took drugs who got hepatitis. It never occurred to me that it was something you could contract through a blood transfusion. Over the years I've educated myself about it. Initially I was ignorant about contaminated blood.
6. I was grateful when they found out about the hepatitis, despite it being 25 years later. Jean could have remained untreated for many years. I would have preferred it to have been discovered a lot sooner. I was puzzled because they were giving people contaminated blood over the years and someone must have suspected something, yet they continued 'doling it out' to patients.

Section 3. Other Infections

7. Jean did not receive any infection other than hepatitis C.

Section 4. Consent

8. I don't believe that Jean was tested or treated without her consent, other than when she was admitted to hospital in October 2018 in a confused state. The nurse gave me a consent form as I am her Next of Kin. I couldn't believe it when the nurse also gave Jean a consent form. She was so confused that she was acting like a child, scribbling on the form. I couldn't believe that they gave it to her to fill in. Jean didn't understand what the form was. She was in a lot of discomfort and was still in the same position after two hours.

Section 5. Impact

9. For years Jean seemed perfectly healthy. It's the impact later in life that the illness has caused, which is the problem. At the time there were no outward signs of her having the disease.
10. Jean sometimes became very short tempered and distant. She also had extreme fatigue. There were times when I couldn't get her out of bed. I was worried that if she slept too much, this was a bad sign. Sometimes Jean would go to sleep and wake up in a confused state. She GRO-C couldn't remember where the toilet was. She used to hold her chest often and I think some of the medicine disagreed with her because she was retching a lot.
11. The hepatitis led to a number of other medical conditions. Jean was diagnosed with cirrhosis and later on, liver cancer. The Consultant, Dr Gkikas, is now concerned about lesions around her kidney, it is possible that the cancer may have spread.

12. Jean tires easily and she gets very frustrated at not being able to do the things she used to do. Hopefully one day Jean will be back to how she was. I had to do things which Jean would never let me do before, like shopping. She was always independent and would like to do these things on her own. [GRO-C] [GRO-C] I [GRO-C] did all the cooking and cleaning.
13. Jean was given three different courses of treatment. Each time, the hepatitis appeared to have cleared, but was actually dormant. After the third course of treatment, Jean was informed that the hepatitis had gone.
14. There have been times where Jean's illness has got me down. It seems like with every step forward, there's two steps back. She was finally cleared of the hepatitis and then we found out she had cancer. Every day, seeing Jean in such a state was frightening. It's like she turned into a different person, it was very disturbing. I spend a lot of time worrying about her and it gets me down.
15. Its waring, especially when Jean is in and out of the hospital all the time. In recent years, visits to hospitals and clinics to see various consultants and have scans have increased dramatically. We have now had to adapt our lives to accommodate the medical appointments.
16. Jean has been deprived of precious moments with her grandchildren. We also used to go out with friends, but now Jean is always too tired.

17. It is lucky that I am retired. If I had been working, it would have been a problem and I would have had to give up work. It has also affected my social life. I don't go out and have a pint with the lads so often, unless Jean is feeling really well and I might go out for an hour. Jean's illness has also affected me financially. I spent a lot of money taking her to various hospitals and running her about, particularly when we had to go to Liverpool for her cancer treatment.

Section 6. Treatment/Care/Support

18. I don't believe that Jean has faced difficulty in obtaining treatment.
19. Counselling or psychological support has never been offered to myself or Jean.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

20. Sharon mentioned the Skipton Fund, before then, we didn't have a clue about it. I went and read up about it and then Sharon applied for us. Jean was given £25,000 as a stage one payment from the Fund. When she was diagnosed with cirrhosis and cancer, she was given a second stage payment of £25,000. Jean also receives a monthly payment.
21. There were no preconditions on the grant from the Skipton Fund.
22. I have never received any financial assistance. I saw on the news that if Jean died, dependants are entitled to £10,000, but I have never been advised about it.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed

GRO-C

Dated 21st FEB 2019