

Witness Name: Janet Webb  
Statement No: WITN1596001  
Exhibits: WITN1596002 - 5  
Dated: January 2019

## INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

---

### FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF JANET WEBB

---

I, Janet Webb will say as follows:-

#### Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Janet Webb. I was born on [GRO-C] 1959 and I live with my husband and two adult children at [GRO-C] Worcestershire [GRO-C] I am a semi-retired director of my own company.
2. I write this statement on behalf of my late father, William John Philip Dewdney. He was born on the [GRO-C] 1925 and lived at [GRO-C] [GRO-C] Worcestershire, [GRO-C] He died on 02/07/2009, at age 84 from liver cancer.
3. My sister, Sabrina Hayward (WITN1280001) and my brother, Guy Dewdney (WITN1187001) have also produced a witness statement each for the inquiry.
4. This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my late father's medical records. If and in so far as I have been provided with limited records the relevant entries are set out in the medical chronology at the end of this statement.

## Section 2. How Affected

5. My father suffered from mild/moderate Haemophilia A. I believe he was diagnosed in or about the early 1950s when he had a tooth extraction and they were unable to stop the bleeding.
6. Prior to his diagnosis, he had served in the Merchant Navy from the age of 17. My father later worked for the Austin Rover Group and worked there for 35 years until retirement.
7. My father did not have any issues with his Haemophilia until in or about the early 1980s. He had an accident at work which resulted in him having a hernia and required him to have treatment. I believe this was the first time he received any blood products, Factor VIII (FVIII). My father only required FVIII as and when he had a bleed and I believe that he received treatment at Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Birmingham (QEH).
8. I believe the FVIII he had prior to the hernia operation was a product from the USA. I believe my father was under the care of Professor Hill and Dr Wilde at the QEH.
9. I believe my father was infected with HIV and Hepatitis C (Hep C) and Hepatitis B (Hep B) as a result of FVIII from the USA.
10. I believe my father was told that he had HIV in or about the mid 1980s. I believe he was told that he contracted the infection through contaminated blood products that he received in the 1980s. I am not sure how many times he required treatment, but I believe that when he required the treatment he would be given FVIII.
11. There is a blood test record which confirms that he tested positive for HIV in 1985. I therefore consider that the hospital should have informed my father as soon as they had the results, because my father put my mother at risk of being infected with HIV.

12. After reviewing the paperwork that he had, I found a statement that was prepared by father in 1994, which provides a timeline as to when my father contracted HIV and Hep C. A copy of the statement is exhibited at **'WITN1596002'**
13. I do not know what information was provided to my father when he was told that he was HIV positive. I do not believe that he was provided with any information in relation to how to manage the infection. I do not believe my father was given any information beforehand about the risk involved in using infected blood products.
14. However, I believe there was a discussion about transmitting the infection. A medical record to Dr Swire from Dr Hill, which is exhibited at **'WITN1596003'** suggests that a conversation about transmitting the infection was discussed in or about 1987.
15. I did not know my father was HIV positive straight away. It was only when we addressed his strange behaviour with my mother that she told us in or about 1987.
16. I cannot recall when my father was informed that he had Hep C. However, his statement exhibited at **'WITN1596002'** states that he had an appointment on the 4 March 1994 to have a Hep C test and he was told shortly after that he tested positive. I am not sure what information was provided to my father about Hep C. However, there is a letter to my father from April, dated 05/07/1994 which states that my father was provided with a Haemophilia Society's booklet on Hepatitis, which includes Hep C. However, I am not sure if he received the information.
17. I cannot recall when my father was informed that he also had Hepatitis B (Hep B).

### **Section 3. Other Infections**

18. In or about 2004, my father received a letter together with an information pack letter stating that he was 'at risk' of being exposed to vCJD. A copy of the letter and information pack is exhibited at 'WITN1596004'. I do not believe he received any follow-up letters in this regard or provided with any further information from the doctors.

### **Section 4. Consent**

19. I believe that my father was treated and tested without his knowledge and consent. I recall my father had a lot of blood tests when he attended the hospital. However, I believe that he was never told what the tests were for. I therefore consider that he was treated and tested without receiving adequate information and for the purposes of research.

### **Section 5. Impact of the Infection**

20. When he was first informed of the infection I noticed that his persona changed. My father was having outbursts and acting quite aggressively, which was very out of character. My brother, Guy (who has also provided a witness statement, witness number 'WITN1187001'), was still living at home and asked my mother what was going on. She took him to one side and told him that he had been infected with HIV. I believe I was told some time later in or about 1987 over the telephone. It became our family secret and we were told not to tell anyone.

21. My father was a very private man and we found out more about his infection towards the end of his life. He did not talk us about the infections. He wanted to live a normal life. We did the same thing.

22. The hysteria around HIV in the 1980s was awful, and the media were constantly contributing to this with adverts on television which were

scaremongering. My father was terrified that people would find out, in particular his work colleagues. He believed that if his work colleagues found out they would have made him leave. My father worked in a very masculine environment and HIV was classed as a 'gay' disease back in the 1980s.

23. I believe that my father was affected mentally being infected with HIV. He lived his life in fear and he was depressed. I was not aware that you could live a normal life with HIV; I thought it was a death sentence. My father was lucky that he lived a long life after being infected.

24. I recall that my father was very concerned about infecting others and would not pick up his grandchildren or sit them on his lap.

25. I believe my father's infection affected my parent's relationship. My father would always worry about my mother. My father wanted to live a normal life and wanted to have a normal sexual relationship with my mother, but he was so terrified that he was going to infect her.

GRO-C

GRO-C

26. I recall that my father became very lethargic. I cannot confirm if this was as a result of his HIV or Hep C.

27. I believe my father received treatment for his Hep C in the early 2000s, but I cannot recall the exact date that he started it. He was treated with Interferon, which was a new product at the time. I was told that the purpose of this treatment was to slow down the cirrhosis. I recall that when my father started the treatment, he was very sick. I believe that he stopped taking it after a few weeks. I believe there was a slight delay in getting the treatment because of the cost of the treatment.

28. In or about 2008 my father was told that the Hep C had developed into liver cancer. During 2009 my father's condition deteriorated and he was admitted to the Princess of Wales Hospital, Bromsgrove my mother was unable to look after him. We then tried to find a care home that would have my father in his final weeks. We enquired with at least four different care homes, which

confirmed that they had availability, but after reviewing his medical records they stated that they were unable to assist us. My husband even offered one of the care homes more money, but it was not accepted. I believe they rejected my father because of his infections.

29. We had no choice but to leave him at the Princess of Wales where he was cared for until he passed away. I believe there was an incident when a nurse was taking blood but was not wearing any gloves. My mother told her that he was HIV positive. When I went back to visit my father he had been moved into a side ward on his own until he died a few weeks later in 2009.

30. I recall the inquest stating that my father died of natural causes. I do not consider being infected with HIV and Hep C by the hospital to be a 'natural cause'. My siblings and I were very distressed about this and put together a letter for the coroner.

#### **Section 6. Treatment/care/support**

31. I believe my father was not offered counselling, but I do not know if he would have taken it had it been available. I believe my mother was also not offered any counselling.

32. I was not offered any counselling after my father's death. We are fortunate that we are very close and talk to each other about everything that happened.

#### **Section 7. Financial Assistance**

33. My father did not discuss money with us, so my knowledge of the financial assistance he received is limited.

34. However, I know he received a lump sum payment, which may have been approximately £25,000. I recall he had to sign a waiver confirming that he would not pursue any further litigation. I believe he was involved in the 1991 litigation and received the payment from Macfarlane Trust.

35. I believe that my father was also involved in the Hep C litigation in or about mid/late 1990s. However, I am not sure if my father received any monies.

36. My father also applied for grants and I believe it was from The Caxton Foundation. He received money for a stair lift as he was unable to walk up and down the stairs. He also received money to convert the bathroom into a wet room,

37. I believe a social worker called Mark Simmons that worked at QEH assisted my father in relation to making applications to the Trust and Funds.

38. I do not know if my mother received any money after my father died. I did not receive any financial assistance whilst my father was alive or after his death.

### **Section 8. Other Issues**

39. As a result of the contaminated blood scandal, Haemophiliacs are now associated with having HIV and other infections. In the mid 2000s when my children were at school, threatening letters/notes were sent to me, our neighbors and to the school [GRO-C] and people automatically assumed they had HIV. Copies of the letters/notes are exhibited at 'WITN1596005'.

### **Anonymity, disclosure and redaction**

40. I confirm that I do not wish to apply for anonymity and that I understand this statement will be published and disclosed as part of the Inquiry.

41. I do not wish to give oral evidence to the Inquiry.

**Statement of Truth**

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

Signed..... GRO-C .....

Dated 28-1-19.



## Medical Summary

(This summary is not intended to exhaustive but sets out key points in the records relevant to the statement)

### Virology Results

14.04.1981	Negative for Hep B
25.05.1983	Negative for Hep B antigen Negative for Hep B antibody
01.07.1983	Negative for Hep B antigen Negative for Hep B antibody
16.01.1984	Negative for Hep B antigen Negative for Hep B antibody
30.09.1985	Low positive for antibody to HTLV3 by Elisa

### Significant Entries/Absent Entries

24.01.1986	Letter to Dr Swire from Ian M Franklin ..... "at his last visit we tested him and found that he has in his blood antibodies to HTLV III Virus. He did not however have any evidence whatsoever of AIDS or any of the AIDS related syndromes and U am sure that although the presence of antibody implies exposure to the virus that his likelihood of proceeding to any such other condition must be remote".
12.05.1986	Letter to Dr Swire from Ian Franklin ..... "I had quite a long chat with him and his wife regarding his positive status for antibodies to HTLV III virus. This has been causing him a lot of anxiety and I hope by discussing it he may begin to relax a little more. Certainly he has no evidence that he is suffering any ill effects from this exposure".
05.07.1994	Letter to Mr Dewdney from April – "further to your telephone call last week, please find enclosed the Haemophilia Society's booklet on Hepatitis, which includes Hep C".
30.01.1995	Letter to Mr Dewdney from Jonathan Wilde – with regards to your telephone query, there was no specific test for non-A, non-B Hepatitis. It is only since the discovery of Hep C and the antibody tests to detect the infection, we have been able to determine that most cases of previously labelled non-A, non-B Hepatitis are in fact Hep C infection".

29.06.1995

Letter to Dr Swire from Jonathan Wilde – "William remains reasonable well at present. He feels he has become increasingly deaf recently and also more lethargic. The latter symptom may possibly be due to his Hep C infection".