

Witness Name: A P Armstrong

Statement No: WITN1623001

Exhibits: WITN1623002

Dated: December 2018

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF ANTHONY PAUL ARMSTRONG

I, Anthony Paul Armstrong, will say as follows:-

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Anthony Paul Armstrong. My date of birth is GRO-C 1951. I live at GRO-C West Sussex GRO-C with my wife Patricia.
2. We have two sons, Neil and Timothy, who both contracted Hepatitis C as a result of receiving contaminated blood products. Patricia (WITN1077001), Neil (WITN1078001) and Timothy (WITN1079001) have all given separate statements to the Inquiry.

Section 2: How Affected

3. Neil and Tim were both diagnosed with sever Haemophilia A when they were babies.
4. They both had treatment with both cryoprecipitate and Factor VIII. They were initially treated at Great Ormond Street Hospital in London (by Professor Hardisty) and St Richard's Hospital in Chichester (by Dr Bateman).

5. Tim developed inhibitors to Factor VIII which meant he had to be given more treatment than Neil.
6. I believe both boys were treated with Armour, Bayer and BPL products during the relevant period.
7. Following the receipt of Factor VIII which I believe was bought from America Neil contracted Hepatitis B and C and Tim was infected with Hepatitis C. I believe that Tim must have also been exposed to Hepatitis B but cleared it naturally. I base this belief on the fact that both Tim and Neil were treated by the same consultants around the same time.
8. I kept records of their home treatment and medical information throughout their childhood and the only record that I have in relation to diagnosis is a note that Neil was told he had Hepatitis B on 6 June 1984. There is now shown to me marked "**WITN1623002**" a copy of that record.
9. Both boys attended Treloars School. Neil went first in or about 1986 and Tim followed in or about 1989. Dr Bateman at St Richard's warned us against American Factor VIII before the boys went to Treloars and he told us that he would send UK factor to the school for the boys treatment. If he knew it was dangerous others must have known as well.
10. Despite this Neil told us that he had to remind the doctor that he was only allowed to have British Factor VIII. Dr Roy at Treloars told Neil that all the Factor VIII was the same.
11. Neil suffered because he lost a lot of his school friends from Treloars.
12. Tim cleared the Hepatitis virus naturally but Neil had to have Interferon treatment which was very unpleasant.

13. Neither Neil or Tim are able to have a liver biopsy to find out what damage has been caused by the Hepatitis C because of their haemophilia.

Section 3: Other Infections

14. I believe that both my sons were infected by contaminated blood bought from America. Neil contracted Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C. Tim contracted Hepatitis C. I know that Tim was exposed to vCJD and I suspect Neil was too. I only found out about the risk of Neil's infection few days ago.

15. I am not sure whether Neil is aware of the vCJD risk but it has certainly put additional strain on Tim and caused Pat and I to worry even more.

Section 4: Consent

16. Neither Pat or I recall being asked to consent to the boys being tested for HIV or any of the strains of hepatitis.

17. We don't recall being asked to sign any forms relating to medical treatment when the boys were admitted to Treloars.

18. Both boys had regular blood tests when they were admitted to hospital, seen in clinic and at school but we did not know what these tests were for. We assumed they were routine.

19. The only information we were given was by Dr Bateman at St Richard's who said that he would not use the new American Factor VIII as he had decided that it was too risky to use. He said that he would make some cryoprecipitate until heat treated British Factor VIII (from British donors) was available.

20. I believe that more was known than patients and parents were told at the time and that information should have been shared earlier. The results of Neil and Tim's blood tests should have been communicated to us as soon as possible.

21. I believe that both boys were tested and treated without their knowledge and consent and without adequate or full information. I also believe that they were tested for the purposes of research along with the other haemophiliacs who attended Treloars School. I believe they were used as guinea pigs.

Section 5: Impact

22. I lost my teaching job in 1982. I was finding it difficult to work and support the children because they took hours to recover from bleeds and I was needed at home.

23. When they were diagnosed with Hepatitis C that was an additional stress for both me and my wife to worry about. We are now in the position where we will lose our home in a couple of years because we cannot pay off the mortgage because I was not able to return to work.

24. Neil and Tim have both been affected by their infections. Neil was put down a year at school. They have struggled with brain fog to retain information. Inevitably this caused Pat and I stress and worry.

25. Neil also found the Interferon treatment difficult. GRO-C
GRO-C I believe the stress of his diagnosis and treatment caused him to have more spontaneous bleeds. He came to stay with us for a while because his wife was finding it difficult to cope. She had to provide special food for him and weigh it to ensure he had the right proportions.

26. Neil had to stop work because of the GRO-C depression which were side effects of his treatment. He had mood swings and often became disorientated.

27. I believe that Neil was also used as a guinea pig to trial the Interferon treatment which. There may have been better treatments around which were not made available because of the cost.

28. Their infected status made it more difficult for the boys to get medical and dental treatment. This was an additional worry for us as their parents.

29. Friends and relatives became worried that they might catch hepatitis and this impacted on the boys' social life. It also impacted on our social life because people tended to stay away from families with haemophilia because of the link between haemophilia and HIV/Hepatitis. We became very isolated both because people did not want to come near us because of the perceived risk of infection but also because we found it difficult to talk to people about the boys' haemophilia and infections.

30. My wife and I have both been seeing a psychiatrist for 20 years. At times I have been suicidal. We are both physically and mentally exhausted. I feel emotionally drained all the time.

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Section 6: Treatment/Care/Support

31. I felt that it was difficult for both Neil and Tim to obtain treatment and support.

32. We have had to make decisions on the basis of the best information available at the time which has not always been very coherent. I was a biology teacher and at times have felt I know more than the doctors which is worrying.

33. Pat and I have had counselling and psychological support for over 20 years.

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34. The boys have not really had counselling as far as I know. I believe this would have benefited them particularly given the loss of so many of their friends from Treloars school,

Section 7: Financial Assistance

35. Both boys have received some financial assistance from the Caxton Foundation.

36. I believe that they found it quite stressful filling in long forms and answering lots of questions about their illnesses and finances to apply for financial assistance.

37. They were usually only granted part of the amount that they asked for and had to borrow the rest.

38. I believe Neil received more financial assistance because he owned a property whereas Tim was renting at that time.

Section 8: Other Issues

39. We have campaigned for years in our own way to try and get to the truth about what happened. I have written letters to MPs, the Queen and the Prime Minister.

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 am happy to be called to give oral evidence at the Inquiry.

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

Signed. GRO-C

Dated 6/12/18