

Witness Name: Clive Efford
Statement No.: WITN4172001
Exhibits: WITN4172002-013
Dated: 22 July 2020

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

WRITTEN STATEMENT OF CLIVE EFFORD

I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 11 May 2020.

I, Clive Efford, will say as follows: -

Section 1: Introduction

1. My name is Clive Efford. I have been the Member of Parliament for Eltham since 1997, and was Shadow Minister for Sport from October 2011 until June 2016.

Section 2: Responses to criticism of W1818

2. Thank you for offering me a chance to respond to Mr Ames' claims. I have attached my correspondence on Paul's case and will address his points as made in his statement.
3. I would like to start by saying that I have been an MP for 23 years and pride myself on the work that my staff and I do on behalf of the people who come to me for help. It is not always possible to get the answers that people are looking for, but we always try to get them a proper response. No one can go through all those years without any complaints being made, but in all that time there have been very few and I have built a reputation locally as someone who can be relied upon to try to help.
4. I have known Paul for many years prior to his visit to my surgery in relation to his case relating to his bone graft that he identified as the point where he contracted Hepatitis C, in the 1970s. I understand that he discovered he had Hepatitis C when he went to give blood in 1992.
5. The first contact I have on record with Paul, in relation to this case, was when he attended my surgery on 3 February 2017. We discussed his case and I agreed to make enquiries on his behalf. His complaint was that he had contracted Hepatitis C as a consequence of an operation for a bone graft during which he also received a

blood transfusion. The meeting was amiable and alongside Mr Ames' case we discussed the Labour Party. I believe that Mr Ames' recollection of a meeting between us, as detailed in his statement, refers to a subsequent meeting that occurred in March 2018. I will address this later.

6. Paul's case was historic and required some research to determine who to write to which caused some delay, but eventually I wrote to the Skipton Fund on 2nd May 2017 (WITN4172002). In 2011 the government had set up the Skipton Fund in response to the contaminated blood scandal which had resulted in thousands of people contracting illnesses after being given blood transfusions with infected blood during the 90s. In my letter to Skipton I requested to know whether the Skipton Fund had provided any information about payments to "*applicant(s) on the basis of an infected bone graft? If so, why has my constituent been refused a payment given the weight of evidence he has provided?*" I also asked the Skipton Fund to consider revisiting its policies in light of the evidence provided by Mr Ames. I did not receive a response to this letter and subsequently the Skipton Fund claimed not to have received a copy. I do not know why this was the case.
7. The next contact I had from Paul regarding his case came on 10th October 2017 (WITN41720013) when he wrote to me again. This was a copy of a note sent to him containing information relating to cases of infections passed through bone transplants, which he forwarded with a handwritten note from him on it. I responded on 12th October 2017 asking for more information. At the time he mentioned medical records from the time of his bone graft had been lost and I wrote back and asked him for details of these so that I could investigate (WITN4172003). There was no further communication until Paul contacted us on 5 March.
8. Mr Ames then contacted me again on 05th March 2018 revisiting our initial discussion in our surgery and outlining the developments made by the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Hemophilia and Contaminated Blood (WITN4172004). Following a small discussion between my office and Mr Ames I received more information about the developments from the APPG. Further to this Mr Ames attended my surgery on the 23rd March 2018. I believe that this is the surgery that Mr Ames' recalls in his witness statement as it later became the subject of his complaint to my office.
9. As you can see from Paul's letter of complaint of 23 April 2018 (WITN4172008), my initial reaction was of disappointment about the length of time we had taken over his case. I know that it was an historic case that we were being asked to restart and that it did not entirely fit into the criteria for the contaminated blood inquiry that was going on and which I was aware of in relation to other casework at the time. This inquiry involved the NHS in relation to contaminated blood and blood products, which did not include bone grafts. In addition, Paul's records were missing and there was no proof he had had a blood transfusion, but Paul had discovered more evidence suggesting that it was possible for a patient to contract Hepatitis C from the bone graft and that this could have been the source of the infection. This was significant because his records were lost, and he could not show that he had had a blood transfusion and the fact the infection could have come from the bone graft meant that this was no longer necessary. Following that meeting I chased up my original letter to the Skipton Fund, to which I had not received an answer. Mr Ames was going to provide me with more details about his surgical operation (WITN4172005). I subsequently made contact with both the NHS Business Authority and Skipton Fund (WITN4172006 and WITN4172007).

10. My recollection of this meeting differs from Mr Ames'. At no time during the meeting did Paul indicate he was upset by anything I had said. When his complaint was received in my office, I discussed it with my Parliamentary Assistant, who was with me at the surgery. We were shocked that Paul was upset because he didn't give that impression at the time, nor could we recall any comment that remotely related to the accusation that has been made. I wrote to Paul apologising and stated that "*I am very sorry if that is how our meeting made you feel. I would not have commented on your lifestyle as all I know about you is your address and that you are a big supporter of the Labour Party*" (WITN4172009). I do not know in what circumstances I would comment on Paul's lifestyle. I do not specifically recall advising him that '*no matter how many letters I write for you they will make no difference.*' There are times when I have to tell people I cannot take things any further, but this was not the case with Paul. What we needed to do was to get his case included in the scope of the contaminated blood inquiry and it is entirely possible that I would have advised him to get the weight of a lawyer behind him to achieve this. I often give this advice to my constituents in cases of this kind as I cannot provide legal advice myself. I am pleased that Mr Ames found this advice useful.
11. I have no recollection of Paul showing me his wrists at this meeting.
12. Mr Ames originally raised his complaint with me on 23rd April 2018 (WITN4172008). I responded to and apologised to Mr Ames on 1st May 2018 (WITN4172009). Mr Ames emailed me back on the same day thanking me for my reply but making it clear he did not accept my apology (WITN41720010).
13. The next time I contacted Mr Ames was on the 23rd October 2018. Having discussed his case with a colleague of mine I asked my office to reach out and provide details of a solicitor who I believed could assist him directly (WITN41720011). They did so and Mr Ames' emailed back that he had already spoken to a solicitor and that he remained upset with his recollection of the meeting (WITN41720012).
14. The last time I spoke to Mr Ames was a chance encounter during the 2019 General Election, at the time we talked amiably and I apologised again and said that it was a misunderstanding.
15. I refute the allegation and would say that the reputation I have built locally over 23 years as an MP demonstrates that I do not behave in this way to my constituents. In cases like this it is possible that MPs can open up avenues that would otherwise be closed to people trying to battle alone, and I regret not being able to do so in this case.
16. I am happy to apologise for what I believe to be a misunderstanding when Paul attended my surgery on 23 March 2018. I did not say what he accuses me of. He is not a malicious person and I recognise that he is genuinely offended by what he believes was said, but he gave no indication of being upset at the time and did not complain until 23 April. Had he raised it at the time perhaps this could have been avoided.

Section 3: Other Issues

17. I believe that Paul Ames is entitled to compensation. The evidence that is contained in the memo to him, which he forwarded to me on 10th of October 2017 (WITN41720013), places the emphasis on the NHS to prove that it carried out the appropriate decontamination process of the bone taken from a cadaver and used in

the graft to his foot. If the NHS cannot demonstrate this was done, it is reasonable to conclude on the evidence that Paul has uncovered, that the bone graft was the source of the Hepatitis C infection. It is for the NHS to prove otherwise.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed GRO-C: Clive Efford

Dated 22 July 2020

Table of exhibits:

Date	Notes/ Description	Exhibit number
02/05/2017	Letter from Clive Efford to the Skipton Fund	WITN4172002
12/10/2017	Letter from Clive Efford to Paul Ames	WITN4172003
05/03/2018	Email from Paul Ames to Clive Efford	WITN4172004
23/03/2018	Surgery Casework Sheet	WITN4172005
27/03/2018	Email from Clive Efford's office to the NHS Business Authority	WITN4172006
16/04/2018	Email from Clive Efford's office to Skipton Fund	WITN4172007
23/04/2018	Email from Paul Ames to Clive Efford	WITN4172008
01/05/2018	Email from Clive Efford to Paul Ames	WITN4172009
01/05/2018	Email from Paul Ames to Clive Efford	WITN41720010
23/10/2018	Email from Elliot Stratton (on behalf of Clive Efford) to Paul Ames	WITN41720011
23/10/2018	Email from Paul Ames to Elliot Stratton	WITN41720012
10/10/2017	Letter from Paul Ames to Clive Efford	WITN41720013