

Witness Name: Grant Hawkins

Statement No.: WITN2842001

Exhibits: None

Dated: 25th February 2019

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF GRANT HAWKINS

I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 5th November 2018.

I, Grant Hawkins, will say as follows:

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Grant Hawkins. My date of birth is the GRO-C 1987. My address is known to the Inquiry. I am married and I am working in a pharmacy with the NHS. I intend to speak about my mother, Marion Dixon Hawkins's infection of hepatitis C. In particular, the nature of her illness, how the illness affected her, the treatment received and the impact it had on her and our family together. I do not wish to be anonymous for this statement.

Section 2. How Affected

2. Mum had no prior condition. The hours after Mum gave birth to me on GRO-C 1987, she had lost a lot of blood and was whisked away the moment she gave birth. For reasons that are unknown to me, she then required to have a blood transfusion. Mum told me that she had lost a lot of blood but I do not know the exact details of what the problem was. I do not know how many pints of blood Mum received during this transfusion, we were just told this later on. This occurred at the Simpsons Maternity Hospital in Edinburgh, I do not know how long Mum was in hospital after this. My dad Brian has not told us what happened either.
3. Someone got in touch with Mum in the 1990s. She was healthy and had no issues then. Someone, we do not know who, got in touch with her and told her that there was a possibility that something may have been in the blood when she had the transfusion and she should be checked. She was checked and she was diagnosed with hepatitis C. I do not know too many details because I would have been seven years old when she was diagnosed.
4. Because I was quite young, Mum kept a lot from us. She told Elaine and I when we were older but otherwise, discussions about hepatitis C were kept away from us. Mum was one of the ones who advocated quite strongly against what has happened to those infected but in fairness we have never been a family that have spoken about matters in detail so we don't know too much. It was not something that she was going to tell us when it happened. We kind of knew that there was something wrong as she had been treating herself at home, she was giving herself injections, it wasn't a big secret, just as we got older, we learned more about it. Mum has been through three or four rounds of treatment through the years which has had more of an impact than the hepatitis C itself. I remember when Mum first started treatment in February 1996, she lost a lot of her hair. I remember this as we went

on holiday shortly afterwards and she ended up having to get it cut short.

Section 3. Other Infections

5. If Mum has been infected with anything else, she has never, ever told us.

Section 4. Consent

6. I believe that people are tested without their knowledge, that is how the system works. In this day and age, I think there is a cover-up going on here, I believe that she has signed a form at some point and it is used for everything else. We do not know for sure but we believe this is quite plausible and should not be dismissed.
7. Mum would not allow anyone to treat her without giving consent.
8. Because the doctors did not know how she was infected or when she got it or the full impact of what hepatitis C was, they did not know the full impact of hepatitis C to provide her with the full information that she probably would have needed, they would not have known the implications.
9. Mum has volunteered for things over the years. I am pretty sure yes, she has agreed to research with consent.

Section 5. Impact

10. Mum was never really been affected by hepatitis C symptoms in the early days. It really has been a case that it is the treatment that has done the most damage. She was in good health before she found out she was infected in the first place.

11. Mum had a full hysterectomy in 1996 or 1997 but we do not know if this was related to the hepatitis C or not. Not that she would have had any more children after she found out that she been infected. We are not aware of any other medical complications.
12. Mum has been through three rounds of treatment for hepatitis C, each time the treatment seems to have made the infection dormant but has not cleared it and it has come back. The last round of treatment was in 2011 and she has not been back to hospital since then. The emotional impact of the medication has been massive though. She did mess with her medication when she was going through treatment, she takes moods with people and stops speaking to them for long periods of time, she gets upset when anything comes up in relation to the hepatitis C and the inquiry. At one point, she wanted to ram her car into the wall. She gets a lot of fatigue and if she gets it again, she has said she is not going to fight the infection next time. At times it has been hard. She gets problems with fatigue, even now and the depression still ongoing. These are all side-effects from the treatment and they have never gone away.
13. The treatment that Mum was on was interferon, I cannot remember the name of the other drug. I think it may have been interferon but I could not confirm exactly. I remember that Mum lost her hair, she had a lot of time off work and she had standard problems with being off work. Dad is a taxi driver so he had no time off for work either, we used to have to manage no matter what. I remember Mum and I used to walk everywhere, she stopped doing this as well which was a big change. She used to do a lot of things in the community and this all ended when she started treatment.
14. I believe Mum was treated at the Royal Infirmary Edinburgh as far as my awareness goes. She was on treatment for 3 to 6 months but I do not know the exact dates, I just know there were three rounds of

treatment and every time it failed until 2011. She does believe that it is possible that hepatitis could come back as it is dormant, it is not clear.

15. Mum has always had issues with her teeth, the treatment has rotted her teeth as it is similar treatment to chemotherapy. Medical professionals have also treated her differently, she has not told us stories exclusively but we have heard things in passing of being treated differently. The way people act now, it is very different, for example she had a tattoo recently and she told the tattooist and he had no problem when Mum said she had once had hepatitis C.
16. From the ages of 7 to 10 we were just normal kids and Mum and Dad did not treat us any differently. We did not know and we were not worried about it. We were more aware of the issues as we got older so we helped out when we were older but otherwise we just got on with it, we didn't change. It was our version of normal.
17. Mum used to help out and do clubs, Saturday clubs for people with learning disabilities and play badminton. This all stopped when she was not well though, she didn't have the strength anymore and her social life just completely changed.
18. Back in the 1990s, hepatitis C was considered being the same category as HIV and AIDs. It is different now, they are banded differently now, I believe it was treated like a junkie's disease in the 1990s. Mum wasn't open about the infection, she didn't announce it. She only told family and close friends so the impact was kept close to home.
19. Mum worked in a Safeway at a Crèche, she worked with children. I am unsure what other impact there was other than having to take time off work during her treatment. Mum is now back working and there is no further impact.

20. There were no educational or work affects that apply to myself.

Section 6. Treatment/Care/Support

21. It was mainly family support that helped Mum through the treatment, she has not reached out to other agencies. The only other support she had was the school psychologist, who supported her with more alternative therapies than standard medicine. This was really about her depression rather than hepatitis C. There was no official treatment from the NHS though. It would have been good to think that Mum was offered psychological support when she was going through the treatment at least because that was fairly brutal.

22. It may have helped Dad to have had some psychological support. For us, it would have made no difference as we were too young and it would have been just like talking to a stranger.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

23. Mum would have got a letter telling her about the financial assistance that was available, she wouldn't have looked into it exclusively. It is not something she would actively seek out to be honest.
24. I am not sure exactly on the amount of money Mum has received. I think it may be between £40,000 and £50,000 that she received from one of the funds. I am not sure if it was Skipton, Caxton or anywhere else.
25. I believe it was a case of filling in a form and they do the rest for you, that is what it was. It was just a simple form filling exercise.

26. I have no other comments to make specifically in reference to the amounts of financial assistance that have been provided.

Section 8. Other Issues

27. I have no further comments to add.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed

GRO-C

Dated

9/7/19