

Witness Name: Elaine Lamb
Statement No.: WITN2846001
Exhibits: None
Dated: 13th July 2019

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF ELAINE LAMB

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

I, Elaine Lamb, will say as follows: -

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Elaine Lamb. My date of birth is the GRO-C 1989. My address is known to the Inquiry. I am married. I intend to speak about my mum Marion Dixon Hawkin'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 lives together as a family. I don't wish to be anonymous for this statement.

Section 2. How Affected

2. Mum required to have a blood transfusion in the hours after giving birth to my brother Grant Hawkins on the **GRO-C** 1987. I don't know what happened but Mum has told us, many years later, that she had lost a lot of blood and had to be whisked away from Grant shortly after she gave birth to him. I do not know how many pints of blood she received during this transfusion. This was at Simpsons Maternity Hospital Edinburgh; I don't know how long she was in hospital for. My dad Brian has not told us any information either.
3. Someone from the NHS got in touch with Mum, in maybe 1994 or 1995, she was healthy and had no issues then. We do not know, maybe her GP got in touch and told her there was a possibility something might be wrong because of the blood transfusion and she should be checked, she was and she was diagnosed with hepatitis C. It was her GP that tested her. I also had to be tested as well because I was the younger sibling and was born 2 years after the transfusion. I was warned that I may have been a carrier. I was tested just before Christmas 2018 and my result came back negative.
4. Mum kept a lot from us, I was five years old when she found out that she was infected and Grant would have been seven. She advocated quite strongly against what has happened with the hepatitis but we have never been a family that have spoken about matters like this in detail. I was aware that Mum would inject herself at home when we were growing up and it was not a big deal. It was one of these things, it has happened and we have accepted it. What I do remember though is that Mum has been through several rounds of treatments through the years which has had more of an impact than the hepatitis C itself. I remember Mum started treatment in February 1996 and she lost a lot of her hair and had to have it cut short the first time. The second and third times that she had treatment were the worst, psychologically; the third time almost killed her.

Section 3. Other Infections

5. I am not aware of any other infections that Mum could have received from the blood transfusion.

Section 4. Consent

6. I think it is plausible that she has been treated without her knowledge but I don't have any exclusive information to confirm this either way. Once you sign a consent form though, you are agreeing to not just the thing you are consenting to that day, but you are agreeing to a lot of other things as well in my opinion.
7. I do not believe Mum would have ever agreed to have being treated without her consent.
8. Mum did not know the full story of hepatitis C when she was diagnosed and the doctors did not know the full story of hepatitis C either. They didn't know the full extent of what they were looking at with the condition and the full implications it would have to her health.
9. Mum has volunteered for research over the years, I couldn't swear to it but I'm pretty sure yes she has agreed to research but it has always been with consent, not without.

Section 5. Impact

10. Mum lost a lot of her hair and a lot of weight the first time she went through treatment. Before she started treatment, she had not had any symptoms so she was feeling quite healthy. The infection had been lying dormant in her system and when she started treatment, this kicked it into gear. The second and third time were worse than the first time and it affected her mental health much worse than it did physically. She was GRO-C on antidepressants.
11. Mum had a full hysterectomy in 1996 and 1997 but we do not know if this was related to the hepatitis C or not. Not that she would have told us either way. She wouldn't have had any more children anyway after she found out about the infection. I don't know what implications that had on her marriage though.
12. I remember Mum would mess with her medication, she wouldn't answer the phone, she once fell out with me randomly for six months and didn't talk to me. She takes moods with people and she gets upset when this whole topic

comes up. At one point she wanted to ram her car into the wall which was not nice to hear. She suffers from fatigue and she says that if she gets hepatitis again, she is not going to fight it and she is going to let it kill her next time. At times, it has been very, very hard.

13. The infection has been lying dormant in her system and has been dormant for many years now. I remember though she lost her hair, she had a lot of time off work and was on sick pay, not company sick pay, just standard statutory sick pay and all the financial problems that that came with. Dad is a taxi driver so he got no time off work, so for him there was no compassionate leave. I remember when we were younger we used to walk everywhere, she stopped doing this when she started treatment. Those are the things that I can remember.
14. I do not know the names of any treatments that Mum took for the hepatitis. I think she might have been treated at the Royal infirmary, Edinburgh.
15. I assume that the hepatitis is now dormant again, Mum talks about feeling like it could come back one day. She does not talk about treatment now; her worries are what would happen if it ever returned again.
16. I am not aware of any difficulties with treatment or access to treatments.
17. Mum has always had issues with her teeth, the treatment has rotted her teeth as the drug is similar to chemotherapy. Mum tells medical professionals that she has had hepatitis and now they have no problems with treating her. Mum also had a tattoo recently and the tattooist was fine when he heard that Mum had once had hepatitis, but I've heard comments in passing from Mum that people in the past, have treated her differently when treating her. We have never spoken about this is though. We were just normal kids and Mum and Dad were not going to tell us what was going on, we lived our normal childhood. It was only when we got older did we start to help out more and become more aware. It was our version of normal. I am not sure about the impact it would have had on her marriage with Dad. Dad GRO-D when I was growing up, whether that has anything to do with hepatitis C or not is another matter. They keep these details from us and Dad would never discuss this with us ever. Mum used to play badminton and help out with a Saturday club for adults with additional needs; it all stopped when she

became unwell and she had to undergo treatment as she was unable to do these activities as she was too ill.

18. It is different now to what it was back in the 1990s. 10 years ago it was announced that Pamela Anderson got it through tattoos, it was viewed as something that was dirty, something associated with junkies or something from a back alley. Now people are more aware of how it can happen and the impact it could have. There is something about it though, there is always that kind of stigma that you have to watch.
19. Mum worked at Safeway at a Crèche with young children. I am unsure what other jobs she has had. This is what I can remember. I don't know if there was a negative impact on her work. As long as everybody followed the rules there would have been no other impact to be heard of. She was off work when she was going through treatment I think, but I can't remember details of this.
20. There were no educational or work related effects for myself.

Section 6. Treatment/Care/Support

21. Mum was mainly supported through the family when she was going through treatment, she has not ever reached out to any agencies other than a school psychologist who was helping her with a talking therapy rather than standard medicine. That was because of her depression rather than the hepatitis C itself though. There was never anything official from the NHS doctors that Mum took up.
22. I do like to think that Mum was offered psychological support, I don't know for sure though. I would not have benefited from any psychological support, I was too young, Dad may have benefited from it, especially when she was going through treatment.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

23. I think Mum may have received £40,000 from the trusts. I think she received the first payment of £10,000 and then a second payment of £30,000. I do not

know which trust or fund gave her this support though and I don't know how she came to find out about it.

24. I believe that applying for financial assistance was really just a case of filling out a form and waiting for the results. It was fairly straightforward as far as I am aware.

25. I have no other comments on the amount of financial assistance as I don't know enough about it to raise any official comments.

Section 8. Other Issues

26. I have no other issues to raise for the Inquiry.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed

GRO-C

Dated

13/7/19