

Witness Name: Adrian Cooper

Statement No.: WITN3344001

Exhibits: nil

Dated: 28/11/20

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

WRITTEN STATEMENT OF ADRIAN COOPER

I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 12 September 2019.

I, Adrian Cooper, will say as follows: -

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Adrian Cooper. My date of birth is GRO-C 1973 and my address is known to the Inquiry. I am married to my wife Ros. I am a businessman and I build natural grass sports pitches. I intend to speak about my wife Rosamund Cooper, who I refer to as Ros, and her Hepatitis C (HCV) which she contracted through contaminated blood products. In particular, the nature of her illness, how the illness affects us, the treatment received and the impact it has had on our lives together. I should point out that Ros is a witness in this Inquiry.

Section 2. How Affected

2. I met Ros in April 1999 and we have been married for sixteen years. I became aware that Ros had severe Von Willebrands Type 3 disease, fairly soon after meeting her. I was aware that this meant that if she cut herself then she would bleed badly and so, she would have to inject herself with a blood product, to enable her blood to clot properly.
3. Ros takes a blood product that is different to that of a haemophiliac as her condition is rare. The product she takes is derived from human blood products. Ros does not inject daily; she takes Factor VIII if she has an external or internal joint bleed.
4. Ros was diagnosed with Von Willebrands Type 3 and has had blood product treatment for her condition since she was six months old.
5. Though this was before we got together, I understand that in 1992, at age nineteen, Ros visited the Royal Free Hospital in London to have her ankle fused which was a procedure that was necessary due to her Von Willebrands condition. During the pre-operation consultation, the doctor asked her how long it had been since she was diagnosed with HCV. Ros had no idea that she had HCV and so, this is how she found out of her diagnosis. Ros and her parents were totally unaware of her HCV, up to that point.
6. She was later apparently told that she had likely been infected multiple times with HCV, due to being treated with blood products over such a long period. Although, doctors have never sat down with Ros, her family, or subsequently with me to inform her/us how this came about.
7. Ros and I believe that the hospitals where she was treated have consciously decided to not give her the blood products that were infected with Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV). We believe this as a lot of

her acquaintances from the Manchester area where she grew up with the same condition, have contracted HIV, yet she has not. We do not believe that this could be a coincidence, although there is no way we can prove this.

8. Ros was treated at Manchester Children's Hospital when she was growing up. As an adult she was treated at Withington Hospital and St Marys Hospital. She also visited Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh, Exeter Hospital and Thornton Hospital for occasional visits while on holiday.
9. I remember not long after we first met, Ros took me somewhere private to inform me that she had previously been diagnosed with HCV. She told me that she had very recently received treatment for it, and that doctors did not know how long she would live for.
10. When we first met in 1999, she was not working as she was just getting over a year of Interferon treatment.
11. I accompanied her to the hospital appointment where she would find out the results of the HCV treatment. Unfortunately, she was told that it did not work for her. She has always been so positive and she dealt with the results so well, but doctors were then concerned that she did not know the seriousness of HCV.
12. She had the treatment as it was advised by her doctor. Before the treatment began, she was reassured by her doctor that there were no side-effects; that she was young and so, she would go on to live a normal full life. In actual fact, the treatment knocked the life out of her, she has never been the same since. She still hasn't recovered from it now.
13. Soon after, she was offered further HCV treatment but she refused. She decided to have a break from treatment and to recover. During this time, she went to college to study a computing course. The idea was that it would make working much easier for her, as it would mean she could work remotely from home.

14. During this time, she was having liver function tests and the returning results were really high, which meant this was a bad result. Consequently, at the start of 2000, she had a biopsy, the results from this were not too bad. However, during the procedure the surgeon touched on her hepatic vein causing a massive bleed and she ended up in intensive care.
15. Following the damage caused in the procedure she was in hospital for two months.
16. Dr Wilde carried out the procedure and at one point he said to me that he didn't know what to do with Ros. He said to me "technically she should not be bleeding and I don't know what to do". She went in for surgery again and was eventually treated successfully for the bleed.
17. In 2002, she began treatment for HCV again. She had six months of Pegylated Interferon which consisted of a once a week injection. This treatment cleared the HCV.
18. During the treatment Ros was very uptight and not herself at all. It was like she constantly had the flu. I would just leave her to it, as there was nothing I could do for her.
19. After the treatment, she was still unwell with chronic fatigue, cold shakes and a high temperature. She also became very depressed and had bouts of anger. GRO-C
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20. After the treatment, Roz worked in Chester, Swindon and Telford, but eventually she had to give it all up and so, she has not worked for ten years now.

21. The main reason she went through the HCV treatment again was because we wanted to start a family. We could not have children until the HCV was cleared, as it would be passed onto the baby.
22. In 2007, we started IVF treatment to have children, as we had been unable to conceive naturally. We did the first round and that was abandoned [GRO-C] and then the second round also failed.
23. In 2010, we then looked into adoption, but eventually decided that we would not proceed down that road due to Ros' health condition. We made this decision as we felt that we could not be sufficiently certain that the HCV had completely gone. Although, we have been told that she is cured of the HCV, the hospital has never actually confirmed that she is completely clear of HCV. They have told us that it could be lying dormant and there could be future tests that could pick it up. Also, it is a long road to go down for us to then potentially be told "no". We believe they would have looked into Ros' health and question how she would take care of a baby, when she struggles with taking care of herself. I can say categorically that the adoption failing was a direct result of the HCV.
24. In 2012, a friend of ours mentioned surrogacy and she offered to be a surrogate for us. We had to pay for the medicals of the surrogacy, we had to go through counselling, an external opinion was sought from the Ethics Committee as to whether the surrogate would be infected from the embryo and the Ethics Committee had to approve the surrogacy. It was a very long process before the surrogacy could begin. We already had one embryo left from the IVF although to use that egg, special permission would need to be sought and it would be very difficult. Consequently, we had to go through the process of IVF again for an egg to be implanted into our friend. However, Ros did not produce an egg and we were absolutely devastated. We still had the frozen embryo and so we gained the special permission to use it and this was implanted into my friend. Unfortunately, it failed and the surrogacy did not work.

25. I then did some research and found that the treatment Ros had received for the HCV causes infertility. Ros had the second round of HCV treatment for the purpose of us having a family and she definitely would not have had this treatment having known this.
26. We do not know how fertile Ros would have been without having the HCV treatment as we did not try until the HCV was eradicated.
27. In around 2004, Ros received a standard letter from the NHS stating that she may have been exposed to Variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (vCJD). This was also followed up in 2005 with a letter that was more specific which stated the batch numbers that were infected with vCJD and that an individual had died from it.
28. There is always a thing in the back of our minds about vCJD as it can lay dormant for some time and this worries us.
29. The difficult thing for us is that she is not getting better or recovering as her illnesses are ongoing and we do not know what is next for her.
30. The NHS just seem to give her tablets to mask her illnesses and not sort the root of the problem out.

Section 3. Other Infections

31. As far as we are aware to date, Ros has not contracted other infections from the contaminated blood. However, I refer back to the vCJD warning and our continuing concerns (paras 27 & 28).

Section 4. Consent

32. Ros never had been tested or given anything which she has not consented to. Although, she did not consent to being given contaminated blood products.

Section 5. Impact

33. I would say on a day to day level her blood condition does not affect us much other than requiring me to be careful around her as she can bleed internally or externally quite easily.

34. We have never been able to live a full married life together which is definitely down to the HCV she contracted.

35. I am a very outgoing person and I like to get stuck in, however with Ros, I am the opposite as I have to be extremely careful with her. I enjoy rugby, climbing and outdoor activities, but obviously she cannot do these things with me as she has no energy from the HCV.

36. She is not physically and mentally strong enough to do a lot of things. She also does not have the drive and motivation.

37. Her lack of energy is extreme and a normal day can tire her out. Our plans have to be organised way ahead of time as Ros needs time to prepare herself physically and mentally. We are also restricted when going away on holiday together. Within the last ten years, many aspects of our lives have been inhibited by the HCV such as socially and holidays.

38. Ros' lack of energy has impacted on any life that we would have wished to make together massively. Any plans that we may have wanted to make have been frustrated by her condition and as a result, in the last twelve months I have started to do things on my own without Ros.

39. My business is doing very well and is thriving, but I do sometimes sit there and think to myself 'what is the point' as I have no child to pass it all onto.
40. We have a business together but unfortunately Ros has never been able to work for it.
41. Also, with work, I have been restricted as I cannot work away as often as I would have done. Ros can struggle mentally and so, I have stayed at home so I can be there for her.
42. I own a farm and run businesses which I have achieved through the need for me to step up my game and make things easier for Ros and I, due to the HCV, and because she cannot work.
43. Ros went to University and is very intelligent. I believe that if she was still able to work and had more energy she would have been a teacher.
44. Ros still suffers from side-effects from the treatment that she had for the HCV. She struggles to sleep at night; suffering badly from hot and cold sweats. GRO-C throughout the night following her liver issue from the HCV. All of which has obviously impacted me.
45. My sister has children and unfortunately, we do not see a lot of our nieces and nephews, which is a result of it upsetting Ros, due to not being able to have children herself. I also have friends with children and again we do not see them as much as I would have done, as it can upset Ros.
46. Ros cannot get life insurance which is a direct result of the HCV diagnosis.
47. For me personally, although I would not have things any different, in regard to being with Ros, I believe that had she not had the HCV our

lives would have been completely different. Ros would have had a career and perhaps we would have had a family. She has had those things taken away from her and it is very sad thing to deal with. Ultimately, she has had her career, professional and personal life taken away from her and I believe it has left her feeling unfulfilled.

Section 6. Treatment/Care/Support

48. Ros has not faced difficulties or obstacles in obtaining treatment for her blood disorder and the HCV derived from the contaminated blood. In fact, the medical treatment she has received for her bleeding disorder has been good.

49. Ros has not been offered counselling or psychological support in consequence of the HCV she contracted from the contaminated blood.

50. Also, following the vCJD warning letter, she was not offered any support or further information. She has not even been told of what vCJD symptoms she should watch out for and what to do.

51. I must say doctors and hospitals have not been very good with the mental aspect.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

52. I believe that Ros became aware of available funds through the Von Willebrands Type 3 community.

53. To my knowledge I believe that Ros receives financial assistance perhaps from the Skipton and Caxton Funds

54. She receives monthly payments and winter fuel allowance.

55. In my opinion the application forms for the financial assistance are very long and I believe there would be people out there that would struggle to complete them, and as a result may not receive what they are entitled to.

Section 8. Other Issues

56. Ros had made requests for her medical notes from the hospitals that she has received treatment from. However, all of her medical notes in relation to the HCV and the transfusion have since disappeared from her records. I believe that this has to be planned and calculated; it cannot be a coincidence.

57. I feel like this scandal should never have happened. If you think about it logically, using blood from prisoners who inject drugs etc and then the blood not being screened before it is given to others. It is not difficult to realise that this would be an issue.

58. I believe that it was an economic decision made by the government. I'm sure the pharmaceutical companies were aware of the issues and risks involved as well. I also believe that there could have been corruption. There is a link between government and pharmaceuticals, but I also believe that there were incentives for these bodies.

59. The NHS should have set up their own blood banks and screening in the U.K.

60. I would like the truth to come out and for the Inquiry to find out what happened.

61. I would like for those people infected, to get some kind of compensation and an apology from those responsible. I do not think the compensation should be means tested. The money will never replace what has happened but it will be used to make life easier.

62. The results of the Inquiry should be put into the public domain, so everyone will know what actually happened and for this to be done sooner rather than later.
63. I would like the mental health aspect to be improved and for there to be some kind of system whereby those people infected can easily go and speak to someone like a counsellor.
64. I am hoping that once the Inquiry has ended that this will give Ros some closure and she will start to feel a bit better.
65. I have some comments concerning Dr Wilde who was in charge of the Haemophilia Centre, Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham and undertook Ros' biopsy. He has never been very helpful, proactive or anything like you would think a doctor should be. He always came across as being so disorganised. The impression we would get is that the situation was not that bad and we could never get a medical opinion from him. I felt the nurses were not allowed to talk about the infected blood issue and no one from the medical profession could ever give us any information.

Statement of Truth

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

GRO-C

Signed _____

Dated

28/1/20