

Witness Name: Melica Eve Dewhurst

Statement No: WITN7230001

Exhibits:0

Dated: October 2022

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF MELICA DEWHURST

I, Melica Eve Dewhurst will say as follows: -

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Melica Eve Dewhurst. I was born on GRO-C 1973. I live at GRO-C
GRO-C
2. I live with my husband and two sons who are aged 19 and 23.
3. I make this statement about my beautiful mom, Olive June Seaward, who was born on GRO-C 1944, and passed away, aged 71, on 10 September 2015, at home in the presence of my father, Robert James Seaward, and myself. She was infected with Hepatitis C (HCV) from contaminated Factor VIII concentrate and died from Hepatocellular Carcinoma.
4. My father has provided a witness statement to the Inquiry under WITN1510001. I refer to his statement in relation to the history and factual position pertaining to my mom's infection with HCV.
5. This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to all my mom's medical records.

Section 2. How Affected

6. In September 1977 my mom had a hysterectomy. At this time, she was wrongly diagnosed with Von Willebrand's Disease at New Cross Hospital in Wolverhampton. During this procedure she bled quite severely, and the doctors assumed that she suffered from a bleeding disorder.
7. After the procedure, my mom received Factor VIII on a number of occasions throughout the late 1970s and early/mid 1980s. Whenever she had nose bleeds or other bleeds, she went to the hospital and was treated with Factor VIII.
8. She received the above treatments at the Royal Wolverhampton Hospital and New Cross Hospital under the care of Dr Jackson and Dr Allen.
9. As far as I am aware, my mom was never given any information or advice about the risk of being exposed to infections from blood products.
10. My father and mom moved house in or about 2003 to GRO-C
GRO-C They changed their GP to Dr Wental at Much Wenlock Surgery. My mom booked a routine appointment with her new GP and on examination the GP noticed that she had liver spots and spider veins. He therefore requested that my mom had blood and liver function tests. A couple of days after she had the blood tests, she was referred to Dr Butterworth at the Princess Royal Hospital who confirmed that she had HCV and Cirrhosis. In or around 2001, my mom required a hip replacement and when she saw the orthopaedic consultant, she was informed about her diagnosis of Von Willebrand's Disease. The consultant referred my mom for further blood tests following which she was advised that she did not suffer from this condition.
11. My father managed to obtain some of my mom's medical records which showed that she had received many doses of Factor VIII concentrate over a number of

years at New Cross Hospital. It was confirmed by Dr. Butterworth that my mom had been infected with HCV as a result of receiving contaminated Factor VIII concentrate.

12. I also refer to my father's witness statement in relation to the background and factual position in relation to mom's infection with HCV.

Section 3. Other Infections

13. I am unaware as to whether my mom was infected with any other infections. I also refer to my father's witness statement.

Section 4. Consent

14. I refer to my father's witness statement.

Section 5. Impact of the Infection

15. It has been extremely hard to write this statement as I find it so upsetting to relive the pain and suffering felt by us as a family; I have had to build up the courage in writing this to you and it has taken some time hence why it has taken me some time to complete this.

16. My childhood with my parents was a happy one, but on many occasions, it had sadness due to my mom's constant ill health. Her being poorly could not be explained and many health professionals and others thought she was suffering with a mental illness as they could not at the time find any medical reason to explain her ill health.

17. Throughout my childhood and on regular occasions, mom would be very poorly in hospital to which my sister and I would have to stay at other family or friends' houses due to my father having to continue to work and as we were such a young age we had no one to look after us at home; this was very upsetting and

disruptive as we were separated as a family and I just wanted to be with my mom.

18. On one occasion, I arrived home from school and found my mom in a very poorly state on the floor and surrounded by vomit as she was unable to do anything. She could not leave the house in the mornings due to feeling so unwell, even though she tried her best I used to look at compare my life with the lives of other families and wanted to know why our family could not be like them. I was so young, and I did not realise why my mom felt so poorly and there was no reason given by medical professionals at that time as to why mom was so poorly.
19. Due to the HCV, mom had to give up her wonderful career in nursing; a role which she dearly loved.
20. It was not until almost 30 years later and on moving to GRO-C that mom and my father finally found out about the HCV infection. When the diagnosis was confirmed, we were in complete shock and clearly devastated as we did not know how this could have happened. Then eventually we found out that mom had been given contaminated Factor VIII concentrates which was how she had become infected.
21. Due to the stigma of HCV, it was very difficult for my family and even more so for my mom.
22. Due to mom's ill health, I got married to my partner; my mom absolutely loved being part of the wedding planning but sadly she only made it to our first wedding anniversary.
23. My sister and I attended hospital appointments when we were able to with my mother and father, but she refused to let my father and any other family member enter the appointments with her to start with; as she held information close to her chest, which I believe was my mom trying to protect us and not letting us know how poorly she was. Eventually she was diagnosed with Cirrhosis of the Liver which then led to how this awful disease ravaged her body progressing into Cancer. The decline in my mom's health accelerated

quickly and unfortunately much needed hospital appointments were cancelled and rescheduled.

24. At her last appointment in May 2015, the devastating news was that nothing else could be done for her; I just felt like I was in a dream state and never let it really sink in, in my mind this could not be happening to us. The deterioration at this point was very quick she was put into contact with a Macmillan nurse. My father took the care lead of my mom.

25. On my mom's passing, my father and I were by her side. I will never forget that afternoon the undignified passing that I witnessed, the sound of the 'death rattle' yellow mucus which came out in a projectile manner from her mouth when she was grasping for breath. I had my arm around her shoulders and neck trying to help her as she was choking, but it was too late she had gone; her body went limp, and I just stayed with her while her body lost all warmth and went gradually cold. This is something that I will never be able to erase from my memory and I will relive for the rest of my life.

26. My mom was always the head of the family, who do I turn to now she had gone? She has been robbed from being able to see her grandchildren grow up which is so sad as she loved both so dearly.

27. I am still completely and utterly heartbroken that my courageous mom has lost her life through no fault of her own, she was given a death sentence by the NHS Trust that meant so much to her, she had been completely let down when they should be there to protect her.

Section 6. Treatment/care/support

28. As far as I am aware, my mom was not offered any treatment for her HCV.

29. I don't think my mom was offered any counselling or psychological support in consequence of her HCV infection. I have never been offered anything similar following my mom's infection with HCV and subsequent death.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

30. My mother was assisted by Dr Butterworth with regard to her application to the Skipton Fund. I believe that she received monthly payments of approximately £1,500.

31. I also refer to my father's witness statement.

32. I have never been offered any financial support from any of the Trusts or Funds set up to distribute payments.

Section 8. Other Issues

33. The NHS gave my mom a death sentence and should be held accountable, she gave her life nursing people back to health and in return has been completely let down by the Medical /Professional's care team who are meant to be there to protect you.

Anonymity

34. I do not wish to apply for anonymity.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed.....

GRO-C

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Dated... 24th October 2022