

Witness Name: Anne-Marie Powell

Statement No: WITN1473001

Exhibits:0

Dated: March 2019

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF ANNE-MARIE POWELL

I, Anne-Marie Powell will say as follows:-

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Anne-Marie Powell, DOB [GRO-C] 966 and I live at [GRO-C]
[GRO-C]
2. My father, [GRO-B: F], died on [GRO-B] 1994 after being infected with HIV and Hepatitis C after receiving contaminated blood products.
3. My step-father, [GRO-B: S-F] (DOB [GRO-B] 1947), died on [GRO-B] 2015 after being infected with Hepatitis C after receiving contaminated blood products.
4. My mother and my two sisters also intend to provide statements to the Inquiry.
5. This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my late father and step-father's full medical records. If and in so far as I have been provided with limited records the relevant entries are set out in the medical chronology at the end of this statement.

Section 2. How Affected

6. My father, F, suffered from severe haemophilia A.
7. I was only a child when my father was infected so I do not have much first hand information from this time. My mother's statement will provide more information.
8. He was infected with Hepatitis B on 21.04.1974 at the Royal Victoria Hospital, when we were on holiday in Bournemouth. At this time I and one of my sisters had chicken pox and my other sister had whooping cough, so we all had to be kept apart.
9. My Dad was infected with Hepatitis C, then known as Non-A Non-B on 01.07.1984 and was told about this by the Queen Elizabeth Hospital (QEH) in 1993.
10. He was informed of his HIV diagnosis by the QEH.
11. My Mum told me that they had to wait six months to receive my Dad's test results back, and my Mum had to wait the same period of time for her results. Fortunately she was negative.
12. I think I was first told about my father's HIV diagnosis around 1985/6. They sat me and my future husband down when I was pregnant because they were worried about any risk to the baby. My partner and I kept it to ourselves.
13. My Stepdad, S-F, also suffered from Haemophilia A and was infected with Hepatitis C at the QEH. He wasn't told about his infection until 1993.

Section 3. Other Infections

14. I am not sure what other infections my Dad may have been exposed to.

15. My Step-father was told he may have been exposed to vCJD and that the infected donor had died as a result of the virus.

Section 4. Consent

16. I am not aware of what testing my father consented to.

Section 5. Impact of the Infection

17. When I was a teenager I clashed with my parents. I didn't want to be in the house because it was a terrible environment so I spent as much time out of the house as possible. I put so much pressure on them and I am embarrassed looking back on it, but I was a teenager at the time.
18. My Dad was always in bed. He was always tired, asleep or had his feet up, and he would be yellow. He had terrible mood swings and, in hindsight, he was obviously depressed, but that isn't something you would be aware of as a child.
19. He became addicted to strong painkillers and when he walked he rattled because he always had his tablets in his pocket. He started to become violent occasionally and I remember having to run and get my uncle for help. I don't blame this on my Dad; I blame it on his illness.
20. There were some good days. Sometimes he would be in a good mood and happy, but this would quickly be brought down when he would become ill again. He was very reliant on my Mum and had panic attacks if she left him alone.
21. It wasn't fair what he was going through. He had a lot of friends and family members who were dying of HIV at this time because he knew so many haemophiliacs, and it must have been heart-breaking to have to bury so many friends and wonder if he would be next.

22. I became pregnant with my first child when I was living at home. It was no environment in which to raise a baby. Fortunately, we were able to move out, but we couldn't tell anybody about my Dad's illness. Telling people that they couldn't tell anyone was the worst thing they could have done. It isolated people and made them feel alone.
23. My Mum always stayed strong for my Dad. When he died we didn't know what to do. I wanted to be there to support her but I also needed to grieve myself. My Mum wasn't given a choice as to whether my Dad was buried or cremated. She wasn't given the option to see him after he died, he was just taken away.
24. When my Dad spent time with my children he said to me 'I don't want to die'. My daughters were very young when he died so they either have no or very little memory of their Grandad.
25. My Dad died of cirrhosis but couldn't have a liver transplant because he had HIV. George Best was having liver transplant after liver transplant and kept wrecking them through drinking, but my Dad wasn't allowed a single transplant despite being infected through no fault of his own. I was so annoyed by the injustice of this.
26. I still feel that I can't really talk about it all now and I don't tell everybody even that my Dad was a haemophiliac. I know I shouldn't hold back, but you just don't know what people are going to say.
27. At times I still feel bitter about what happened and now I am very angry about it all. It shouldn't have happened.
28. My Stepdad was given a trial of Viekirax and Exviera (sponsored by ABB VIE) in May 2015 in an attempt to clear the Hepatitis C virus. After starting the treatment, his health deteriorated rapidly and he went into multi-organ failure. He died 15 days later in hospital.

29. This left the family absolutely devastated and we had to cope with the fact that his life had been taken away by the very drugs that were meant to prolong his life.

30. My Mum was in a terrible state after my Stepdad's death and needed counselling. I was trying to grieve myself and had three daughters and a grandson to comfort.

31. I lost not one but two Dads to contaminated blood products.

Section 6. Treatment/care/support

32. There was no counselling, there was no help. There was absolutely no help made available for us.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

33. I am not aware of what financial assistance my Mum received.

Section 8. Other Issues

34. I feel really proud of my Dad. He had to struggle through all of this but he kept going and he loved us and he was proud of us, and what happened wasn't his fault. My Dad died at near the age I am now; it is no age to die.

Anonymity

35. I do not wish to remain anonymous.

36. I do not want to give oral evidence to the Inquiry.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed..... GRO-C

Dated 23.03.2019.