

Witness Name: David Stevens

Statement No: WITN1545001

Exhibits: 0

Dated: January 2019

## INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

---

### FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF DAVID STEVENS

---

I, David Stevens, will say as follows:-

#### Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is David Stevens. I was born on GRO-C 1962 and I live at GRO-C  
GRO-C
2. I am married with 3 grown up children, aged 27 and 23 (twins). I am employed full time as a Stock Controller with Western Power Distribution.
3. This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my full medical records.

#### Section 2. How infected

4. I have mild/moderate Haemophilia A and I was diagnosed at birth. My two brothers who are older than me are also haemophiliacs, hence the reason why I was tested at birth for Haemophilia. My mother was a Haemophilia carrier.

5. As a young haemophiliac, between the years of 1973 to 1985, I suffered from regular "bleeds" normally caused by sporting activities. I therefore required treatment and received it from the Royal Treliske Hospital, Cornwall. This hospital is also known as The Royal Cornwall Hospital.
6. During these years, I was treated under a total of 4 consultants, namely Dr Murrell, Dr Helena Daly and latterly Dr Kruegar and Dr Creigh.
7. I do not recall the exact product that I was given, but in the early days (under Dr Murrell) I was administered Cryoprecipitate. Later (under Dr Daly and beyond) I was administered Factor VIII (FVIII).
8. Dr Murrell always at the time administered FVIII to me. After a point, he did not seem keen to treat me and I did not know the reason why. With hindsight I do wonder if he was aware of the risks and if so was probably responsible for saving my life.
9. I cannot say precisely at which point I would have been infected with contaminated blood products, but I believe it was between 1973 and 1985.
10. In the early 1990s I received a telephone call from the hospital asking me to come in. I was told at this meeting by Dr Kruegar that I had Hepatitis C (Hep C). I was also told I had not tested positive for HIV. I was offered no other advice than "We've all got to die of something". I was stunned by this and by what he said as I did not even know what Hep C was. At the time, I do not think I fully understood the consequences of the infection and spent the next five years pretty much blissfully unaware of the potential seriousness of the infection.
11. It was approximately 8 years later, after I had moved to Devon and under the care of Dr Lee in the Haematology Department of the Royal Devon & Exeter Hospital (RDEH) that I was offered treatment for Hep C.

12. I was never told of the risks involved in using FVIII. My father and I were not even aware where the blood was being sourced from. It was always administered to me at the hospital.
13. I know that I was infected with Hep C as a result of FVIII, as it had nothing to do with my lifestyle. I was not an alcoholic and even some doctors at the clinics told me I could have only contracted it from FVIII.
14. I do not believe I was given adequate information to help me understand and manage the infection. I had annual check-ups for my Haemophilia, but I was never told that I was being tested for Hep C and HIV.
15. I do not know how long the doctors knew about my infection before telling me. It was about 8 years later that I was offered treatment for Hep C, which is when I received a little more information about Hep C.
16. I was not provided with any information about the risks of others being infected as a result of my infection.

### **Section 3. Other Infections**

17. As far as I am aware I have no other infections as a result of being given the contaminated blood but I do have concerns as to whether I was given a batch which had vCJD.
18. I recall receiving some leaflets in or about the early 2000s regarding potential risks involved with vCJD. I did not speak to the doctors about it. It is something that keeps playing on my mind.
19. I have blood tests every 6 or 12 months and I do worry whether I could have contracted other infections because of the contaminated blood.

#### **Section 4. Consent**

20. I was not aware that I was being treated or tested for Hep C or HIV. My recollection is that I was called in to an appointment and I was told that I have Hep C. I therefore believe that I was treated and tested without my knowledge and without my consent.
21. I also believe that I was treated and tested without being given adequate information and for the purposes of research.
22. Whenever I attended the hospital for a blood test or a routine check-up, I was never informed about what I was being tested for.

#### **Section 5. Impact of the Infection**

23. My infection has had a negative impact on my life. After being diagnosed with Hep C, I did not really understand the significance of it immediately. It was completely out of the blue. Then I started to display signs of liver damage caused by the Hep C.
24. I find it actually quite hard to describe the effects of the infection as I had endeavoured to just "get on with life and not think about it". It played on my mind most of the time, particularly in the period after I was first told, as I was just unsure if, when, and to what extent the virus will affect me.
25. If I was not told about Hep C, I would have never known and probably died as a result of the infection. I had depression and anxiety in the past, about 35 years ago, which a lot of people go through, but at the time I was unable to link my symptoms to Hep C. I now believe that the above symptoms were as a result of Hep C.
26. As the years progressed I just had to accept that I was living with a time bomb that may go off with devastating effects. I was lucky in many respects as I did not exhibit any severe physical effects of Hep C, but the mental anguish and

anxiety were considerable and pretty much exist to this day (even though I have been told that I have cleared the virus).

27. It is probably best summed up by my reaction to the news that a public inquiry was announced. I was watching the lunchtime news, alone at home when it was announced and I just simply burst into tears. This is not a common occurrence and I think it signifies the release of suppressed emotion that I had been hiding for over 30 years. I was so relieved to know that the truth was finally going to come out after so long. It was the way that the authorities had behaved over it in the aftermath, trying to cover it up. As a community that has done nothing wrong, the authorities just left us to deal with it.

28. The biggest impact on my family was (and to some extent, still does) the effects of the depressive state of mind and anxiety that my infection created within me. Although I never sought a medical diagnosis, medical treatment or even properly acknowledged the fact that I was depressed, the fact remains that it caused me to become short tempered and somewhat distant and remote from both my wife and children. I was always feeling down. I now become anxious with regard to situations (such as this statement) that I am confident would never have affected me prior to the infection.

29. Sometime in the new millennium I had treatment involving Interferon in an attempt to clear the virus. This involved self-administered weekly injections and taking tablets daily. Unfortunately, whilst the treatment certainly affected me physically with hair and weight loss, it was shown that it was not effective on the particular strain of Hep C that I was infected with. After a period of 3 months, with the advice from my Liver Consultant, Dr Christie at the RDEH, the treatment was halted.

30. This treatment gave me flu like symptoms and I was feeling really unwell during this period. There were no other treatments available at the time so no further treatment was offered.

31. In or about 2016, I believe new treatment had been tested, approved and made available to people. I was offered the new treatment, Ribavirin and accepted it. It was a 12 week course. I completed the treatment and I was told that I cleared the virus, although I am very cynical about this.

32. There was definitely a feeling that there was a stigma attached to Hep C, particularly in the early years. I vividly remember being afraid that I might have contracted HIV. I also recall the frenzied newspaper headlines such as "Vicar Dies from Gay Plague" that were prevalent at the time. It was horrible the way the media portrayed the infections.

33. I told my employers about my infection and they had been very supportive about it. As a result of the treatment, I had to take time off work. My employer was very flexible with me.

34. Socially, I never really discussed the infection with friends or acquaintances. However, I was always careful not to share drinking glasses and be particularly vigilant if I had a split lip. This also applied to my home life. I was never physically close to my children and wife as I would have liked to have been just in case of some unexpected or accidental cross contamination. This really upset me and it would bring me down.

#### **Section 6. Treatment/care/support**

35. I cannot recall ever facing difficulties or obstacles in obtaining treatment, care or support as a consequence of my infection.

36. I was never offered counselling or psychological support as a result of the infection. If I was offered treatment, I believe it would have helped me.

## **Section 7. Financial Assistance**

37. I received a Stage 1 payment from the Skipton Fund in the sum of £20,000 in or about the late 1990s/early 2000's. I believe I was asked to sign a waiver, not to take further action.

38. I now receive annual winter fuel payments in the sum of £500, which is now administered by the EIBSS.

39. The EIBSS do offer various financial schemes, but they are means tested and I would therefore not qualify.

40. I do not remember how I found out about the Skipton Fund, but it was pretty straight forward to apply for it.

41. Currently I am also receiving quarterly payments of £1,000. However, the amount will be reviewed in 2021, which I am not happy about.

42. I am also not happy that these payments are discretionary, I believe that everyone should get the same amount.

## **Section 8. Other Issues**

43. I want closure from the inquiry. I would like an acknowledgement and an apology for the hurt and suffering caused by the years of denials, cover ups and contempt in which the infected community has been held by the successive Governments.

44. I would also like the key participants in the scandal who are found to be responsible to be held to account.

45. Regarding the financial side of this inquiry, I would like an end to the various discretionary support schemes and instead, a fair and final compensation scheme that is swiftly implemented.

**Anonymity, disclosure and redaction**

46. I confirm that I do not wish to apply for anonymity. I understand this statement will be published and disclosed as part of the Inquiry.

47. I do not wish to give oral evidence.

**Statement of Truth**

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

Signed... 

GRO-C

.....

Dated 27<sup>th</sup> January 2019