

Witness Name: Debra Pollard  
Statement No.: WITN3094029  
Exhibits: WITN3094030 – WITN3094035  
Dated: 12<sup>th</sup> August 2021

## **INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY**

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### **WRITTEN STATEMENT OF DEBRA ANNE POLLARD**

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I provide this statement on behalf of the Royal Free London NHS Foundation Trust ('**The Trust**'), Pond Street, London, NW3 2QG in response to the notification under Rule 13 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 02 June 2021 and the request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 16<sup>th</sup> June 2021.

I, Debra Pollard, will say as follows: -

#### **Section 1: Introduction**

1. I am employed by the Royal Free London NHS Foundation Trust (the Trust) as Lead Nurse Specialist within the Haemophilia and Thrombosis Centre ("the Centre"). I have been in this role since May 2014. Prior to that I worked for the Trust as a Clinical Nurse Specialist since February 1992. I have therefore worked at the Centre for 29 years. I retired from this full time role in October 2020 and returned part time in December 2020. My job title remains Lead Nurse Specialist.
2. As Lead Nurse Specialist, my responsibilities included leading and managing a team of specialist nurses and allied health professionals. I was also responsible, together with the Centre Director, for the strategic development and management of the department. In my role as Lead Nurse Specialist, I was responsible on a number of occasions for answering questions from the Infected Blood Inquiry (the Inquiry). As a result I am aware of some of the issues surrounding the Inquiry and know how to investigate matters arising within our archives and systems.



3. I have been asked to write this witness statement on behalf of the Trust to respond to certain criticisms raised in the witness statement of Mrs Sheila Squires dated 30<sup>th</sup> September 2020, in which Mrs Squires raises criticisms regarding the care received by her late son, Mr Peter Squires.
4. I was one of the clinical nurse specialists involved in Mr Squires' care from February 1992 until his untimely death. I have a good recollection of Mr Squires' case from February 1992 onwards. For the purpose of preparing this witness statement I have reviewed the records held by the Trust in relation to Mr Squires and provide this statement on the basis of my recollection and those records. Where matters within this statement are not directly within my own knowledge, I believe them to be true.
5. The Inquiry has requested that the Trust respond to the following comments made by Mrs Squires:
  - i) At paragraph 32 of her witness statement where she states that she asked the Trust if her son had hepatitis C but they said no. Mrs Squires notes that this response contradicts what was written in her son's medical records;
  - ii) At paragraph 33 of her witness statement where she states that she requested her son's medical records after he passed away, but the Trust appeared rather reluctant and said that she would not understand them;
  - iii) At paragraph 67 of her witness statement where she states that she asked for her granddaughter to be tested GRO-A at the age of 11 GRO-A but the Trust refused to conduct this test because of her age and said she would have to wait until she was 16.
6. I have also responded to various other criticisms that Mrs Squires makes relating to Mr Squires' treatment. Although these are not explicitly expressed as criticisms of the Trust, I have responded where the criticism is relevant to the care provided by the Trust to Mr Squires. I hope that the additional information assists.
7. I attach to this statement exhibits WITN309430 – WITN309435 which are extracts from the Trust's records detailing various aspects of Mr Squires' care which are relevant to the criticisms made by Mrs Squires.



## **Section 2: Background Information**

8. Mr Squires' care was transferred from Great Ormond Street Hospital to the Royal Free Hospital on the 14 April 1975 when he was 14 years old. I have exhibited a summary document **WITN3094030** that states that his first exposure to clotting factor concentrate was 1974, although I cannot find the source evidence for this as it was prior to his transfer to the Royal Free Hospital and would have been administered at either Great Ormond Street Hospital or at Lord Mayor Treloar's.
9. According to our records Mr Squires attended Lord Mayor Treloar's until 1978 when he was 17 years old. I exhibit at **WITN3094031** treatment records summaries from when he transferred to the trust until 1979 when he became an adult. These suggest that they include treatments administered at Lord Mayor Treloar's. The records suggest that Mr Squires was receiving NHS Factor VIII concentrate (Lister) in 1975 and commercial FVIII concentrate (Hemofil) in 1976 and by 1977 he had also been exposed to another commercial FVIII concentrate (Koate).
10. Mr Squires participated in at least two clinical trials for clotting factor concentrates. There are records showing that he participated in the "8SM" trial. This was a new highly purified plasma derived product from BioProducts Laboratory (BPL). There is also evidence that he participated in a pharmacokinetic study of "Recombinate" in 1997. This was one of the first recombinant (synthetic) Factor VIII products. Patricia Lilley (deceased) was the nurse specialist involved with clinical trials in the Centre at that time. I exhibit at **WITN3094032** two letters and a consent form demonstrating his participation in these clinical trials.

## **Section 3: Response to Criticisms of Mrs Squires**

11. At paragraph 30 of her witness statement Mrs Squires states that '*My husband and I never attended any consultations with Peter about his HIV infection and he never communicated anything to do with his treatment. I was never given any information about infection management control.*' According to his medical records, Mr Squires was told about is "HTLV III" (later known as HIV) result on 2 December 1985. I have exhibited at **WITN3094033** a handwritten record by Dr Elizabeth Miller on that day where she states that she discussed "Modes of transmission and means of prevention". As Peter was an adult by 1985 he would have had the choice to bring friends or family to his clinic appointments and the clinicians at the Royal Free would



not have been able to contact and advise families unless individual patients requested it and gave consent for information to be shared.

12. At paragraph 32 of her statement Mrs Squires states *'At one point, I asked the Royal Free if Peter had Hepatitis C but they said no, yet this contradicts what is written in his medical records.'* The Trust is not able to respond to this specific criticism as no details are provided regarding when this exchange took place or who with. From the records it would appear that Mr Squires was first diagnosed with "Non-A non B Hepatitis" in 1980 and was followed up at least annually by the hepatologists after that. The first reference to Hepatitis C being discussed with Mr Squires is by Dr Eleanor Goldman on 02 May 1990. It can be seen in the handwritten notes of Dr Christine Lee on 3 September 1990, that Mr Squires stated that he would want to be present if there were any discussions with his mother. It would not be possible to give information to a parent about their adult son without consent. These records referred to in this paragraph are exhibited at **WITN3094034**.
13. At paragraph 33 Mrs Squires states *'I asked for Peter's medical records after he passed away, but the Royal Free were rather reluctant and said that I would not understand them. Eventually we were given copies by Patricia Lingley and this is when I first became aware of his HCV infection.'* Following Peter's death Mrs Squires wrote to Professor Lee on 28<sup>th</sup> March 2000 to request a copy of his medical records. Professor Lee responded on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2000 agreeing to give copies of the records, and also suggested a meeting to discuss the contents which took place on the 26<sup>th</sup> April 2020. I have exhibited this letter at **WITN0394035**. It is standard NHS practice that requests for medical records are made in writing, and the Trust Haemophilia Centre has always given individual patients and their surviving families access to them.
14. At paragraph 67 Mrs Squires states *'When my granddaughter was 11, I asked for her to be tested [GRO-A] The hospital refused because of her age and said she would have to wait until she was 16.'* I am unable to comment on the care of another patient without her explicit consent. However I can comment that a grandmother would not be able to request blood tests on a child without parental consent. It is in accordance with national and international guidelines that genetic tests [GRO-A] should only take place when a child is fully able to understand the implications of the result of the test for her future [GRO-A] choices and is able to consent to the test. 11 years of age would not generally be accepted as



an age where a child would be considered mature enough to be able to discuss the implications and consequences.

15. At paragraph 69 Mrs Squires states that she and her husband have never been offered any counselling or psychological support via the NHS in relation to her son's infection with HIV and HCV. The Royal Free employed two Psychotherapeutic Counsellors within the Haemophilia Centre and it was normal practice to offer their services to the bereaved. However as there are no records I cannot comment on whether that offer was made to Mr and Mrs Squires.

#### **Section 4: Other Issues**

16. Mrs Squires notes at paragraph 6 of her witness statement that she has never received medical records from Great Ormond Street Hospital. I would like Mrs Squires to know that in the course of preparing this witness statement I found some of Mr Squires Great Ormond Street Records amongst the records held by the Trust.

#### **Statement of Truth**

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

Signed 

GRO-C
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Dated \_12<sup>th</sup> August 2021\_\_\_\_\_

#### **Table of Exhibits:**

Date	Notes/ Description	Exhibit number
n/a	Summary record	WITN3094030
1975-1979	Early treatment summaries	WITN3094031



1991 and 1997	Two letters and a consent form regarding participation in clinical trials.	WITN3094032
02.12.85	Handwritten medical record Dr Miller	WITN3094033
1980 – 81 and 1990	Hepatology records	WITN3095034
31.03.00	Letter from Dr Lee to Mrs Squires re medical records	WITN3094035