

Witness Name: Mrs. C L Smith

Statement No: WITN3240001

Exhibits: 0

Dated: June 2019

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF CHARLOTTE LOUISE SMITH

I, Charlotte Louise Smith will say as follows:-

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Charlotte Louise Smith. I was born on the GRO-C 1995 and live at GRO-C Devon GRO-C with my husband and new son.
2. I make this statement as the daughter of Richard Joseph Waring who was infected with Hepatitis C and B as a result of receiving contaminated blood products.
3. **This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my father's full medical records.**
4. My father has provided a statement to the Inquiry (WITN1721001) and so has my mother (WITN3241001)

Section 2. How infected

5. My father suffers from Haemophilia A classified as severe. I refer to paragraphs 5-21 of my fathers statement which set out the hospitals and places he was treated, the blood products he received, when and where he was infected, and how he was informed he was infected.

Section 3. Other Infections

6. I am aware my father is at risk of being infected with vCJD and refer to paragraph 22 of his statement for full details.

Section 4. Consent

7. I refer to paragraph 25- 26 of my father's statement which set out that he believes that he has been tested without his knowledge or consent or adequate and full information being provided.
8. I believe I may have been tested without my knowledge, consent, or adequate information being provided as when I was about 16 weeks pregnant, I was contacted by Derriford Hospital asking if I wanted to find out the gender of the baby and how I was planning to find out. I replied I was happy to find out at the 20 week scan. However they offered me a blood test to find out sooner. I did not know at the time there was such a test for this. Apparently the cost for this, normally done privately was around £400 but they offered it for me free. So I agreed. I was surprised to find when I went for the test they took 4 phials of blood and I was told these had to be sent to Bristol for testing. I was suspicious so many samples were taken that other tests could also have been done without my knowledge/consent.

Section 5. Impact of the Infection

9. The impact of the infection and the treatment spread across all aspects of my life and family life. I didn't really have a father when I was younger, as my mum was looking after my father; and he was very distant and suffered

from severe mood swings. He would shout at me for no reason and that would make me question my actions and make me feel alone. My mum had to look after my dad and care for me. I remember my father suffering from severe headaches and being exhausted all the time and not being able to play with me.

10. We didn't go out much when I was young, due to the lack of money and my mother having to spend a lot of time looking after my father, and could not leave him for long. I felt alone and isolated, I didn't have a proper relationship with my father. I was 5 or 6 and at that young age I didn't really understand why this was all happening. This had a detrimental impact on my social development.

11. At primary school I experienced the stigma of being the daughter of a haemophiliac who was suspected of having received contaminated blood. I was bullied a lot; the older kids would call my dad a "spastic" or say "he had AIDS". My social life at school was not good; I didn't get to meet other kids because we couldn't afford to go clubs or go out and their families wouldn't allow their children over to play, due to wrongly placed worries their children could be infected. I had a couple of good friends. However I suffered with major anxiety; partly from the bullying but also worrying about being away from my parents. I wouldn't stay over anywhere. I struggled to stay at a friend's house.

12. I couldn't concentrate in school and it left me with physical illnesses as well. I couldn't keep food down and I lost a lot of weight. When I was about 6, my mum took me down to the bottom of the garden, planting seeds and explained to me that my father may not be around long. This sort of news is hard at any age; however, it has a big affect on a 6 year old. It was earth shattering news, although at the time I didn't fully understand and had lot of questions. I asked myself 'why me?' 'why my dad?', the stigma didn't allow me to easily open up to my friends as we were still very young and people didn't understand the predicament my family and I were in.

13. When I went to college my mental state improved, however I still suffer with anxiety today. At college I was able to concentrate more and apply for myself. I studied animal management, however, when I left college I decided to start a business baking gluten free cakes and selling them from a van. I did really well the first year. However, due to my father's poor health and helping him out; I wasn't able to go out to big events at the weekends and make enough money to reinsure and run the van. As a result the following year I had to close the business. My father's infection has not just affected my social development but also my ability to generate a steady income and become financially secure.
14. Seeing what happened to my parent's and how it impacted on their relationship has also impacted on my own expectations of relationships which did not help me in any new relationship I formed, although now these concerns and problems have been put right by my husband who has been a rock for me, and helped me develop as an individual in all aspects.
15. I refer to my paragraphs 27-44 of my father's statement and to paragraphs 19-36 of my mother's statement for further details of the impact of the infection and treatment.

Section 6. Treatment/care/support

16. I understand my father did encounter obstacles in obtaining treatment, however, I was very young at the time so I refer to paragraphs 45-50 of my father's statement and paragraphs 37-39 of my mother's statement which set out the obstacles faced by my father and mother.
17. There was no counselling or psychological support ever made available to me. I consider my father's infection and the treatment, had a serious impact on my ability to develop socially and lead a normal life as a child which have had knock on affects I still have to deal with. Counselling or psychological support would not change my childhood however I believe it

would have allowed a more smooth transition and ability to understand the situation around me, along with understanding the emotions I was feeling.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

18.I would refer to paragraphs 51-58 of my father's statement which set out the financial assistance received.

Section 8. Other Issues

19.I have nothing further to add to what my father has to say in paragraph 59 of his statement and my mother in paragraph 41 of her statement.

Anonymity, disclosure and redaction

20.I do not wish to be anonymous, and I do not want 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...03/07/2019.....