Witness Name: MICHAEL ANDREWS
Statement No: WITN3651001
Exhibits: 0
Dated: SEPTEMBER 2019

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF MICHAEL ANDREWS

I, Michael Andrews, will say as follows:-

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Michael Andrews. I was born on GRO-C 1982 and I live at GRO-C GRO-C Northampton GRO-C.

2. This Statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my full medical records.

Section 2. How Infected

3. I have severe Haemophilia A, diagnosed just after I was born.

4. I am infected with the Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) from Factor VIII (FVIII) concentrate.

5. I was treated with FVIII concentrate at the Northampton General Hospital by Dr Daniels. I was however under the overall care of Dr Rizza and Dr

Matthews at the Oxford Haemophilia Centre (OHC). I attended at the OHC for my 6 monthly check ups.

6. In or around 1998 when I was around the age of 16 I started to have home treatment. Around that same period of time I was told that I had HCV.

7. My father took me to my 6 monthly appointment at the OHC. After we had seen the doctor, a female medic (whom I assumed was a nurse) came into the room and said "*You do know you're Hepatitis C positive?*" We responded with *"No. What is that?"* I don't remember the rest of the detail of what was said but it seemed clear that we were told at that time because of my age and because it was assumed that I might become sexually active. I remember the nurse commenting *"You can't go around giving it to people"* as if I was responsible for having it. She talked about me using condoms and told me that I couldn't drink (alcohol). She thrust a pamphlet at me that I read in the passenger seat of my father's car on the way home. It provided warnings about sharing razors and toothbrushes.

8. I was not offered any counselling, support or additional information. I was left confused, with nothing more than a leaflet to read. The attitude of the nurse was that HCV was entirely my problem and that it was something I would not want 'normal people' to know about let alone be infected with by me.

9. I believe that I was infected with HCV for many years before being told. I had a liver biopsy in 2001. Dr Jane Collier, Consultant Heptologist told me that the condition of my liver at that time was indicative of someone being infected at a young age. Apparently the liver in someone young can better adapt to dealing with HCV than the liver of an older person.

10. No information or advice was given to me or my parents about risk of infection before being treated with FVIII concentrate. My mother asked Dr Rizza about the HIV/AIDS risk. My mother was assured by Dr Rizza that the FVIII concentrate they provided their patients with at the OHC was sourced from Scotland as opposed to the *"dangerous stuff"* from the USA. My mother

clearly recalls Dr Rizza saying we get *"our blood from Scotland* GRO-D GRO-D".

Section 3. Other Infections

11. In or around 2004 I received a letter saying I had been exposed to the risk of vCJD. There was no explanation about it. I thought "what's this?" I was left to my own devices to do my own research (Google) about it.

Section 4. Consent

12. I was tested for infection without my/my parents' knowledge and consent. I did not know that I had been tested for HCV before I was told of the diagnosis.

13. I believe that I was treated with FVIII concentrate for the purposes of research. Some of the way in which the OHC handled things then seemed seedy. The OHC is different now and more professional. I was a young haemophiliac and I was given a large volume of FVIII concentrate over the years.

14. The nurses would take up to 10 vials of blood from me at every appointment. My parents were told that the many blood samples taken were for *"just routine*" purposes.

15. After I was told of the HCV diagnosis at around the age of 16, I knowingly participated in OHC research. Having had such a large volume of FVIII concentrate, they wanted to know why I was not also HIV positive and were looking for antibodies in my blood. The doctors must have known that some of the batches I had been given were contaminated with HIV. Before agreeing to the HIV research, I did not know that I had formerly been tested for HIV.

Section 5. Impact

16. My life changed instantly from the moment I was told that I had HCV. I was all geared up to start to enjoy the beginnings of adulthood. I was ready to do all the things my friends were doing. I wanted a girlfriend and to go out with my friends drinking and having fun. The news that I had HCV made me scared to do the normal things in life. I had to step back from my own life when it had happened through no fault of my own.

17. I suffered with anxiety and depression from my late teens. I did not have an alcoholic drink until I was aged 21 because of the worry about what it would do to damage my liver further. I was unable to explain myself to my friends because of the fear of stigma. I was always the designated driver on nights out. If anyone asked why, I blamed my haemophilia and the alibi that I do not drink in case I fall over and have a bleed. I told my very closest friends that I had a problem with my liver but was vague about the details. I camouflaged the reality of my situation. Having HCV really held me back in forming relationships and friendships.

18. When I was referred to Dr Collier we discussed possible treatment. Dr Collier advised me that the HCV treatment at that time was harsh and that there would be better treatment on the horizon if I waited.

19. In 2015 I had a fibroscan. I do not recall the specific reading but I believe my liver to have been heading in the realms of substantial scarring, not yet in the Stage 2 cirrhosis bracket.

20. In 2016 I underwent treatment for HCV. The treatment (I do not recall the name of the drug) was to consist of me taking one tablet per day for three or four months. However just as the treatment was about to start I was told by Dr Collier that she had bad news for me because "*the powers that be*" were unable to sanction my intended treatment. I had to have a different treatment consisting of me taking 10 tablets per day for a total of three months. I was told that the former treatment was being prioritised for the homeless and alcoholics because they couldn't be trusted to remember to take 10 tablets each day. I felt very unfairly penalised in circumstances where my liver was damaged through no fault of my own.

21. The side effects to the treatment I was given were terrible. I suffered with acute paranoia and anxiety. I suffered with panic attacks and the shakes, leaving me pacing around in a state of agitation. However my HCV viral load came down quickly and I had to continue with it, albeit with a little tweaking. I would have swapped what was going on in my head at that time for some physical side effects in a heart beat. My children were just 3 and 6 years old at the time and the treatment placed an enormous strain on my marriage. I take antidepressants and anti-anxiety tablets to this day. I have now cleared the virus.

22. I have known my wife for 16 years and have been married since 2011. I have always worried about infecting my wife and children. I was always worried about keeping them away from me if I suffered with cuts and bleeds at home. I have always kept my tooth brush and razors hidden.

23. I started a new job in April 2016 and had to advise my new boss that I was starting HCV clearing treatment later that year. That was a big step for me. He was very understanding but I felt compelled to use my holiday entitlement rather than take sick leave in a new job when I had not yet completed a year of service at the company. I was not in a fit state to work and fortunately for me the Christmas period then intervened.

Section 6. Treatment/Care/Support

24. I was not offered adequate care and support. I have been through turmoil and depression whilst questioning myself as to why I was experiencing what I was going through. No one has taken responsibility.

25. I am disappointed to have been let down with the HCV clearing treatment initially planned for me as detailed at paragraph 20 above.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

26. In 2004 I received the Stage One ex gratia payment of £20,000 from the Skipton Fund. I only found out about the Skipton Fund through a haemophiliac friend. No-one at the OHC informed me of the Skipton Fund.

Section 8. Other Issues

27. The position/attitude of the OHC as presented to myself and my mother has always been that HCV was an unfortunate side effect of a miracle treatment (FVIII) and without treatment I would be in a worse position (possibly wheelchair bound) by now. It is only when hearing the experiences of others and reflecting on your own experience that you appreciate how very bad this scandal is.

28. I have recently asked the OHC for my medical notes and records and I have been asked if I want them for my own personal use. I do not know why they would want to ask me what I wanted my own records for.

Anonymity, disclosure and redaction

29. I do not wish to retain my anonymity and I understand that my Statement will be disclosed and published as part of the Inquiry. I do not wish to give oral evidence

Statement of Truth

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

Signed…………………………………………

MICHAEL ANDREWS

Dated……………………………………………

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Signed GRO-C

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Dated 17 Dec 2019