

Witness Name: SUSAN EARNSHAW

Statement No: WITN4716001

Exhibits: 0

Dated: October 2020

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF SUSAN EARNSHAW

I, Susan Earnshaw, will say as follows:-

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Susan Earnshaw. I was born on **GRO-C** 1951 and I live at **GRO-C**
GRO-C West Midlands **GRO-C**
2. Two of my four sons were infected with the Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) through contaminated blood products. My son, Daniel Stocks (born on **GRO-C** 1974), has provided a Witness Statement to the Inquiry (WITN0458001). My son, Ben Stocks (born on **GRO-C** 1975), is also in the process of providing a Witness Statement to the Inquiry.
3. This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my sons' full medical records.

Section 2. How Affected

4. Daniel and Ben have Haemophilia A. Daniel, my third son, is a mild haemophiliac (3% clotting factor), diagnosed at 3 years old when he fell down the stairs and sustained a head injury. At that time my other sons were tested. My eldest son is also a mild haemophiliac (7% clotting factor), my second son does not have haemophilia and Ben, my youngest, is a severe haemophiliac (2% clotting factor).
5. My sons were treated at the Birmingham Children's Hospital (BCH) under the care of Professor GRO-D. They were treated in hospital initially, with elevated limbs and bed rest and then with Factor VIII (FVIII) concentrate. Daniel was, on at least one occasion, also treated with Cryoprecipitate.
6. Aside from the 6 monthly routine appointments, my sons spent a lot of time at BCH as inpatients receiving treatment through various injuries. They couldn't just enjoy being kids. They were not allowed to play sports and I did not allow them in pools or on slides if we had a holiday. I was always on edge, worrying about them hurting themselves but the boys were very boisterous and spent many weeks each year lying in hospital beds. We were very familiar with all the staff. We became familiar and got to know other children and their parents, some of whom came as far away as Wales for treatment. We were a community.
7. After a while the boys learned to self-administer the FVII concentrate at home. We kept it in our fridge. I was not pre-warned of any risk of exposure to infection from the treatment before it was given to my sons. I would not have been a part of it had I been advised of risk. I trusted the doctors. I had great faith in them and that they were doing the best they could.

8. My sons transferred to the adult Haemophilia Centre at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital (QEH) when they were 18 years old. Daniel and Ben were told that they had HCV at the QEH around the same time I believe. They were called into have biopsies. I remember Daniel being very angry and saying

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He was extremely emotional. The knowledge that he was infected with HCV through contaminated blood products changed him overnight. Ben has a calmer temperament. No information was provided to help us understand and/or manage the infection. No counselling was offered.

Section 3. Other Infections

9. Daniel had a tooth extraction at BCH in the mid 1980s. He was given Cryoprecipitate ahead of the operation and had an immediate adverse reaction to it. I remember leaving to get a coffee. Something didn't feel right to me about leaving him. I felt agitated about it like something was very wrong. I immediately returned to witness Daniel having a fit. Daniel was given the treatment by mistake and the words 'DO NOT GIVE CRYO' were all over the top of his notes. The mistake could have been fatal. I was so scared by what had happened. A few months later he was diagnosed with the Hepatitis B Virus.

10. As stated, we became friendly with other families with haemophiliac children. One family (of Indian origin) kindly shared the food they brought in to the ward for their own son with Daniel. Their son contracted TB on the ward and all those on the ward and their visitors had to have jabs.

Section 4. Consent.

11. A lot of vials of blood were taken. I would not now be surprised to learn that the boys were tested without my knowledge and consent.

Section 5. Impact

12. The fear and stigma associated with HIV/AIDS in the early to mid 1980s was a terrible thing. I remember having to challenge the Headmistress when the boys were at junior school because I felt they were being treated unfairly by her. She openly told me that she didn't want the boys at her school. She said that they were 'unruly' and 'too much of a worry for her'. News about HIV/AIDS began emerging on television. I said to her 'They have haemophilia, not AIDS'. She responded by saying 'We don't know that'. Even the canteen staff at the school didn't want the children anywhere near them. Shortly after that Sister Marion from BCH came to the school and gave a reassuring talk to other families about haemophilia.

13. Many of the families we knew at BCH lost children. **GRO-D** was quite secretive. We were told that they had died through having haemophilia, not AIDS. When the truth came out, **GRO-D** turned grey overnight. Ward 8 was shut down straight away.

14. When my sons were told that they had been infected with HCV there was a lack of clarity for a long time about treatment options. Some years later, Ben learned that he had cleared the virus but Daniel has had to struggle with it for decades. I spoiled Daniel, trying to compensate for his feelings of anger about everything. It had an impact on my other sons (particularly those unaffected). Being infected with HCV had to be kept secret as they didn't want anyone to know. Daniel confided in a girlfriend and the news about him having HCV spread after they split up. Daniel is a lovely man. I found out relatively recently that he has been reliant upon anti depressants. It all had a big effect on me as I was constantly worried about my sons. It led to the end of my relationship with my then partner.

Section 6. Treatment/Care/Support

15. As stated, no treatment and/or support has been forthcoming.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

16. I rely on the Statements of my sons.

Section 8. Other Issues

17. I am disgusted by what has happened. It is not just what has happened to my sons but to those that have died to include the children that we knew so well. It is also 'the cover up' and not being believed for all these years that bothers me.

Anonymity, disclosure and redaction

18. I do not wish to apply for anonymity.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed.

GRO-C

Dated..... 29.10.2020