

Witness Name: Peter Langley

Statement No.: WITN0141001

Exhibits: **WITN0141002**

Dated: 6 March 2019

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

WRITTEN STATEMENT OF PETER LANGLEY

I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 7 February 2019.

I, Peter Langley, will say as follows: -

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Peter Langley. My date of birth is GRO-C 1941 and my address is known to the Inquiry. I am a retired man living with my wife. I intend to speak about my infection with Hepatitis C. In particular, the nature of my illness, how the illness affected me, the treatment received and the impact it had on my family and our lives together.
2. I confirm that I am not legally represented and that I am not claiming anonymity.

Section 2. How Infected

3. I was involved in a motorbike accident at the age of 18. I underwent several operations as my legs were badly injured, particularly my left hip. Fortunately, I did not require any transfusions at the time.
4. On 23 May 1967, I had an operation on my hip at Rochdale Infirmary and two units of blood were cross-matched to me (units FG7501 and FG9653), but I do not know whether they were transfused. On 12 May 1986, four units of blood were cross-matched to me and transfused during a full hip replacement at Rochdale (units SB9987, SB8095, SB4583, and SB6312). I was provided this information in 2008 and the Hospital has now been closed. See Exhibit WITN0141002.
5. I have had no other transfusions and I do not have any tattoos or piercings. It is the opinion of medical professions who have treated me that the transfusion in 1986 was the likely source of my Hepatitis C infection.
6. I discovered my infection approximately 5 years ago. I was suffering with pain in my back and underwent two operations. I thought the issues were due to my accident all those years ago, but I am no longer sure this is true. After the operations, I began to feel quite unwell, particularly suffering from tiredness and weakness. I had previously been fit and healthy and enjoyed travelling and physical activity. My GP suggested I undergo extensive testing, which included blood tests and an MRI. The MRI revealed I had lung cancer and I was also diagnosed with Hepatitis C.
7. I was treated for the lung cancer by having a lobe of my lung removed. Fortunately, this seems to have cured the cancer as I have not had any further complications.
8. I did not know what Hepatitis C was at the time, though I had heard of it. I was not told much about Hepatitis C initially, either how to manage it or any precautions I should take, but I was referred to a specialist in blood borne viruses. I had liver tests and other tests done and everything checked out okay. Fortunately, I do not have any liver damage despite the infection remaining undiagnosed for nearly 30

years. I was never part of the look back exercise for Hepatitis C, but I got the impression that the NHS did not think the infected blood was their fault, but were covering their own backs. I do feel, were it not for my back issues, I may never have discovered I was infected with Hepatitis C.

9. The blood borne viruses specialist I was referred to, Donna Blinston, was excellent and gave me a lot of information about the Hepatitis C, including dietary advice.

Section 3. Other Infections

10. As far as I am aware, I was only infected with Hepatitis C.

Section 4. Consent

11. To the best of my knowledge, I was never treated without my consent or for the purposes of experimentation.

Section 5. Impact

12. Physically, I am unsure which symptoms are attributable to the Hepatitis C infection. My specialist did inform me that inflammation, joint pain, poor bones and arthritis are common amongst individuals with Hepatitis C. I have experienced all of these issues. I was told my spine was crumbling, which was causing my back pain. I would like to wake up in the morning and be pain free.
13. The main physical symptoms I have suffered with are tiredness and weakness. I could sleep for Great Britain! These symptoms have persisted after my treatment for Hepatitis C, though I do not yet know if the treatment has been successful. The weakness is particularly bad in my legs and I am now unable to walk any distance. My wife and I used to enjoy travel and walking and hiking, but I am no longer able to do this.

14. I experienced a lot of swelling in my legs and they would be as tight as drums. I was sent for investigations into this swelling. The investigations were delayed due to other treatment for my back and hip, but eventually found nothing was wrong. I was given a course of injections, but even now my left leg is still numb lower down near my foot.
15. A number of my teeth have become rotten, and I am now due to have my third set of dentures fitted. I experienced sickness and heartburn, but I am unsure whether this was due to my various medications or the Hepatitis C. I also get cramps, which my specialist has explained may be due to the Hepatitis C, but we cannot be sure. It is difficult to pinpoint symptoms when you have a few different health issues going on.
16. Most significantly, before my treatment for Hepatitis C, I began to lose a great deal of weight and lost my appetite for no apparent reason. I was referred to see a nutritionist and was admitted to hospital and placed on a drip feed for a while. Fortunately, this resolved.
17. Mentally, I have recently been suffering from depression. I find it difficult to enjoy things I used to, especially as I was previously an active man who liked to travel but I am now unable to do so. Some mornings I wake up and feel I would rather die.
18. I faced no difficulties in obtaining treatment or in accessing other health care services.
19. Socially, the impact of my infection has affected my family. I feel I am unable to drive distances as I used to, so I do not get to visit family as often as I would like. The impact has been minimised by discovering my infected status so many years later. Only my family and a few close friends are aware of the infection.
20. Fortunately, I have not experienced any stigma associated with having Hepatitis C. My infection did not affect my education, which was completed before my infection. The Hepatitis C did not affect my work;

I retired at 60 for reasons other than Hepatitis C. I was fortunate enough to travel extensively during my career and lucky enough to never get any infections, which is why the Hepatitis C infection came as quite a shock.

21. The Hepatitis C has not impacted me financially. I have not yet required travel insurance, so I do not know how this might be affected, but my doctor has given me a letter saying I am fit to travel.

Section 6. Treatment/Care/Support

22. I was unable to receive treatment at the time of my diagnosis. The specialist said we would have to wait until I was not on as much medication. At that time, I was on 23 tablets a day for my back and other health issues. They feared possible reactions. I was left in no man's land for several years knowing I had Hepatitis C and that I had to get rid of it but would just have to wait.
23. I began treatment before Christmas 2018 and had my final dose on New Year's Eve. I am awaiting an appointment to confirm whether my Hepatitis C has cleared and until then I am in the dark. My treatment consisted of a course of 56 tablets called Harvoni (Ledipasvir 90mg and Sofosbuvir 400mg). Fortunately, I did not experience any side effects with this treatment.
24. I was never offered psychiatric support or counselling. I never felt I needed counselling, until recently.


Section 7. Financial Assistance

25. My GP's assistant asked me if I was aware of the financial assistance available approximately eighteen months after I was diagnosed. I was unaware of the support and he advised me to go online and have a look at the help available. I printed a form to send to them and found the application quite easy. There were no preconditions to my receiving the financial support. I received the stage 1 payment for

Hepatitis C from the Skipton Trust and I now receive quarterly payments of about £4,500 from EIBSS. I am kept up to date and receive letters about other support to which I might be entitled. It is good to have this support as it allows us to have a nicer home, which is more important now that I cannot travel anymore. It keeps us comfortable, though it was quite honestly a surprise to find I was entitled to it. I was informed of the Inquiry through EIBSS.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed  GRO-C

Dated 13-03-2019