

Witness Name: Christine Ward

Statement No: WITN1590001

Exhibits: WITN1590002

Dated: February 2019

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN WITNESS STATEMENT OF CHRISTINE WARD

I, Christine Ward will say as follows:-

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Christine Ward. My date of birth is GRO-C 1950. I am a widow and live at GRO-C Surrey GRO-C GRO-C
2. I make this statement in relation to my late son, Jason George Ward, who died as a result of contracting Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), which unfortunately progressed into AIDS.
3. This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my son's full medical records.

Section 2. How affected

4. My son was born on GRO-C 1968. He was diagnosed with severe Haemophilia A at birth.
5. I know initially that he was treated with Cryoprecipitate but then received Factor VIII treatment. I cannot recall when he started with this. He received all his treatment at St George's Hospital, Tooting, London.

6. In 1983 when he was about 15 years old we were asked by his treating doctor, Dr Bevan, to meet him in his office. I remember thinking that it was strange that we were not going to the clinic and that we had been asked to see him in his office. I cannot recall the exact date but I went with Jason and Dr Bevan told us that they had tested a number of patients from the Haemophilia Centre and he told us that Jason was HIV positive. He did not say when he had been infected and he did not say when he had been tested or why.
7. Dr Bevan indicated that the hospital had received some bad batches of blood infected with HIV. We were left completely in the dark. We were given no information.
8. At the time we did not know what it was all about and whilst I recall that Dr Bevan was a lovely man and did not rush our meeting I got the impression that he also did not know a lot about the condition. It was fairly new to them. We did not know what questions to ask. I now know that he must have been in an awful position telling us about this.
9. My son died of HIV on 24th July 1990.
10. There were no particular problems with arranging Jason's funeral or during his funeral.
11. I recall that we were given no information or advice whatsoever between 1983 and 1990.

Section 3. Other Infections

12. I know that my son also had Hepatitis C (HCV). We were not told this as a result of a test per se but we went on holiday as a family to America in April 1990. During our stay Jason became very unwell and went completely yellow. Dr Bevan had written a letter in advance of our travelling and had advised us of which hospital to attend if Jason became unwell.

13. We took Jason to this hospital (details of which I cannot remember) and they told us that Jason had HCV but it was not discussed with us in detail. This happened towards the end of the holiday so we came home on the date we should have done. Jason was given some medication at the time which took the yellow colour from his skin. He was very poorly.

14. The doctor we saw in America was fantastic and wrote to us when we got home. He said that it was a pleasure to meet us and if we were ever there in the States again and needed help that he was there for us.

15. I remember that we did not receive a bill for the treatment Jason received there.

16. We had asked Dr Bevan before going to America whether it was ok to take him and we were advised yes.

17. Jason was in a wheelchair at the time.

Section 4. Consent

18. As far as we were aware Jason was tested without his knowledge or consent and without being given adequate or full information

Section 5. Impact

19. As I have stated above and as far as I recall Jason did not receive any information or advice with regard to his condition.

20. He did have an awful time at school. I remember that we had difficulties accessing a secondary school for him and we were told that he would have to go to a special school. I wanted him to remain in mainstream education and eventually he was accepted by Haling Manor Park School.

21. Jason was a very bubbly boy. He attended Stage school at the age of 11/12.

22. When there was more awareness in the news of HIV people who suffered from it were treated so badly because of the ignorance of the general public. We therefore kept it a secret from everyone except for close family.
23. Jason started working as a hairdresser and would not have been able to secure this job if anyone was aware of his condition. He remained in this employment until he started having problems with his elbow in 1986 and he had to stop. Then he tried working as a postman against our advice but was only able to do this job for a short time.
24. After that time he did not work. He was rushed into hospital in 1988/1989. I cannot remember the specific date but he did have a girlfriend at the time.
25. He was not receiving treatment for HIV.
26. He started becoming unwell with chest infections which led to pneumonia. He lost a lot of weight and eventually he died in hospital. He was one of the first haemophiliacs to die.
27. I am attaching to this statement a copy of a poem that Jason wrote which gives a little insight into his feelings and the impact the infection had on him. This is exhibited at "WITN1590002".

Section 6. Treatment/Care/Support

28. Jason received no treatment for HIV. I was not aware of any at the time. From what I can remember the doctors knew very little about the condition too. He died from AIDS related causes.
29. I remember that during the latter stages of his life a nurse visited sporadically to help but I was his main carer. He would be admitted to hospital and then pick up for a while to enable him to return home but then he would go down with something else and have to go back to hospital.

30. Jason received all his care from St George's Hospital (Tooting), including his dental care so I am not aware that he was treated any differently from others as a result of his condition.

31. As Jason was unable to go upstairs during the latter stages of his illness we had to have our house extended to accommodate a downstairs bathroom.

32. Jason was very open with us and discussed his funeral arrangements. He did not want anyone attending his funeral wearing black.

33. We got no assistance from the Haemophilia Society. I had asked for their help when trying to find a mainstream school for Jason but did not have any support from them.

34. I feel I have been kept in the dark about a lot of things and was not aware of organisations that existed to help. I only found out about a support group for those infected and affected from my sister and a year after Jason died I went on a women's weekend in Durham with other women who had been affected.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

35. I recall that I may have received help from the MacFarlane Trust for something financially but it was not much. I believe it was for a washing machine. We did not ask for help as we tended to just get on with things.

36. It was in 1989 I think that the Government gave a pay out to haemophiliacs infected with HIV. I think that they worked it out in different payments depending on your status. As Jason was single he received approximately £20,000. I know he received this before he died as he had said to us that he was worried about his sister when he died. We said that we would be here to help and support her but we decided after his death to give the money that he had left to her.

37. As far as I can recall we did not receive any other financial support.

Anonymity, disclosure and redaction

38. I confirm that I do not wish to apply for anonymity and I would be happy to attend to give evidence if I was called to do so. I am partially disabled having lost the use of my left hand side. I walk with a stick. I understand this statement will be published and disclosed as part of the Inquiry.

Statement of Truth

I believe that the facts stated in this Witness Statement are true.

Signed.....

GRO-C

Christine Ward

Dated:

6/2/2019

2019