

Witness Name: Vernon Lloyd Williams

Statement No: WITN1726001

Exhibits: WITN1726002

Dated: April 2019

## INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

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### FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF VERNON LLOYD WILLIAMS

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I, Vernon Lloyd Williams will say as follows:-

#### Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Vernon Lloyd Williams. I was born on the **GRO-C** 1971. I live at **GRO-C** with my partner and our two children who are 10 and 6 years old. I currently work for Asda as a customer delivery driver.
2. I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 and understand that my mother Josephine Elizabeth Gant and sister Sharon Elizabeth Williams also intend to provide a witness statement to the Inquiry.
3. My father, Peter Williams, born on **GRO-C** 1943, was infected with the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) from contaminated blood products. He died from an AIDS related illness on **GRO-C** aged 50.
4. This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my dad's medical records.

## Section 2. How infected

5. My dad had severe haemophilia A. He was diagnosed from birth and struggled with the condition throughout his life.
6. My dad was treated at the Liverpool Haemophilia Centre at the Royal Liverpool Hospital until spring 1985, when he moved to the Sheffield Haemophilia Centre at the Royal Hallamshire Hospital, Sheffield.
7. Throughout his life, Dad suffered from frequent hemorrhaging. This caused major damage to many of his joints and he suffered from chronic arthritis. Before having the Factor VIII treatment he could be bedridden for a number of days after a bleed. I believe my dad was first given Factor VIII in around 1979 by the Royal Liverpool Hospital. I do not think he received any treatment prior to this. He may have had cryoprecipitate once or twice. After using the new Factor VIII Dad was able to manage his bleeds much more and he was not incapacitated for days like he had been.
8. Dad was co-infected with HIV and HCV as a result of being given contaminated blood products.
9. Dad remembered having the worse case of flu he ever had in late 1984. He was away from home at the time on a driving-instructor course and he said he felt horrendous. My dad believed this was when he received the contaminated blood.
10. We moved from North Wales to GRO-C in the spring of 1985. Dad was transferred to the Sheffield Haemophilia Centre at the Royal Hallamshire Hospital Sheffield. When he went to the new hospital he was told he had HIV. They told my dad that he had 10 years to live and my mother would have to be tested as well.
11. Dad was then diagnosed with HCV some time in the early 1990s.

12. I do not think he received any information or advice about the risk of any infection.

13. My parents told me about my dad's infection when I was around 15 or 16 years old. They played it down but I was aware that at some point my dad could die from the infection.

14. I believe my dad was probably not told about the infections early enough. He was not told until he moved to the Sheffield Hospital so I would imagine the Royal Liverpool Hospital could have told him.

### **Section 3. Other Infections**

15. My dad received no other infections that I am aware of.

### **Section 4. Consent**

16. I do not know if my dad was tested without his consent or knowledge.

17. I do think that my father was treated and tested for the purposes of research as he said that he felt like a 'guinea pig' when they were trying different drugs on him.

### **Section 5. Impact of the Infection**

18. Before he was infected my dad was a really strong man. I had never seen him cry as a child but when he was ill he would get upset and cry after he was told he was HIV positive. He tried to not let it show but it did affect him and he suffered from depression. He suffered from a personality disorder and suffered from anger and mood swings.

19. My dad gradually started to become unwell.

20. As a result of the medication prescribed to manage the HIV and the HCV clearing treatment, Dad had a number of nasty health related issues. He had terrible digestive problems meaning he could not eat a lot of normal food and in the end he was on liquefied food. He suffered from fevers, chills, and terrible night sweating. He had severe headaches and coughing. He suffered weight loss and mouth ulcers. He suffered chronic fatigue and was constantly tired, so he slept excessively. He had muscle weakness and required a wheelchair to move any distance. He had pneumonia and felt the cold.
21. Dad had a liver biopsy to monitor the effects on his liver at Sheffield Hospital. After having this procedure and coming home, his stitches burst causing more problems. He gradually deteriorated becoming thinner, weaker and more sick. As a result, my mum was giving him 24 hour care in the last few years.
22. Dad used to like to try and go out if he could. On one occasion shortly before he died he went out with my mum for the day. They had driven to the seaside but he started driving in the gutter. They came home and Dad was incapacitated on one side of his body. We got him into hospital and we later found out he had a brain haemorrhage. He died within a couple of days of going to hospital.
23. I do not think Dad's infected status impacted on any other care he received.
24. Dad's social life gradually went down and down as his health decreased, especially in the last 4 or 5 years of his life. As a family we could not do as much because of his illness. He just stayed at home. We did have little holidays but only in this country because Dad never wanted to go abroad as he would be asked too many questions about the Factor VIII treatment. In the last couple of years he felt like he could not go on holiday anymore.
25. Dad gave up work in 1990 and told people that it was due to his arthritis. It was probably from just before 1990 that he started feeling really poorly and felt he could not work. He lived off sick pay from 1990 until his death in 1994.

26. I had a great relationship with my dad. We were a tight-knit family and we did lots together.
27. Dad's infections possibly did affect my education. I got my predicted O levels but by this time his illness was affecting my ability to concentrate fully. The school did not know about Dad's infection as we never told them. I failed my A-levels and then had to resit them.
28. In 1990 I went to the University of Sunderland to do a Health Study degree. I was away for 3 years but I came home every other weekend because of how ill Dad was. While I was at university I did not get involved as much as I should have with my course because I was always coming home. I never knew how long he had left so I wanted to spend as much time as I could with him. Dad came to my graduation about 6 months before he died and he looked terrible. I wonder what other people thought but I could not say anything.
29. My youngest sister Sharon did not cope well with Dad being ill. She used to blame him. It was difficult to be around him so she took it out on him.
30. My older sister Hayley did her O-levels and then she went on to college. Hayley struggled when my dad died and she could not cope. She gave up college and she got a job to help the family financially. Hayley had an asthma attack and died about 18 months after my dad.
31. We made a decision not to tell anyone about Dad's infected status. My dad, who was an only child, told his mum, and we told my mum's brother and sister. My Uncle and Aunt were very supportive but they were not aware of everything that we were going through. Apart from that we did not tell anybody. It was hard not tell anybody else. I knew what we were going through as a family but outside the four walls nobody knew. I had friends but I did not want them to come round and see my dad.

## **Section 6. Treatment/care/support**

32. My mum provided the care that my dad needed, so he did not feel that he needed any care from anybody else. He wanted to be at home and would not have anyone except his wife nursing him or in the house to help. With regard to the medication, he did have various drugs to help him but he felt like he was a guinea pig and had things tried out on him.

33. We were not offered any counselling or psychological support. I do not think it would have benefited my dad as he would not want anything like that but it may have helped the rest of us.

#### **Section 7. Financial Assistance**

34. Dad received £60,000 in 1991 from the ex gratia payment. He may have had another smaller payment before this but I cannot remember.

35. He would apply for 1 or 2 one-off payments from the Macfarlane Trust but he accepted any financial assistance reluctantly.

36. I did not receive any payments.

#### **Section 8. Other Issues**

37. My dad's death certificate does not mention HIV and I exhibit this at WITN1726002. It records his cause of death as 1.a Cerebrovascular Accident b. Haemophilia. It should have been on there because he died as a result of the HIV infection.

#### **Anonymity, disclosure and redaction**

38. I do not wish to apply for anonymity and I understand this statement will be published and disclosed as part of the Inquiry.

39. I do not wish to give oral evidence.

**Statement of Truth**

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

Signed.....

GRO-C

Dated.....

18/4/19