

Witness Name: Jennifer Ann McCabe

Statement No: WITN4179001

Exhibits: 0

Dated: JULY 2020

## INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

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### FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF JENNIFER ANN MCCABE

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I, Jennifer Ann McCabe, will say as follows:-

#### **Section 1. Introduction**

1. My name is Jennifer Ann McCabe. I was born on GRO-C 1985 and I live at GRO-C, East Sussex, GRO-C.
2. My father, Keith Robert Francis (born on GRO-C 1959), was infected with the Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) through contaminated blood products. He died on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2014, aged 55.
3. My sister has also provided a Witness Statement to the Inquiry (WITN4178001).
4. **This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my father's full medical records.**

## **Section 2. How Affected**

5. My father had mild to moderate Haemophilia A. I believe that he was treated at the Croydon University Hospital (formerly known as Mayday Hospital) and at the Kings College Hospital for dental treatment. I do not think he attended regular routine appointments and he very rarely needed treatment.
6. I never spoke to my father about how he was told that he was infected with HCV. I was a young child at the time. After my father found out that he was infected with HCV, he and my mother worked out between them that he was likely to have been infected when he was treated with Factor VIII concentrate in 1979 at the Mayday Hospital after he was beaten up.
7. My father was one of five brothers and three sisters. My father and two of his brothers had haemophilia. Both brothers were infected with viruses through contaminated blood products, Derek with HIV and Jeremy with HCV. My Uncle Derek died in November 1996 after developing AIDS and my Uncle Jeremy died a couple of years before my father lost his own life.
8. My father experienced many bouts of depression in his lifetime until finally committing suicide in 2014. I am in no doubt that the poor state of his health because of the contaminated blood scandal was a significant contributory factor to his death.

## **Section 3. Other Infections**

9. I do not believe that my father was infected with anything other than HCV.

## **Section 4. Consent**

10. I do not know whether or not my father was treated and tested without consent.

## **Section 5. Impact**

11. My parents separated in 1993. I was 8 years old and my sister was 3 years old. It was a rocky period for them for a few years but they got on well after they divorced towards the end of that decade.
12. My father took it really hard when his brother, Derek, died in 1996. I knew that my Uncle Derek had HIV and it was a frightening time for the whole family. I remember that my auntie and my cousin were both also tested for HIV/AIDS (some time in the late 1980s). Uncle Derek died in St Thomas' Hospital and it was an awful death. I also remember the day of his funeral. My father had bought Celine Dion concert tickets for us as a treat because he knew I liked her. The funeral fell on the day of the concert and we didn't go to the concert (for obvious reasons).
13. My father loved music. He was a very talented guitar player. One of my happiest childhood memories is the memory of lying in bed at night and hearing my father and my Uncle Jeremy downstairs playing their music together.
14. The death of my Uncle Jeremy after falling off his bicycle (a couple of years before my father's death) was even worse for my father to cope with than the death of my Uncle Derek.
15. The fear and horror of it all was a terrible thing. My father was very unwell through having HCV and the HCV clearing treatment but the mental impact on my father was far worse for him than the physical impact. He had many serious bouts of depression and was clearly in deep distress. When I was 16 years old, my father packed a toothbrush and dressing gown and went missing. He lived on the streets for a while.

16. I am a haemophilia carrier. My children were born after my father died. I remember having a conversation with my father years before my children were even thought of (and before my Uncle Jeremy's death) about the prospect of me one day having a son with haemophilia. My father told me that haemophilia had not affected his life but the issues relating to him being infected with HCV and losing his brother Derek to HIV/AIDS had profoundly affected him.
17. My father struggled for so long and had some huge lows but when he was good he was the polar opposite and seemed happy. He had a keen interest in motorbikes. He was in his element playing his music (and he loved music) and could easily entertain a room full of people (as he did at my sister's 21<sup>st</sup> and my mother's 50<sup>th</sup> joint birthday party). He enjoyed writing sonnets which I still have. Towards the end of his life he isolated himself and didn't have many friends. He maintained a good relationship with my mother and the news that I was expecting their first grandchild brought them closer. My father spent his last Christmas with my mother and her partner.
18. The fact that my father took his own life has had a massive effect on me. Before his death I was forever in a state of limbo waiting for it to happen. I think I always knew deep down that it was going to happen. I worried about my father and expected the worse.
19. I lost my child, my first son, within three months of losing my father. We had to cancel the date planned for my son's funeral because my father's Inquest fell to take place on the same day. My father never got to meet any of his grandchildren. My son has haemophilia and I know that I would have been able to ask my father anything at all about my son's haemophilia if my father was still alive.

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

20. My father had a six month course of Interferon and Ribavirin treatment approximately 12 years ago. It was a gruelling treatment that wiped him out. He described the treatment to being something like what he imagined a cancer patient would have to go through. It was awful, like chemotherapy. The treatment failed. It did not make him better.

21. My father had flu-like symptoms such as muscle aches, headaches and a high temperature (fever); chronic fatigue; loss of appetite; nausea and sickness. He had to endure severe abdominal pain and developed a bloated stomach and jaundice.

## **Section 7. Financial Assistance**

22. My father received the Stage 1 ex gratia Skipton Fund payment of £20,000 shortly after his attempt at clearing HCV. I am certain that he struggled financially. He was a black taxi driver but he couldn't work from around the time he had his failed clearing treatment.

**Anonymity**

23. I do not want to apply for anonymity.

**Statement of Truth**

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

Signed...

GRO-C

Dated...

21.07.2020