

Witness Name: Timothy Mills

Statement No: WITN4459001

Exhibits: 0

Dated: JUNE 2020

## INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

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### FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF TIMOTHY MILLS

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I, Timothy Mills, will say as follows:-

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

1. My name is Timothy Mills. I was born on GRO-C 1965 and I live at GRO-C  
GRO-C
2. My partner, Lee Suzanne Masheder (born on GRO-C 1965) was infected with the Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) through a contaminated blood transfusion.
3. This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to Lee's full medical records.

#### **Section 2. How Affected**

4. Lee had a blood transfusion at the Lancashire Royal Infirmary (LRI) in 1982 or 1983 through haemorrhaging during a miscarriage. I have Lee's GP records. The record of the miscarriage is missing from Lee's medical notes and records. I believe it to have been deliberately destroyed/expunged.

5. The miscarriage was a very traumatic event for Lee. She was just 17 years old and had been assaulted by her then partner. The memory of the miscarriage still haunts her to this day. She was very poorly immediately after the blood transfusion. I understand her to have been given the wrong blood type in any event as Lee is a rhesus negative blood group.
6. We found out that Lee had HCV just after the birth of our only child and daughter, Alex. During the birth, Lee was identified as having an inverted uterus and it would have been impossible for her to have ever had a normal birth. Lee went through 24 hours of labour with Alex after two attempts to induce her. Lee bled out, the baby's heart stopped beating and Alex was eventually born by emergency caesarean on GRO-C 1996.
7. Lee had post-natal depression that Lee's GP failed to pick up on after Alex was born. Lee had to return to work shortly after the birth and literally ran out of her place of work because she was unable to cope. Lee was identified as having post natal depression in 1998, when I arranged for Lee to see a private doctor that I funded through my occupational medical scheme. It was then discovered (through the running of some additional tests) that Lee also had HCV. We were told that it was likely that Lee had been infected with HCV many years earlier. Lee had the contaminated blood transfusion over 15 years before we found out that she was infected with HCV.
8. Lee had HCV genotype 3 HCV. There was no effective treatment for her in 1998. The specialist we saw at the Manchester Royal Infirmary told us that Lee had one of the most difficult genotypes to treat. The treatments available were akin to having chemo in any event. As Lee seemed to be okay (virus inactive) at that time, we were told to hang on but no one then kept track of her and there was no ongoing support.
9. It was only after Lee was diagnosed with Peripheral Neuropathy in 2016 that we learned that the virus was active and Lee had liver damage. It was then only after I learned of new effective HCV treatment and fought for it that Lee cleared the virus in 2018.

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

10. Lee was also infected with HBV and had treatment for it.

### **Section 4. Consent**

11. I do not believe that Lee was ever tested for hepatitis without her knowledge or consent. I had to fight to get every test that she has ever had and I have had to fight even harder for her treatment.

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

12. Lee had some problems in her teens. She had a boyfriend who mistreated her, she went off the rails, she experimented with club drugs and she fell out with her family. Lee has always carried the guilt of the miscarriage she had when she was 17. After the further trauma of our own daughter's birth, Lee really struggled with her post natal depression. To then learn that she had been infected with HCV through a contaminated blood transfusion during the miscarriage all those years ago could not have come at a worse time for her. Psychologically it was a double 'whammy' for her on top of the post natal depression. The news that Lee had HCV at that time exacerbated her guilt over the miscarriage. I secretly had Alex tested for HCV so as not to cause Lee any further emotional distress. Thankfully, she tested negative (as did I).

13. Psychologically, being infected with HCV has destroyed Lee's life in more ways than one and we could never consider having more children. Lee was paralyzed with the fear of getting pregnant again and our sex life stopped. I came from a big family and I would love to have had more children. Lee and I had known each other socially before we started dating but were only dating for a matter of months before Lee got pregnant.

14. At the end of the final trimester of her pregnancy with Alex, Lee was unexpectedly confronted by a social worker at the final pre-natal hospital appointment that she attended with her mother. There was a marker on her medical notes of drug use in her teens. That social worker threatened to remove our unborn baby if she discovered evidence of current drug usage. Lee was horrified as she had not taken drugs for very many years. Lee was not treated well by the hospital staff after the birth. She was treated like a junkie. My father was a doctor. He picked up on it when visiting and was unhappy with how Lee was treated.
15. Lee was an excellent mother to our daughter but she wasn't able to be as maternal towards Alex as other mothers. The distress to Lee of being infected with HCV has made things worse for Lee. She felt like a bad mother and it resulted in her having several mental breakdowns. We have a beautiful daughter in Alex but she too has suffered and has a massive lack of confidence in herself. I did my best for Alex but she didn't have the right kind of motherly support.
16. The stigma associated with being infected with HCV has been difficult. After Alex started school, we informed the school of Lee's status. We were then ostracised by the other parents and Lee believes the information (meant to be confidential) was leaked by the school secretary who was in a clique of a particular group of parents.
17. Lee struggled with a variety of undiagnosed health issues for many years in addition to being chronically depressed. Lee's GP has been unhelpful and dismissive. Despite signs that Lee's health was deteriorating, her symptoms were dismissed as being synonymous to symptoms of severe depression. Within the last four years, Lee has been diagnosed with Peripheral Neuropathy. It only then came to light that Lee's HCV viral load had increased to active levels and the damage was done to Lee's physical health and wellbeing. Nobody had previously tested Lee's liver or kept track of her.

18. Lee had a very good job as a graphic designer but lost the job when it became apparent that she could no longer do it. She tried to find work elsewhere but it soon became apparent that she had lost the ability to remember how to do it. She also started doing odd things like putting her clothes on back to front. I twice arranged for Lee to be tested for Alzheimer's and she somehow managed to pass the memory test. There is a documented link between HCV and the early onset of Alzheimer's that I have researched (albeit dismissed by the doctors we saw at that time). The toxins the liver is unable to process through having HCV have a detrimental effect on the brain.
19. I also researched/discovered that there was a new effective HCV treatment available. Lee was denied that treatment and I had to fight for it even though under the NHS guidelines (to include her liver deterioration levels) she clearly qualified for it. We had to wait for a further six months for NHS Macclesfield to go through the testing and funding process before treatment could commence. By then (2018) Lee was barely able to hold a conversation or sign a birthday card.
20. Lee was refused any psychiatric help until last year when she was at an all time low. I had to insist upon help for her and, once referred, the psychiatrist she saw insisted upon seeing her alone. I was branded as a potentially 'controlling' influence. After one initial appointment Lee was sent home with nothing more than a promise of a CBT referral. Three days later I had to call Lee's GP because she didn't eat or drink anything during that time and he immediately called an ambulance. She spent 24 hours in A&E before being sectioned under the Mental Health Act. She was identified as having delirium and psychosis, seeing things crawling the wall and posters of her dead baby everywhere. It was only then, and for the very first time, that they did the requisite scans to include a deep scan identifying her as having Cerebral Alzheimer's. Cerebral Alzheimer's is an aggressive and debilitating form of the condition. It affects Lee's speech, vision and makes her prone to strokes. She suffers from shaking and seizures because of it.

21. Lee has been treated very unfairly by the medical profession. She was infected with HCV through no fault of her own. Whilst on the dementia ward the staff kept going on about alcohol (also used as the reason for initially refusing Lee the HCV clearing treatment). A doctor even once said to her that her health issues were her 'own fault'. Lee is a lovely and capable person. She is just one person of many who have had problems in their teens. Concerns about alcohol mismanagement/misuse were only documented on Lee's record because of the strength of anti depressants she was being treated with in conjunction with the evening alcohol consumption self-reported by her during the time of a breakdown. Because of the content of her medical record, Lee became a safeguarding issue. The social worker told Lee when she met her for the first time just ten minutes before her Best Interests Meeting 'You belong in a care home'. Lee was in tears. No capacity test was undertaken despite the social worker telling me otherwise. She was not allowed home and placed in residential care against her will for six months.

22. Lee was forbidden to stay with me overnight. She was unable to stay overnight before and after her daughter's graduation after initially being promised that that would be alright. Alex was also in deep distress and broke down as she wanted her mother to meet her boyfriend's family at the occasion. Lee was also compelled to return to residential care prematurely on the occasion of our nieces wedding day. I eventually won the fight to get her home. Lee has been beside herself with distress. It has been a constant fight for us since the beginning of our relationship to get the right treatment, care and attention for Lee. We have been treated like dirty, horrible people. I have had a successful career in IT at various high profile companies for 20 odd years. I left my job and had to become self-employed to prove myself fit in order to get Lee home to us.

23. I do not take any respite because I would never want to leave Lee with anyone else. Having people coming into the house is awful. She has to have carers every day and I look after her for the weekend and evenings.

24. We are adversely impacted financially. I do not earn as much as I used to and have to support the three of us. I have used our savings on a walk in shower room needed for Lee.

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

25. I was a carer for and nursed my mother through MS before Lee and I started dating. I am quite an astute person but, as stated above, I have had to fight to get treatment for Lee for years. I have also raised complaints in relation to Lee's lack of treatment over many years against so many doctors. It has been awful and nothing ever comes of it.

26. They sent Lee to self-help groups, labelling Lee as an alcoholic and a drug user. She was not. Neither of us were ever offered any form of counselling or psychological support.

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

27. Lee has not received any form of financial assistance from the trusts and funds. I will try to obtain financial assistance for Lee through the EIBSS now that I have (recently) acquired Power of Attorney.

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

28. It is only now that anything positive is happening about the Contaminated Blood Scandal even though it happened back in the 1980s. Those responsible should be held to account for something that should never have happened in the first place.

**Statement of Truth**

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

Signed.....  
GRO-C

Dated ..... 29/07/2020 .....