

Witness Name: Patricia Mary Carrington-Howell

Statement No: WITN5237001

Exhibits: 0

Dated: NOVEMBER 2020

## INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

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### FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF PATRICIA MARY CARRINGTON-HOWELL

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I, Patricia Mary Carrington-Howell, will say as follows:-

#### Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Patricia Mary Carrington-Howell. I was born on GRO-C 1949 and I live at GRO-C Warwickshire GRO-C
2. My son, James Michael Carrington-Howell (born on GRO-C 1982), was infected with the Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) through contaminated blood products. He was killed in a car crash on 24<sup>th</sup> November 2000, aged 18.
3. This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to James' full medical records.

## **Section 2. How Affected**

4. James had mild Haemophilia B. He was under the care of Dr Strevens at the Coventry and Warwickshire Haemophilia Centre at the University Hospital Coventry & Warwickshire (UHCW).
5. James was treated with Factor IX (FIX) concentrate on just two occasions, for an operation on his foot (at aged 1) in 1983 or 1984 and in 1986 or 1987 for a tooth extraction.
6. We were not warned of any risk before James had the FIX treatment.
7. We did not know that James was infected with HCV until 1998. James was called in for a routine blood test and we were asked to return later for the results. My husband, Digby, and I were not the least concerned, being told that it was nothing to worry about and they were merely checking up on their haemophiliac patients.
8. All three of us (James, Digby and I) were called into the consulting room for the results to be told that James had HCV. There had been no mention of anything being wrong up until that point. James was then asked to leave the room to seemingly enable Dr Strevens to tell us the implications for James and what he might get. It was a distressing and bewildering experience for all of us.
9. Digby and I attended a few seminars on HCV through the Haemophilia Society shortly thereafter to learn more. I am therefore no longer able to clearly recall the information we were given by Dr Strevens at our first consultation in order for us to understand and manage James's HCV infection. We were told that HCV would affect his liver and that he could develop cancer (possibly by the time he is in his thirties). I do not remember any viable treatment options being

mentioned. I do remember being told that James might need a liver transplant in time. We were told that it was best for James to avoid alcohol. We had to tell our 16 year old son that he wouldn't be able to drink. We lost him at aged 18 but he did not drink. He would instead safeguard the keys of his friends on a night out. He was very good like that.

10. To have to tell James and talk to him about all of this was very upsetting and difficult for me and Digby (as well as James himself).

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

11. James was not infected with anything other than HCV.

### **Section 4. Consent**

12. We were not pre-warned of any risk to James through his FIX treatment.

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

13. James was not overly confident. Living with haemophilia is not easy. There were games at school that James couldn't play but his friends were quite good and didn't say anything to him about it. At aged 16, James was growing in confidence and had just starting to come out of his shell. To learn that he had been infected with HCV knocked him back. I was very upset by this but didn't let James see it. I was constantly worried about how his life would develop but I never wanted him to know. James didn't want to worry me about things either. He was a lovely caring boy.

14. I believe it affected his schooling. The Head called all of us into his office (Digby too notwithstanding that he is a teacher at the school) and talked to James about trying harder ahead of his GCSEs. He told James that he was more than capable of doing well and that seemed to help James.

15. Stigma was definitely an issue. I believe that James felt uncomfortable and he didn't open up a lot. I do not know if he confided in his friends. He has one very good friend he may have told. That friend comes to visit us every year on James' birthday.

16. James had a quiet and beautiful nature. He was very upset by his diagnosis and was affected in a big way when girls came on the scene. Just after his 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, he spoke of a girl he was interested in, but he was wary of doing the wrong thing. I do not think it went anywhere as he didn't mention her again. He died just 6 weeks after his 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.

17. James' younger brother, Sebastian, was just 8 years old when we lost James. The difference in their age is 10 years but they would have helped each other along the way. Sebastian is a very confident character and they would have complimented one another. Sebastian has been proactive in learning about contaminated blood and is the driving force of the family in seeking to uncover what has been done to us, to James and to our family. I find this very hard to deal with. I have attempted to shut my mind away from things that upset James during his life. These memories are unwelcome ones for me. James, at his young age, should never have had to deal with being infected with HCV.

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

18. James did not have any HCV clearing treatment. No counselling or psychological support was offered to him.

## **Section 7. Financial Assistance**

19. We received the ex gratia Stage 1 payment from the Skipton Fund upon advice received from the Royal Hallamshire Hospital in Sheffield.

**Anonymity**

20. I do not wish to remain anonymous and understand that this Statement will be disclosed for publication to the Inquiry.

**Statement of Truth**

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

Signed:

GRO-C

Dated..29/11/2020.....

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