

Witness Name: David George Winter

Statement No: WITN5201001

Exhibits: WITN5201002

Dated: 1 June 2022

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

WRITTEN STATEMENT OF DAVID GEORGE WINTER

I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 21 January 2022.

I, David George Winter, will say as follows: -

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is David George Winter. My date of birth is GRO-C 1935. I reside at GRO-C I married my wife, Georgina Winter ("Georgina") on GRO-C 1960 and we have four daughters and eight grandchildren. Georgina was born on GRO-C 1934. I am retired, I previously spent 28 years in the Royal Berkshire Fire Service and was in the British Army prior to this.
2. I intend to speak about Georgina's infection with Hepatitis C ("HCV") following a blood transfusion as a result of a miscarriage. In particular, I intend to speak

about the nature of how she learnt about her infection and how her illness has affected me and our family thereafter.

3. I can confirm that I have chosen not to have legal representation and that the Inquiry Investigator has explained the anonymity process to me. I do not wish to be anonymous as I wish for my story to be known in full.
4. The Inquiry Investigator has explained to me the 'Right to Reply' procedure, and I understand that if I am critical of a medical professional or organisation, they will have the right to reply to that criticism.
5. I wish to acknowledge that naturally as time passes, memories can fade. I have been able to provide approximate timeframes for matters based on life events. However, these timeframes should be accepted as 'near to' rather than precise dates.
6. I have constructed this statement without access to Georgina's medical records. We have struggled to obtain any relevant medical records relating to the blood transfusions Georgina received, specifically those she had in 1963 or 1964.
7. My daughter, Jacqui Salazar, was present in the room during the process of preparing my witness statement and has helped me with certain memories. It had been our intention for Georgina to provide this statement, unfortunately she is unable due to recently being admitted into hospital.

Section 2. How Affected

8. I met my wife, Georgina and we married in 1960. We resided in [GRO-C] [GRO-C] and [GRO-C] Berkshire. Throughout most of her working life, she worked in catering. She used to work in school catering before we moved to [GRO-C] where she worked as a waitress, along with some cleaning jobs in hotels before retiring.

9. We had our first daughter in 1962 and fourth daughter in 1967. We have four daughters in total. We also fostered a little boy.
10. Between 1963 and 1964, Georgina suffered a severe miscarriage. I recall arriving home from my night shift to an unbelievable amount of blood. Georgina was conscious but she had to be taken to Royal Berkshire Hospital, London Road, Reading RG1 5AN ("Royal Berkshire Hospital"). She had managed to get the local policeman who was outside our flat at the time to call the ambulance on her behalf.
11. Georgina was given blood transfusions at the Royal Berkshire Hospital as a result of the severe blood loss. Georgina went on to suffer from three miscarriages in total, before our final child, Jacqui was born in 1967, after relocating from [GRO-C] to [GRO-C].
12. Georgina had a full hysterectomy in the early 1970's as a result of the gynaecological issues she was experiencing.
13. Georgina later had a prolapse, which had to be stitched up. During the procedure the surgeon at the Royal Berkshire Hospital caught her liver by mistake in the process. I recall her being in a lot of pain after this. She may have had additional blood transfusions around this time. Following this mistake, she had to be re-admitted to hospital for a corrective procedure.
14. Following my retirement from the fire service in 1985 and the loss of a close friend, murdered in the Hungerford Massacre in 1987, we decided to move to [GRO-C]. This was prompted by a holiday in Barnstable, North Devon which Georgina had won and we spent this time on a property search in [GRO-C] with a view to relocating following our retirement. We moved to [GRO-C] in 1988.
15. A couple of weeks before we moved down to [GRO-C] Georgina attended Royal Berkshire Hospital for a check-up. I do not recall the reason for this. They checked her liver and found that she had scarring of the liver. They also told us

that she would have to have a kidney operation to have a kidney removed. At the time we were informed that the anaesthetic, Halothane, was prone to cause liver scarring.

16. We informed the hospital that we were moving to GRO-C and consequently we did not want the operation to delay our move. They agreed to this and upon relocating we made an appointment at the Royal Cornwall Hospital, Treliske, Truro TR1 3LJ ("Treliske") to have it removed there instead.
17. When we attended Treliske, we were informed that they would be able to repair Georgina's kidney instead of removing it, which they did. However, her health has never been the same since and has seriously deteriorated.
18. Georgina later started suffering from a lot of stomach issues. She had internal bleeding, which would come out in her stools. We went to the doctors and she was referred to Dr Hussaini, Consultant Hepatologist and Gastroenterologist at Treliske.
19. It transpired that she had a bowel tear which had been and still is causing serious issues resulting in long stays in hospital. She attended the hospital to have surgery to have it stitched up but they could not find the location of the tear. Over the years various specialist consultants around the country have been consulted to perform this procedure but have been reluctant to do so due to Georgina's fragile medical state.
20. She would have to receive blood transfusions and iron tablets; then four weeks later, the whole process would have to be repeated, the same over and over again.
21. I think this bowel tear is as a result of one of the surgeries or the many invasive investigations over the years that Georgina had to undergo subsequent to the miscarriage, prolapse, hysterectomy and kidney operations she had to endure since the 1960s.

22. She said that every time the wound opens up, she feels like a 'wine box' and could feel the blood draining from her body.
23. Approximately 10-15 years ago, Dr Hussaini took some blood samples following Georgina's stomach concerns. We were invited in for an appointment and I recall Dr Hussain saying to my wife, 'my dear, I believe we have got a major problem, you have Hepatitis C.'
24. Neither Georgina nor I knew what Hepatitis C was nor the severity of the disease. Dr Hussaini gave us a lot of information about HCV. He asked about Georgina's medical history, asking whether she drank or had any blood transfusions. Georgina explained that she had a major blood transfusion as a result of a miscarriage. I recall Dr Hussaini turning to his secretary to say that he had to investigate this by obtaining all her medical history because he thought that my wife had a reasonable claim.
25. Georgina provided as much medical information as possible to Dr Hussaini, including as much as she could remember about her attendance at Royal Berkshire Hospital. She had to go back more than 30 years. Unfortunately, none of Georgina's medical records had been transferred from Royal Berkshire Hospital to Treliske so we could not ascertain the details of the blood transfusions that took place there.
26. Royal Berkshire Hospital said that their medical records were all being transferred onto microfiche, so they could not be obtained. To this day, no medical records can be found. I find this very suspicious.
27. Georgina has no tattoos, has never taken recreational intravenous drugs and only had her ears pierced in her 50's after pressure from her daughters.

Section 3. Other Infections.

28. To my knowledge, Georgina has only been infected with HCV.

Section 4. Consent

29. Georgina didn't know that she was being tested for HCV, however she did consent to blood samples being taken for testing purposes.

Section 5. Impact.

Mental/Physical Impact

30. By the time that Georgina had found out about her HCV infection, she was in her 70s. She has lived most of her life not knowing about it as she was probably infected when she was about 30 years old. I have no idea what her genotype is or what her viral load was at the time of her diagnosis.

31. Had she found out earlier, psychologically I think this might have had a knock-on effect in her earlier life and people may have treated her differently. I am of the opinion that although knowledge is key, knowledge is also dangerous.

32. When we found out about the infection, GRO-C
GRO-C I was tested and my result was negative. GRO-C
GRO-C
GRO-C

33. GRO-C

34. When Georgina found out that she was infected, she was angry and blamed foreign blood for infecting her and to this day the anger and bitterness remains.

35. In terms of lifestyle changes, I remember being told that Georgina should use her own knife and fork, towels, and separate cups. I don't think we followed these rules as for the previous 40 years we had continued as a normal couple.

Treatment

36. When Georgina was informed, she was infected with HCV, Dr Hussaini explained next steps for treatment. At the time, Dr Hussaini was a young doctor. I told him not to hold back and be upfront with us about the treatment, he didn't hold back. He informed us that the treatment would be horrific and described it as 'worse than chemo' and debilitating.

37. Georgina decided that as she was in her 70s, she didn't want to have it. In my mind, he put her off it. To date, she has never had any treatment for HCV.

Impact

38. When Georgina was diagnosed, she was still working. She was working in hotels in GRO-C despite moving down here to retire. She got fed up sitting about and said she would get a little job. That job lasted 14 years. She just loved keeping busy.

39. I'd never blame the people upfront. It's behind the scenes that I blame and the fact that her medical records are lost. Without a doubt, she was given infected blood. Before the blood transfusion, Georgina was active and normal.

40. Georgina has always been a hard-working and active lady. The children used to have to run to keep up with her because she'd walk so fast. It would always be a last resort before she went to the doctors with an issue.

41. We haven't discussed her infection with HCV as a family much. I think it is more of a matter of, it is what it is. The doctors did what they could at the time. They

didn't know that as a consequence of the blood they gave that it would have such a grave impact.

42. There is no point getting angry. If Georgina hadn't had the blood transfusion, she nor 3 of our daughters would be with me today.
43. I remember one occasion; we had agreed to come up to Berkshire to look after Jacqui's dogs and house sit whilst she went away on holiday. On arrival at Jacqui's house, Georgina was feeling very unwell and struggled to walk up the drive.
44. As time progressed Georgina became so unwell that she had to get medical attention. I had to call Jacqui to organise alternative arrangements because we had to go back to Cornwall. Georgina didn't want to go to Royal Berkshire Hospital because of how she had been treated there, despite the hospital only being 5 minutes down the road. I drove the 4 hours back to GRO-C and as soon as we arrived home I called for an ambulance and she was admitted to hospital.
45. Since the irregular bowel bleeding has started, maybe 10 years or more, this has had a massive impact on our lives. Month on month we need to attend Treliske hospital for various consultant appointments and, due to the unpredicted time that bleeding can start Georgina has been very reluctant to leave the local area. She was frightened that she would end up in a hospital where her history was not known.
46. We used to go on holiday a lot; Warner holidays, and coach holidays as well as visiting our daughters and their families who live a significant distance away. Georgina also used to play bowls but now she can't even pick up the wood.
47. The last two and a half years have seen a dramatic change to our lives. Due to her vulnerability and the fact that she had to attend hospital and the doctor's surgery on a regular basis, during the COVID pandemic, both she and I became housebound for fear of catching the infection and not being able to receive the

treatment she needs. This has affected her mobility and she has become heavily reliant on me to be her carer within the home.

48. Georgina is now in hospital at Treliske. She was admitted almost two weeks ago following a period of double incontinence and the pain she is experiencing due to her ascites (Edema). She also suffers with Angina and has recently been diagnosed with Congestive Cardiac Failure. (CCF)

49. They have said she has very low blood pressure and her stomach is in a mess. She currently has two drains in her stomach to assist. She is frail and her skin is paper thin and she is not eating. She only weighs about 7 stone but is bloated with the water retention and is in a lot of pain and discomfort.

50. Following her bowel tear, we worked out that she has had around 500 blood transfusions in total as a result.

51. Georgina had a liver scan a couple of weeks ago and her liver is disintegrating at a rapid pace. She has Hepatitis C cirrhosis. Her heavy bleeding bowel tear is currently being controlled by Octreotide injections administered every 4 weeks. This has only been available to her in the last two years.

Section 6. Treatment/Care/Support

52. Georgina has not had any issues in terms of accessing treatment or issues with dentists.

53. Being in the fire service and going through what I have been through, counselling wasn't really a thing. We haven't been offered any counselling.

54. The treatment at Treliske has been good and they take good care of her. When she goes back, everyone knows her. Unfortunately, there are sometimes mistakes, and following her last hospital stay she was given the wrong name tag, which could have resulted in disastrous consequences for Georgina but also for the other patient, especially if the wrong medication had been

administered. Upon discharge, when returning home, she found that a cannula had also been left in her arm.

55. During a hospital stay at Treliske in July 2021, although testing negative for COVID when she arrived, she subsequently contracted COVID from another patient and was isolated in an empty room with "RESTRICTED ACCESS" or something to that effect on the door. I was informed that I was not allowed to visit during the month that she was in there. There was no form of entertainment, she wasn't allowed magazines or books to read and eventually one of my daughters sent a radio from Amazon to her. She was not informed why she was placed in the "cell" as she called it and felt as if she was being punished.

56.

GRO-D

57. I am now able to visit for an hour each day during restricted visiting hours. There are still quite strict covid restrictions. She can no longer make conversation, sleeps constantly and is not eating.

58. Since our initial interview, I have been told that they are moving her immediately to a community hospital in Liskard for rehabilitation! This is awful as it's miles away and I cannot get there to see her. I am no longer able to drive and the buses are infrequent and may not work with the visiting hours at the hospital and it takes over an hour each way from GRO-C.

59. Because of this I feel that during my visit on Monday 30th May, this may have been my last opportunity to say goodbye to my wife of 62 years, without actually knowing this at the time. I am genuinely a strong man however, the matter-of-fact manner in which I was notified has really blown the wind out of my sails, it is very upsetting. The hospital just did this without any consultation.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

60. Georgina applied to the Skipton Fund (7237) through Dr Hussaini and her GP. She made an application on 6 August 2008. However, as a result of the lack of medical records received from Royal Berkshire Hospital, her application was declined on 21 November 2008.

61. Georgina sent a follow up letter to Nicholas Fish, Scheme Administrator for Skipton Fund, which reads:

'Unfortunately and apparently the records I require regarding my claim are not available, but I would like to place on record the fact that in the early sixties, 1963? I had a miscarriage. This resulted in a heavy blood loss which due to that I was taken to the Royal Berkshire Hospital where I had an operation and given a blood transfusion, I was very poorly at the time. We were then living in GRO-C which was then in Berkshire, my doctor was a Dr Warburton, it was very distressing to hear that records for that period are not available as I know they could have been a contributing factor to my problem.

Another factor was when I offered my blood to the transfusion service as a donor, I was rejected for having bad blood Group A negative, no explanation was offered

P/S I have been in contact with The Royal Berkshire Hospital Reading records department, who have informed me that my general hospital records are there from 1973 but my maternity records were dispensed with after 25 years unfortunately'

62. We felt deflated. We thought that if the support is available, we would have liked a piece of it. We just thought, hard luck and resigned ourselves to that fact. We didn't bother appealing. We had to write it off as an option, it was a bad luck situation.

63. I questioned why there were limited records available, especially because it wasn't just a couple of pints of blood given to her. She lost a lot of blood. I wonder if her medical files were destroyed on purpose?

64. I have today applied for an assistance allowance, no one has ever informed us what we can claim. If Georgina is able to leave hospital, she will need constant care and I doubt whether we will be able to receive this at home. She will have to have full time care.

Section 8. Other Issues

65. Individuals and families need to be compensated for the effect that this has had on them. This is a situation which must never be allowed to happen again. It's ruined people's lives and their respective families.

66. I have included some pictures of Georgina and my family in order that the reader can put a face to myself and my beloved wife. **Exhibit WITN5201002.**

Statement of Truth

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

Signed GRO-C

Dated 1st June 2022.