Witness Name: Christopher Mitchell
Statement No: WITN1401001
Exhibits: WITN1401002
WITN1401003
Dated: February 2019

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF CHRISTOPHER MITCHELL

I, Christopher Mitchell will say as follows:-

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Christopher Mitchell. I was born on GRO-C 1976. I am single and live alone at GRO-C Essex, GRO-C.

2. This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my full medical records. If and in so far as I have been provided with limited records the relevant entries are set out in the medical chronology at the end of this statement.

Section 2. How infected

3. In February 1977 I was referred to The Hospital for Sick Children, Great Ormond Street for investigations because of my family history of haemophilia and investigations which were performed confirmed a diagnosis of Haemophilia A. My records state that I was very mildly affected.

4. I received my first Factor VIII treatment in June 1977 which was Cutter FVIII (Koate) at Great Ormond Street when I fell and bit my lip which developed into a haematoma.

5. My records state that I received FVIII (BPL) treatment in 1981 at Great Ormond Street, FVIII (BPL) in 1989 at Southend Hospital, FVIII (BPL) in 1989 at The Royal London Hospital, FVIII (BPL) in 1990 at Derby Hospital, FVIII (BPL) in 1990 at The Royal Free Hospital and Oxford FVIII in 1991 at Southend Hospital and I attach a copy of a document entitled Patient annual treatment record as Exhibit WITN1401002.

6. As a result of being treated with blood products I contracted Hepatitis C (HCV).

7. I am unable to state specifically by name which Doctor or hospital gave me infected blood products. I am unable to state specifically which of the Factor VIII treatments as described above infected me.

8. Neither my parents nor I were given any information or any risk indications prior to having Factor VIII. I did not receive Factor VIII every time I required treatment; I received Cryoprecipitate in 1978 at Great Ormond Street, Tranexamic Acid in 1985, 1987 and 1990 at The Royal London and also DDAVP in 1985 and 1987 at The Royal London.

9. I was not told that I had been contaminated with Hepatitis C (HCV) until 1992 when Dr Colvin at the London Hospital, Whitechapel advised me that I had been contaminated with HCV from Factor VIII in the past. He said that it was nothing to worry about and none of my family were offered blood tests to see if they had also been infected.

10. I was not provided with any information on how to manage or understand my infection. I was not given any information at the time about the risks of infecting others. I was given no advice.

11. I feel we were not given adequate information and it was in approximately 1996/1997 when my mother was handed the Evening Standard in which there was an article on haemophiliacs and Hepatitis C. She came home and called the Haemophiliac Society for information; we had not been told of the dire consequences of my infection. The way in which my parents and I had been told I was infected was played down and as Dr Colvin had said that there was nothing to worry about we trusted him as my doctor. I now feel foolish for believing him and that it was something to worry about; it has ruined my life.

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Section 3. Other Infections

12. In 2005 I received a letter stating that I fell into a group of patients who had been asked to take special precautions to reduce any risk of further transmission of v CJD. However, I am not aware that I have been tested for this.

Section 4. Consent

13. I have seen a consent form with my signature on when I was 15 years old at the time but I have no knowledge of what I was consenting to. The paper was signed by a witness and by Dr Colvin for some form of study. I cannot remember being advised what I was being tested for and I certainly was not given any information in respect of the testing.

Section 5. Impact of the Infection

14. The infection has had a huge effect on my daily life. I have struggled for years and feel the burden of carrying the biggest secret that I cannot tell anyone about; I feel they would not understand.

15. I was alienated whilst I was a school and I was not allowed to participate because of my haemophilia and HCV. I stopped trying at school and I wonder if I had not been infected how my life would have been different.

16. On one hand I feel lucky that I did not contract HIV but I do feel angry and scared that I have been infected with HCV.

17. I have not told anyone else including my family but a few years ago I thought about ending my life. I felt that I was not living, just existing.

18. I do feel tired all the time. I also feel weak and by midday I fall asleep. I suffer from depression on a daily basis and it took me some time before I went to my GP for help. I have been prescribed Amitriptyline. I suffer from eczema when I am anxious and my hands are extremely bad at the moment as I am dealing with the Inquiry which brings back memories and situations I would rather not think about.

19. My short term memory is terrible.

20. As I live on my own I have had no treatment to date because of my concern about possible side effects and how I would be able to cope with them.

21. I feel like an outcast; my social life is none existent. I feel like my life is one big secret and people ask me questions which I am not comfortable answering. I have never had a long term relationship as I feel it would not be fair for someone to deal with the way I am and I would find it difficult to tell someone that I had Hepatitis C.

22. I would love to have children but I do not want to bring children into this world not knowing how long I will be around and so I have come to the realisation that I will not have a family of my own and that my mother will never be a grandparent.

23. My family and I have kept my infection a secret. At opening evenings at school my mother was always told by my teachers that my concentration level was very poor and that I could not retain information. I wish that I had achieved more but I found it very difficult.

24. I have always struggled to work because of tiredness, fatigue and poor concentration which has always been difficult to explain to my employers. I am no longer fit to work due to these symptoms and my depression.

25. I have a sister who has a terrible fear of doctors and hospitals as a result of my infection. She has always said that you go to hospital to be helped not to be given an infection you cannot get rid of. It has given her a total distrust of medical people and I remember when she was younger running to our mother crying as she had used my toothbrush by mistake. My mother has always blamed herself for my infection. She says that she feels she should have been more educated regarding Factor VIII but I do not blame her; you put trust in what your doctors are telling you.

Section 6. Treatment/care/support

26. I have not been offered counselling or emotional support, for my HCV. I have only been given antidepressants by my GP

Section 7. Financial Assistance

27. In 2004 I received a letter from the Skipton Fund; I had no knowledge that I was entitled to any money until then. I received £20,000. I had no assistance from anyone with regard to financial help; it was only when I went on the Skipton Fund website that I found out that I was entitled to further payments. On 25th July 2017 I received a backdated payment of £4,500. I then received £252.50 a month until April 2018 which was then increased to £333.37. In August 2018 I applied for Stage 2 payment from the Skipton Fund and I now receive £1500.00 per month.

28. I feel insulted that I have had to prove how having Hepatitis C has affected me mentally and physically. I feel that I have had to jump through hoops to receive financial support through no fault of my own.

29. There were conditions on Stage 2 payments in respect of proving that I was infected and how it had affected me. The monies received through the fund do not come anywhere near the impact this has had on my life.

Section 8. Other Issues

30. I have received my medical records but it appears that they have been censored. The records received from the London Hospital show that Dr Colvin asked Great Ormond Street for my records but Great Ormond Street said they could not be found. There is a letter from London Hospital showing that I was not told until 1992 that I was HCV positive which I attach as Exhibit WITN1401003. Whilst my medical records show that I received Factor VIII treatment from Derby and the Royal Free I have not to my knowledge been to these hospitals.

Anonymity, disclosure and redaction

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

I would consider giving oral evidence to the Inquiry.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed..... GRO-C ....

Christopher Mitchell

Dated...20/02/2019..........