Witness Name: D Pritchard
Statement No: WITN1479001
Exhibits: WITN1479002-10
Dated: November 2018

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF MR DAVID PRITCHARD

I, David Mark Pritchard, will say as follows:-

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is David Mark Pritchard. My date of birth is GRO-C 1959 and I live at GRO-C GRO-C with my wife, Carol and our daughter GRO-C (christened GRO-C but we changed her name by deed poll when she went to senior school because the teachers had insisted on calling her GRO-C which she hated) who is 13 years old and our son GRO-C who is 12 years old. We both have other children from previous marriages.

2. This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my full medical records.

Section 2. How Infected

3. I suffer from hereditary spherocytosis which is a blood disorder. I was diagnosed with this condition at the age of 16. Due to these conditions I have had to have multiple doses of both blood plasma and Factor VIII which were predominantly between 1985 and1987.

4. I had a splenectomy on 14th January 1987 when I was aged 26. Professor Bellingham from The Royal Liverpool Hospital was the expert who diagnosed my

hereditary condition and he decided that the only way to combat it would be to remove my spleen. However, because my platelets were very low and my clotting factor was insufficient I was given further doses of Factor VIII in 1987 following the splenectomy.

5. During the period 1985-1987 I was under the care of Dr V Clough who was a leading haematologist based at The Countess of Chester Hospital.

6. I believe that I was infected with Hepatitis C during the period 1985-1987.

7. I found out that I had Hepatitis C (genotype 1a) when Carol and I went to The Nuffield Private IVF Clinic based in Chester. This was in 2005. Exhibit WITN1479002 is the first page (the second page is missing) of a letter dated 27th September 2006 addressed to Dr R Harris, Consultant Gastroenterologist at The Countess of Chester Hospital which records that I was found to be Hepatitis C positive when I attended an IVF clinic. This letter also details my hereditary condition, the need for blood products and being infected with Hepatitis C.

8. Carol and I each have children from our previous relationships but we wanted children together. However, because of our ages we had to seek IVF on a private basis. This was meant to be a really happy and positive time for us and a time for new beginnings. However, it turned out to be an awful time. Hepatitis C has destroyed mine and my family's lives to a degree that I could have never predicted. I had heard about Hepatitis C but I was totally ignorant about it. I just thought that it was something that drug addicts got.

9. Carol and I both had to have a routine blood test at The Nuffield Clinic as they tested you for everything before you commenced IVF. A few days after the blood test there was voicemail message on our home telephone asking us to telephone the Clinic. I did so and I was told that I had to come in as soon as possible. When Carol and I attended, I was told that I was infected with Hepatitis C by a doctor at the clinic and it felt like a bombshell had been dropped on us. We were both devastated and in a state of extreme shock and in that moment our dreams for the future were shattered.

10. I was given no information at all about the virus or about how to manage it but then I was at an IVF clinic. The IVF clinic had no idea what to do or how to deal

with Hepatitis C so they sent me to the sexual health clinic at The Countess of Chester Hospital. However, it was actually my general practitioner, Dr. Allan, who helped me as he referred me to The Royal Liverpool Hospital.

11. The last thing you do is question the doctors but I kept thinking that it was now 2005 and the health professionals knew all about my Factor VIII and blood plasma treatments in the 1980's so I was puzzled as to why they had not found me to check whether I had been infected. Instead, I was left to track down everyone whom I had come into contact with from 1985 to check that they had not been infected. I had unknowingly put all of these people at risk including my wife and children.

12. I was upset about the way in which I was told about my infection but I don't blame the IVF clinic as they were doing all they could; they were not experts in the fields of Hepatology or Haematology. The only reason I managed to find out everything I needed to know was because The Royal Liverpool Hospital was fantastic and I could not fault them. I have nothing but praise for the way in which they have dealt with me and the Hepatology Nurse Consultant, Helen Caldwell was beyond fantastic. Unfortunately, when I spoke to The Countess of Chester Hospital about my Hepatitis C they did not want to know.

Section 3. Other Infections.

13. To the best of my knowledge I have not received or been put at risk of any other infections.

Section 4. Consent.

14. I think that I am one of the lucky ones as I don't believe that I have been tested or treated without my consent. The IVF clinic did tell me what they were testing for and this included a number of viruses such as HIV, Hepatitis C and Syphilis.

Section 5. Impact

15. Mentally and physically I felt and still do feel devastated about how Hepatitis C has ruined mine and my family's lives. GRO-C GRO-C requires regular blood product treatment and will eventually have to have her spleen removed. She takes folic acid regularly and has a pastoral worker at school. She is really clued up about contaminated blood matters; she asks about what happened to me and she is very aware that there are risks of receiving blood products. She always asks all the right questions at the hospital and never fails to ask where the blood has come from. Both Carol and I GRO-C reassure her that what happened to me will not happen to her because things are different today.

16. GRO-C was born on GRO-C 2005 and soon afterwards, I would say in or around 2006, we went to The Royal Victoria Hospital and they explained everything to Carol and I about Hepatitis C and the fact that I had genotype 1a which was difficult to cure. They were also really upfront about the treatments and the punishing regimes they presented and they told me that the treatments would comprise Interferon and Ribavirin. They said that they would give me a grace period of six months before starting me on the treatments as Carol and I wanted another child and it would not be possible to have a child whilst I was being treated. They were only prepared to delay the treatments for a maximum of six months.

17. Luckily Carol fell pregnant within the six month period and our son GRO-C was born on GRO-C 2007.

18. As a family we did not really know how to deal with my diagnosis. Both Carol and I were frightened to death about what would happen to me and the stigma attached to Hepatitis C. Apart from The Royal Victoria Hospital we felt that we had nowhere and no-one to turn to.

19. I had been a head gardener for MBNA and they "*pensioned me off*" as soon as I told them that I had Hepatitis C. The Royal Liverpool Hospital had given them information regarding my projected life expectancy stating that it was probably less than five years. They thought that I would be dead in a few years so they

were happy to *"pension me off"*. Ironically I survived and I still have a really good pension from them today. If they had thought that I was going to survive beyond the five years then I am sure that they would not have taken the action they did at that time. Carol did not know whether I was going to survive and it was a really scary time for both of us.

20. I commenced the Interferon and Ribavirin treatments shortly after GRO-C was born and this was probably the worst time of my life. It was a truly horrendous time. The resultant depression arising from the treatments was far worse than the Hepatitis C. Carol and I had to go to Relate because my depression and mood were horrific. I was irritable and angry. My marriage was on the brink of failure. This was a really sad time for me; I was so selfish and thought that it was all about me.

21. I felt that I was pushed into having GRO-C even though of course I love him dearly but if you stopped to think about what we were doing for even a minute it was madness. We were trying to a child when I was about to undergo forty-eight weeks of gruelling life changing treatment. We had both been put under enormous pressure in the ensuing six month period. It felt like we had no choice in the matter and poor Carol ended up with two very small children to care for and on top of this she had to deal with a failing business and my awful and angry behaviour. I really put Carol through the mill and I was not in a position to appreciate that at the time.

22. Carol and I had started a landscape gardening business which was called Pritchard's Garden Therapy. We had a young apprentice called Joel to help us but once I had started my treatments I was virtually useless to the business. Unfortunately, the business got into a lot of debt and I was too poorly to take action because the Hepatitis C treatments had wiped me out both mentally and physically. We lived in a council house and our credit cards were maxed out. We had to sell Carol's jewellery just to put food on the table and this was upsetting due to the sentimental value it held. This put extreme pressure upon Carol who somehow still stood by me irrespective of my horrid behaviour. As a man I felt like a failure as I was unable to provide for my family and it was definitely my job to do just that.

23. A very close friend of ours came to the rescue and she was called Dr GRO-C GRO-C. She sat us both down and prepared a business plan of how to take things forward. GRO-C loaned to the business the sum of £38,300.00 and if it had not been for her kindness we would have lost everything. Exhibit WITN1479003 is a document confirming the figure loaned to the business by GRO-C. GRO-C had worked out how much money the business would need for me to take a full year off to complete my treatments in order to fight the virus. She was confident in our business, which had good clients and was actually a really good business. It was at this time that Martin, whose surname I don't know, from The Caxton Foundation came to see us and told GRO-C not to bother with me as I was not going to live much longer. The Caxton Foundation eventually agreed to reimburse GRO-C £19,000.00 and I deal with this in section 7 of my statement below. We paid back the remaining £19,300.00 to GRO-C.

24. Before GRO-C had offered her support, I had approached various banks to see if I could get a loan to help with the business. However, as soon as you mentioned Hepatitis C the door was shut firmly in your face. I found the process both soul destroying and demeaning and it was already hard enough dealing with my virus and the treatments without having to deal with such poor behaviour from professionals.

25. Further, with this diagnosis I was unable to take out any form of life insurance. Therefore it was absolutely imperative for our livelihoods and for my family's future that we kept the business going.

26. During this time I was still undergoing the gruelling forty-eight week treatments to try and clear the virus. I was then admitted to The Royal Liverpool Hospital during August 2007 and Exhibit WITN1479004 confirms that I presented with right sided hemiparesis and weakness of four weeks duration, blurring of vision and decreased visual acuity. The doctors initially thought that I had a tumour but now they believe that the treatments I was undergoing for Hepatitis C were so severe that they caused this reaction in me.

27. The virus has also caused my osteoarthritis and this is really painful. I ended up having a full right knee replacement in March 2009 and was in hospital for about a week.

28. Currently I have osteoarthritis in both wrists and grade three arthritis in my left knee. I had an arthroscopy of the left knee and underwent keyhole surgery about two years ago which was reasonably successful. I also have a lot of pain in my ankles.

29. I have a very strong Christian faith and I don't like to take any regular medication or painkillers. However, I have taken paracetamol, tramadol, morphine and seroxat in the past and I now take penicillin although I did not start this immediately after my splenectomy. I am prone to infections as a result of not having a spleen.

30. There have been times when I have wanted to end my life. Mentally it has been tough and particularly so during the treatments. I had always had a very physical outdoor job and it was depressing staying indoors. Physically, in addition to my osteoarthritis I also now have diverticulitis which is difficult to manage. Even today, I am continuously exhausted, tired and grumpy.

31. Currently, I am being followed up by The Walton Hospital, which is a neurological hospital and I am monitored here every six months. When I spoke to my consultant about my Hepatitis C he was concerned that I should still be followed up in this regard. He said that the virus will never be eradicated and I will still have a viral load but that it would be undetectable on a normal blood test. However, if you specifically tested for Hepatitis C then it would show up on this type of blood test. I am 60 years old on my next birthday and I would never ever go through any other treatment for my Hepatitis C as it was so horrific and nearly cost me my marriage.

32. Socially I did tell most people that I had Hepatitis C as I am very open. I actually had to tell people as they needed to find out if they themselves had been infected by me. Everyone was very supportive. However, there were a couple of people who I did not tell as I was ashamed at first and you are never quite sure how people are going to react. However, today I would tell the world.

33. I also lost two children GRO-C and they were called Hailey and Ben. Hailey was born in 1987 and died when she was only one week old and Ben was born in 1994 and died at two weeks old. I always carry in the back of my mind that it could have been because of my virus. No consultant has been able to tell me that Hepatitis C had nothing to do with losing these two babies. Exhibit WITN1479005 confirms Hailey and Ben's deaths.

Section 6. Treatment/Care/Support

34. I have never faced any obstacles or difficulties with regard to accessing medical services as a result of my infection. I have not received any stigma from anyone in either the medical or dentistry professions. In fact my dentist was phenomenal.

35. I did not receive any counselling or psychiatric support. I helped to set up the Hepatitis C Support Group at The Royal Liverpool Hospital in 2008. As I had struggled to find support I wanted to help others who were going through what I had endured. Helen Caldwell was truly inspirational and championed Hepatitis C.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

36. Helen Caldwell told me about the Skipton Fund and the Stage 1 Payment. My general practitioner got all of my medical records together and sent them to Mr Nick Fish at the Skipton Fund. There was no difficulty in obtaining the Stage 1 Payment of £20,000.00 which I received on 21st December 2006. I recall that at the time my liver score was eight and I had fibroids. I was also told that my success rate for clearing the virus was very low as I had genotype 1a. However, I was not eligible for the Stage 2 Payment as I did not have cirrhosis.

37. I also applied to The Caxton Foundation for financial assistance towards my debts and business costs in 2011. The Caxton Foundation wrote to me on 22nd December 2011 to refuse a grant in relation to my debts because their funds were limited and they had to prioritise their expenditure. In relation to my business costs they asked me to provide a detailed business case to establish how viable the business was. I attach a copy of this letter as Exhibit WITN1479006.

Eventually The Caxton Foundation agreed to pay £19,000.00 to reimburse Belinda.

38. The Caxton Foundation also agreed to fund two new mattresses for my children at £500, a new dining table for £367.16 but they declined to fund laptops for the children. I attach a letter confirming this at Exhibit WITN1479007.

39. The Caxton Foundation also agreed to fund a van and a tractor mower for my business to the total sum of £10,000.00. Exhibit WITN1479008 confirms this.

40. The procedure for applying for financial assistance from The Caxton Foundation was somewhat protracted and arduous. We had to provide letters with quotes and estimates and had to specifically set out which member of the family it was for. Exhibit WITN1479009 confirms this.

41. I found the application procedures for both The Caxton Foundation and The Skipton Fund both protracted and difficult. For example, you had to obtain 3 different quotes and this was really difficult. For example if you went to a carpet shop you could not obtain a quote without paying a deposit. It was really degrading as people would question us as to who was paying and you could not really say "*I have Hepatitis C and a charity is going to fund the payment*". It was just embarrassing.

42. When you applied to the Trusts you would have to declare a large proportion of your recent bank statements and there was always the worry that they may look into them and possibly conclude that you would lose certain payments and therefore people were reluctant to do this. The application procedure was definitely designed to put people off.

43. The banks did not want to know. As soon as I mentioned Hepatitis C I would be rejected for any loan.

44. Now that I have gone through all of my medical examinations I now qualify for the Special Category Measures (SCM) payments. I receive this quarterly and it is a blessing. As a result of the SCM payments we have been able to do things that we should have done years ago and we have also treated **GRO-C** because without her help we would not still have a business.

45. In summary, I do not think that any of the payments were sufficient for being given viruses that we did not deserve.

Section 8. Other Issues

46. Carol and I campaigned a lot and we often went to the House of Commons. We would also meet up with the Tainted Blood Support Group. I have realised the devastation that this scandal has caused and felt it first hand as a victim. I am here to fight to the end for the truth. Exhibit WITN1479010 provides an example of some of the letters I have received in relation to my campaigning although some of the enclosures are missing.

47. I also helped to set up the Hepatitis C support Group at The Royal Liverpool Hospital and I refer to Section 6 of my statement above in this regard.

Conclusion

48. I think that we will be looked after now and I really hope that Sir Brian Langstaff will ensure that this is the case. I think that Sir Brian knows how bad this contaminated blood scandal really is. I wonder why other countries looked after their people yet we have failed in this regard; until now that is. The evidence is now out there and no-one will be able to ignore it. I am confident that this Inquiry will bring answers and support, both emotional, practical and the right kind of financial compensation for those who have suffered in silence for decades. I believe that with our solicitors behind us we will not fail to get the answers we need and they will make sure that no stone is left unturned.

49. Carol and I have emerged stronger as a couple from this tragedy. Nothing can break our bond now; Hepatitis C tried and very nearly did but we got there in the end and this Inquiry is the last step in a very long, sad and exhausting process.

Anonymity, disclosure and redaction

50. 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 want to give oral evidence at the Inquiry.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed GRO-C ....

Dated 27. 11. 18 ....