

Witness Name: L Demir
Statement No: WITN1184001
Exhibits: WITN1184002
Dated: April 2020

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF LORNA DEMIR

I, Lorna Demir, will say as follows:-

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Lorna Demir and I was born on GRO-C 1967. I live at GRO-C
GRO-C County Durham, GRO-C
2. I make this statement as an affected daughter of my late father, David William Hill, who was born on GRO-C 1947 and died, aged only 44, on 18th April 1992.
3. He was infected with HIV, Hepatitis C and Hepatitis B via contaminated blood products.
4. My sister, Sarah Neasham, has also provided a witness statement to the Inquiry under witness number **WITN1423001**.
5. **This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my father's full medical records.** I received some records from the Royal Victoria Infirmary (RVI) in Newcastle upon Tyne but none from the Manchester Royal Infirmary (MRI) in Manchester.

Section 2. How Affected

6. My father had severe Haemophilia A with a clotting factor of less than 1%.
7. He was diagnosed with Haemophilia at only 10 days old having bled heavily and uncontrollably following a circumcision operation.
8. My father was treated at the RVI, initially under Dr T.H. Boon and then Dr Peter Jones. In or around 1982/1983 my father's care was transferred to the MRI but I am unaware of the names of his consultants at this hospital.
9. **Exhibit WITN1184002** details some of the blood products which my father received whilst he was at the RVI. These included Cryoprecipitate, pig's blood and Factor VIII concentrates manufactured by Amour, NHS, Baxter, Abbot and Cutter. He continued to receive blood products when he moved to the MRI up until his death on 18th April 1992.
10. I don't know whether my father was given any advice or warning regarding the risk of infection from Factor VIII concentrates.
11. In or around 1990, I remember a social worker, who I think was called Jean Lovey, coming to my mother's house to inform me that my father had HIV. My mother and father had separated and I resided with my mother in GRO-C whereas my father had set up home with his new wife in Manchester. I also recall my father telling my sister and me about his infection but this memory is a bit of a blur. I refer to my sister's witness statement in this regard which confirms that she thought that my father told us that he had been aware of his HIV infection since 1989 and that he thought he had been infected in 1982.
12. I believe that my father was told about his HIV when he attended a routine appointment at the MRI in 1989. I don't know which consultant told him or the manner in which this news was delivered. I am unaware as to whether he was given any advice or information to allow him to both manage and understand the infection, including regarding the risk of transmission.

13. I don't know when my father was infected with Hepatitis C and Hepatitis B and I am unaware as to when or how he was told about these infections.

Section 3. Other Infections

14. I believe that my father was put at risk of vCJD.

Section 4. Consent

15. I am unsure as to whether my father was tested, treated or used for the purposes of research without his knowledge and therefore without his consent.

Section 5. Impact

16. The RVI records confirm that my father suffered with Haemarthrosis and experienced significant difficulties with his joints, including recurrent bleeds. He had particular difficulties with his right elbow which necessitated a synovectomy. He also suffered a fracture of his right femur which left him with a shortened right leg.

17. It was a massive shock to find out that my father had been infected with HIV. I found the news incredibly difficult to process which was not helped by the massive stigma which surrounded this virus. Initially, my father and I did not really talk about his infection which I think was, in part, caused by the fact that things were incredibly strained between my parents following their separation.

18. However, as time went by, I started to see my father and his new wife in Manchester more regularly and I would often stay with them at the weekends. Our relationship was better than it had ever been and I was glad to have my father back in my life.

19. I was never frightened of contracting HIV from my father as I was fully aware of the modes of transmission. However, I was acutely aware that others may

not have been as educated and sensible as I was. I did not tell a soul about my father's infection for a long time until I finally disclosed it to my best friend, who was supportive.

20. It was not long until my father's health started deteriorating. He used to get shingles and other ailments. I remember that he had to take a cocktail of tablets on daily basis in an attempt to control his HIV.
21. My father was a well respected, sociable and likable man. He used to be a community worker in the centre of Newcastle. His life was focused on helping children and teenagers.
22. Towards the end of my father's life he became reclusive and his medical records confirm that he was both depressed and less communicative. He then developed HIV encephalopathy which was very hard to witness as he was such an intelligent man.
23. My father bravely fought on but he was not able to win the battle against HIV and he passed away on 18th April 1992. I was devastated and felt particularly robbed and aggrieved that I lost my father having rekindled our relationship.
24. Following his death, his local football team held a fundraising event in his memory and there was a phenomenal turnout which demonstrated how well thought of he was in the community. This made me feel very proud of my father.
25. My father passed away without making a will and following his death, his new wife disappeared (I believe she went to Tibet) which was GRO-D completely out of the blue. I had had a good relationship with her and she had always been supportive of me and even stayed in regular contact with me for the first few months after my father's death. I was, therefore, incredibly shocked at her behaviour. I have no idea whether my father intended to leave my sister or me any inheritance but we received nothing. It would have been nice to have received a letter from my father but sadly this was not to be.

26. When I learnt more about the contaminated blood scandal I developed a huge mistrust towards both medical professionals and the UK Government. My father had been really close to Dr Peter Jones and Maureen Ferns and I was very familiar with them as well, so much so that I used to call Maureen "*Aunty Maureen*". I felt that it was a massive betrayal on their part as I believe that they knew that the products they had given to my father, and to many others, were contaminated. I believe that they knowingly pumped poison into their patients and then proceeded to treat them like guinea pigs. I also remember being under Dr Peter Jones for my pregnancy in 1984 and that he used to make sure that I was very well looked after so it almost felt like a "*double betrayal*" and a real "*kick in the teeth*".

27. My mother also [GRO-C] for a long time as she had helped my father with his home treatment and therefore felt guilty that she may have given him the contaminated batch.

28. My sister and I don't talk or support each other in relation to what happened to our father. I don't think she wanted to have much to do with the Infected Blood Inquiry because [GRO-C]
[GRO-C] She did, however, provide a witness statement which I have referred to earlier on in my witness statement.

29. About a year ago, I received a letter from the Haematology Department at the RVI advising me that I had received an unscreened blood transfusion when I had given birth to my daughter in 1984. The letter asked me to come in for urgent tests. My GP surgery continuously telephoned me as well. I knew that I did not have Hepatitis C or HIV because I got married in Turkey which necessitated that I was tested for a number of viruses and I therefore did not undergo any further tests that were being offered to me.

Section 6. Treatment/care/support

30. I don't know whether my father received any unfavourable treatment by clinicians or dental technicians as a result of his infections.

31. However, I remember going to the dental hospital at the RVI for treatment on my teeth and when I walked in the dental technicians and nurses were all fully gowned because they clearly considered that I was a risk due to my father being infected with HIV. Their behaviour worried me; I was an impressionable teenager at the time and the memory of this incident firmly cemented itself in my head.

32. As far as I am aware my father was not provided with any counselling or psychological support in consequence of his infections. I was not provided with anything in this regard as a result of his infections and subsequent passing.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

33. My father received a settlement from the 1991 HIV Litigation for which he signed a waiver.

34. I believe that he received financial support from the Macfarlane Trust (MFT).

35. I have never received any support, financial or otherwise, from any of the Trusts.

Section 8. Other Issues

36. I want answers and I want assurances that a scandal of such magnitude will never happen again.

Anonymity

37. I do not want to apply for anonymity and I do not wish to give oral evidence to the Inquiry.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed..... GRO-C

Dated..... 9.6.2020