

Witness Name: C Cope
Statement No: WITN1169001
Exhibits: 0
Dated: February 2019

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF CHERYL COPE

I, Cheryl Cope, will say as follows:-

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Cheryl Cope of GRO-C
GRO-C I was born on GRO-C 1978. I am married and have a son who is aged 6.
2. I prepare this statement as an affected person in connection with my late father, John William Beddow, who passed away on 29th December 2008 at the age of 52.
3. My father was infected with HIV, Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C as a result of receiving contaminated Factor VIII.
4. **This statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my father's full medical records.**

Section 2. How Affected

5. My father had severe Haemophilia A and received Factor VIII. My father had also been taught to administer Factor VIII to treat haemophilia at home.
6. My father was treated at the Queen Elizabeth Medical Centre in Birmingham and Manor Hospital in the West Midlands. His consultants were Dr J T Wilde and Dr F G H Hill.
7. My father was never given any advice or information regarding the risks of receiving Factor VIII.
8. My father was advised that he had been infected with HIV at a routine clinic appointment by Dr Hill at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital on 23rd October 1986. I am unsure as to whether my father was given adequate information to allow him to understand and manage his infection.
9. According to my father's medical records, he tested positive for HIV as early as 1st December 1984. However, a letter dated 24th October 1986 confirms that there had been a delay in communicating this result to my father due to a non-attendance at a clinic. However, I am of the view that my father would have attended the clinic on more than one occasion between 1984 and 1986 and therefore I suspect that the delay was not just caused by my father missing one appointment.

Section 3. Other Infections

10. I recall that my father was possibly tested for vCJD in or around 2005 and I believe that the result was negative.

Section 4. Consent

11. My father was adamant that he was being tested without his knowledge and therefore without his consent. An example of this is the fact that he was not aware that he was being tested for HIV in 1984. I therefore strongly suspect

that he was being tested on other occasions, and for other viruses, without his knowledge and consent. My father also told me that he was treated like a guinea pig.

Section 5. Impact

12. My father's mental state was extremely fragile and I often took the role of the parent trying to reason with him. He tried to take his life on a number of occasions as he was unable to deal with his declining physical state and poor quality of life.
13. My father was prescribed AZT and other medications which left him bed ridden for days, altered his appearance and also had a huge effect on his mental state. My father also suffered from extreme exhaustion and fatigue.
14. He developed cirrhosis which then progressed to cancer of the liver. He was unable to undergo chemotherapy due to his HIV infection.
15. Due to the side effects of the medication and my father's mental state of not knowing whether any given day was going to be his last, he had to give up work. Therefore the financial burden lay with my brother, Simon, and me.
16. Simon and I were told in the very early 1990's about my father's infections which had an enormous impact on us as children. I had to grow up very quickly and be in a position to support my father, both mentally and financially.
17. Not long after I found out about my father's infections I sat my GCSE's and I did not do as well as I could have. I had no motivation to revise and no support from my father because he was mentally unable to deal with anything in his life other than living one day at a time.
18. I would have loved to have gone to University but since my fathers' diagnoses and him leaving work, I knew that that this dream was financially impossible. I knew that we could not afford for me to go to University and I was fully aware that I would have to get a job to support my father.

19. Simon had to leave school and get a job for the same reason. Simon had always dreamed of being a car designer but the reality was that he needed to stay at home to support my father whilst also holding down a job which produced a reliable income.

20. I also worked long hours to help my father out financially and I took out a loan for £1,000 for my father to enable him to purchase a car.

21. My father had to move from the Midlands to Devon due to the stigma surrounding HIV after he confided in, who he thought were, close friends about his condition. This was very hard for my father as he was a private man. Unfortunately, one of the "*friends*" he confided in spoke openly about my father's infections which meant that we had to uproot and move over 100 miles away. This was very difficult for Simon and me because the family home was sold and we were effectively homeless and had to find somewhere to live which meant renting a property.

22. The whole family was broken following my parent's divorce, which occurred due to our mother living in fear of being infected. GRO-D

GRO-D

GRO-D We had some contact with my father's side of the family but because my father became very bitter following his diagnoses, that contact then stopped fairly abruptly as well.

23. I do struggle and I am aware that it is not easy on my husband who has to deal with the effects of me losing my father at such a young age. It has been really hard growing up and knowing, since my early teenage years, that my father had a terminal illness which was caused by absolutely no wrongdoing on his part. My father was given these infections by the establishments who were meant to be looking after him.

24. I feel cheated that my father was never able to see me get married, because he couldn't travel due to illness and in any event was unable to obtain insurance, or meet his wonderful grandson. I am sad that we lost our family unit at a young age and I miss my father dearly.

Section 6. Treatment/Care/Support

25. My father always felt that he was a lost cause and the impression he gained from his dealings with the medical professionals was that they were too busy and had too many other problems and therefore failed to support my father.

26. I do not think that my mother or father were offered any counselling or psychiatric support.

27. GRO-C I have never been offered any counselling or psychiatric support either during his diagnoses or following his death.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

28. I believe that my father received one off payments from the MacFarlane Trust as and when he was in need.

29. I believe that my father received the Stage 1 payment from the Skipton Fund. My brother, who was my father's next of kin, received the Stage 2 payment and also the "top-up" lump sum payment of £25,000 on 10th May 2011. My brother distributed this evenly between the siblings.

30. I remember my father's frustrations when he applied for financial assistance. He was an extremely proud man who had a loving marriage and a very good job; all to be lost through no fault of his own. He often said that he felt like he was begging for what he felt should rightfully be his.

Section 8. Other Issues

31. I believe that my father was party to the HIV litigation that ended in 1991. He had to sign a waiver in order to obtain the approximately £80,000 payment.

32. My father was also part of the European Blood Factor Litigation in 2003 with Lieff, Cabrase, Heimann and Bernstein LLP.

Anonymity, disclosure and redaction

33. I do not wish to be anonymous and I do not want to give oral evidence to the Inquiry.

Statement of Truth

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

GRO-C

Signed.....

Dated..... 21st February 2019