

11/3/21

Witness Name: Stephen Makin

Statement No.: WITN3197

Exhibits: None

Dated: March 2021

**INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY**

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**WRITTEN STATEMENT OF STEPHEN GEOFFREY MAKIN**

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I, Stephen Geoffrey Makin will say as follows:

**Section 1: Introduction**

1. My name is Stephen Geoffrey Makin. My date of birth is GRO-C 962 and my address is GRO-C Leeds GRO-C I am a farmer and I have lived at this address all of my life. I now live with my wife who I have been married to for 26 years and I have grown up children.

**Section 2: How infected***Haemophilia*

2. I have mild Haemophilia A and due to this, I only receive blood products when I experience trauma or have to have dental work (I probably only have blood products every four to five years or so).
3. Due to the passage of time, I cannot recall the timeline or the specific names of the products which I have received over the years, although I am aware that I received factor products. I was not given any advice about the risks of the treatment which I was receiving periodically.
4. I was treated at St James' University Hospital in Leeds and my clinician was Dr McVerry.

*Diagnosis with Hepatitis*

5. I recall that I had a tooth extracted at St James' University Hospital in the late 1970s, possibly 1979, when I was around 17 years old and I can recall that I received factor for that procedure. This is when I believe I was infected with Hepatitis B and C.
6. In around November/December 1979, after I had had the dental treatment, I was very ill and a local doctor and his wife, who was a nurse, came to see me on the farm. They could see that my eyes were yellow and that I had jaundice and alerted me to the possibility that I had contracted Hepatitis. I was then referred straight to Seacroft Hospital who informed me I had Hepatitis B and I spent two to three weeks there recovering.
7. Five or six years after this, probably in the mid-80s, I was informed by Dr McVerry that they had found another disease in my liver which is now known as Hepatitis C but it did not have that name when I was first diagnosed with it. I was diagnosed after I had been having, what I was told, were routine blood tests every six months at the Haematology Department. Dr McVerry sat me down and told me that it was a disease which they did not know a lot about but that it would give me cirrhosis of the liver and because of my haemophilia, there was no chance I could have a liver transplant. I asked Dr McVerry what that meant and he told me that I potentially only had between five and ten years to live and that there was no cure for it. He then went on to say that there was a treatment which was being trialled called Interferon which had been tested on cancer patients and it was discovered that it helped with Hepatitis C and asked me if I wanted to join the trial. He basically said to me that I had no choice but to join the trial because there was no alternative treatment and I would die. I went onto the trial shortly afterwards.
8. I was only given very vague information about the consequences of Hepatitis C and the risks of me transmitting it. I think this was because they were still learning about the condition.

**Section 3: Other infections**

9. I have never been notified that I have been infected or exposed to any other infections apart from Hepatitis.

**Section 4: Consent**

10. I was not aware that I was being tested for Hepatitis. In relation to Hepatitis B, I think I was only tested for it because I became ill and I was never informed that I was being tested for Hepatitis C. I was just informed that the blood tests were routine.

**Section 5: Impact***Physical/mental impact of me*

11. When I was ill with Hepatitis B, I lost two stone in weight within about one to two weeks and that was when I was admitted to hospital. I had a young family at the time and I was working on the family farm. It was around three months after I was discharged from hospital before I could return to work on the farm.
12. In relation to Hepatitis C, I had no idea I had contracted it so it was not until I started the treatment with Interferon that this impacted on my health.

*Treatment for Hepatitis C*

13. The first few months of the treatment with Interferon were horrendous. I had to go to hospital two to three times a week to inject myself. It was a really dark few months.
14. At the time, I was farming on the family farm and we also had a haulage business but I could not work because I felt so ill. I had to take on a driver to fulfil my contracts and my ability to work on the farm deteriorated. It probably took me a good three to four years before I felt something like back to normal physically. Thankfully, the Interferon treatment did clear my Hepatitis C infection

and Dr McVerry told me that only about five people in the country had cleared the infection at that time.

*How infected status has impacted on medical treatment and/or dental care*

15. I have had decent dental care over the years and I can get dental work done at my local dentist as long as I have got cover with factor for any extractions. I know the local dentist quite well and we are able to work out a plan when factor is required.

*Further medical complications or conditions*

16. I do have high blood pressure but I do not know if that has been caused by my Hepatitis infections or the treatment with Interferon. At the time when I was receiving treatment, I lost some of my hearing in my left ear but again, I do not know if this is related.
17. I do know that I was and I still am a lot more tired than I ever used to be. I was a farmer, very, very fit and active before all of this happened and I have never really recovered from the tiredness. I also experience issues with my concentration which I have been told is due to the treatment with Interferon.

*Private, family, social life and stigma*

18. I have no doubt that my diagnosis with Hepatitis C and the treatment I received for it resulted in the breakdown of my first marriage and ended in divorce in or around 1990.
19. I was told that I had contracted Hepatitis C around the same time that AIDS had been discovered. As a haemophiliac with Hepatitis C, people also thought that you had AIDS. I did not realise this until I went to the pub and they kept changing my glass. They never changed my glass previously or other people's glasses. People were looking at me and then I worked out that they were labelling me with AIDS. After this I stopped going out.

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20. My first wife was from a fairly big family, a mining family, and they were close to people in the village and she was worried about them being stigmatised due to their association with me and the misunderstanding that haemophiliacs were infected with AIDS.

21. After I was diagnosed with Hepatitis C, my first wife

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That was the start of the demise of our marriage and it ended six or seven years later. I was young at the time, I had a young family but my first wife would not let me see the children. I have no doubt that my infection cost me my marriage.

22. My children have all grown up and have come back to me. They are a great support to me.

*Education, work, financial impact*

23. Due to the Interferon treatment, I could not work the farm or the haulage business. I had to take 12 to 18 months off. My father had to do the work and this caused my relationship with my father to break down and rift, especially after I had to pay the divorce settlement partly from the family business. Approximately 15 years ago, we split the farm into two – he kept one half and I kept the other. We sold a lot of land and I have had to do other jobs to help with the finances. This is all linked to my Hepatitis C diagnosis and treatment. My father and I still talk to each other and we do little jobs together but we do not do anything business wise together which is a shame.

24. I take jobs on here and there and I rent some of my yard out but I have not got the income I used to have from the family business.

25. I have always had problems with getting insurance from life to work to holiday insurance because I am a haemophiliac. In addition, you do have to disclose that you have had Hepatitis. The first thing you are asked when you tell the insurance companies that you are a haemophiliac is 'have you contracted any infections?'. Due to this, you cannot always get insurance and when you can, it is very expensive. We go on holiday with very little or no insurance now.

**Section 6: Treatment, care, support**

26. I have never been offered or received counselling in relation to my Hepatitis diagnosis or in relation to the treatment with Interferon and I have not explored it myself.

**Section 7: Financial assistance**

27. I did receive a payment from the Skipton Fund which was £20,000 in around 2007. I did not claim it for years until my wife looked into it as I did not realise I was entitled to it. I also receive payments from England Infected Blood Support Scheme ("EIBSS"). I used to get around £3,000 a year which increased to £7,000 a year but that has now gone up to around £28,000 a year which is a great help to me and my wife. It has kept us afloat and if we did not have it, we would really struggle. I think that the payments from EIBSS started in around 2018.
28. I recall that the haematology nurse helped me to complete the application forms for the payments. She telephoned me and we did it over the phone so it was a straightforward process.

**Section 8: Other issues**

29. I hope that the Inquiry can establish the truth about what happened and that the Government take responsibility for their actions and mistakes. It would be nice if people were provided with compensation as an acknowledgment and apology. Compensation will not be able to make up for what I or other people have gone through. I am a pretty strong person and have been able to cope with what happened and my wife of 26 years has been a fantastic help and support to me but other people have not been so fortunate.

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30. I do not wish to provide oral evidence to the Inquiry but I am happy for my evidence to be public.

**Statement of Truth**

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

Signed: ..... **GRO-C** .....  
Mr Stephen Geoffrey Makin

Dated: ..... 11/3/21 .....