

Witness Name: Carol Margery Kavanagh

Statement No: W4801001

Exhibits: SKIP0000002_002

Dated: 21 April 2021

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

WRITTEN STATEMENT OF CAROL MARGERY KAVANAGH

I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 04 January 2021.

I, Carol Margery Kavanagh, will say as follows: -

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Carol Margery Kavanagh. My date of birth is GRO-C 1955. I reside at GRO-C
2. I married my ex-husband ("Kevin") on 12 December 1985, and we were together for around ten years. We have two children. My son Jack was born in GRO-C 1986, and my daughter Katie was born in GRO-C 1989. I am currently employed as a counsellor at the Cornwall Drugs and Alcohol Team ("CDAT").
3. I intend to speak about my infection with Hepatitis C ("HCV"). In particular, the nature of how I learnt about my infection, how the illness has affected me and our family thereafter, and the treatment I have received.

4. I can confirm that I have chosen not to have legal representation and that the Inquiry Investigator has explained the anonymity process to me. I am not seeking anonymity as I wish for my story to be known in full.
5. The Inquiry Investigator has also explained to me the 'Right to Reply' procedure, and I understand that if I am critical of a medical professional or organisation, they will have the right to reply to that criticism.
6. I wish to acknowledge that naturally as time passes, memories can fade. I have been able to provide approximate timeframes for matters based on life events. However, these timeframes should be accepted as 'near to' rather than precise dates.
7. I have constructed this statement without access to my medical records. I will however provide you details of two occasions where I received blood transfusions.

Section 2. How Infected

8. In July 1975, when I was aged about nineteen years old, myself and my friend decided that we would go on a holiday. For approximately four weeks, we hitch-hiked around Cornwall and Devon, where we ended our trip in Torquay, Devon.
9. In August 1975, myself and my friend became friends with a local man who was offering his flat through rented accommodation for a small amount of money. This was great for us as we wanted to stay in Devon for a little while longer.
10. Thereafter, we stayed in Devon for a few weeks, eventually I had to go back to Wolverhampton. Rather than hitch-hike as I would usually have done, I got a lift from a friend who was making the same trip around a similar time. He was reluctant to take me but he relented and agreed to give me a lift.

11. A few days later, myself and three others were due to make the trip to Wolverhampton. Maybe this wasn't the best idea but we started off the night by going to a club in Torquay, Devon, our plan was to then drive through the night once we left the club. Around 11pm we were about to leave the club when my friend realised that he had lost his cloakroom ticket and was unable to get his leather jacket back until the club closed around 2am. He did not want to leave his jacket at the club, so we had to stay until the club had closed and his was the only jacket left to collect.
12. By 2am, we were all very tired as it was the middle of the night, but nevertheless, we decided to set off on the journey. I can recall being in the front passenger seat with my feet on the dash and leaning forward on my legs. We were in an old fashioned Mini, the type with the open dashboard.
13. At one point my friend was showing signs of being very tired so I asked him if he wanted to stop at the service station on the motorway to get a coffee. He agreed and we pulled into the next available service station. A short while after, we all got back into the car and continued on our journey. I fell asleep with my head on my knees and my feet on the dashboard.
14. The next thing I remember is being in a hospital bed at the Gloucester Royal Hospital, Great Western Road, Gloucester, GL1 3NN, with my leg raised up in front of me in a cast.
15. I had later found out that my friend had fallen asleep at the wheel, and driven down a bank on the side of the road and crashed into a sewer pipe. I was told that at the scene of the accident either a member of the Police or Ambulance crew had touched me and thought I was dead as I did not respond and my head had fallen forward. I was trapped in the car and had to be cut out by the Fire Services. I have no memory of this.
16. As a result of this accident I sustained a number of serious injuries. This included a broken tibia of which resulted in me undergoing surgery where a 12 inch plate was inserted and held together by eight screws. I also broke my

pelvis in five places, and suffered a broken jaw, which had to be wired back together. I also lost some teeth and had damage to my right ankle, whereby I had a screw inserted. To be fair, it's my ankle that now causes me most of my pain. It is fair to say that I came off the worse.

17. I was unconscious for around a week after being admitted to Gloucester Royal Hospital. When I woke, I did not remember being in a lot of pain. I believe this was down to the medical staff giving me a lot of medication for my pain, and as a result, I did not realise the severity of the accident and the implications it may have on me in the future.
18. I received treatment for my injuries at Gloucester Royal Hospital for around three months, from August 1975 until the end of October 1975. In October, a nurse changed the plaster on my leg to a thinner cast so I was able to become more mobile. I was then told that I could return home the next day.
19. Thereafter, for a period of 12 months, I received care from my local hospital Wolverhampton Royal Hospital, Cleveland Road, Wolverhampton, WV2 1BT. An ambulance would pick me up from my family home once a week and take me to Wolverhampton Royal, where I underwent physiotherapy. This included exercises such as alternating placing my leg in hot and cold water to get the blood flowing.
20. After being discharged from hospital in October 1975, I stayed in my family home. No one was there to look after me and I had to be self-reliant so this was very difficult for me.
21. Thereafter, in 1976, when I was aged around twenty-one years, I took part in an Enterprise Youth Scheme, which gave me the opportunity to experience different skills such as wood work, graphic design and silversmithing. I particularly enjoyed graphic design so I decided to attend an Arts College in Rugby, East Warwickshire where I completed a Diploma in Graphic Design over the course of one year.
22. After completing my Diploma, around the age of twenty-one or twenty-two years old, I had formed a relationship with a man by the name of John; we

stayed together for around five years. We initially met at a dance club. I loved Northern Soul and prior to the accident I was a good dancer. The accident put pay to that as I couldn't move as freely as before.

23.

GRO-C

24.

GRO-C

Since my car accident in 1975, I had started to experience a loss in energy, stamina, and mobility.

GRO-C

GRO-C

25. In a way,

GRO-C

 was a form of pain relief. I could now function well and I was no longer in pain. For someone who had been in chronic pain for a while, this was a relief. It placed me in a position where I could start to manage my life pain free.

26.

GRO-C

27.

GRO-C

28.

GRO-C

29. John and I were together for five years; I left him for my ex-husband Kevin.

GRO-C

GRO-C

30. GRO-C

GRO-C

31. GRO-C

32. GRO-C Kevin had always asked me if I wanted to move to Cornwall with him and start afresh. I said yes. GRO-C
GRO-C Kevin picked me up and we moved to Cornwall the next day and I was so happy I was finally going to start a new life.

33. In a way, Kevin rescued me. I was at such a pivotal point in my life GRO-C

GRO-C

However, I believed that by moving to Cornwall, this was the beginning of having a life GRO-C

34. I had only been with Kevin for around six months before we moved down to Cornwall in 1981 when I was aged around twenty-five years old. We began to build up Kevin's business and bought a house together. We had worked so hard for around three or four years. I worked a number of part time jobs such as a role as a Bartender where I would work late nights, and Kevin would work during the day. We were getting our life sorted together GRO-C

35. On 12 December 1985 myself and Kevin got married. Then, on 30 December 1985 we found out that I was pregnant with my son Jack. We were very happy at his news.

36. Prior to finding out that I was pregnant, I had always been told by the medical profession that I was unable to have children naturally as a result of my accident having had an effect on my pelvis. My obstetrician thought otherwise and told me I would be ok for a natural birth.

37. On [GRO-C] 1986, I was induced. I was then in labour for 13 hours. Eventually I was told that I had to undergo a caesarean, due to my pelvis I could not give birth naturally. Jack was born on [GRO-C] at 12 noon.

38. Thereafter, in 1987 when Jack was aged around six months old, we moved to a larger cottage in [GRO-C] Cornwall, which was located around two miles outside of [GRO-C] I have called this our family home ever since.

39. Around 1988, Kevin's work had started to take off, and he began to get regular work of his own. As a result, I took care of the company's books whilst looking after Jack. During this period, myself and Kevin had started to grow apart. Work was getting so busy that in the end, we were employing around eighty men at any one time.

40. I was trying to keep everything together within Kevin's company with regards to ensuring we were getting paid correctly. It all got too much for me. I could not cope and I found myself being alone a lot. I had started to lose my identity as I was simply referred to as Kevin's wife and Jack's mom.

41. I began to pick up extra work locally as a Barmaid in an attempt to get my identity back. [GRO-C]

[GRO-C]

42. [GRO-C]

43. [GRO-C]

44. GRO-C

45. GRO-C I found that I was now able to manage my life more effectively. I could do the company's books, look after my little boy, and not care so much that Kevin would not come home from work when he said he would.

46. I had felt as though I had lost myself in my marriage, and found this other part of me who was a survivor. GRO-C

GRO-C During this period, Kevin did not notice, or he simply chose to ignore the signs. GRO-C

GRO-C

47. GRO-C

48. GRO-C

49. GRO-C
GRO-C I was crying out for help from him and this did not happen.

50. GRO-C

GRO-C

51. I had previously been convinced that if I became pregnant again, I would terminate my pregnancy, but when it came to it, we kept the baby. GRO-C

GRO-C

52. In GRO-C 1989, I gave birth to my daughter Katie. At around 8am on the morning of her birth I started experiencing contractions and I rang the Royal Cornwall Hospital, Treliske, Truro, TR1 3LJ ("Treliske Hospital"). I was told that I should come to the hospital around 11am to give birth.

53. Similar to my birth with my son Jack in 1986, I was unable to give birth naturally. Instead, I underwent a caesarean.

54. After giving birth to Katie, the doctors were aware about my GRO-C

GRO-C

It was at this point that one of the doctors had asked me if I had previously undergone a blood test for the presence of HIV. I replied stating that I had not previously done so.

55. I was advised only to have the test if I was sure that there was a definite risk of having contracted HIV. I was told that if I decided to have this test, it would have to be disclosed on all applications thereafter, and in effect, it would ruin my life. You have to remember that this was a different era.

56. GRO-C

GRO-C

Therefore, I did not believe undertaking the HIV test was necessary. I also did not have any grounds to believe that I needed to tell the doctors this information prior to giving birth to Katie, as I was unaware that I had possibly been given a contaminated blood product prior to this point.

57. Not long after having told the doctors that I did not want to have the HIV test, I was placed into a side ward in Treliske Hospital with Katie.

58. My room was absolutely filthy. I can distinctly remember my mother having to bleach the room and clean everything as much as possible. It was at this point that I began to realise that the doctors were treating me differently. The nurses placed a sign on my door, which read something along the lines of "Danger of Infection." Written on a brown card.
59. When I needed medical assistance, to enter my room doctors and nurses would have to wear masks, gowns and wear double gloves. I believe that as it took so long for the medical profession to put on their personal protection equipment before attending to me, they did everything they could to get out of it. For five days from the point at which I gave birth to Katie, I laid in my hospital bed without gaining assistance and bleeding internally.
60. On the fifth day, a nurse came into my room to check on me. She immediately noticed that there was something not quite right with regards to my health so she called for a doctor to visit me. After around four or five hours, the doctor eventually attended.
61. The doctor had thought that I needed to have a drain inserted into my body to drain away any blood. However, after a short while, nothing had happened. The doctor then told me that I would need to undergo another caesarean to take out a large blood clot that had formed in my body. I underwent surgery as planned to remove the blood clot. I wasn't treated very well, I remember being thrown onto the operating table. This occurred on the following day.
62. As a result of the internal bleeding I remember receiving blood both before and after the operation. I believe that I was given around four pints of blood, but I cannot be certain of the volume I was given.
63. A week after having my operation, the nurses tried to get me up out of bed and see if I could walk around. I was told that now I could walk around, I was able to go wherever I wanted around the hospital and do what I wanted to do. I felt amazing.
64. However, as soon as they told me this, I could see it in their eyes that it was a mistake. They had placed me into the side room for a reason, and that was

my possible risk of having contracted HIV. I believe that they did not want me to mix with the other patients on the ward, but now that they had told me this information, they could not go back on their word.

65. Some four hours after the operation they tried to get me up and about. I wanted to walk and was so pleased I could. I walked around the maternity ward, when I had completed that they asked me if I wanted to go again. I said yes, took two steps and collapsed.

66. It transpired that I had developed blood clots on my lungs and I was taken to intensive care. I was very ill and nearly died.

67. Throughout this period, Katie stayed in my room with me. I wanted to breast feed her as much as I could, even when I was ill. After my operation, the nurses gave her a bottle as I was too ill to breast feed.

68. One month after giving birth to Katie I was discharged from Treliske Hospital.

69. From the point of being discharged from hospital and until Katie was around six months old, I immediately started to feel myself going downhill again. I had gained more weight and my pain had become more severe.

70. On reflection and looking back now I believe I may have had Post Natal Depression. This was not recognised and it took me back to some dark places associated with the near death experiences of the car accident.

71. From the point of my car accident in 1975 I have noticed a pattern with regards to my pain. The larger I am in weight, the more pain I experience. I also felt as though I had reverted back to how I had felt previously. I felt as though I had lost my identity again. I was just Kevin's wife and Jack and Katie's mum.

72. GRO-C It was almost a form of self-sabotage. I had asked Kevin what it would take for

him to leave me, [GRO-C]

[GRO-C] This was the hook for me and my behaviour.

73. [GRO-C]

74. Myself and Kevin sat down together in the family home, and it was at this point that I told him I was going to leave him. [GRO-C]
[GRO-C] He replied saying that he was going to take the children to see his family in Wolverhampton, and when he returned, I needed to have pulled myself together [GRO-C] I thought to myself, no, this is fate. [GRO-C]

75. Thereafter I moved out of the family home and into a small flat in [GRO-C]
[GRO-C] It was almost as if I had gone back in time and it was awful. [GRO-C]
[GRO-C]

76. I then moved out of my small flat and into a larger flat. It was at this point that I knew I needed to sort my life out [GRO-C]

77. Whilst I resided at my new flat, Kevin came to visit me to tell me that he had a new job in Germany. I told him that if he did not return to the United Kingdom by a certain date, that I would move back into the family home and live there with my children. Jack was aged around six years old and Katie was around three years old at the time.

78. Kevin did not return when he had previously told me he would. He has never very family orientated, or wanted to look after our children. For him, his focus was work and that was his identity. He was a workaholic. I moved back into our family home thereafter.

79

GRO-C

80. However, around this time I had found out that my mum had developed lung cancer. My mum died on 07 January 1994. GRO-C

GRO-C My children stayed with my step-sister in my family home in Cornwall. She was unable to cope very well so she took them back to Wolverhampton. GRO-C

GRO-C

81. In 1995 I was volunteering with Freshfields Volunteering and Training Scheme in Truro, Cornwall. It was part of the agreement that I had to undergo a number of blood tests and gain a HBV vaccination. Naturally, I agreed so I attended a place they had set up in Truro, Cornwall where my blood was taken.

82. Thereafter, I attended a face to face consultation with my General Practitioner ("GP") Doctor GRO-D at GRO-D for an unrelated medical issue.

83. It was at this point that I was asked by Doctor GRO-D if I had undergone a liver function test. (LFT) At the time, I was very confused, and asked him why? It was then that he told me that I had tested positive for the presence of HCV. I had no idea I was being tested for HCV.

84. I was totally taken aback upon hearing my HCV diagnosis. I was not told much information by Dr GRO-D about my HCV on how to manage my infection other than that I had tested positive for HCV and that I had HCV Genotype-3a. I do not believe that the information I received was adequate for me to understand and manage my infection.

85. Due to the lack of information I had received from the medical profession, I sought my own support.
86. I sought help immediately, Freshfields told me about the potential dangers and I got a number of leaflets from CDAT, which helped me understand the implications of the virus.
87. I also spoke with Ben Chaunad, my psychiatrist, he told me about the virus and gave me advice. The medical profession did not appear to understand the full implications.
88. I was eventually referred to the Hepatology Unit at Treliske Hospital.
89. I was very grateful that I had the support network around me from my workplace. Also, that my children were safe.
90. It could be suggested that my HCV diagnosis should have been provided to me at an earlier point. I should have been told about my blood test having returned a positive result as soon as they had become aware. Instead, it was only during a consultation with Doctor [GRO-D] for an unrelated issue that I had been asked if I had undergone a liver function test, and it was disclosed that I had contracted HCV. I was not called into my GP's surgery as soon as they had received the result for a separate consultation.
91. It is my belief that I was infected with HCV as a result of receiving contaminated blood during the blood transfusion I received in [GRO-C] 1989, after I gave birth to my daughter Katie. However, we cannot confirm this as fact. I have had two potential contaminated blood transfusions in my life, the first being when I was treated in Gloucester Hospital after my car accident in 1975.
92. Upon reflection, since my car accident, I have not had the stamina and the energy I used to have. Therefore, it could be suggested that I was infected with HCV in 1975. However, I cannot say this as a matter of fact.

93.

GRO-C

94. As far as I am concerned, in my case, the risks of having contracted HCV from a contaminated blood transfusion [GRO-C]
[GRO-C] I truly believe that I contracted HCV as a result of contaminated blood.

Section 3. Other Infections.

95. I do not believe that I have received any other infection or infections other than HCV as a result of being given infected blood.

Section 4. Consent

96. I do believe that I have been tested for the presence of HCV without being given adequate or full information. Whilst I had originally consented to having undergone a blood test in 1995 whilst volunteering with Freshfields, I was led to believe this was a test for HBV and not for all blood-borne viruses such as HCV or HIV.

97. I do not believe that I have been tested or treated for the purposes of research. If I had, then I am not aware of this fact.

Section 5. Impact.

Mental/Physical Effect.

98. In 2012, I attended a Christmas meal. They served food really late at around 10pm and as a result, I experienced severe stomach pains. Thereafter, I was in agony throughout the Christmas period.

99. In February 2013, I realised that I had not undergone a check-up for my HCV for a while. I decided to book a face to face appointment with my GP as a result. After a number of tests, I was diagnosed with gallstones. This explained my severe stomach pains in December 2012.

100. My doctor also told me that they believed I had developed cirrhosis of the liver and would need to undergo a liver biopsy to confirm this fact.

101. I underwent a liver biopsy thereafter where a needle was placed into the side of my body. I was diagnosed with cirrhosis as a result of my liver biopsy. Thereafter, I have undergone an endoscopy every year and a liver scan every six months.

102. For forty-six years from the point at which I had my car accident I have experienced chronic pain. Although I have been able to manage my pain as much as possible, I cannot sit for long periods of time. I have also had arthritis for twenty-years. I have since learnt that arthritis could have partly been caused by my accident and partly due to my HCV infection.

103. My HCV has definitely had an effect on my mental health. I became depressed, and I now feel anxious whenever I feel there is something wrong with regards to my health. I always question, "Is that something to do with my liver."

Treatment:

104. After I was diagnosed with cirrhosis of the liver, it was a wake-up call for me and I focused on sorting out my health out. At a face to face consultation with Doctor Berkin at Treliske Hospital, I asked Doctor Berkin what I could do to help aid my health. It was at this point that I was referred for treatment.

105. In 1999, I started my first course of treatment with Interferon, I only managed to take this for six weeks. Throughout my course of treatment, I experienced severe side effects. In particular, my white blood cells were very low and I constantly felt tired to the point that I could not get out of bed. I was a mum of two very young children with whom I needed to look after at this point, I could not spend day after day laying in bed. I felt like a two year old unable to do anything. As a result of the side effects I had experienced, I was not able to complete my course of interferon.
106. Thereafter, between 1999 and 2013, I had undergone a number of tests.
107. In March 2013 I started my second course of treatment with Interferon and Ribavirin at Treliske Hospital. This course was due to last for a term of forty-eight weeks. During this period, I took a tablet of Ribavirin daily and injected Interferon three times a week.
108. The side effects I experienced as a result of my second course of treatment were very similar to the side effects I experienced with my first course. Due to my previous knowledge I pretty much knew what I was going to experience.
109. After a while I felt there was a pattern in the side effects I experienced due to my treatment. On the day in which I injected Interferon I felt like normal. Then, the following day I would feel so bad that I would lie in bed all day. As my children were either at university or had left home by this time, it was okay for me to lie in bed all day on my own if I wanted to.
110. My treatment left me completely breathless. I had no energy, and I was always so tired. I was also in pain due to my arthritis so I was not able to get up the stairs, I had previously moved my bed downstairs so this made it easier for me to cope with the treatment. My bathroom was also downstairs.
111. The treatment was horrible. I thought I was going to die. My daughter ended up staying with me and helped me through this time. As before my

white blood cells had also become very low. I was however determined to finish the course.

112. After completing the planned term of my course of treatment, I had undergone a test to determine whether my treatment had eradicated the HCV. When the test result returned I was told that my HCV was undetectable. I was delighted.

113. Then, after six weeks I had undergone another test to determine whether my HCV was still undetectable. However, much to my amazement, when the test result returned, it had shown that my HCV viral load had come back and it had increased ten times. The treatment had failed.

114. I felt well that's it, it was a death sentence and I didn't want to go through that again. I resigned myself to the fact I was going to die of HCV. I had to let the kids know and I think this affected them.

115. I was told by my Hepatology nurse (Mary McKenna) that I was able to go back on Interferon treatment but, due to the side effects I experienced, I did not want to do this. Instead, I asked her if I could wait until a new drug came onto the market.

116. In 2015, Mary told me that a new drug trial was coming up in Plymouth told me. I agreed to take this trial. Thereafter, I started a course of Sofosbuvir which was due to last a term of three months. I travelled to Plymouth once a week for observations and would take one tablet daily.

117. Throughout the duration of my third course of treatment for HCV I continued to work. I experienced a little bit of memory loss where I did not feel that I had the quickness of thinking I previously had. After three months, I had undergone a test to determine whether my treatment had impacted on my HCV. When the result returned, it highlighted that my HCV was not detectable.

118. Six months after finishing my third course of treatment, I had undergone another test. The test results returned and highlighted that my HCV was still undetectable. I was finally cleared of my HCV.

Impact

119. When I look back now, my HCV infection has definitely had an effect on my ability to form romantic relationships. I experienced a knock in confidence on starting new relationships. I would think why would someone want to get involved with someone who is going to die?

120. I have been on my own for a very long time. I feel as though I would be judged by my potential partners. I do not want them to feel that they could no longer be involved with me due to my HCV, so it was easier to just not get involved in the first place. I also have a constant fear that I could pass on my HCV. I haven't had a relationship for over 20 years.

121. Both my son and my daughter are aware of GRO-C my HCV infection. In effect, I believe that this is why they are both doing very well in life, as they know that life can sometimes have its downsides.

122. GRO-C

123. I have experienced the stigma associated with my HCV diagnosis, particularly when I tell people about my cirrhosis of the liver diagnosis. Their automatic response is always "well you do not look like an alcoholic." Or when I told my friends they say "but you do not drink?" I feel that most of society are

ill-informed surrounding the causes of cirrhosis, and that it could be caused by blood-borne infections.

124. I have also experienced stigma with regards to my medical treatment at Derriford Hospital. During the drug trial I had to have a liver scan. I can recall attending an appointment, the nurse came out and shouted my name with the extra sentence 'drug abuse' I thought oh my god. I got some awful looks from a number of nurses as they walked past.
125. As a result of my HCV infection, I became more focused on ensuring I was doing everything I could to stay healthy. After my first course of treatment with Interferon I went on my first body toxin retreat in Thailand. This lasted around two weeks, albeit I stayed for another two recovering.
126. After my successful treatment with Sofosbuvir in 2016, I visited Ko Samui, Thailand for my second body toxin retreat. I stayed here for around one month.
127. In 2018, I then went back to Thailand for my third detox retreat, where I was taught all about my health and how to look after my arthritis. Then, in 2019, I completed a yoga training course in Rishikesh, India where I learnt to become a Yin Yoga Teacher.
128. As a result of all the retreats I have gone on between 2015 and 2019, I have been taught how to take care of my body. I am also very conscious of how I nourish my body and it is my belief that if I did not start to look after my body, I would be in real trouble now with regards to the effects HCV would have had on my body.
129. When I had my car accident in 1975, I was very young. This changed my aspirations and my outlook on life. I loved Art and to travel. I also loved to dance. I was forever dancing, so it was a shock that I could no longer do it due to my injuries. I started to develop my father's way of doing things, which

was to do what I wanted to do. To be able to do this, I needed to earn money, so I focused on gaining a job rather than education.

130. My focus shifted towards education after 1995 GRO-C

GRO-C

131. Around April 1995 I began to volunteer at CDAT. Then, in 1996, I was taken on as an employee and I have remained employed here to date. As this was part of the NHS I was interviewed by occupational health in order to establish my fitness to work. They were concerned about my HCV status and the arthritis. Ben had to fight for me and support me through this process.

132. In September 1995 I started a counselling and psychotherapy course. After around a year and after completing my course, I was taken on as a counsellor in October 1996.

133. Between 1995 and 2010, I had obtained various Certificates, Diplomas and a Degree. In 1995 I commenced my Counsellors' Certificate. This was a two years course, which ended in 1997. Then in 1999 I commenced my Counselling Diploma, which was a two years course. I graduated in 2001. Thereafter, I completed my Counsellor's Supervision Diploma, a Master Practitioner's LLP Diploma, a Hypnotherapy Diploma, and a degree in Counselling at Plymouth University. All these qualifications were obtained on a part time basis. I had to work as well.

134. I do not believe that my HCV infection had an impact on my education.

135. However, my HCV diagnosis has had a financial effect. Particularly, since my cirrhosis diagnosis in 2013, I have had to declare this when travelling abroad with my insurance company. This has caused my insurance to go up in price.

136. Additionally, my HCV has had an impact on my ability to work full time due to lethargy. I have to plan my workdays very carefully and make sure I do not over extend myself.

Section 6. Treatment/Care/Support

137. I have faced difficulties in obtaining adequate treatment. In particular, the period after my daughter was born in GRO-C 1989 at Treliske Hospital. I feel as though I had been treated so badly by the medical staff who were in charge of my care, all due to the fact that they believed I had HIV GRO-C GRO-C I could have sued them for the way they treated me, but I did not do so for my children's sake. I did not want to drag the family name through the mud.

138. GRO-D
GRO-D

139. GRO-D
GRO-D

140. Whilst I do believe that my old dentist in St Austell, Cornwall, had started to treat me differently after I disclosed to them that I had been diagnosis with HCV, I cannot say for a fact this was due to my infection or due to other factors.

141. I was not offered either counselling or psychological support as a result of my HCV diagnosis.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

142. In 2014, My HCV nurse, Mary made me aware that I could apply to the Skipton Fund to gain financial assistance for my HCV infection. She mentioned that as my form of HCV was chronic and it would affect me for the rest of my life, if I was successful I could be awarded between £20,000 and £40,000 in financial assistance.

143. On 21 May 2014, I applied to the Skipton Fund for financial assistance. My application form and associated documentation is evidence within my Skipton Fund file exhibited as **SKIP0000002_002**.

144. From the point at which I had made my application to the Skipton Fund, I had a feeling that I was unlikely to be successful

GRO-C

GRO-C

145. Just as I thought, on 23 June 2014 I received a letter from Nicholas Fish, Scheme Administrator, Skipton Fund. This letter is exhibited below at **SKIP0000002_002**:

"Having considered the application, along with all other information contained within, it is with regret that I must advise you that your application has been declined.

GRO-C

GRO-C

146. On 30 June 2014 I appealed to the Skipton Fund. This letter is exhibited within **SKIP0000002_002** and reads:

"Reason for appeal:

I had a car accident in 1975 where I was treated in Gloucester Royal Hospital for 3 months from August till the end of October. The accident resulted in me sustaining a broken ankle (which is pinned) Broken Tibia (which has a 12" plate 8 screws). Fractured pelvis in 5 places and broken jaw (wired). I believe I was given at least 8 units of blood/blood product during my recovery.

GRO-C

After I gave birth to my second child in 1989 in Treliske Hospital, Truro. The stiches from my second caesarean had broke open resulting in a haematoma and blood clotting in my lower abdomen. I was given blood products after blood clot was removed but the next day I developed pulmonary embolisms in both lungs.

GRO-C

I found out I had Hep C in 1995 when I began voluntary work as a routine Hepatitis blood. I attempted treatment when my children were still young in 1999 but was too ill to continue. I found out in 2013 I now have cirrhosis of the Liver and have done 48 weeks interferon treatment, which has failed. Leaving me still suffering from side effects of treatment.

When I found out I had hep C I was always convinced that this infection came from blood given to me.

GRO-C

GRO-C

147. 09 July 2014, I received a letter in response from Nicholas Fish, Scheme Administrator, Skipton Fund. This letter is contained within exhibit **SKIP0000002_002**. This letter had stated that my case was being referred to an Independent Appeals Panel.

148. On 10 October 2014, I received a letter from Mark Mildred, Chair of Appeal Panel. This letter reads:

"We conclude that, based on the evidence and conclusions of the expert report,

GRO-C

GRO-C

As a result of these considerations we were not satisfied that it is probably that the infection resulted from NHS treatment and accordingly regret that we must refuse your appeal."

149. I have since looked at the documents contained within my Skipton Fund file, and there appears to be a page, which details the blood I was given after Katie's birth.

150. I question whether the Skipton Fund considered researching these blood batch numbers to see if they were contaminated. It would appear that they did not look at this evidence or take it into account when refusing my financial assistance.

Section 8. Other Issues

151. What I want to achieve from going through the witness process with the Infected Blood Inquiry ("IBI") is for the Skipton Fund to reconsider my application. I believe that the Skipton Fund have evidence in their hands that I received contaminated blood during a blood transfusion, and they did not think to look at this when considering my application. Why?

152. I would like the IBI to establish the facts surrounding where the contaminated blood was sourced. It is important someone takes ownership of this contaminated blood as it has had such a wide-felt impact. Why was this issue not looked into?

153. Today was a very good day! When I'm having a bad day if I'm stressed about anything especially my health I can't think clearly at all. I can't tolerate the simplest of things. Form filling and reading to understand documents etc takes me days. When I was on the treatment it was like this 24-7 all the time. I have a lot of short-term memory loss also which again returns at times of anxiety and is possibly the side effects of liver damage.

154. Since completing my treatment for my HCV, I have been unable to concentrate enough to read long passages of text. I can confirm that Roger Milburn, Deputy Lead Investigator to the IBI has read my statement to me, and that this is a true and accurate reflection of my story.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed
 GRO-C

Dated 21/04/2021

Table of Exhibits:

Date	Notes/ Description	Exhibit number
Undated	Skipton File of Carol Margery Kavanagh.	SKIP0000002_002