

Witness Name: Amy Rebecca Davage

Statement No: WITN7403001

Exhibits: **WITN7403002-06**

Dated: 28th April 2023

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

WRITTEN STATEMENT OF AMY REBECCA DAVAGE

I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006, dated 23 November 2022.

I, Amy Davage, will say as follows: -

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Amy Rebecca Davage. My date of birth is [GRO-C] 1989. I live in [GRO-C] near Milton Keynes, and my full address is known to the Inquiry.
2. I am separated and currently live alone with my 12 year old son. I have two siblings; a brother and a sister, and growing up we have always lived in the [GRO-C] area on the outskirts of [GRO-C]. I am also a full time carer for my dad who is 75 years old and unwell.
3. I intend to speak about my mum Lorraine Sharon Davage who was born on [GRO-C] 1963, and my sister Louise Oakes, born on [GRO-C]

1983, and their infection with Hepatitis C ("HCV"). In particular, the nature of their illness, how it affected them, the treatment they received and its impact on them, me and our family's life together.

4. My sister Louise Oakes has also provided a statement to the Inquiry with full details of how she was infected with HCV, before she was born and the impact it had on her life. (WITN7268001)
5. I confirm that I am not legally represented, and I am happy for the Inquiry Team to assist with my statement.
6. The Inquiry Investigator has explained the Inquiry's statement of approach and 'Right to Reply' procedure. I understand that if I am critical of a medical professional or organisation, they will have the right to reply to that criticism. I have also been advised of my option to seek anonymity however, I do not wish for my statement to be anonymous.
7. In 2008 I suffered a stroke when I was 18 which has affected my short term memory to some extent. I wish to acknowledge that naturally, as time passes, memories can fade. Therefore, I have been able to provide approximate time frames for matters based on life events. However, these timeframes should be accepted as 'near to' rather than precise dates.

Section 2. How Affected

8. In October 1983, my mother was pregnant with my younger sister Louise, and it was a long and complicated delivery. She lost a lot of blood and received a blood transfusion on 17 October 1983, while my sister Louise was still in her womb. Eventually, my sister was born on [GRO-C] [GRO-C] 1983, and all seemed to be well with my mum and my sister at the time. I believe my sister was delivered via natural birth.

9. My mum went on to have two more children after my sister; my brother and I were delivered via caesarean section.
10. My mum had been feeling poorly for many years and saw her GP on many occasions to complain about some of her symptoms, but they did not take her seriously. She also suspected that Louise was unwell because she was often tired and experiencing extreme fatigue. She also suffered from brain fog and struggled to keep up at school.
11. Our local GP at the time was either Dr Watkins or Dr Mead at Europa House Surgery in Leighton Buzzard. One day my mum read an article in a magazine in which someone with HCV described their symptoms, which resonated with her.
12. My mum took the article to the GP and demanded that her doctor test her for HCV. Not long after this, I believe it must have been a few weeks later when my mum [GRO-C] me to the GP to be tested for HCV.
13. I believe I was around 8-10 years old because we were still living in [GRO-C], and I know we moved house a little further away to [GRO-C] when I was 9. Mine [GRO-C] test results came back negative. However, my mum and sister both tested positive for HCV.

[GRO-C]

15. My mum was referred to the John Radcliffe Hospital in Oxford, where I know they carried out tests, although I am not sure which ones. My dad used to take her to appointments at John Radcliffe. She was under the care of Professor [GRO-D] at the Royal London Hospital in Whitechapel. I am not 100 percent sure how the connection with Professor [GRO-D] came about, and whether it was as a result of mum

researching doctors or whether the referral came from the John Radcliffe Hospital.

16. When I was about 12 or 13, my mum had a liver biopsy at Stoke Mandeville Hospital, during which time they scarred her liver when they performed the biopsy. About a year or so later, it was confirmed that she had scarring of her liver. By the time my mum died it had been confirmed that she had liver cirrhosis.
17. My mum and sister began receiving treatment under the care of Professor GRO-D at the Royal London Hospital in Whitechapel, as mentioned earlier. Louise cleared HCV after the first round of interferon and ribavirin treatment, but my mum did not. My mum went on to have two other rounds of treatment, and it destroyed her.
18. My mum also suffered extreme psychological side effects during and after the treatment. She suffered from symptoms such as paranoia and remained in bed all the time. Sometimes she would spend an entire day searching the house for bugs because she believed she was being stalked and someone was listening to her conversations.
19. I believe that the intense psychological symptoms were solely brought on by the treatment, because a few months after the first round of treatment, the symptoms subsided, but then they returned during the next round of treatment. After that her mental health symptoms remained constant although not as severe.
20. Growing up, I could not have friends over to my house because my mum was unwell and did not want anyone to see her. I was very young then and did not fully comprehend the severity of the diagnosis until I was about 14, when my mum gave me a book on HCV.

21. My mum carried out most of her own research, looking into dietary and lifestyle advice, including choosing not to drink and researching and considering treatment and pushing for treatment for her and Louise.
22. My mum remained under the care of Professor [GRO-D] for over ten years. I understand that Professor [GRO-D] initially became interested in my mum and Louise's case because it was a rare instance of a mother passing on HCV to her child through childbirth.
23. I remember accompanying my mum and sister to regular hospital appointments, although I cannot recall if I ever had to miss school due to this. [GRO-C]
[GRO-C] He had [GRO-C] which was another thing my mum had to manage while being ill herself.
24. Fairly early on after my mum began seeing Professor [GRO-D] he told her that she would not live beyond the age of 50. I was 14 when I accompanied my mum to that appointment with Professor [GRO-D]. It was shocking to hear this and I was concerned for my mum.
25. My mum did not react too much at the time, perhaps because I was with her, she felt the need to put on a brave face for me. She was also not one to make a fuss or complain about her problems. I am sure when we, her children, were out of sight, she would break down and get upset.
26. I do not know if my mum was warned about any risks associated with receiving a blood transfusion when she was pregnant with Louise in 1983.
27. My mum never used intravenous drugs or received any medical treatment abroad. As far as I am aware, the only way my mum could have contracted HCV was through the contaminated blood transfusion she received in 1983 in relation to her pregnancy. She later received a

payment from the Skipton Fund in around 2005, as a result of contracting HCV from contaminated blood.

28. Shortly after my mum died, I requested her medical notes from the Royal London Hospital, but the cost implication at the time was a deterrent from moving forward with it. I was also grieving and could not focus on pursuing the matter properly. I am now in the process of trying to obtain my mum's medical records and have recently contacted the Royal London Hospital. I have not been able to find my mum's old GP and discussions are still ongoing with my family as to whether or not it will make a difference to have her records.

Section 3. Other Infections

29. I do not believe my mum and Louise received any infection other than HCV due to being given infected blood. I know that they were tested for HIV and the results were negative.

Section 4. Consent

30. I cannot comment on whether my mum thought there were any issues regarding consent because we never discussed this. As mentioned earlier, I am not in a position to know if my mum was warned about any risks associated with the blood transfusion she was given in 1983, when she was pregnant with Louise.
31. I believe that Professor GRO-D used my mum as a test dummy. HCV was a fairly new illness when my mum was diagnosed, and in my opinion, he used my mum as a case study to advance his career ambitions, instead of treating her like a person.
32. My mum consented to a trial, which was the last round of treatment she received before she died. My mum was eager and willing to try anything

that might cure her, and Professor [GRO-D] would probably have sold this as having the potential for a positive outcome.

Section 5. Impact

33. I was 22 years old and my mum was only 49 when she died. My mum has missed many milestones in both her and our lives. What would have been her 60th birthday is coming up, and all I can think of is how she would still be too young to die now.
34. Deep down mum knew she was dying. Up until about two weeks before she died, me and my siblings couldn't believe she was actually dying. Professor [GRO-D] informed my mum that she was on the liver transplant list and she was given dialysis because her liver was failing and it was putting too much pressure on her kidneys and that is why she had 2 lots of dialysis.
35. We were also hopeful that eventually she would get a new liver. However, a day after making this announcement, Professor [GRO-D] snatched this hope away. He explained that my mum was too sick to be on the transplant list. I think it was then that we knew she was going to die.
36. My mum and Louise went through the first round of treatment together, although I cannot remember if Louise had had her first baby by this time. I do not know if they were given any warnings about the side effects of Interferon.
37. The first round of treatment lasted about six months and consisted of injections and oral tablets. After the treatment, it was confirmed that my mum did not clear HCV, so about a year later, in 2006, she underwent another round of treatment. This time it was only oral tablets and no injections. Again, this treatment did not clear the HCV. I am not aware of what my mum's HCV genotype was.

38. During the treatment, my mum regularly visited a specialist nurse called Opal, who was lovely.
39. Mum describes not feeling the same again after her second treatment ended in February 2007, and in a handwritten note she describes the various symptoms she was suffering with including pain, not sleeping and feeling down. She felt that the doctors treating her were dismissive of her. (WITN7403002).
40. I do not think she was given enough information about her illness and managing the risks of spreading the infection to others. I think the only information she was told was to abstain from alcohol, not to share toothbrushes and that being intimate with her husband could possibly pass on hepatitis C.
41. At the start, my mum didn't claim back the costs of travel to the Royal London hospital, because it was a complicated process, but towards the end she did claim travel expenses.
42. When I discovered that my mum had liver cirrhosis, I was constantly worried that it could turn into liver cancer.
43. In the last few years of her life, my mum suffered from various illnesses, which, now looking back, may have been linked to HCV. She developed osteoarthritis in her knees, which made it difficult for her to walk.
44. At first, Professor GRO-D informed her that there was nothing he could do about her knees because her body would be unable to withstand the anaesthesia during surgery. Later, he referred her to another surgeon at the Royal London Hospital to carry out a knee replacement surgery which he referred to as a 'back door operation' because he wasn't willing to do it himself and asked another surgeon. It was an operation that should not have been performed.

44. I believe my mum was aware of the risks of undergoing this procedure to an extent, but she also thought it could help her walk and was willing to try it. I see this operation as the trigger for her final deterioration. She was dead within six months following this knee replacement surgery.
45. My mum was in the hospital for about two months before she died. She went in at the beginning of May and she died in the middle of July, and I saw her regularly during this period. My brother would pick me and my sister up at 5 pm after he had finished work and he wouldn't get home from the hospital until around 11 pm, and that was daily until she passed.
46. I believe Professor [GRO-D] had plenty of information and time to prevent all of this from happening. He knew everything about my mum's health and should have put in more effort from the start.
47. I do not understand why the offer to put her on the transplant list came so late, when she was too ill to realistically benefit from it.
48. Mum also really struggled with having a lot of her appointments cancelled or rescheduled, and she was just not provided with the care she needed by Professor [GRO-D]. She wrote to him on several occasions about her issues with appointments being cancelled and rescheduled, which made her life even more difficult and stressful, when she needed his support. (WITN7403003)
49. On one occasion, she received a letter that had been sent to her GP from Professor [GRO-D] which said she had failed to attend an ultrasound appointment, and that a further appointment would not be made for her. She wrote to Professor [GRO-D] about this as she had never received an appointment for this procedure and felt that the hospital were mixing up hers and Louise's notes. Professor [GRO-D] responded to this and said it may have been a software error and mentioned ongoing trials that he

might want to discuss with mum at her next appointment. I'm not sure anything ever materialised in this regard. (WITN7403004)

50. During her final stay at the hospital, the treatment from the nurses at the Royal London Hospital was appalling. For example, my mum had fluid which was being drained, so there was a bag attached to her stomach. I noticed that the bag was full and tried to get some of the nurses on the ward to change the bag, but they ignored me. Eventually, I found a room with a sink to empty the bag into and then attached a new bag to the drain myself.
51. On another occasion, when I arrived at the hospital, I noticed that another patient's family was giving my mum juice and water. There were bruises on my mum's knees, and when I asked her how she sustained this, she did not say anything, and I saw a tear roll down her cheeks. They put her on the Liverpool pathway, which is palliative care, but they didn't tell us until a few days after they had started her on the pathway.
52. Over the years, I lost faith in Professor [GRO-D] ability to look after my mum properly, so most of the time, my brother tried to keep me away from him.
53. My mum's handwritten notes mentions her, slow energy levels; severe fatigue; terrible memory and 'feels like wading through mud most days.' She felt paranoid at times and was reclusive. (WITN7403005)
54. She also wrote that she had not had a reply to the letter she wrote to Professor [GRO-D] and that she had not seen him for over a month and that she could not get hold of him and had not had the results from her blood tests. It also appears that her GP had not received a reply to his letters regarding my mum's blood test results either.
55. The Friday before my mum died, Professor [GRO-D] pulled my siblings and I aside into a private room and informed us that my mum would not make

it to Monday. I was shocked and angry, so my immediate reaction was to run out of the room. I could not comprehend that my mum was going to die. My brother had to come and find me as I had run out the main entrance of the hospital and was hiding.

56. After my mum died, I considered taking legal action against Professor **GRO-D** and the Royal London Hospital. I went as far as making an appointment to see a high street Solicitor, but when my brother did not turn up to the meeting, I decided not to pursue it further. I could not take it on solely.

57. It was heartbreaking and devastating for my dad because he had been unable to spend the last few weeks of my mum's life with her. He just had to cope with any guilt he may have felt about it. I think the guilt about the circumstances surrounding my mum's death and him not being able to be with her, will eat him up for the rest of his life.

58. When my dad was able to visit mum, she was in a coma and she came around when she heard my dad's voice. I think my mum gave up the fight after my dad's visit because she died about two weeks after this.

59. My mum had her initial liver biopsy at Stoke Mandeville Hospital and experienced stigma when she went back there about 5 years later after her liver biopsy. I am not sure why she was there at that time other than it was related to her HCV.

60. I have discovered from reading my mum's notes that Luton and Dunstable Hospital treated her badly as well. The week before she went into Luton and Dunstable Hospital, she had been sectioned under the Mental Health Act and was an in-patient at a psychiatric hospital. She was taken to Luton and Dunstable Hospital following a bad reaction to the medication they gave her in the psychiatric hospital, which had an adverse effect and made her jaw lock. She was also very shaky, withdrawn and not with it.

61. My mum has described her poor treatment in hospital in handwritten notes, which say how she was labelled as a 'druggie' by the nurses, as she had HCV. The nurses looking after her had been very rude to her and had made comments about her taking up bed space. This was just appalling, especially given she became infected through no fault of her own. People just didn't understand that the Government could be responsible for her infection with HCV. (WITN7403006)
62. When I was 15, we moved to Lanzarote, Spain, for a couple of years, as my mum started a business there. The son of someone my mum knew, kept referring to my mum as a heroin addict. My mum had never used drugs because her brother died from a heroin overdose when he was 21.
63. My sister Louise also experienced stigma relating to HCV. After she had her first child, when she was about 18 or 19 at that time, one of her friends began spreading rumours about not using the toilet at Louise's house. I think that I may have confronted her about it, but eventually, Louise stopped being friends with her.
64. My mum's illness had an impact on me when I was growing up, because my mum was always tired and sometimes could not physically get out of bed to wash clothes or do the dishes. My sister left home when I was 12 or 13, so being the only daughter at home, I tried to help mum with the housework, but being 13 to 14, my priorities were different. When my dad was around, he tried to make her life as easy as possible. My mum's illness and death continue to have an impact on me, and has left me with mental health issues.
65. My mum tried to hide the effects of her illness and the fatigue, but it held her back from fighting for us as much as she would have liked because she just did not have the energy. I am sad for my mum because she didn't have the chance to be a healthy mother. My mum was amazing, a

gentle kind woman who would help anyone, not judge us for the things we did and we could tell her every little thing that most children couldn't tell their parents. She tried hard to be the best mum, but at times was hindered due to HCV.

66. It is horrible watching your mum deteriorate and die from the age of ten, while knowing your sister has the same illness. It is like watching my sister Louise suffer too, knowing she is not always coping well and cannot do all the things she could be doing.

67. My dad is 75 years old now

GRO-C

GRO-C

68. My mum did not live to see three of her grandchildren, and they have missed out on getting to know their grandmother. With my sister's first 2 pregnancies, mum was there and she got to have the support of my mum through pregnancy and after. By the time I had my baby, my mum was too ill. I did not get to share that part of my life with my mum. She wasn't around to give me advice and tips on having a baby and raising a child, and even now at this point in my life, I don't have her around to give me advice and guidance. She has missed so much of her children and grandchildren's lives and milestones.

69. My mum was a very strong woman and tried to be there for her children as much as possible. When I was 18, I suffered from a stroke, and my mum returned to the UK from Lanzarote so she could look after me. Following my stroke, I had to relearn to walk, read, and write, and my mum did everything for me. The doctors never figured out what triggered my stroke because I was very young for such an illness to occur. The stroke also affected my short-term memory as mentioned earlier. My Dad also helped during the first year following my stroke and took both me and mum to our hospital appointments in London, which were at different hospitals so my mum would try to arrange the appointments for

the same day. Mine were at The Royal Free Hospital and my mums were at the Royal London, in Whitechapel.

70. My mum was never one to sit around, she made an effort to do things and participated in campaigns on behalf of the Hepatitis C Trust. I remember that she and Louise were part of a billboard campaign, and appeared on 'This morning' - the television show, to raise awareness.

71. The year before she died, my mum went on a last holiday to Cyprus. She loved to go shopping and enjoyed retail therapy. My mum left some debt behind when she died, so I think maybe deep down she knew she was going to die.

72. My family and I have handled our grief in different ways. After my mum died, my brother buried his grief and dealt with it by stepping up to be the man of the house because our dad was away. However, in the last few years, he has suffered some challenges and has only now begun to properly grieve the loss of my mum.

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74. I grieved the loss of my mum by directing and focusing my anger on the actions of Professor GRO-D I feel like he just left my mum to die, despite all the faith she had in him.

75. I still suffer mental health issues regarding my mum's HCV and her death. My mum dying has left a hole in my heart and soul and a part of me died with her.

Section 6. Treatment/Care/Support

76. My mum was friends with some women who were all on an HCV forum online, some of whom had contracted HCV through drug use. Two of these women were also under the care of the Royal London Hospital. They were both given liver transplants and are still alive today. I felt this was unfair because my mum got HCV through no fault of her own.
77. I feel like my mum did not receive adequate treatment in a timely manner, and the Royal London Hospital treated patients like a lottery system. It is additionally aggravating because Professor [GRO-D] was always aware of the worsening of my mum's health and should have acted quickly to ensure my mum received proper treatment before it was too late.
78. As mentioned earlier, I do not think my mum was given adequate information about her illness, how to manage it and the risks of spreading the infection. The only information she was given that I am aware of, was to abstain from alcohol, not share toothbrushes and an intimate relationship with her husband could possibly pass on the hepatitis C.
79. However, our GP Surgery has been great over the years. Dr Watkins was our family doctor for many years in the 1990s and she was very good. Dr Sivakumar was my mum's GP up until mum was in her late 30s to her early 40s, and was also brilliant with my mum.
80. I believe there were other treatment options available to my mum at the time, but this was not offered to her. My mum wrote an email of complaint regarding cancelled appointments, as mentioned above. She also wrote that she had not had a reply to her letter she wrote to Professor [GRO-D] that she had not seen him for over a month; that she could not get hold of him and she had not had the results from her blood tests. From reading the documents we recently found, it also appears that her GP had not received a reply from Professor [GRO-D] to his letters regarding my mum's blood test results.

81. I cannot recall if counselling was ever offered to my mum at the time of her HCV diagnosis. I have never had bereavement counselling, and it has taken me about nine years to come to terms with my grief. I still have yet to fully come to terms with the loss of my mum.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

82. I do not know how my mum found out about the Skipton Fund, but I know that she received the stage one payment of £20,000. I believe this was before we moved to Lanzarote, so in around 2005.

83. I am not sure if my mum received any further payment, or if that was Louise.

Section 8. Other Issues

84. It is not about the money. It is about my mum, who is not here to speak for herself and the government and the people in office at the time who allowed the dirty blood into the UK. I am here for the people who have lost parents, siblings, children and spouses. This has destroyed so many peoples' lives. I want to emphasise that it is many other families, not just my mum.

85. I think those responsible should be willing to accept responsibility and punishment for their actions. I believe that many, such as the Health Secretary in the 1980s, were aware long before they let on.

86. Up until this Inquiry, no one was willing to acknowledge that this incident had occurred. Their actions focused more on greed and saving costs, so they cost other people their lives.

87. Compensation is not enough, they need to be held accountable, and not just the government as an entity, but individuals should be held accountable for decisions that they made.

88. Saying sorry is a word. It does not correct what they have done or that the apology is genuine and comes from a place of understanding of the extent of harm that has been done. It does not mean that they have accepted that they were wrong.
89. So many families have gone through what my family has gone through and it is devastating. The government have killed people and should be held accountable for killing thousands of people. The present government has accepted liability but it is not them I want held responsible. They were not in office when the blood was brought in to treat people in the UK.
90. I have followed some of this Inquiry's proceedings, including watching some of the hearings, but I cannot bring myself to watch the ones from people who were in government back then. It makes me so angry and frustrated, so I have to avoid it for the sake of my mental health. I know there have been people who have lied when called up for cross-examination.
91. I do not believe they are above the law just because they were government officials. It is not the NHS but the government that allowed it.
92. Giving my statement to the Inquiry has helped me to be able to have a say, and tell people what happened to my mum and hopefully I can start to be at peace. I am grateful for the opportunity and the help I have had to give my statement.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed

GRO-C

Dated

GRO-C

28th April 2023.

Exhibit number	Description	Date
WITN7403002	Handwritten diary notes	Undated
WITN7403003	Email complaint from Lorraine Davage regarding postponed appointments	10/11/2008
WITN7403004	Email chain between Lorraine Davage and Professor GRO-D regarding an ultrasound appointment	10/11/2008
WITN7403005	Handwritten diary notes	Undated
WITN7403006	Handwritten diary notes	Undated