

Witness Name: Angela Howard

Statement No.: WITN5742001

Exhibits: WITN5742002-3

Dated: 21/2/2021

## **INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY**

---

### **WRITTEN STATEMENT OF ANGELA HOWARD**

---

I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 01 July 2021.

I, Angela Howard, will say as follows: -

#### **Section 1. Introduction**

1. My name is Angela Howard. My date of birth is GRO-C 1959 and my address is known to the Inquiry. I live in Sheffield with my husband Steve. I am a retired Safeguarding Manager, having worked for the local authority and I have 2 grown up daughters, Rachael and Rebecca. I enjoy spending time with my grandchildren and I help out by looking after them often.
2. I intend to speak about my late father Roy Newbold and his infection with Hepatitis C (HCV). In particular, the nature of his illness, how the illness affected him, the treatment received and the impact it had on him and our lives together.

3. I can confirm I am not legally represented and that the anonymity provisions have been explained to me and I am happy for my story to be in the public domain.

## **Section 2. How Affected**

4. My father was born on GRO-C 1931. As my mother died when I was just two years old, it was just my dad and I for many years. After my Mum died, my grandparents, my dad's sister and one of my grandmother's good friends were very involved in my care and I always had lots of love. When I got to about 4 years old my dad decided that it wasn't good for me to be looked after by so many different people and he gave up work until I went to school so I could have more stability.
5. Despite losing my mum at such a young age, I became a very strong and resilient child. Even though I would initially cry when I left my Dad to go into school, my teachers said I was very independent and would often make friends with the staff. I had a lot of family support and love, especially from my dad, and that helped me not go off the rails despite growing up without a mum. As it was just the two of us, dad and I were extremely close and shared everything.
6. In around 1974, my dad fell very ill. I called our GP Dr Tony Collington and he came to see dad straightaway. As we lived in a small village, we knew Tony personally and had a good relationship with him. He said that dad needed to be admitted into hospital straight away and he was taken to the Royal Infirmary in Sheffield. He was diagnosed with a blocked bowel and had an operation to remove part of his bowel.
7. When dad woke up from the operation, he was receiving blood through a drip. When I was visiting dad sometime after his operation, I noticed that he was being given blood again. Being worried by this, I recall asking dad why he needed more blood and whether he was getting better or not, but he said that he had been told he needed it to recover.

8. Dad was in hospital for about 6 to 8 weeks following his operation. I was doing my GCSEs at the time and I remember taking 3 buses to go and see him every day and coming home quite late. When dad eventually came out of hospital he was very tired, weak and frail. He was never the same person again and seemed to have aged significantly.
9. Before dad had gone into hospital, he had a fruit shop for about 10 to 15 years, as well as running our home as a solo parent. After coming out of hospital, he was too weak and unwell to be able to go to the wholesale fruit market, which was arduous enough for those in the best of health with a 4am start every day. As a consequence, he had to close the shop permanently. This meant he lost a good income from running the shop. This left him with the house but he still struggled to do any household chores due to the state of his health.
10. Dad never fully recovered after coming out of hospital and I became a carer to him for a long time. He just had no energy, he was exhausted and he lost interest in everything. Life was very difficult for us and I was worried about him. Prior to going into hospital dad had suffered from some heartburn and occasional headaches, but had always been fit and healthy and seemed well. This was a real change for him.
11. Eventually, one of dad's friends got him a job at the coal board, although it was a lot less pay than he had been earning before. This involved working at a pit on the weighbridge where the lorries left from. Having this job improved how he was a little bit as he now had a purpose in life, but he was never the happy person he had been and you could see he was deteriorating physically.
12. Over the years, I noticed that dad seemed to suffer from 'brain fog' and became more vacant. He wasn't someone that would ever moan or complain, so it was difficult to know exactly what he was going through. When dad was just 18 years old, he left home to join the RAF. He had

been ill for a few weeks when he was diagnosed with tuberculosis and had to stay in a sanatorium for 12 months, after which he was sent home. He had been through a lot in his life but never complained.

13. Around May 1979, a few weeks before I was to get married to Steve, dad became very unwell. I came home from work and I just knew something wasn't right with him at all. Our local GP, Tony came out to see dad and said that he needed to go into hospital. He was taken to the Royal Hallamshire Hospital and we were told that dad was suffering from kidney failure, and he would need dialysis for the rest of his life. We were devastated by this news.

14. Although dad was hooked up to a drip, they had not started him on dialysis despite the doctors having made out it was something he needed urgently. Eventually, a doctor approached dad's bed and said that he could not start dialysis as he had an infection. He was told that once the infection had cleared, he could start dialysis. We thought it was something like a cold, as we had not been given details about what this infection was but we eventually learned it was an infection of the blood. We thought that it was something that would clear up with a course of antibiotics.

15. At this time, I was told that I would require a test to see if I had this infection as I lived with my dad.

GRO-C

GRO-C

We both had our tests straight away on that day and within a day or so we were told that we had tested negative. I remember that it was at least a day later as I was very worried when we came home that first evening. I also distinctly recall being told that the infection was spread through handling infected bodily fluids, including blood by staff at the hospital.

16. When I was being tested for this infection, I remember asking the nurse how dad would have contracted this infection. She told me that he most likely contracted it when he had the blood transfusions following his

bowel operation in 1974. I was very taken aback as the nurse mentioned this so casually, almost like it was something we should have expected. I was not given any more information about this or what it meant for my dad or us in the future but we knew from then onwards that this infection was through the transfusion.

17. Although I recall being given very little information about this infection, Steve remembers hearing 'hepatitis' being mentioned at this time. We did not know what this meant and the way they discussed dad's infection made it out like it was a very innocent thing – nothing too much to worry about

18. It was only more recently in around 2017 that I was able to connect the dots between what happened to dad all those years ago and the infected blood scandal, after watching a program about it on television. So many things resonated with me and it was clear that dad had become infected with HCV through a blood transfusion in 1974.

19. Dad was never an intravenous drug user, he had no tattoos and he had been happily married until my mum died, and he never remarried. He was also never medically treated abroad and had not undergone any other major operations. There is no way he could have been infected with HCV other than through the blood transfusion after his bowel procedure.

### **Section 3. Other Infections**

20. I am not aware if dad was ever tested for HIV or any other infections. As far as I am aware, he was only infected with HCV as a result of the blood transfusions he received.

#### **Section 4. Consent**

21. I'm not sure if dad was asked to consent to the blood transfusions he received. The risks associated with a transfusion were not explained to him before he received the blood, and he was not aware that it could cause him any type of infection. If he had been told about any risks, I know he would have told me as we were very close and he would have been aware of the potential impact on my life.

22. As far as I am aware, dad was not asked for consent to the blood tests that revealed the Hepatitis and he certainly was never informed that this was what they were testing for.

#### **Section 5. Impact**

23. Dad's diagnosis with this blood infection was a massive shock but looking back, we were able to understand why he had been so unwell following the bowel operation in 1974 and the blood transfusions he had received. He had lost his livelihood as a result of his poor health and was never the same person again. It had such a massive impact on him.

24. After dad had been diagnosed with this infection we now know to have been HCV, he was discharged from hospital within a week with no treatment. This was despite initially being told he needed dialysis. A transplant was never mentioned as an option. All we were told was that we needed to manage dad's diet and we were given a diet sheet. This sheet simply said to avoid seasoning his food. Dad just went along with things, thinking the doctors knew best – that's what people from his generation did.

25. To begin with, dad had been placed in a general ward but when we visited him later that night, he had been moved to a separate isolation room. The nurses treating him would wear an apron and gloves which they would then put into a bin to be cleaned or disposed of after visiting

his room. The first night we visited dad we were asked to wear a hospital gown, but this did not happen during subsequent visits. To me, it felt like they just wanted him out of the hospital as soon as possible.

26. Once dad had been discharged from the hospital and was getting ready to leave, I went to discuss things with the hospital staff as I was confused about what was happening. I asked if dad was coming home to die and basically, they said yes but that dad had not been made aware of that. The ward doctor said he had weeks or months to live. Things had all happened so fast and I was shocked. I couldn't really take it in. Nothing to this effect had been suggested during his stay in hospital. If I had not asked that direct question, I don't think anything would have been said to me.

27. Looking back at this situation now as an older person, dad was just rushed in and out of hospital and it felt like we were being told there was nothing they could do. Maybe there wasn't but we didn't feel like dad's condition was considered important. There was no discussion about coming back to the hospital for tests or monitoring. No hope offered in the way he was treated, something to cling to. We were just sent on our way. It was an awful time and very difficult to cope with. We were just not given enough information about what was happening to him and he was just sent home with some tablets.

28. For around 7 to 10 days after dad came home, I lived on a knife edge. I constantly checked on him to make sure he hadn't died as I was so worried about this happening. Tony would come to the house almost every day to check on dad. He was the only person who was involved in dad's care during this period and the only contact we had.

29. One day, Tony said that dad needed some medication and he drove me to the chemist. While I was in the car with Tony, I broke down and told him about my fear that dad would die at any moment because of what the doctors had said. He looked at me like "what are you on about?" and

was very surprised. He said that would not happen and tried to reassure me that dad would go into hospital if his condition deteriorated.

30. I believe that after I had this conversation with Tony about my worries, he told my dad about what I had said and how concerned I was. I recall my dad saying to me shortly after this that he wasn't going anywhere, although I'm sure he knew what was happening with his health.

31. Although dad was able to manage his personal care, he was still very weak. If he went upstairs to go to the toilet, he would have to lay down on the bed for a bit before coming downstairs again. He was like this until our wedding, and I feel like he was trying his best to be strong and put mind over body until he reached our wedding day.

32. When dad learned about the fact that he had got an infection through contaminated blood he went very quiet. He was a thinker anyway and did not say much about it, although I'm sure he was able to finally understand why he had been so ill since the operation in 1974. However, if he got so much as a papercut he would overreact about cleaning up his blood so it was clearly something he was concerned about.

33. I think dad thought a course of tablets would sort out his infection, but it was only later when it sunk in that it was more serious than that, perhaps after speaking to Tony. He would never be the one to ask questions, it was always me. He knew it was something he could not change so he seemed to just get on with it.

34. Over the next few weeks until the wedding, life was very much a blur and it felt like things were going at 100 miles an hour. I just wanted to slow things down. The week before the wedding, dad really tried to go out and do things. He went out with his friend uncle Bill a few times. In hindsight, I think he just wanted to spend time with him before the end.



35. We got married at 3pm on Saturday at our local church and had a reception in the village hall. Dad was quite weak and drawn by then and he was bright yellow when walking me down the aisle, so he definitely was having issues with his liver. **(See Exhibit WITN5742002)**
36. Some relatives were staying at our house, so they said they would take dad home and stay with him when he became tired. Steve and I had bought a house in Aston, so we were going to stay there the night of the wedding. At about 8pm, I went to check on dad before returning to the reception and then going to our new place.
37. The next morning, a relative who was staying with dad called to say that dad had fallen ill overnight, and he had been taken to the Northern General Hospital in the morning. His kidneys were failing and his lungs were filling up with fluid.
38. When we went to the hospital dad was comfortable but was dozing on and off. He was in a room on his own but I think this was because he was dying; I don't think they were even aware of the HCV. Steve recalls dad telling him to look after me. He had never thought Steve was good enough for me as I was his only daughter and we were so close, but it was like he was accepting Steve at this time.
39. After spending time with dad all day. I came home to have a shower and I got a call to say I needed to come back to the hospital as dad's condition had deteriorated.
40. Dad passed away on 21 August 1979. He had not complained at all about how he was feeling that day, but I do think he had been holding on until the wedding, so he could be there for me on that day. The following Saturday after getting married, I was back in the same church burying my dad, my best friend. It was devastating.

41. Dad's death certificate listed his cause of death as respiratory failure due to pulmonary oedema, renal failure and pericarditis. **(See Exhibit WITN5742003)**. He had no heart problems previously and I believe this was all linked to the infection with HCV, certainly the pericarditis.

42. We used the local funeral director in the village to arrange dad's funeral, and I recall him saying that they had to wait a few days until dad's body was released. I'm not sure if this was linked to the HCV, but we were still allowed to go and view him.

43. Dad's HCV infection and death had a huge impact on me. We were incredibly close as it was just the two of us for so many years. I had now lost my only parent and everything fell on Steve. The first few years of our marriage were difficult because I was just not myself.

44. A few weeks after dad's death, my aunty Dot mentioned that my dad had said that after I was married, he would have nothing left to live for. This really upset me and was something she should never have said as I felt very guilty about this. I also felt guilty about whether I could have done more to prevent dad's death. He had been placed on a special diet and I wondered if I had given him something that affected him negatively.

45. I felt such distress, anger and guilt about dad's death. It knocked my faith a great deal too. Until I was around 14 or 15 years old I had been a very active member of our local chapel community but after dad fell ill, I felt like I no longer had time for this. After dad died I lost my faith and never really returned back to it. If I need something I will ask mum and dad for help but I would not pray regularly. When my GRO-C GRO-C I prayed to my parents to keep him safe and thankfully he is doing well.

46. From the time Dad left hospital in 1974 after his bowel operation, there was a massive impact on our lives. I don't think it affected my schooling as I am quite a resilient person, but I did have to apply for a bursary to

go to college as dad's income dramatically reduced when he gave up his fruit shop. He was on sickness benefits for some time before taking the lower paid job at the coal board. Despite everything that was going on, I managed to continue my education and went on to train as a nursery nurse at the school where I was educated.

47. When my daughter Rachael was born, I missed my dad a great deal as I know he would have loved to have been involved in her life. Steve's mum and dad died when our daughters were young, so they have missed out on having a relationship with their grandparents which was very sad. I had been very close to my grandparents, so I wanted this for them. I think this is partly why I am so close to my grandchildren now.

48. After the birth of my daughter Rachael, I sadly suffered a number of miscarriages. I have had 9 pregnancies with only 2 live children, so that shows what an awful time I have been through. It was difficult not having my dad there for support, but I just had to keep going. I eventually gave birth to my second daughter Rebecca, and I wish dad had been alive to meet her.

49. I think about how dad would have felt about having grandchildren and the joy he would have had from them. He liked children and he was always very good with them. He sadly missed out on so many special moments. When my youngest daughter graduated from university, I thought of my dad as I knew he would have been so proud of her, as she was the first in the family to achieve this.

50. My dad's parents, my grandparents, really struggled to come to terms with dad's death. He had been in a sanitorium for a year and came out of that situation alive, so I don't think they ever believed they would lose him like they did. My grandmother would always say your children should never die before you. My dad and his sister were also very close and she still talks about him a lot and remembers the fond times they had together. She was heart-broken by his passing but as long as you keep

speaking about them and keep them in your thoughts, they are never really gone.

51. Thankfully, dad did not suffer any stigma related to the HCV infection. I think this was because no one, including us, really understood what this blood infection was or meant at that time. Now if you mention HCV, people have a better understanding of what this is.

52. Unfortunately, my dad's experience has dented my faith in the NHS. I question things a lot more than most people would. Even when I lost my babies, I didn't trust the care I was getting. I had an ectopic pregnancy and I told them not to give me any blood without checking it first as my dad died of an infection through blood.

53. When I needed to have a transfusion following my ectopic pregnancy it caused me a lot of anxiety for a long time as I worried I could be infected with something. It was extremely difficult for me to trust the doctors who suggested I needed it. I did become a blood donor myself and donated often until about 5 years ago. I even reached platinum status.

#### **Section 6. Treatment/Care/Support**

54. Dad was never offered any treatment for the blood infection he was diagnosed with. I'm not sure if any treatment would have been available for HCV at the time. He was not monitored or asked to come in for any additional tests after his diagnosis.

55. The infection ended his opportunity to have dialysis which must have been a contributing factor in his demise and I am sure that the hepatitis must have played some part in causing the damage to his kidneys in the first place.

56. Dad was offered no psychological support or counselling to deal with his diagnosis or effectively the death sentence he had been handed. I was

only 14 years old when dad became infected and only 19 years old when he died, but I was never offered any psychological support or counselling either.

### **Section 7. Financial Assistance**

57. When I learned about the infected blood scandal on television, it resonated with me so much. I rang the Terrence Higgins Trust that directed me to the Skipton Fund. I spoke to someone at the Fund who asked me to get as many details as possible about my dad's infection.

58. I contacted my dad's former GP, Kiveton Park Medical Centre, and the Hallamshire Hospital, but I was told that they no longer held records for my dad as he had died so long ago.

59. I applied to the Skipton Fund on 09 August 2017 and they told me that I had not provided enough details about my dad's infection. I spoke to them on the phone and I explained that I just wanted recognition for my dad, but the person I spoke to was quite rude. They sent back my application.

60. My doctors recommended contacting the local authority to see if they had any of dad's records, but they said that as he had been deceased for so long they would not hold any records. I thought that it would be included in GRO-C my medical records that we had been tested for HCV, but apparently there is nothing in our records about this either.

61. It felt like there was nothing more I could do to prove dad had been infected. It was not about getting money from the Skipton Fund but I wanted some recognition for what dad went through.

### **Section 8. Other Issues**

62. I wanted to provide this statement so that the Inquiry and public become aware of how many lives have been affected by the infected blood scandal. A lot more people were infected than you would think and sadly my dad was one of them.

63. A lot of water has passed under the bridge since then but there is not a single day when I don't think of my dad. I feel that through this statement his voice will be heard and it is the least I can do. He deserves recognition for his suffering and early death.

### **Statement of Truth**

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

Signed

GRO-C

Dated

8/12/2021.