

NOT RELEVANT

Witness Name: Keith John Dyson

Statement No.: WITN2863001

Exhibits: N/A

Dated: 18th June 2019

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF KEITH JOHN DYSON

I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 5th November 2018.

I, Keith John Dyson, will say as follows: -

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Keith John Dyson. My date of birth is GRO-C 1988. My address is known to the Inquiry. I am currently a student doing a degree at Glasgow University in Electrical Engineering. I intend to speak about my mother Eileen Dyson and how she was infected with contaminated blood and contracted hepatitis C. In particular, the nature of the illness, how the illness affected her, the treatment she received and the impact it had on her and the rest of our family.
2. I have a very close, loving family. My father and mother have been married for thirty eight years. I have a younger sister, Julie who is a chartered accountant. I would say my mother is my best friend, more so as I've got older. My mother Eileen was infected with hepatitis C through a blood transfusion she received when I was born.

Section 2. How Affected

3. I was born on GRO-C 1988 at Bellshill Maternity Hospital. My mother has told me that she had a difficult birth and had to have a Caesarean section. During the operation she needed a blood transfusion. The blood she received was contaminated and my mother contracted hepatitis C.
4. I have no knowledge of the names of the doctors or nurses that treated my mother at the time I was born.
5. Throughout my life I have always known my mother was very ill. I remember as a very young child my mother would spend a lot of time in bed and was in a lot of pain. I can always remember I felt helpless and didn't know how to stop her pain. I would sit on her bed and rub her back and sides when she was being sick or if the pain was unbearable. I can vividly remember my mother was jaundiced. Her skin and the whites of her eyes were yellow. I used to think she had been poisoned. My mother would try really hard to play with my sister and I despite being very ill. I have so many lovely memories of us playing with our toys in her bed and her laying in bed and bending her knees with a cover over them and telling me it was my tent to play in.
6. I'm not sure exactly what age I was when I became aware that mum had become ill when she gave birth to me, but I do remember being quite young, earlier than 10 years old. I remember conversations my mum and dad had where doctors had told her she should plan her funeral. I regularly feared my mum was going to die. I remember my mum and dad having these conversations and my dad would get very upset, I can't imagine how hard it must have been for them. As a child I didn't know what hepatitis was.
7. I do not know if my mum was ever warned about the risks of receiving contaminated blood before she had a blood transfusion.
8. When I was about 15 years of age, I remember I was in a home economics class at school. The teacher started talking about something she had heard

on the news or a newspaper. It was about people who had been infected with Hepatitis C and AIDS. I remember thinking about my mum.

9. My mum didn't really tell me about Hepatitis C or how serious the condition was, in truth she didn't have to. I think she and my dad tried to shield my sister and I from her illness as best they could and focused all their energy in to making sure Julie and I were taken care of. I only picked up on things from listening to my parents talking. Thinking back, I was scared to look into what it was myself when I was younger.

10. I do not know who told my mum she had hepatitis C. I do not know what information she received regarding the infection or how to manage it. All I remember is throughout my childhood my mum was very ill.

Section 3. Other infections

11. My mum was infected with the Hepatitis C virus.

Section 4. Consent

12. I really don't know if my mum was treated or tested without her knowledge or consent. I do remember she would have to go to the hospital a lot. I remember I sat in waiting rooms at the hospital with my mum or dad. I cannot say which hospitals they were and who she saw.

Section 5. Impact

13. I have only ever known my mum being ill. I have seen photographs of her before I was born and she looked fit and healthy. Mentally, my mum would always try to shield my sister and I from her suffering. I did however on occasions hear my mum crying. She would always tell me it was because she had hit her toe off something or a similar story.

14. My mum had a really good job before she became too ill to work. She was a tax manager and worked for a Chartered Accountants in Glasgow. There were many times my mum would say if it wasn't for her illness, she would have earned enough money to send my sister and I to private schools.
15. I do not know what treatment my mum received for her illness. I know she took a lot of medication. I can always remember my dad had a timer on his phone that would beep to remind him it was time for my mum to take her tablets. I know there were some treatments available to my mum for her Hepatitis C infection but they often caused more issues than aid. In terms of difficulty to access treatment I know there were times my mum had to wait with drug addicts and was looked upon as one herself, she was subjected to harsh screening and waiting lists which were all barriers to her physical and mental care.
16. My mum's life has been destroyed by her illness. She lost a highly paid job and any future career aspirations. She lost her health and whilst I know that no one cared more for their children than my parents she always felt the ability to physically care for her children was taken from her.
17. The impact my mum's illness has had on me is profound. All my childhood my mother was ill and to watch your own mother in such pain is heart breaking. A memory I have when I was very young was around the day my Gran died. Someone from my dad's work left a message on the answering machine saying they were sorry to hear about my dad's mum passing away. I remember always thinking the answering machine could leave a message like that about her and worrying that I wouldn't see my mum again.
18. My mum and dad made sure we had holidays, I remember us driving and camping and my mum would rest in the car when she could. We went to Lourdes, France and to Italy to the Vatican. We would often drive everywhere as flights were difficult for my mum and sometimes, she would be too sick to be able to leave the hotel or campsite. Sometimes holidays would have to be cut short or cancelled if my mum was too sick.

19. My mum is a devout Catholic and I remember when I was very young, going to Lourdes in France. I remember seeing and hearing that you could go to the baths in Lourdes and be cured of all manner of illness and disease. As I got older and we revisited Lourdes many times, I became more aware of my mum being ill and I hoped that we were there so that mum could be cured. When I was little, I remember one visit to Lourdes my mum was extremely ill and vomiting. As I was so young I didn't really know about the true nature of how sick she was but I remember I was also ill from something I had had for lunch and had also vomited so I thought my mum and I must have eaten the same thing not realising it was her illness.
20. Our holidays were mainly driving holidays where my dad would drive so my mum could sit and try to rest in the passenger seat. When I was 14 or 15 years of age, we went to Rome to share mass with the Pope. I remember her saying several times throughout my life "someone will find a cure, if I can just hold on until then, I have to take care of myself until then."
21. I know this is irrational, but I knew I was part of the reason my mother was ill. I always carried this feeling around with me. I had this paranoid notion that I was the reason for my mother's illness. I know they didn't feel this way but I sometimes feared that one day my family would see me like this. I left home at 19 to go to university. It is around this time my mental health suffered. Being low all the time made me think about how helpless I was to my mum, I hated what had happened to her and became very bitter about the world. A lot of my friendships broke down in part because I was so depressed. I felt absolutely nothing just totally numb. I spent two and a half years just scraping by on my university course. My health had worsened as I had put on considerable weight, I was upset all the time and the pain from my chronic health condition (Ehlers Danlos Syndrome) had become unbearable. I dropped out of my university degree. I had no motivation, drive or ambition. I felt completely disappointed in myself and felt my family would also see me as a failure. I remember walking past my old school to go to the job centre to claim job seekers allowance. I remember crying on the walk home thinking

about when I was in school and I never thought I would have had to go on benefits.

22. I spent most of my 20s in a dark place mentally. I had no drive or ambition and thought of myself as a huge disappointment to my parents. I had about 15 low-paid jobs that were menial and boring. I just didn't care about anything really. I rarely visited my mum and dad. I was ashamed to let them see the person I was turning in to. In recent years my partner and my parents have helped me get back to university and over the past 10 years I have been trying to get myself a sense of purpose.

23. I have sought medical help for my depression.

24. I am aware there is a stigma attached hepatitis C. It is associated with homosexuality and drug use. I know that my mum feels like she was excluded from certain places with friends because of the stigma.

25. I remember the kids at school would ask me why my mum was ill and what was wrong with her. I remember I didn't want to say hepatitis C because of the stigma. I think people got to know anyway because I did feel that people avoided me.

Section 6. Treatment/ care /support.

26. I do not believe that my mum was given or even offered any counselling as a result of being given contaminated blood. I do know that I was never offered any form of psychological support as a child.

27. In recent years my GP did send me for counselling because of my mental health. I went to a counselling centre near Silverburn. I had three two-hour sessions with a counsellor over two months. I cannot remember the name of the counsellor I saw. During these sessions I spoke a lot about growing up with the constant fear of my mum's being taken from us and how I viewed the

world as a cruel place. I have also spoken about how my mum's illness has affected my mental health.

Section 7. Financial assistance

28. I do not know about any funds or trusts set up in relation to people who have been infected with contaminated blood. I don't feel that there have been any funds or trusts that would qualify to take care of the damage that has been done to my mum. I have a vague memory of my parents being really insulted after they received a letter from someone from some scheme.

29. I can say nothing about the process of applying for financial assistance.

Section 8. Other issues

30. I do not wish to remain anonymous in this inquiry.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed

GRO-C

Dated 15 . 2 . 20