

Witness Name: D.A. SHEPHARD

Statement No: WITN1515001

Exhibits: WITN1515002

Dated: 26<sup>th</sup> February 2019

## INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

---

### FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF DAVID ALAN SHEPHARD

---

I, David Alan Shephard will say as follows:-

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

1. My name is David Alan Shephard of [GRO-C]. I was born on [GRO-C] 1947. I have lived here since 1979 with my wife. I am a retired Health and Safety Manager although before that I used to work as a detective in the police force.
2. I currently live with my wife Teresa Shephard whom I married in November 1968.
3. My daughter Claire Shephard was born on [GRO-C] 1979 and passed away on 14 August 1980 at Sheffield Children's Hospital. She was 17 months old when she passed away.
4. My wife and I have another daughter named [GRO-B] who was born before Claire.
5. **This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my late daughter's full medical records.**

## **Section 2. How infected**

6. After our wedding, my wife and I wanted to have children immediately but it proved to be very difficult for us. After a visit to the gynaecologist, it was discovered that my wife had a tilted womb and required an operation. The operation took place in 1975 and was successful, as soon afterwards my wife became pregnant with GRO-B in 1975.
7. In 1978, my wife became pregnant a second time with Claire, who was born on GRO-C 1979. In both births, my wife went through a very difficult labour and had to undergo a caesarean section.
8. After Claire was born, my wife's doctors told her that she wouldn't be able to have another caesarean section and that it would be unsafe to have another pregnancy. To my absolute horror, whilst my wife was still recovering, I was asked by her doctors whether I, as her husband, wanted to have my wife sterilised. Obviously I said no but I was appalled that they were asking me and not my wife.
9. Claire was a very happy, beautiful baby girl. She always seemed very healthy and for the first few months of her life we had no reason to believe there was anything wrong.
10. However, in or about August 1979, we noticed that Claire's right ear lobe was very red. We took her to the GP and it was first diagnosed as an insect bite. When the redness continued to grow, we were referred to Grimsby Maternity Hospital, which has since closed down. The consultant there told us that Claire's condition '*could be serious*' and so we were referred onwards to a hospital in Sheffield for a biopsy. I cannot remember the name of this hospital. A week later, we were told that the red mark was a tumour and that Claire had non-Hodgkin Lymphoma. I was not a medical professional and so I did not understand the connotations at the time, but I was frightened for my daughter and I can remember my heart was pounding that day.

11. Thereafter, we took Claire to Sheffield Children's Hospital (SCH) where she underwent chemotherapy to treat the tumour. During the chemotherapy, I was told my daughter would receive a blood transfusion also receive a blood product which at first I misheard as "*Factor H*". I was corrected by the consultant, who said it was actually called "*Factor VIII*". This is how I can say with certainty that it was Factor VIII that Claire received. She was given Factor VIII on a regular basis between about January and August of 1980.
12. No information was ever given to me about the potential risk of infection to my daughter from receiving Factor VIII or other blood products.
13. In or about early August 1980, we had gone on holiday as a family to Durham but unfortunately our time there was cut short. My wife and I noticed that Claire was suddenly getting thinner. She wasn't eating or drinking and was suffering from high temperatures. We telephoned SCH and were advised to bring her in immediately. We stayed with her at SCH for a number of days and only went home for two days during that period for some respite.
14. I can clearly recall that we then received a telephone call at home from SCH shortly before 14<sup>th</sup> August 1980 telling us that we needed to return because Claire's condition had deteriorated. That night, my wife and I stayed in the parents' sleeping rooms provided by SCH.
15. At approximately 7am on 14<sup>th</sup> August 1980 we were sleeping in one of the parents' sleeping rooms at SCH and were woken by a nurse who said "*You had better come down, Claire might not last much longer.*" We got dressed and found Claire in bed on drips.
16. My wife held Claire and we watched her die within two hours of arriving at her bedside. She was 17 months old.
17. A post mortem revealed that Claire had suffered from irreversible liver failure as a consequence of an unknown viral infection.

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

18. To date it has never been confirmed precisely what infection Claire suffered from, save that her death certificate records "*hepatitis*" as one of the causes of her death.

### **Section 4. Consent**

19. I believe that Claire was treated or tested without our knowledge, without our consent, and without our being given adequate or full information. We had faith in the medical professionals and whenever we went to the SCH we would hand Claire over to them in hopes that they were doing what was best for her.

20. No information or advice was given to me before Claire was treated regarding the risk of infection from contaminated blood products.

21. Claire was never diagnosed with hepatitis whilst alive, so we never received any information or advice regarding that.

### **Section 5. Impact of the Infection**

22. When we found out that my wife was pregnant with Claire we were delighted. Due to the difficulties my wife had had becoming pregnant with GRO-B and the difficulties she had had in labour, we never imagined we would have another child. When we were expecting Claire, we moved to a three-bedroom house to make room for our growing family. At that time we thought that we might even be able to have more children.

23. To lose our daughter was devastating, and knowing that we could never have another child made it even harder.

24. When we were told Claire's cancer had cleared but that something else had destroyed her liver, we were baffled. We had heard of hepatitis, but the doctors were saying they didn't know what it was, so we had no way of knowing what it was that had caused my daughter's death.

25. I had the terrible task of telling **GRO-B** that her sister had passed away. I took her upstairs and told her the news. It was one of the most difficult things I have had to do in my life.

26. Because of what happened with Claire, I saw my wife become very overprotective of **GRO-B**. I used to describe her as being a "mother hen".

27. My way of coping with the grief was to go back to work almost immediately. I had left the Police Force in 1978 and in **GRO-C** 1979 (just before Claire's birth) I then changed career and began working as a Health and Safety Manager. Later in life, between 1999 – 2000, I successfully studied for a Masters in Health and Safety and Environment Law. My duties as a Health and Safety Manager involved me having to travel across the country (some 30,000 miles a year), which kept me occupied. However, it did mean that my wife would often be in the house alone waiting for our daughter to come home from school. I hardly spent any time with my wife at all. Even when I had taken time out to study for my Masters, I had my head down in the books.

28. Socially, we never really did anything after Claire's death.

**GRO-B**

**GRO-B**

29.

**GRO-B**

30. After Claire passed away, I had to accept the fact that we were never going to find out what had actually happened to Claire. For years after her death I never imagined that there was any explanation besides her liver failure. However, in the 1990s, I began to hear more and more in the media about the outbreak of HIV and AIDS and the fact that many patients had been infected as a result of receiving contaminated blood products, including Factor VIII. I read several academic papers and conducted my own research. Some of the stories felt all too familiar. I realised that the timing of what happened to Claire seemed to fit with the contaminated blood scandal: the time at which Claire was given Factor VIII was the peak time for infection with contaminated blood products.

31. After the Infected Blood Inquiry was announced, I wrote a letter to my sister and brothers in law explaining what may have happened to Claire. I refer to this letter as exhibit WITN1515002

32. I have been denied the right to enjoy my time with my second child. My eldest child is older now, single, and will now never have any children of her own. My wife and I will never have any grandchildren. If Claire were still alive, that may have been different. This was brought home to me when my wife and I recently received a Christmas card from my wife's younger brother in which he boasted that he now had four grandchildren. I do not see myself as a jealous person, but that did make me feel like I had missed out terribly.

#### **Section 6. Treatment/care/support**

33. No counselling or psychological support had ever been made available to me in consequence of what happened.

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

34. Neither my wife nor I received any financial assistance whatsoever after Claire's death. I had no knowledge of the Skipton Fund or the English Infected Blood Support Scheme before my solicitors told me about them.

**NOT RELEVANT**

35. I have never been involved in any litigation concerning infected blood products.

**Section 8. Other Issues**

36. We never received any explanation for why our daughter died. GRO-B always asked a lot of questions growing up about the death of her sister, and we would often have nothing to say in reply.

37. We want answers. We want confirmation that our daughter was taken from us as a result of being given a contaminated blood product.

**Anonymity**

38. I do not wish to remain anonymous.

39. I do not wish to give oral evidence to the Inquiry as I have to care for my wife, who is not well.

**Statement of Truth**

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

Signed.

GRO-C

David Alan Shephard

Dated

26<sup>th</sup> February 2019