

Witness Name: Debra Anne Pollard  
Statement No. WITN3094129  
Date: 18 December 2023

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**EXHIBIT "WITN3094131."**

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This is the exhibit marked "WITN3094131" referred to in the witness statement of  
Debra Anne Pollard dated 18 December 2023

Our ref: F9059/20R

5 March 2020

Royal Free Hospital  
Pond Street  
London  
NW3 2QG

Tel: 020 7794 0500

**Private and Confidential**

Dear [REDACTED]

I write in response to the recent correspondence from you, your daughter, Ms [REDACTED], and Sir Keir Starmer QC MP, regarding concerns that your daughter was tested for HIV, HAV, HBV, and HCV on many occasions as a child without your or her mother's knowledge or consent. I recognise that this is a difficult time for you and your family with respect to the Infected Blood Inquiry, out of which this matter came to your attention. I hope to address your concern about your daughter's testing in this letter.

Ms Anne McReynolds, divisional director of nursing for the transplantation and specialist services division, has overseen the investigation into the issues you have raised. In addition to a review of your daughter's clinical records, Ms Debra Pollard, lead nurse for haemophilia, has contributed information to enable me to respond.

At the time that your daughter was diagnosed with Von Willebrand disease, it was standard practice to test those with this condition for hepatitis viruses and HIV. This surveillance was introduced as a safety initiative because there was a history in those with inherited bleeding disorders of exposure to, and contamination with, viral infections in contaminated blood products throughout the 1970s and 1980s.

After your daughter's diagnosis, she, her mother and maternal grandmother were seen in the haemophilia centre on 23 February 1993. The plan was for her to start a programme of Hepatitis B vaccination, which was, and remains, a standard of care for patients who are likely to receive blood products.

Your daughter subsequently underwent her first virology test, the result of which is dated 1 July 1993. This was a hepatitis surface antibodies test. This is not a test for HBV, but to see if the vaccination she had received had taken effect by mounting an immune response.

On 4 August 1993 your daughter was seen again. The doctor notes that they were requesting HAV, HIV and HCV tests on the specimen previously taken. As I have already noted, such testing was standard practice. This testing was performed the same day, and testing for HIV 1 and 2 antibodies, and Hepatitis A and C antibodies were negative.

Reference to your daughter's records shows that tests were also carried out on 9 February 1999 and 14 February 2007, and the results were negative on both occasions for HIV 1 and 2 and Hepatitis A, B

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and C antibodies. Although it was usual for this to be disclosed to patients (and in the case of paediatric patients, their families), we have found no documented discussion about this and therefore no evidence of consent.

We can only apologise if this standard virology testing was not discussed with you or your daughter's mother, and consent not obtained.

Finally, we note that further Hepatitis B and C testing was carried out on 19 April 2012. We suspect this testing may have been carried out at your daughter's request, because there is reference in the clinical notes to your daughter requesting virology testing on 25 October 2012, as she was attempting to become pregnant at the time. There is also reference to your daughter being tested again in November 2012, because a consultant haematologist comments in a letter to your daughter's GP dated 24 November 2012 about "*her virology screen, which I repeated at [REDACTED] request*" being negative for HIV 1 and 2 and Hepatitis A, B and C. I enclose the relevant letter for ease of reference.

Finally, there is also reference to your daughter being tested for Hepatitis B and HIV (amongst other tests) on the 29 September 2015, these tests being negative. At the time your daughter was pregnant and the records specifically record that your daughter consented to this testing.

Thank you for bringing this matter to our attention and giving me this opportunity to respond. Should you have any questions about this letter or require more information, please do not hesitate to contact Mr Phillip Purcell, complaints manager for the transplantation and specialist services division, who will discuss the options available to you under the NHS Complaints Procedure. Mr Purcell can be contacted via email at [phillip.purcell@gro-c.nhs.uk](mailto:phillip.purcell@gro-c.nhs.uk) by telephone on 020 7794 0500, extension **GRO-C** or by post at the address at the top of this letter. If following further contact with Mr Purcell you remain dissatisfied with our approach to resolving your outstanding issues, please write to me directly.

Yours sincerely

**GRO-C**

Rebecca Longmate  
**Director of Nursing**  
**Royal Free Hospital**

Encl. Letter dated 24 November 2012