

Dated: 04 November 2021

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

WRITTEN STATEMENT OF SHEILA HALSTEAD

I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 06 October 2021.

I, Sheila Halstead, will say as follows:

Section 1: Introduction

1. My name is Sheila Halstead. I was born on GRO-C 1939. My address is known to the Inquiry. I am now retired but I worked in the computer centre in the university in Preston from 1976 until 2002. I have two children and one grandchild. I also had a sister (who recently died) who had two children.
2. I intend to talk about my father's accident, subsequent hospitalisation and death. In particular, I intend to talk about the nature of his illness with Hepatitis B (HBV), how the illness affected me, the treatment received and the impact it had on me, my family and our lives together.

Section 2: How affected

3. My dad's death was caused by infected blood, which had an impact on me and our family, which will be set out below.
4. My dad was called William Lawson. He was born on GRO-C 1907. He worked as a farm labourer all his life but the farm packed up one day, so he got a job as a road sweeper. He used to go onto Carr's Green, Common Road, Inskip, which is near Preston - a barren piece of land. He would deposit the sweepings there.
5. The accident happened on 4 October 1971. As he was walking around the front of his vehicle one day, a pick-up truck hit him in the chest. He was taken to Preston Hospital and stayed there for two weeks. He had to have his spleen removed and his ribs had to be sawn off. He was cut all down his chest - because of his ribs all being smashed. He was also given blood transfusions six times.

6. We went to see him in the hospital the day after. He wasn't in hospital for a hugely long time before coming home. He was ok for Christmas but afterwards, from around 31 December, he started feeling ill. He started feeling like he had the flu. He wasn't feeling well at all, so he went to see the doctor and they took him into Deepdale Isolation Hospital because he was feeling so ill. It was jaundice as well.
7. When we went to see him, we had to wear PPE and we were only told what it was then, HBV. We were told you can't touch any of these fluids at all. The kids went up to him, touched him, as children do.
8. I remember seeing him before he died and he was really yellow. I saw him there with a mask on, PPE. He started being confused towards the end. My husband went in and said – "what's my name?" My dad got mixed up, he got the name wrong. The brain was not working properly, and they said if your blood is wrong, nothing works. We didn't know until then how serious it was.
9. He died on 10 January 1972. So he was only in the hospital for two days.

Section 3. Other infections

10. There were no other infections or issues - he was fit as a fiddle. He had not taken intravenous drugs, or had any tattoos, piercings, or other blood transfusions.
11. He had no ongoing issues so as far as they were concerned the prognosis was - you'll get better. He was round and about afterwards and driving. His injuries had healed up. He had good healing flesh - healed up pretty quick and recovered ok from the crash.

Section 4: Consent

12. There was no consent requested for the treatment.

Section 5. Impact

13. We didn't really know the impact of it until he became really ill. When my dad died there were 3 of us, mum, sister Jean me and also 4 grandchildren. I was the youngest daughter. We all missed him terribly after we had lost him. My sister has recently died.
14. He had been looking forward to retirement. He was a handyman, always helping - he would do anything for anybody.
15. Mum really missed him. There was no money coming in and they didn't have pensions in those days, they both only would have got a state pension. And there was no pension from the county council.
16. She was a bit older than him, 64 in GRO-C He was 64 in GRO-C She worked until she was 65 because at Lancashire County Council (LCC), you

had to finish at 65 whether or not you were fit. After that she went and did little cleaning jobs around and about to make ends meet. She could not sell the house or anything like that.

17. It was also hard because of the worry of the children really. At the time, I was very worried about my kiddies because of the infection. Mum said that somebody died up in Scotland because they had touched somebody with HBV. We didn't know much about it and people didn't get tested back then. I remember going to dad's funeral and thinking – I hope they haven't caught anything – because it was catching. We didn't realise until after he died how serious it was.

18. Mum died not too long after dad. He died in 1972 and she died in 1979. She went bowling on the village green, and she died soon after. She cycled home and was on the front step when she just crumpled and the lady next door came out to help.

Section 6: Treatment/Care/Support

19. We did not face difficulties or obstacles in obtaining treatment.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

20. We did not receive any financial assistance. I wasn't sure at the time whether there was anything we could have claimed through LLC, accident at work. I remember them saying that because he had lived afterwards for 3 months more before he died, we couldn't claim.

21. When I contacted the Skipton Fund I was told there were no support funds covering Hepatitis B. At the suggestion of the Investigators, I contacted the English Infected Blood Support Scheme and I was told the same thing.

22. I did appeal to the Skipton Fund and there was a list of names that were sitting on the board but it didn't work. I also wrote to the Hepatitis C Trust and I wrote to Lord Archer of Sandwell. He died soon after that in 2012. He had passed it on to the chief executive of the Haemophilia Society but I got no reply. It was fairly toothless.

Section 8. Other Issues

23. There are no other issues but I would like to add that I am very grateful for the work you are doing at the Inquiry.

Table of exhibits:

Date	Notes/ Description	Exhibit number
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10/01/1972	Death Certificate of William Lawson, which confirms date of death as 10 January 1972 and shows cause of death as: 'serum hepatitis following a blood transfusion necessarily given following a road traffic accident at Inskip'	WITN6906002
undated	Newspaper clipping number 1 relating to the inquest of William Lawson	WITN6906003
undated	Newspaper clipping number 2 relating to the inquest of William Lawson	WITN6906004
1960's	Photograph of William Lawson taken in the 1960's	WITN6906005

Statement of Truth

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

Signed GRO-C

Dated 13 November 2021