

Witness Name: Dr Gary Benson

Statement No.: WITN3082041

Exhibits: WITN3082042 -

WITN3082043

Dated: 25 September 2023

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

WRITTEN STATEMENT OF DR GARY BENSON

I provide this statement in response to the request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 3 November 2022.

I, Dr Gary Benson, will say as follows: -

Section 1: Introduction

1. My name is Dr Gary Benson. My professional address is NI Haemophilia Centre, Belfast City Hospital, Lisburn Road, BT9 7AB. My date of birth is GRO-C GRO-C 1976. My professional qualifications are as follows; MB, BCh, BAO, FRCP, FRCPath.
2. I have held the following positions:-
 - JHO Aug 1999-July 2000: Altnagelvin Hospital, Western Health and Social Care Trust.
 - SHO Aug 2000-July 2001: General Medicine, Altnagelvin Hospital, Western Health and Social Care Trust.
 - SHO Aug 2001-Jan 2002: General Medicine, Causeway Hospital, Northern Health and Social Care Trust.

- SHO Feb 2002-July 2002: Clinical Oncology, Belvoir Park Hospital, Belfast Health and Social Care Trust.
- SHO Aug 2002-Jan 2003: Clinical Haematology, Belfast City Hospital, Belfast health and Social Care Trust.
- Specialist registrar Feb 2003-Jan 2007: Haematology, Belfast City Hospital, Belfast Health and Social Care Trust.
- Specialist registrar Feb 2007-Jan 2008: Haematology, East Of Scotland Haemophilia Comprehensive Care Centre, Royal Infirmary Edinburgh.
- Consultant Haematologist with a specialist interest in disorders of haemostasis: Feb 2008 – present, Belfast City Hospital, Belfast Health and Social Care Trust. This post includes the role of Director for the NI Haemophilia Comprehensive Care Centre in leading and delivering the care to patients in NI with congenital and acquired bleeding disorders. The majority of work revolves around those who attend the adult centre but also undertaken a clinic alongside the paediatric haematologist.
- I am the laboratory lead for specialty coagulation and run the regional specialty coagulation laboratory for NI.
- I am the Clinical Director for Blood Sciences within the Trust.

Section 2: Responses to criticism by Witness W3708

3. At the outset of my response, I would like to extend to the whole family circle my condolences on recently learning of the death of Witness W3708's mother.
4. At paragraph 59 of her statement (WITN3708001), Witness W3708 stated the following: "About five years ago, Dr George Benson at The Royal sent a message to mammy via my cousin because he said they should talk regarding some payment she may be entitled to. [Witness W3708's sister] and I went over with mammy to see about it and I remember mammy said to Dr Benson "I don't know why my niece is talking about it as she shouldn't have been aware". This was another breach of confidentiality."

5. Further to changes made to the ex gratia Skipton Fund, around October 2011, a posthumous claim can now be made on behalf of those who died prior to 29 August 2003. Payments were to be made to the individual's estate.
6. An exercise was undertaken reviewing information held within the Haemophilia Centre, in order to identify those families who would be able to make an application.
7. Witness W3708's late father was identified. No member of the family remained under active review within the Haemophilia Centre. The options reviewed were to await for the family to make contact in regard to the application or to approach the family directly. In relation to the former, as no other family member remained within the haemophilia service, it was highly unlikely that the family would be aware of such changes. In relation to the latter, whilst an address was known, it was not clear whether any of the family still lived there, and writing out a letter was felt to have a risk of it being opened by the current occupant and high likelihood of issues regarding confidentiality.
8. Whilst no member of Witness W3708's late father's immediate family attended the clinic, the team were aware of other relatives who did attend. I spoke with a niece to confirm that Witness W3708's mother was well and clarified the address. I requested the niece to advise Witness W3708's mother that I would be in touch, to ensure no additive distress was caused, but did not disclose the reasons as to why.
9. The initial letter which I had written is enclosed (WITN3082042).
10. At the end of the process, Witness W3708's late mother wrote to me personally, and a copy of the letter is enclosed (WITN3082043).

Statement of Truth

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

GRO-C

Signed

Dated 25th September 2023

Table of exhibits:

Date	Notes/ Description	Exhibit number
10/02/2012	Letter from Dr Gary Benson to Witness W3708's late mother	WITN3082042
23/07/2013	Letter from Witness W3708's late mother to Dr Gary Benson	WITN3082043