Witness Name: A FOTHERGILL
Statement No: WITN3221001
Exhibits: 0
Dated: May 2019

# INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

---

# FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF ANNA FOTHERGILL

---

I, Anna Fothergill will say as follows:-

## Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Anna Fothergill of GRO-C France. I was born on the GRO-C 1948.

2. I moved to France from the UK in 2002. I used to own my own independent business in selling vintage clothes however I had to give that up. Since then, I have occasionally worked in a café, but other than that I do not work.

3. I was infected with Hepatitis C as a result of being given contaminated blood products.

4. This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my full medical records. If and in so far as I have been provided with limited records the relevant entries are set out in the medical chronology at the end of this statement.

## Section 2. How infected

5. In 1982, I had to undergo a caesarean at the Hammersmith Hospital and consequently lost a lot of blood. I was therefore given Factor VIII treatment and an Anti-D immunoglobulin injection (which pregnant mothers who have blood type O Rhesus Negative were recommended) both of which were infected. At the time I was under the care of Dr House. No information or advice was given to me about the risk of being exposed to infections from blood products.

6. Ten years prior to my move to France in 2002, I experienced various symptoms such as tiredness, headaches, aching limbs and depression. After seeking medical attention I was told that I was depressed and was prescribed anti-depressants.

7. I do not know when I first tested positive for Hepatitis C, but I was first informed of my diagnosis in approximately 2002 in France. I was prompted to seek medical attention there as I was experiencing the same symptoms mentioned in paragraph 6. I also felt that I had a hopeless immune system and despite the fact that I had been eating well, I had troubles digesting my food. Upon being diagnosed the doctor asked me if I had ever taken drugs to which I replied "No." At that time, my doctor also told me that the blood transfusion and the Anti-D injection I had received in 1982 were contaminated. I was given information to manage the infection in France.

8. As no doctor in the UK ever recognised my condition as Hepatitis C, no information or advice was given about any aspect of the infection here. I strongly believe that in the almost twenty years I was in the UK, it should have been discovered sooner.

## Section 3. Other Infections

9. Aside from the infection aforementioned above, I do not believe I received any other infections.

## Section 4. Consent

10. I believe that I been tested without my knowledge, without my consent, and without being given adequate or full information. My infection should have been picked up in the UK as after giving birth to my child in 1982 I was pregnant again in 1989 so I was constantly having my health checked and monitored. In 1989, I had no knowledge of any anomaly in my blood. I also had a caesarean during that pregnancy so I find it hard to believe that no medical professional in the UK identified the infection.

11. I was not treated for my infections in the UK, but was treated in France. My treatment is discussed below.

## Section 5. Impact of the Infection

12. In 1982, the infection triggered an adverse effect on my mental health. I used to cry all the time, would often have nervous breakdowns and I frequently entertained thoughts about death. My British doctor thought that I was depressed and prescribed me with anti-depressants to which I am, I believe, now addicted. I have since managed to reduce the dosage from 30mg tablets to 10mg, but I become extremely emotional and despairing if I fail to take the medication.

13. My life has been very difficult, mostly due to the fatigue. My family (and in particular my children) believe that my relationship with their father ended in the year 2000 due to my infection which nobody knew anything about. My youngest child was only eleven at the time. I was so depressed and never had energy to do anything. I had a nervous breakdown and felt that it was all too much to cope with, so I moved to France. I feel in retrospect that my life was ruined! I thought it was the nerves at the time, but now I question that and realise what I have lost in terms of family, career and business success.

14. In the 1970s, I had a thriving enterprise in selling vintage clothing and my own designs in Chelsea. We were very popular at the time and the store was one of the first of its kind to open on King's Road which attracted a lot of attention from high profile customers. At the time I lived in Hereford and travelled into London every

week. I would be up until early hours of the morning restoring beads and sequins into clothing. It was hard work, but I absolutely loved what I did. Unfortunately, I had to close it up in 2001 as the illness caused me to lose a lot of energy, although at the time this was put down to depression by the doctor and I did not know that I had Hepatitis C.

15. To this day I still suffer extreme fatigue and depression. I have aching joints and have lost a considerable amount of weight. I also have difficulties digesting food which contributes to more weight loss.

16. In terms of treatment for the Hepatitis C, it was only after I moved to France that the infection was discovered. No medical professional in the UK had ever helped me and I only felt like I was being helped after my move to France.

17. In France I have had a lot of treatment for these infections including chemotherapy and various courses of Interferon, the last of which cleared the Hepatitis C in 2012. The first few courses of Interferon were unsuccessful. All treatment was carried out in France at the Francois Metterand Hospital by Dr Alexander Pariente. I suffered various side effects from the treatment including weight loss, constant sickness, thinning of the hair, aching limbs and fatigue which rendered me able to only manage to do one thing per day be it meeting a friend or shopping. I was very depressed. I still need to go for annual routine check ups.

18. My family were very upset when I informed them of my diagnosis. I have two daughters and one son. It was very difficult for all of us.

## Section 6. Treatment/care/support

19. No counselling or psychological support was made available to me in consequence of being infected.

## Section 7. Financial Assistance

20. I received a payment of £20,000 from the Skipton Fund in the mid 2000's. My daughter rang and told me to apply. I found the application process challenging as it

was not easy for me to handle the technology side of things. It was not very accessible for people who are not computer literate. The Fund informed me that I could only receive £20,000 and that no further payment would be made.

## Section 8. Other Issues

21. If I meet anyone with a cold, I will get it. I try to take vitamins, eat fruit, but I have a very bad immune system for which I blame my infection! Putting on weight is very hard. Everyone tells me I'm getting thinner and thinner even though I believe I eat well. Last I weighed myself, I was 39kg. Even now, I feel impacted by everything that has happened.

## Anonymity

I do not want to be anonymous and I understand that this Statement will be published on the Public Inquiry website.

I do not want to be called upon for oral evidence.

## Statement of Truth

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

**NOT RELEVANT**

## Anonymity

I do not want to be anonymous and I understand that this Statement will be published on the Public Inquiry website.

I do not want to be called upon for oral evidence.

## Statement of Truth

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

Signed.. GRO-C: Anna Fothergill ..

Dated 29 · 5 · 2019