

Witness Name: Kate Day

Statement No.: WITN3305001

Exhibits: **None**

Dated: 24/07/19

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

WRITTEN STATEMENT OF KATE DAY

I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 3 June 2019.

I, Kate Day, will say as follows: -

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Kate Day. My date of birth is GRO-C 1964 and I live in London. My full address is known to the Inquiry. I am single and I have two young adult children who are 22 and 23. I am unemployed. I intend to speak about my infection with Hepatitis C. In particular, the nature of my illness, how the illness affected me, the treatment I received and the impact it had on me and my family and friends.

Section 2. How Infected

2. To my knowledge I had a haemorrhage when I had my tonsils out in 1970 and I was given a blood transfusion. I don't know where this was or how much blood I was given. My Mum is now dead so I cannot find out. However, from my Mum's stories it sounds like it was quite a dramatic time.
3. I was also given blood in January 1991 when I had tubal surgery (fallopian tube surgery). That was at the Royal Free Hospital but I don't remember any

doctors' names. I'm convinced I was given blood transfusions and I have spoken to my ex-husband and he's sure that I had blood transfusions.

4. I don't know how much blood I was given but I was in hospital for 12 days which is quite unusual for the operation, so it suggests I was quite poorly. The reason I have little memory and am a bit hazy about this is because I went to a psychiatric hospital straight after being in hospital. To my knowledge, no information was given to me before the blood transfusions.
5. In 1995 I had a haematoma when I gave birth to my first son at University College Hospital ("UCH"). As far as I know for that one I was given plasma. It was a horrific birth because I had been given an epidural which didn't work, it missed because I was having a contraction when it was given. During the birth I also had an Episiotomy (which is the site where the haematoma occurred). My partner was called to give permission for me to be unstitched and re-stitched but I was only allowed gas and air to go through that because I had had the epidural. It was incredibly painful.
6. I was given a form to complain after that but my son was my first child and I'd wanted a child forever. My named midwife had been with me for the birth and I was so grateful I had a baby that I did not pursue the complaint.
7. With my second baby in early 1997, also at UCH, I had another haematoma after an episiotomy and a tear. That birth was a lot easier to deal with in a way because they gave me a spinal block and a drug called Pethidine to deal with the haematoma. During this labour I was given a blood transfusion.
8. I discovered during that pregnancy that I had Hepatitis C. My second child was born in GRO-C 1997 so it was either late 1996 or early 1997 when I found out.
9. I was told over the phone by my GP. They said that they'd looked at my blood tests and discovered I had Hepatitis C. I can't remember if I gave my consent for blood tests to be taken. As a result of my diagnosis, both of my babies had to have intravenous blood taken from them for testing. The results were negative.

10. Afterwards, the GP didn't do anything, there was no follow-up appointment with my GP. I did see someone at the Mortimer Market Clinic which is the venereal disease clinic for UCH and is on UCH grounds. This was probably sometime in 1997 after my son was born in GRO-C. I felt that the clinic was a clinic for dirty diseases and for me, Hepatitis C had some sort of connotation with sexually transmitted diseases. I can't remember if someone made an appointment for me or if I did. I assume someone else did as I wouldn't have known where to go and at that time I didn't realise Hepatitis C was particularly serious.
11. At the Mortimer Market Clinic, on either the first or second appointment, the doctor advised me not to have the Interferon and Ribavirin treatment then because it was invasive and there were side effects so it was not conducive with looking after two babies. I don't know the title or the profession of the man I saw. I wasn't told how to manage Hepatitis C at the clinic. I wasn't madly worried about the infection. When the GP had spoken to me on the phone I didn't get the impression it was anything to be madly worried about.
12. I remember at one point the doctors gave sharing toothbrushes or sharing apples as possible reasons for getting Hepatitis C. But the only person I could have done that with was my partner but he was tested and he didn't have it. This all seemed odd, as I don't remember any healthcare professionals suggesting I could have contracted Hepatitis C via infected blood from another person at this time.
13. I've always been convinced that I got Hepatitis C from either blood products or blood transfusions; either during or after an operation or procedure as there is no other way I could have got it. I said that to a doctor at either UCH hospital or the Mortimer Market Clinic and they said that I wouldn't have got it in 1997 but it was true that people got Hepatitis C from blood before. I cannot recall the doctor's name.
14. In 2008 I had a hysterectomy and that's when they put together the fact that within the UCH during those years I'd been given blood during the last few

operations. I was sent to the haematology department and it was discovered that I had Factor XI deficiency which is also known as Haemophilia C.

15. I know I was given three pints of blood after the hysterectomy. It was through key hole surgery and I didn't lose blood but I had the most massive bruise all over. That's the only operation where I know how much blood I was given but I assume I was given more blood at the other operations as I actually lost blood during those procedures.
16. I remember that later on, once I had been referred back to the main hospital at UCH, I saw a specialist and he did explain what Hepatitis C was. I think he was a hepatic or some sort of liver specialist. He gave me a thick booklet about the general condition and how the treatments affected you. I don't remember the doctor's name.
17. I can't remember when this was but I think there were a few years between my appointment at the Mortimer Market Clinic and seeing the specialist. There were 9 or 10 years between me finding out I had Hepatitis C and starting treatment. When I saw the specialist at UCH he discussed treatment options with me and I then went on to have the Interferon and Ribavirin treatment.
18. In between my appointment at the Mortimer Market Clinic and seeing the specialist at UCH I wasn't being monitored. I don't know what led to me being sent to UCH. My memory doesn't help me with that but it's possible I may have decided that I wanted treatment now that my children were 9 and 10. If that is what happened then I am not sure who I spoke to, it was possibly my GP and then I was referred on.
19. The other thing that may have initiated it was that I was on Lithium at the time. I was initially prescribed Lithium by my psychiatrist and this was then carried on by my GP. It was a condition of my job that I took the Lithium. Lithium is notoriously bad for your kidneys so I wanted to make sure I preserved my liver.

Section 3. Other Infections

20. I was only infected with Hepatitis C.

Section 4. Consent

21. With the Hepatitis C testing, I wasn't aware that I had had the test.
22. I think I may have been asked at some point when I was pregnant if I wanted an AIDS test. I cannot recall which pregnancy this was. They said that they weren't going to give the results of the tests to the individuals because it was just for statistics. I didn't agree to have the test because it seemed pointless to me if they weren't going to give me the results.
23. I am not aware of being tested for anything else. The treatment for Hepatitis C was given with my consent.

Section 5. Impact

24. It's true that I've never been sporty and I've never run for buses or anything like that. I have always been a bit lazy. Until a couple of years ago I didn't have a lot of energy and I wasn't particularly active. I don't know if the Hepatitis C contributed to that.
25. I've got emphysema, oesophagitis, arthritis and a hernia but I don't think any of this is related to Hepatitis C. I have bi-polar which in the past was called manic depression. It is so severe that I have been hospitalised for it many times. Because my mental health issues have been so significant I tend to downplay other things.
26. I've been told that my liver did deteriorate but I presume it has repaired itself. I'm lucky in that I have made some bad choices of lifestyle but drinking isn't one of them. After I was told I had liver damage this was not followed up and I don't see a liver specialist now.

27. When I was told I had Hepatitis C it came as a shock to me but I didn't appreciate how serious it was. I didn't even know what it was. At the time, until I knew more about it, I do remember thinking that it must be relevant for the doctor to tell me and I wondered how I'd got it.
28. Because of my mental health I was never taken seriously for anything and I never pursued things. For example, when I wanted HRT I had a doctor who was very against it. It's a bugbear of mine that I think because I have mental health issues people treat me differently. I think that if someone else had gone in they would have made the decision about the treatment themselves, not the doctor. I think that if I did not have a history of mental illness, the doctor would have agreed to begin the treatment without resistance and delay.
29. I didn't know the infected blood was widespread so I thought it was kind of a random thing that had happened to me and I didn't pursue anything at the time. I didn't go to any support groups or anything, I kind of just get on with things a lot because I have my mental health issues to deal with. There has been a loss of self-respect from me because of the Hepatitis C. The only reason I know now and feel that finally I will be believed when I say I got it through infected blood is because I have seen the Inquiry in the recent news.
30. After I got the leaflet from the specialist at UCH I was worried that my life would be cut short. I had two children and I wanted to do what I could to get rid of the infection. That's when I wanted to go on to the Interferon treatment.
31. In 2006 I started on Interferon and Ribavirin treatment for Hepatitis C. It was for 6 months in total, I was tested after 3 months and the treatment was extended for a further 3 months. After 6 months of treatment the virus had cleared.
32. I felt I had to push to get the treatment. In 1997 I wasn't given the option of treatment due to my circumstances, being a single mum with two babies. I also remember being told that I didn't have significant liver damage and this may be another reason why I was not offered treatment at that time. I told

the doctors I was only an occasional drinker so I think they thought the progression of liver damage was going to be quite slow.

33. After I had gone back to the main hospital at UCH and seen the specialist, I know they didn't offer me treatment on the first or second visit. I remember asking for treatment. There wasn't a lot of reluctance from them to give it to me but I felt I had to ask for it more than it just being automatically given to me. In fairness, they may have said that they were proposing to give me treatment at a later date and then I asked to be given it then.
34. There were side effects. When I administered the injections, for the first couple of days after I had flu like symptoms and I felt very achy, weak and generally unwell.
35. I think my mind was quite affected. I wasn't able to concentrate and mentally I did feel weak. On the treatment I was foggy brained and I had very little energy.
36. I was always very honest about my infection with my dentist. Nobody has refused to treat me but I was moved from a normal dentist to a clinic dentist. I cannot remember when that was. The clinic dentist is one that only sees children or elderly people who need a lot of dentistry or people who are afraid of the dentist. The reason they gave for moving me was because I seemed terrified of the dentist but I never thought I was scared of the dentist.
37. I don't know if they referred me because of the Hepatitis C. Or it could have been because I had Haemophilia C. I have to take tranexamic acid if I'm having a tooth out and I carry a card saying I have Factor XI deficiency so any medical professional is aware.
38. In 2007 I wanted a minor cosmetic procedure. I can't remember which clinic it was with, it may have been Spire. During the course of the consultation I told the nurse, just before I had blood tests, that I had had Hepatitis C but I had been treated and no longer had it.

39. The long and short of it was that they wouldn't do the operation because of it. I said that I was telling them because they may find antibodies in my blood but there was no chance of anyone getting the infection from me. I said that there was more chance of them getting it from people who didn't know they'd had Hepatitis C. They showed ignorance about it and compared it to herpes, insisting that it was latent and could reappear at any time. They wouldn't give me the operation on those grounds.
40. There was another time, I think it was when I was in hospital for the birth of my second child, and a member of staff had cut their finger or spiked it with a needle or something like that. They asked me to stay in for an extra day while they tested themselves. I can't remember all the circumstances of that. I had just had a baby and having babies was the most important thing to me at that time.
41. I kept a lot of the worry about it to myself or very immediate people. I wasn't with my partner at the time but I did talk to him about it. I couldn't tell my boss for example.
42. In terms of the impact on my family life, I think particularly when I was going through the treatment I couldn't do much with my children. I think my children suffered while I was having treatment to a degree. It also didn't feel very nice when my children were babies and they had to have blood taken from them intravenously to test for the Hepatitis C.
43. My children are aware of my diagnosis. They probably found out around the time I was having treatment when they would have been 9 and 10. I asked them to keep my diagnosis and treatment a secret because they went to the school where I worked. That's probably not a good thing because it would have put pressure on them and they would have known it was a serious thing they shouldn't talk about.
44. They didn't take the news badly, they're very resilient. But my children were affected. They saw me sometimes injecting myself and to a child that probably seems more significant than if an adult saw it. They were aware I was quite tired and that I didn't function as well as I used to.

45. I didn't tell my Dad and Step-Mum because I felt I might be judged. My Dad didn't understand my mental illness for a long time and with me having children I think he worried about that. So I was loathed to tell them as I thought I would get the opposite of support.
46. I told my best friend but I didn't tell a lot of my friends. My best friend was okay about it. It's not the reason I told her but I think she'd had herpes or something like that so I'm sure she'd felt a bit of stigma around that. I did discuss the Hepatitis C with her and I'm sure her opinion of me didn't change but I was worried that for a lot of people it would change.
47. I didn't tell the boyfriend I had just prior to and while having treatment that I had Hepatitis C. He was absolutely furious with me when he found out, as he should be. That had quite an effect on me at the time. Because of my mental illness the Hepatitis C wasn't at the forefront of my mind and I thought well I'd managed to live with it for a long time. I should have told him though, he was furious because I hadn't said anything.
48. I worked as a part time teaching assistant and I'd had my job since 2001/2002. I completed my training to be a teaching assistant with the school I worked at. I had a letter from my psychiatrist saying I would be fine to do the job but on the condition that I took the Lithium I was prescribed.
49. My contract had always been renewed but in 2006 it wasn't. I was physically present when I was at work but, because of the treatment, I wasn't able to contribute anything. I had been warned before I started the treatment that I might not be able to do a job while on Interferon but I was determined to be there physically at work.
50. I definitely think that although I was physically present I wasn't doing my job to the best of my ability. I think it was because of the Interferon that my contract was not renewed. I am now unemployed and I am on benefits to a degree as a result of the Hepatitis C.

51. They say that part of my mental illness is chemical and the other part is affected by lifestyle. All the time I was working I managed to stay out of hospital with my mental health. Since I lost my job I've been in hospital 5 or 6 times. That's significant in the sense that I lost my job and having a job would have helped me to stay stable.

Section 6. Treatment/Care/Support

52. I was not offered any counselling or psychological support at any point at or after the diagnosis with Hepatitis C. I think the health visitor after I'd had my second baby mentioned it but nothing was offered to me at the time.
53. I'd never gone to any support groups before but after seeing the Inquiry on the TV I contacted the Hepatitis C Trust helpline and spoke to them about what happened.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

54. I have only just learnt that there is financial assistance for people who have been infected. I think it is disgusting that no one told me about it until I spoke to the Hepatitis C Trust helpline recently.
55. Even when I have spoken to people about it they are quite negative about the chances of me getting financial assistance because I don't have actual proof of how I got it. I can't remember who it was that said that but I have looked into it and proving it is on the balance of probabilities. I can see that if you're an intravenous drug user then there could be another explanation for the infection but for me there is no other way I could have got it.
56. I live on very little. My children are not children any more. One son is at university and the other is an apprentice. I used to receive a carers allowance when my children were not yet above 18 years of age, now they are legally adults I cannot claim a carers allowance to manage my own care, they would have to do this. But their study/working hours do not allow them

to register as carers for me, and they are not recompensed well for the apprenticeship position and have to manage living expenses on student loans, so they cannot afford to contribute to this loss of household income at this stage in their working lives. As they are now adults of working age I cannot claim child benefit any more either. As a result of both of these factors my weekly income has been reduced considerably for a person who has a low income to begin with.

57. When I consider the probability that the negligence of a government-funded organisation led to me contracting this infection, I'm surprised I haven't been offered financial assistance. I don't judge people who have used needles or anything, but with everything I have been judged for in the past it is important that I'm not judged now for something that isn't my fault. Compensation would recognise that the responsibility of having contracted Hepatitis C was not my own, and would personally validate my experience and challenge the stigma I have felt for having it.
58. Even though they say that giving financial assistance is not admitting responsibility, for me that is as near as it gets to them admitting responsibility.
59. I haven't applied for funding. I'm at the stage of looking for my medical records. I've written to my GP to ask for my medical records and they told me it only goes back to 1994. I've had an appointment with the haematologist at UCH in the last few weeks and they said the records only go back to 1994. I'm sceptical as to whether I will be able to get records from the Royal Free. My mum's dead and my Dad probably wouldn't have a clue about where my records for the tonsillectomy are.

Section 8. Other Issues

60. Hepatitis C was until recently looked at as a dirty disease. I didn't tell people for that reason. Even doctors looked at it as a dirty disease and maybe that's changing now there's an Inquiry.

61. If I'm successful applying for financial assistance that will help but more than anything it dispels peoples' attitudes or possible attitudes about Hepatitis C.
62. At the end of the day, I did need to have blood transfusions. Most of the time you have transfusions without your knowledge while you're under anaesthetic. I wasn't told about any risks but even if someone had said before that there was a risk of contamination I wouldn't really have had a choice. It would be irrelevant if they said anything before because if you need a blood transfusion then you would decide to have it even if there is a risk, because that against dying is better.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed

GRO-C

Dated

24/07/19