Witness Name: Ian Brayzier
Statement No.: WITN2860001
Exhibits: 0
Dated: 2 December 2020

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF IAN BRAYZIER

Section 1. Introduction

I, Ian Brayzier, will say as follows: -

1. My date of birth and address are known to the Inquiry.

2. I live with my partner, Lesley McEvoy, in Cheshire. We have been together as a couple since 2012, and living together since 2015.

3. Lesley has prepared a witness statement for the Inquiry and I make this statement in support of her statement. She has set out the details of how she was infected and the impact infected blood has had on her life in her statement. My statement describes the impact from my perspective.

Section 2. How Affected

4. My partner's statement explains in detail the circumstances of her infection with Hepatitis C (HCV). I did not know her at the time she was

infected, only meeting her in 2012. When we met, she did not feel able to tell me about her infection immediately because HCV infection is difficult to discuss with someone you do not know well due to the stigma of the disease. We got to know each other gradually, and a few months into our relationship she told me about her HCV infection and the circumstances in which she had been infected. She was very anxious when she told me, and she still is today, when she has to tell anyone new about her infection.

Section 3. Other Infections

5. I do not believe my partner received any infection other than HCV as a result of being given infected blood.

Section 4. Consent

6. I do not believe my partner was treated or tested without her knowledge or consent, or for the purposes of research.

Section 5. Impact

7. The mental impact of HCV on my partner has been the anxiety she feels about her physical health and the stigma of the disease. In addition, the ongoing public Inquiry has increased my partner's levels of stress. She gave oral evidence at the Inquiry, which was a very hard thing for her to do. She finds it difficult to talk about her HCV, given the level of stigma that still exists.

8. In terms of stigma, my partner knows that she is treated differently from others as a result of the infection and, as a result, she thinks of herself as different. She talks of her life when her children were growing up, before she was diagnosed, and describes having a perfectly normal family life. I understand that she used to be outgoing and would host events for family

and friends. Over the years, since diagnosis and treatment, she has become more and more withdrawn and reclusive. Nowadays she likes to keep to herself and would never organise social gatherings of her own volition.

9. I think some of this social isolation is down to the physical impact of the infection and its treatment. Since we met in 2012, I have seen a big change in her. When we first met we used to walk the dog a lot, take trips and go sightseeing. Now she cannot walk much more than 300-400 yards without being in crippling pain. She was diagnosed with fibromyalgia as a result of the effects of the treatment, so each day is different. She suffers with chronic fatigue and chronic muscle and joint pain. Some days she is not so bad, and other days she is unable to get out of bed and feels very low. My partner gets very upset about the physical impact the infection and its treatment has had on her, and this contributes to the anxiety she feels. She finds it very difficult and upsetting to talk together about this.

10. At the time we met, my partner was still suffering from the long term effects of treatment on her health, even though it was nearly two years since her treatment had ended. She was left with a cough and a weakened heart valve as a result of her prolonged treatment. We worked together to build up her fitness with lots of walks in the countryside. However, she soon began to struggle with pain in her joints, and over the years this pain has worsened.

11. Our relationship has been affected as I know she is upset that we cannot do the sorts of things we were starting to enjoy when we first met, like walking. She has always been very apologetic, and at first would tell me that she was sure she would regain her fitness. Sadly, this has never happened and her health has steadily declined.

12. We used to enjoy going on a yearly trip to Brighton. However, we were not able to go last year as she felt unable to manage it. We will try again this year and see how it goes. We also used to regularly visit my son together, however, she no longer accompanies me as she feels she will hold us up and spoil the weekend for everyone else. She worries that we will change our plans to accommodate her, and she does not want to be a burden. She feels unable to get involved in things like she used to and I think this is contributing to her withdrawing from others.

13. I know she feels disappointed in her health, and the impact this has had on our relationship. Many times she has said that she will understand if I no longer want to be in a relationship with her. I am saddened that we cannot do as much together as we had hoped to be able to do, and sometimes now I do things on my own, and I wish she was with me. I find it hard to see her struggling with her health.

14. The stigma of the disease still impacts on her. Whenever she has a blood test she has to declare she is HCV antibody positive, and then there always follows questions about how she contracted the virus. She is also unable to be a blood or organ donor. She will not tell people she has been infected unless she has a very good reason for doing so. If she mentions she has had treatment, she will often let people assume it was for cancer.

15. My partner has suffered greatly from a financial perspective. Although she was very unwell during and after treatment, she had to return to work after her treatment ended in order to make ends meet. This was exhausting for her after the treatment she had undergone and there is simply no way she would be able to do that job any more, given her current state of health.

Section 6. Treatment/Care/Support

16. Please refer to my partner's statement.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

17. Please refer to my partner's statement.

Section 8. Other Issues

18. I hope the Inquiry investigates the issues around heat treatment very carefully. If it turns out that blood that was labelled as heat treated was not in fact heat treated then someone needs to answer for this. I would like to see people brought to justice. So many lives have been ruined.

19. The focus needs to be on those infected and affected. Startlingly few people know about the contaminated blood disaster, even though it is the worst disaster in the history of the NHS.

20. The infected and affected must also be adequately compensated for the terrible effect this has had on so many lives.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed GRO-C

Dated ....2\12\2020:.....