

Witness Name: Diane Broom
Statement No: WITN4103001
Exhibits: WITN4103002-3
Dated: 26 August 2020

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

WRITTEN STATEMENT OF DIANE BROOM

I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 9 March 2020.

I, Diane Broom, will say as follows: -

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Diane Broom. I'm 56 years of age. My date of birth is GRO-C
1964. I live at GRO-C
2. I have 2 children and 7 grandchildren. I work full-time as a retail assistant.
3. I intend to speak about my infection with Hepatitis C (HCV) following a blood transfusion in 1983. This is something that I only became aware of a few months ago, and therefore have lived with for 37 years without knowing.

4. In particular, I intend to speak about the nature of my illness, how the illness has affected me (and still is affecting me), the treatment I have received, the impact it has had on my life and on the lives of my loved ones.
5. I am not legally represented and I am happy for the Inquiry team investigators to assist me with my statement.

Section 2. How Infected

6. I gave birth to my son, Michael, on GRO-C 1980 at the Royal Victoria Hospital in Bournemouth. It was an easy birth, and a natural one. It was just one and a half hours in labour. There were some complications to begin with. I was in there two weeks prior to going into labour because my blood pressure was through the roof. I was with my partner, John, at the time and life was brilliant. He was a laborer, working at his father's company. I was a receptionist at the Carlton hotel.
7. Three years later I gave birth to my daughter, Carrie'ann on GRO-C 1983. That was a traumatic birth. It was an emergency caesarian and I was given multiple blood transfusions.
8. When I went into labour, Carrie'ann was in the breech position. The doctors tried to turn her a few times, but she's as stubborn as her mother and she wasn't budging.
9. The nurse came in to the hospital room and examined me. She told me my waters would be breaking soon. Before she left the room, I felt a gush. The nurse was shocked, looked at me and said 'Oh shit' and hit the emergency buzzer. I was hemorrhaging.
10. I was rushed down to surgery and I was told to calm down but I was terrified. I was fighting the medication and I was in a bit of a state. To calm me down they had to sedate me. It all happened very quickly, probably within the space

of about two minutes. They put me to sleep and that's the last I knew for about 8 hours.

11. When I woke up, I could see lots of blood in bags hanging over me and that I was on a drip. Apparently they had to change arms as the veins in my left arm had collapsed. They told me I had received over three pints of blood.
12. There was about 5 people there and they were pressing on my stomach. John was there too. I didn't know where the baby was. I was absolutely petrified. They were talking about giving me more blood. I began to panic again. I felt as if nobody was listening to me. I accidentally punched a doctor but I don't remember that. They had to knock me out again because the more I would move, the worse the hemorrhaging got. They had to sedate me twice.
13. When I came around, my partner John told me that I had given birth to a healthy baby girl. She was 7 pounds and 5 ounces. They explained to me that I had hemorrhaged; and that the more I had moved, the more blood I had lost. So they had to keep sedating me. It was very traumatic. If I had been booked in for a caesarian they would have gone through the process properly. But they didn't have the time to do any of that. All they did was take off my rings and my necklace.
14. I went into labor in the afternoon and my daughter was delivered just before midnight. The following day I think it was about 2pm, the doctor told me the bleeding had stopped, and then the baby was wheeled in. I had to wait for a midwife to come in and pick her up and hand to me.
15. I was in hospital for 14 days. I was kept in a private room because of the risk of infection. I remember feeling euphorically happy. I couldn't stop crying because of the sheer emotion that I had been through. They told me that if they hadn't gotten the baby out in time, I wouldn't have made it. I had survived. Carrie'ann has developed healthily and she is 36 this year.
16. I hadn't consented to the blood transfusions; I didn't have the chance to. John wasn't present at the time because he was taking my son to my parents'

place, so he hadn't consented to it either. He was only made aware of it after I had been given blood.

17. For a while I wasn't allowed to lift the baby or even lift a heavy kettle of water. I had staples, not stitches, and they had to heal. Life continued and I got better with time. I had had 2 children by the age of 25. I felt tired after the transfusion, but not lethargic, that only happened fairly recently.

18. Unfortunately, John passed away at a very early age, he was only 44. It was a heart attack, while he was at work. They put it down to natural causes. Carrie'ann was 3 when her father died.

19. After that I was a single mum for two years. I was working and looking after my children.

20. I then met Tom two years after John passed away. My son was 8 at the time and Carrie'ann was 5. Tom was a tree surgeon. I used to say he was my little lumberjack. We moved to GRO-C where he and his brother had a business.

21. Four years into my relationship with Tom, I was told I had to have a hysterectomy; the birth of Carrie'ann had damaged me internally. I was only 25. I didn't have a blood transfusion then. After that I went straight into menopause.

22. I was with Tom for about 8 years. Then he traded me in for a younger model.

23. Later I met Simon and we got married in Romsey on 21 March 1989.

24. Simon and I were married for 10 years and then

GRO-C

GRO-C

25. Then Carrie'ann fell pregnant and everything fell apart. My aunt passed away too. She had cancer. She was shopping in Melbourne and collapsed. She was taken to hospital and died 2 hours later.

26. Simon and I then divorced in 2000. My grandson, Liam, was born in the same year, on [GRO-C] 2000. After that I was single for a while.
27. Then, 10 years down the line, I met [GRO-C] But [GRO-C] has now left me, since I found out about the HCV in February. I became single practically as soon as I got my results. This was around the 7 February 2020.
28. Just before the Christmas of 2019, I started to feel like something wasn't right. I was very tired all of the time. I work in quite a demanding store and I was moving flat, so I thought it was all of that. But it didn't make sense. Normally I can function on about 4-5 hours sleep. But all of a sudden, I was exhausted all the time and I would immediately fall asleep when I got home. I would just drift off.
29. All I wanted to do was go to bed and I would sleep for ages. On occasions I would wake up at some ridiculous time in the night and not be able to get back to sleep again. I wouldn't say I was depressed but I was on the verge of it. I would sit at home just staring into space for hours. I couldn't figure out what it was or what was wrong?
30. I knew there was something going on. My nails kept breaking and my hair was falling out. I had nice long hair a while ago but ever since I went through the menopause I've had it short because of the hot sweats.
31. I also had this awful pain in my feet. It was like my feet were breaking underneath me, I couldn't walk. I couldn't put my weight on my feet. I would crawl to the toilet at night. The doctors thought it was arthritis. I was given co-codamol and then amitriptyline for the pain. [GRO-C] to help with the pain and that was the only remedy that really helped numb the pain.
32. Around the end of November or beginning of December 2019, they did a blood test in my old surgery; Grove Road Medical Practice, Shirley, Southampton. But I never got a follow-up, or any results back.

33. When I moved into my new flat a few months later, I changed GP. I changed to Stoneham Surgery, Southampton. I went in to register on a Monday, and on the same day I got a call from them asking me to get a blood test. This was to follow up on the previous blood test I had had with my old GP but had never heard back about. Apparently my new Doctor had seen the results of my previous test on my notes and wasn't happy about something he had seen.
34. I had my bloods done at Southampton General that Wednesday, on my day off. Then I got a call from the surgery asking if I could come in that Friday.
35. When I went in, Dr. Greenfield asked me if I had been with anyone who had taken intravenous drugs. I said that I hadn't and that I only had 3 partners in my life. He asked me about drinking. I told him that I don't drink much, about 4 times a year – on birthdays or Christmas.
36. I don't celebrate New Years, that's when my dad died. I'd had my ears pierced for my 16th birthday, and I got my first tattoo done when I was 50, but both of those were done professionally, in a proper studio. Dr. Greenfield said something abnormal had come up. I said, "you can't tell me I'm pregnant – I'll sue the NHS because I had a hysterectomy at the age of 25."
37. He then told me I had HCV, and he asked me if I had ever had a blood transfusion. I was absolutely distraught.
38. My initial understanding of it was AIDS. I was on my own when I went to see him. I broke down and I wondered around his office a lot. He explained everything to me. He told me that there are 5 different types of HCV. I was told I had Genotype 1a Hepatitis C. My viral load was over 30 million, the exact figure was 30,474,745
39. I was in there for an hour and a half. He took time and cancelled his other appointments. He's a good doctor, he's brilliant. I couldn't fault him. He told me, "being single is going to be pretty damn good. You can't get hurt."

Section 3. Other Infections

40. I do not believe I have been infected with any other infection apart from HCV during the blood transfusion I received.

Section 4. Consent

41. I hadn't consented to the blood transfusions that I received when I gave birth to my daughter, but I hadn't had a chance to. I know that they had to give me blood.

Section 5. Impact

42. When I found out, I rang my deputy store manager, Karen and told her that I'd been given a sick note and my doctor had signed me off for work for 3 days. I went into work the following Monday and again spoke to Karen, I explained to her what the problem was and she said I would have to speak with the store manager, [GRO-D]. By the time I spoke with [GRO-D] [GRO-C] and I had split up.

43. After I had left the surgery with this awful news I called [GRO-C] on his mobile and left a voicemail. He called me back and I told him what had happened, when we were on the phone he Googled HCV and he told me it would be ok and that it wasn't as bad as it seemed. He was quite positive on that phone call.

44. I told him that I had a lot to process and that I wouldn't see him that day. I suggested a roast dinner for the coming Sunday and he was happy with that. He came over for roast lamb and that was the last time I ever saw him.

45. When he came in I went to give him a hug and a kiss and he backed away. I knew something was up. Then I sat and talked a load of nonsense, sometimes I just waffle on. He didn't ask me how I was feeling. He said he was going to get tested the following day and I encouraged that.
46. We had always practiced safe sex from the start. We used condoms because he had previously had far more sexual partners than me, so I wanted to. I didn't think about getting tested. I'm a healthy person. I do smoke, but I eat healthy. I exercise and all the rest.
47. He got tested and he rung me on the Wednesday night. He called to tell me that he was all clear and he wanted to wish me all the best for the rest of my life. He said, "I think I need to move on, I can't be with somebody like you."
48. We had been together for 3 years. He was my daughter's landlord, that's how we met. She had been renting his properties for 8 years or so. We would see each other 3 or 4 times a week, he would stay over but we didn't live together. He had helped me move into my flat on 5 December 2019. He got me my fridge, freezer, drier and cooker. He said it was a treat.
49. As I said earlier, when I got back to work on the Monday, I explained what had happened to GRO-D the Department Store Manager. I think it was 7 February 2020. I was supervisor at the time. I asked her if I could take emergency week leave, even though that meant I would have about 2 weeks off. She said, "I think you need it."
50. By this time, I hadn't spoken to any of my family. It was very difficult to tell them. I went and visited my mum, she is 84. She just went to church and prayed.
51. I told my daughter and my son. My son took some time to process it. He rang me a few days later and he was supportive. My daughter said, "if you get ill, you come and live with me and I'll take care of you."

52. My grandchildren don't know that I have HCV. We made the decision not to tell them unless it gets worse.
53. When I went back to work, all of a sudden I couldn't do anything right, or at least in the Store Manager's eyes. His name is GRO-D He kept telling me I was doing things wrong, even though we had always done them that way.
54. He called me in for a meeting and asked me why I always needed Wednesdays off. My grandson GRO-C and I always sit with Harry on a Wednesday when my daughter goes to college. He is 17 now but I still sit with him just in case. GRO-D said to me, "you are not fit for purpose as a supervisor, Diane. And let's face it you can't do first aid with what you've got and that is a requirement as a supervisor in this company. Therefore, I am demoting you."
55. I make £160 less per month now. There's nothing I can do about it. There is no HR, and I am not part of a union.
56. I was supervisor of one department, with two sub-departments. I oversaw a team of five people. Once a month I would do their rotas, and make sure all of their holidays were booked. I would make sure everything was running smoothly, and I'd help with delivery. I would also help with customer services support.
57. I was in that role for 7 years. In that time, I only had to administer first aid once. A child had tripped over their laces and cut their knee on a shelf. I put gloves on and put a plaster on the child. I did the normal procedure, I gave advice and the next day I gave a follow up call. My diagnosis with HCV should not have had an impact on my first aid abilities since you can mask up and glove up to do it.
58. The shop I work at is called GRO-D it's a department store. We've just had an GRO-D fitted so we sell frozen food. When lockdown happened, the company owner rushed to get a freezer put in so that we were made essential

business. I don't like the company, but it's a job. I can't leave. So many businesses are going under.

59. Through no fault of my own I have been given HCV and have had this fall out with work. I can't get my head around it. I know I was tired and I had a hard time walking, but my deadlines were met. I was performing.

60. When I look back, it makes sense. I think about what was happening and I can see it was the HCV. There was one time quite recently where I couldn't breathe at work. My body shut down. One minute I wasn't feeling 100% and the next thing I knew the ambulance was there and I was going to hospital.

61. They said I had an abnormal heart rate and did an electrocardiogram (ECG). They thought I might have COPD, a lung disease, because I had given up smoking and it could have been my lungs adjusting. I went in to see the COPD nurse but I wasn't diagnosed with it. They just told me I wasn't breathing out properly.

62. This was in 2018. I think that's when the gradual decline started. I had no air con in my work place, and no heating in the winter. It has a tin roof. My health was generally deteriorating. I was staying at my daughter at the time. I was in between flats and became homeless. I'm in council accommodation now.

63. I did have brain fog and headaches. It felt like sleep walking, there was a haze over my memories. It felt like I was walking through smoke or a fog. And now my brain is nowhere nearly as sharp as it was. I forget things very quickly. It's gotten worse since the medication too.

64. There weren't any gall bladder issues. I did have my appendix out when it erupted. I'm a bit rusty with dates. When I had the menopause, I had hot sweats. I was about 36 when I came out of the menopause. This was after the hysterectomy. They left 1 ovary in just to keep me balanced. That's still there and there haven't been issues with that.

65. My new GP, Dr. Greenfield, informed me that the first blood test I had done at my previous doctors had shown that I had a fatty liver; I was never informed of this.
66. I have also been unable to get dental treatment as a result of having HCV. Recently, my in-fill fell out and I need it put back in. I have tried booking in with a dentist but because I have HCV nobody will treat me. I asked 5 different dentists and they all refused. I stopped trying because it was so demoralizing. The list of dentists I contacted are as follows: Highfield, 02380557063; Ferry House, 02380332255; Dental Group 02380556449; Polygon 02380390090.
67. I have had HCV from 1983 up until 2020. That's 37 years I've lived with it and didn't know. I am so angry at the whole process. I am totally demolished.
68. The medication has since fixed the pain, but not the HCV. Once the HCV is undetectable, I could ask work for my job back but I am not going to.
69. I was demoted. I can't get dental treatment. Mentally, it has destroyed me. If I could, I would be constantly crying. It has changed my life forever. I didn't ask for this.

Section 6. Treatment/Care/Support

70. After Dr. Greenfield had delivered the news, I was referred to the Hepatitis Clinic at Southampton General. They were very nice there. My nurse's name was Becky. She was very nice and she gave me the number to call the Inquiry. She also told me I could get compensation but I did not apply.
71. At the hospital, I was seen straight away. I was asked all the same questions about intravenous drugs and alcohol. They did blood tests again and gave me a scan. It wasn't invasive or a biopsy, just through the skin. They pushed right through my ribs which ached for days afterwards.

72. I'm allergic to penicillin and polystyrene, so they did blood tests to make sure I would be ok with the medication. They weighed me, took my blood pressure and calculated my BMI. Then Becky, the nurse told me about Maviret medication and prescribed me the eight week course. She said it cures alcoholics. I reiterated very clearly that I'm not an alcoholic, and she told me she hadn't meant it that way.

73. I was meant to start the medication on 25 March 2020 but then lockdown happened. This worried me and I contacted the investigator to let him know. The HCV clinic reassured me that once I started it I would have nothing to worry about ever again.

74. I started the treatment on Monday 28 June for 8 weeks. I went to Royal South Hants Hospital, Southampton for the treatment. It was horrible. I've never felt so ill in my life. I wished I hadn't been born.

75. I suffered terribly on the medication. I had dry skin, so I kept myself extra moisturized. I have a bit more of an itchy scalp than skin. That comes and goes at the moment. It was mostly the nausea that was unbearable. I couldn't even manage a cup of tea, never mind the two litres of water I was supposed to drink a day. The medication was meant to be taken with food, at 6am in the morning, which was hard. I did manage it though. I suffered from night sweats but that may have been from the hot weather we have been having as opposed to the HCV treatment.

76. When I initially spoke to the investigator he asked me to keep a diary of the treatment and how it made me feel, below is what I wrote.

On Monday 29th June 2020, I started my medication. Maviret, 100mg/40mg, 3 tablets a day for 8 weeks.

Week 1:

Day 1. I felt nausea at the end of the day. Following that a chronic headache. Trying to drink 2 litres of water as recommended (it's just not happening). The nausea is real bad.

Day 2. I didn't sleep well. The nausea kept me awake for most of the night and I still have my headache. I took my tablets 3 at one time today with water. The water is making me feel so ill. I got home from work and just cried.

Day 3. Wednesday. Even though it's my day off I can't function. My head is banging so much. I couldn't even go help my daughter and grandchildren

GRO-C

GRO-C

Day 4. Headache, nausea and fatigue. Not even enough strength to cook. Went straight to bed.

Day 5. Can't stop crying. Was sent home from work.

Day 6. I wish I wasn't born. I stayed in bed all day (day off).

Day 7. Can't go to work today. Diarrhoea. Great I don't get paid sick pay.

Week 2:

Day 1. Nausea and diarrhoea. Another day without pay. (Only 7 weeks to go).

Day 2. Tuesday. Back at work, not feeling great. Just so tired. Had my return to work form filled out (copy included).

Day 3. Struggled to do the shopping today. Feeling so so tired.

Day 4. Not feeling it today. It's really difficult to concentrate. No energy.

Day 5. As if life can't get any harder, my infill fell out today. I tried phoning my dentist even though they are not open. I spoke to my dentist and because of covid 19 and I've got Hep C, I can't be considered for treatment.

Day 6. Feeling so weak. I can hardly write and I'm on a late today. Roll on 8:15pm.

Day 7. Day off. Please god help me through this, please give me the strength to continue.

Week 3:

Day 1. Wow – woke up this morning with no headache.

Day 2. Even though I'm still feeling weak, today was a better day.

Day 3. Managed to go and visit my family today, social distancing, but it was fantastic to see them.

Day 4. Fatigued today.

Day 5. Just went straight to bed from work today. Nausea is back.

Day 6. Day off. This is no lie, can't even get out of bed, so tired.

Day 7. Feeling ok today. Today was a good day.

Week 4:

This is the first time I'm feeling a bit normal. I have to go to the hospital on Wednesday. Half way there, had bloods taken.

Week 5:

Even though I'm feeling fine, at the end of the day I completely have no energy.

Week 6:

Same as above.

Week 7:

Starting to feel normal, every day is getting so much better.

Week 8:

Wednesday. I went to the hospital. Wow I didn't know the results of my blood test had taken me from over 30 million down to just 54. More bloods taken, they are going to ring me next Wednesday (26th) with my final results. (End of treatment).

Well that was not fun, I never asked to get Hep C and I'm feeling very angry about the whole situation. Well done the NHS for dealing with covid-19, let's all clap them. Well let's not, they gave me Hep C and because of that I then had to take medication which made me ill so thank you NHS.

I produce a copy of these notes as my exhibit **WITN4103002**. I also produce a form detailing the time I had to have off work due to the medication; this is dated 5 July 2020. I produce this as my exhibit **WITN4103003**.

77. My viral load has gone down but the HCV is still not eradicated. It started off at 33 million, which was apparently the highest they had ever seen.

78. At 4 weeks my viral load had gone down to 56 but was not undetectable. Yesterday, at 7.5 weeks, I was told that the treatment has not fully worked. It was down to 21 but not undetectable. I had a meltdown.

79. I cried solidly for 2 hours. They told me it would be fine. I was expecting it to be all clear. My expectations were raised to the bar. Why did they build my hopes up like that?

80. I had a blood test yesterday, and there is another one booked for 16 September 2020 to follow-up. If it has not been successful I will have to go through that treatment again.

81. I have never been offered any counselling.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

82. I did not know how to apply for the compensation but the investigator told me about EIBSS and how to apply.

83. I called EIBSS on 25 August 2020 and they told me they will send me the stage 1 form. Which I will have to complete and my Doctor has to sign. I'm worried that as the Royal Victoria Hospital is no longer in existence my medical notes re the emergency caesarean and blood transfusion will never be located.

Section 8. Other Issues

84. I've been asked if I've ever donated blood and the answer is no.

85. I want justice. I don't want this to happen again. I don't want anyone else to go through what I'm going through.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed

GRO-C

Dated

20th August 2020