

Witness Name: MARK FOSTER

Statement No: WITN3965001

Exhibits: 0

Dated: FEBRUARY 2020

## INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

---

### FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF MARK FOSTER

---

I, Mark Foster, will say as follows:-

#### Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Mark Foster. I was born on [GRO-C] 1979 and I live at [GRO-C]  
[GRO-C] West Yorkshire, [GRO-C].
2. My mother, Ann Foster (born on [GRO-C] 1947), was infected with the Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) through a contaminated blood transfusion. She developed end stage liver cirrhosis and died on 17<sup>th</sup> February 2016, aged 67.
3. This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my mother's medical records. I requested them approximately one year ago and was told that it 'could take some time' before I receive them.

## **Section 2. How Affected**

4. My mother had a routine gallstone operation that resulted in the removal of her gall bladder due to high blood loss. The operation took place some time between 1990 and 1992 at the Barnsley General Hospital in South Yorkshire. During the operation my mother was transfused with several units of blood. Within days, my mother became very jaundiced and very confused. She became so poorly that she was practically at death's door.
5. The medical professionals then took my mother's blood in an attempt to ascertain what was wrong with her. It was at this point that they determined that she had HCV.
6. My mother was not given any warning about the risk of infection before or after the blood transfusion in 1990-1992. When it was determined that she had HCV, my mother was told that she had 'contracted' it without any admission on the part of the team that she had been infected through contaminated blood transfused to her. No explanation was given to her as to *how* she had *contracted* HCV. A consultant present at the hospital when my mother lay dying told my sister and I that the blood transfusion she had 26 years prior was the source of the infection.
7. I do not believe my mum was ever given advice about managing the risk of infection.

## **Section 3. Other Infections**

8. I do not believe that my mother was infected with anything other than HCV.

## **Section 4. Consent**

9. I do not know whether or not my mother was tested for HCV with consent.

## **Section 5. Impact**

10. I would have been something in the region of between 11 and 13 years old when my mother (Mum) had the operation and blood transfusion but I remember it clearly.
11. Mum had an almost immediate reaction. She was very unwell and looked like one of the Simpsons, she was so yellow. It was shocking to see her that way. My grandma had moved in with us to help out whilst Mum had the operation and Mum was in hospital for 7 days. She was so ill at one point that my father and grandma feared the worst and called the vicar to come in (Mum told him to f\*\*\* off when she saw him). Mum was a feisty character.
12. During the stay in hospital the hospital team told my mum that she had contracted hepatitis. We didn't think of it as a long term issue and that was perhaps naivety on our part. All we were told was that Mum would have it for the rest of her life and that it would have to be controlled. They did not explain the enormity of the condition to us and that the HCV would eat away at her liver until she died.
13. My father was a miner and Mum was a housewife and mother. Mum was a big, robust, no nonsense sort of lady. Within six months of the operation Mum's weight had dropped from around 18 stone to just 6 stone. She then regained some of her weight but not much of it. She was never again the fuller lady she once was. That said, things returned to normal. I do not believe Mum was unduly concerned about her health. She could run for a bus and, after my father died (in 1999), she enjoyed playing bingo at our local Centre with her friends (at the Centre she was known as the 'baby' of the group. Her friends were older). She was full of life.
14. My mum was always a private person and when it came to her health she never complained. However I know she would have spoken to us about anything of serious concern. My father went with my mum to her appointments when she was alive. I do not believe that they were given

advice about managing the risk of infection. By way of example, Mum was never worried if she cut herself. My father was never tested for HCV. We never even realised Mum had had a bad blood transfusion and that there was something wrong with her blood. We placed our trust in the hospital and they completely played down what they had done to her.

15. It was a shock to find out Mum was dying. My daughter and I had something to eat with Mum one Saturday and she was chatting to us before she asked me to call the doctor because she didn't feel well. Within 24 hours, she was a completely different person, lying in a hospital bed plucking strands of invisible cotton from the air in front of her. As soon as we mentioned to the hospital consultant that she had had a blood transfusion years ago, he immediately knew what had happened. He said 'You do realise the blood transfusion has caused this?' He went on to explain the effect on the liver of having HCV in the blood. Mum lasted 11 days in hospital and she believed she was getting better. She would ask us 'I'm looking a bit better today aren't I?' and we would lie and say she was. Liver cirrhosis and liver failure were the stated cause of death on her death certificate. She never drank or did anything particularly unhealthy like that. She didn't even smoke.

16. Approximately 10 years before Mum died, she coughed up blood and she had to have stents in the veins in her neck because they had worn thin. Some time later she had to have more stents in. She would call me and let me know what was happening. She never seemed unduly worried about any of it and never made a fuss. I may be wrong but I do not think that Mum was told in any particularly dramatic way why it was that the veins in her neck had deteriorated. My sister and I were looking at Mum's notes when she was dying and the hospital consultant spoke to us and said that that would have been 'the beginning of the end'.

17. I lost my mum, and my children have lost their grandmother. It was the shock of it all that got to me. When my mum passed away, one of my uncles

forwarded an article to me regarding the infected blood inquiry. Without him, I would not know this was even going on.

#### **Section 6. Treatment/care/support**

18. Mum had B12 injections on an annual basis but there was never an offer of HCV clearing treatment.

19. We were not offered any form of counselling or psychological support.

#### **Section 7. Financial Assistance**

20. My mother had to survive on a small pension once my father passed away. We/my mother had no financial assistance from any of the trusts and funds.

#### **Anonymity**

21. I do not want to apply for anonymity and I would like to give oral evidence to the Inquiry.

#### **Statement of Truth**

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

Signed.....

GRO-C

Dated.....19.03.2020.....