

Witness Name: David HADFIELD

Statement No.: WITN3997001

Exhibits: Nil

Dated: 27/04/2021

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

WRITTEN STATEMENT

of

DAVID HADFIELD

This statement is provided in response to a request made under Rule 9 of The Inquiry Rules 2006, dated 9th February, 2021.

I, David Hadfield, will say as follows:-

1. My name is David Hadfield and I was born on GRO-C 1964 in Gateshead. I am the son of Michael Hadfield. I intend to speak about my late father, his infection as a direct result of having been given contaminated blood and blood product; how this affected him, and its impact upon myself, my late mother Patricia Hadfield, our family and friends.
2. My father was born on GRO-C 1943 and died on 2nd July 1984. According to his death certificate, this was as a result of Haemorrhage, Hodgkins Disease, Pulmonary Tuberculosis and Diabetes Mellitus. He was just forty-one years of age.

3. My father had been diagnosed as having Hodgkin's Disease in his early twenties, and was later found to also have Haemolytic Anaemia. Later in life he developed Type 1 Diabetes.
4. His ailments were treated in different ways, many of which as a young person growing up, I was unaware of, but I have learned from my mother that he initially had to have regular blood transfusions before being given the blood product Factor VIII which replaced it. As time progressed he also had to take steroids and insulin.
5. My mother always thought that my father had become infected with Hepatitis C because of his use of blood or the blood product, but he died before this had been diagnosed, but the signs of hepatitis infection had become apparent before he passed away.
6. I noticed in around 1982, when I was seventeen or eighteen years old, that my father's health was declining. My recollection is that he was attending hospital from approximately 1980. I accompanied my mother, travelling by taxi, to these appointments where sometimes he would need to use a wheelchair. On occasions, one of my father's brothers supported at these appointments.
7. In about 1982, my father was noticeably and rapidly losing weight. His clothes were visibly hanging off of him and he was tired out all of the time. Prior to this he had been a big man and full of life, a family man.
8. About twelve months prior to his death, I could see that his skin had become a yellow / grey colour, he slept a lot and was always cold, so much so that my mother had to have a gas fire installed.
9. By this time, my father was unable to get in or out of the bath, so mother asked the council, as we were council tenants, if they would install a shower, but they refused. My mother made further requests and finally the council agreed to install a shower for him, but this didn't actually take place until the week after he had passed away. Their reluctance to help had left my mother having to wash my father as he became unable to do so himself.

10. About six months before he died, my father found himself unable to use the stairs and so I had to carry him up and downstairs so that he could access his bedroom, use the bathroom or the lounge – it was something I had to do every day until his death, but a few months prior to this we had moved his bed downstairs, and into the lounge which became both a lounge and his bedroom.
11. Over the last twelve months of his life, my grandmother also tried to support my mother with caring for my father as a means of not just helping him but of assisting her.
12. I was then employed as a full-time fork-lift driver, working night-shifts from 2.00a.m. until 11.00a.m. and was then helping care for my father during the day whilst one of my sisters was also working and our younger sister was at school.
13. I can clearly recall the day when my father died. I was having a driving lesson as my test had been booked for the following day. I can remember entering our street and seeing two ambulances parked outside of our house.
14. A neighbour and my grandmother saw me coming, and tried to stop me from going into the house. I can still remember a look of horror on both of their faces at that time.
15. I went into the house where I saw that my father was lying on the dining room floor where ambulance officers were attending to him, giving chest compressions. I remember hearing what I believe to have been his ribs cracking as they did so, seeing that there was blood everywhere and hearing my mother crying.
16. There was nothing that the ambulance personnel could do, he had died, but it seemed to take ages before they cleared their equipment and bags away. The neighbour, a friend of my fathers,' then placed a blanket over his body.
17. I felt, at that point, that my life had stopped and felt a great weight of responsibility being placed upon me, to look after my mother and two sisters. I was only twenty years of age, my sisters being nineteen and sixteen.

18. I can remember spending a long time scrubbing the carpet where he had lain as it was soaked in his blood. My sisters were both hysterical and slept with my mother that night, all three in her bed together.
19. Fortunately, my employer was very understanding and I was able to take a few weeks off of work, sorting things out and helping my family. My mother was very worried, financially. I gave her most of my wages each week to help out.
20. As a family we were all devastated. My mother and I tried to stay strong, for my sisters, and even now they find it very difficult to talk about our father.
21. My sisters and I all went on to marry, and had seven children between us. We have always felt a huge sadness because our father never got to see his children married or to have the chance of meeting his grandchildren.
22. My mother reacted by throwing herself into work and worked very hard as I knew that money was very tight. She focused on her children and grandchildren trying very hard to hide her own sadness from us all. She worked up until she sadly died herself, from cancer, in July 2019. By this time she also had seven great-grandchildren, a new generation of the family my father had never met.
23. I know that my mother had very strong feelings about the Infected Blood Inquiry as she had discussed it with both me and my wife and I. She had kept a folder which she'd filed with newspaper clippings and other relevant documents.
24. My mother was never compensated for his death or the impact which Hepatitis C had on his and her lives, nor did she receive any financial assistance. She had tried to apply for help, but as he had not been diagnosed as having contracted any disease from his use of blood and blood products, her application was rejected.
25. Her application for assistance also fell short because we were unable to access any relevant medical records as her application was made some ten years or so after he had passed away by which time the records she needed had been destroyed.

26. Aside from this witness statement, I do not believe that I hold any documents of evidential value other than the information my mother had gathered together and which she supplied to the inquiry as an integral part of her own statement.

27. Following my father's untimely death, feelings of having to look after my family have affected me throughout all of my adult life and I have felt a very heavy burden across my shoulders which, for many years, meant that I did not feel it appropriate that I enjoy myself.

28. I have written this statement to continue my support of my late mother. I also feel very strongly that my father did not receive safe treatment or care and as a result died at far too young an age, leaving a wife and three children. My mother never received any financial support and found that she had to work to until her death at the age of seventy two.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed:

GRO-C

Dated:

27/04/2021