Witness Name: DANIEL KITTS
Statement No: WITN4005001
Exhibits: 0
Dated: 21 September 2020

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF DANIEL KITTS

I, Daniel Kitts, will say as follows:-

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Daniel Kitts. I was born on GRO-C 1978 and I live at GRO-C GRO-C Manchester GRO-C

2. I was infected with the Hepatitis C Virus through a contaminated blood transfusion and/or contaminated blood products.

3. This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my full medical records.

Section 2. How infected

4. I have severe Haemophilia A, diagnosed at 7 months old. I was treated at the Pendlebury Children's Hospital in Manchester under the care of Dr Evans before transferring to the Manchester Royal Infirmary (MRI) at the age of 18.

5. I was treated with Cryoprecipitate before moving on to Factor VIII (FVIII) concentrate. I was around the age of 9 when I first had FVIII treatment as I remember learning to how to inject it myself in order to have home treatment at that age.

6. I was told that I had HCV by Dr Hay at an appointment at MRI when I transferred to the adult centre there at aged 18 in 1996 or 1997. No-one had mentioned anything to me or my family about having HCV whilst I was under the care of Pendlebury Hospital. No-one from Pendlebury Hospital had even so much as warned us of the risk of infection. We trusted the doctors there. They were like family to us.

7. When Dr Hay told me that I had HCV, I was shocked and confused. I didn't really know what it was and associated it with having HIV. I had just learned to drive and I was there on my own. Dr Hay explained to me that HCV was dangerous to the liver and that I would need regular blood tests. Being so young and on my own, it was scary to hear.

8. I have been infected with HCV for most of my life. Dr Hay told me that I was likely to have been infected with HCV in the mid 1980s when I had a blood transfusion or from around the time of my first FVIII treatment a couple of years later. I cleared HCV just a couple of years ago after three months of clearing treatment in tablet form.

9. I believe that the doctors at Pendlebury Hospital must have known that HCV had already started to affect my liver whilst I was under their care. It was probably around just one year after being told by Dr Hay that I had the virus that I was given Pegylated Interferon as a first attempt at clearing it.

Section 3. Other Infections

10. I was not infected with anything other than HCV.

Section 4. Consent

11. I had no idea that I had been tested for HCV before being informed at the MRI that I had the virus. We (my parents and I) did not consent to me being tested. When I was told that I had HCV I initially thought that my mother might have already known about it. She did not. She was just as shocked as me. Many a blood sample was taken at Pendlebury Hospital but we thought to it was all treatment related. It wouldn't surprise me at all if I was treated and tested there for the purposes of research.

Section 5. Impact of the Infection

12. Every aspect of my life has been affected through being infected with HCV. My social life was immediately affected. I was told to avoid alcohol. As my liver had already been compromised, just one occasional/social drink with friends would result in me suffering with severe stomach pains.

13. Stigma has been a huge issue for me. I did not like to tell people that I had haemophilia because it was associated with people with HIV/AIDS. When I was then told that I had HCV I was very scared about how people would react to me and I kept it a secret. HCV is thought of as a dirty disease. It is associated with HIV/AIDS and/or intravenous drug users. I do not like to talk about HCV as people presume the worst. I am just thankful that my having HCV wasn't somehow disclosed whilst I was still at school because I would have been bullied.

14. My current partner was, at first, extremely sceptical about how I got HCV. It took a while before she came to understand that I had been infected through no fault of my own. My really good/close friends have also been very understanding. I have a daughter from a previous relationship. GRO-C

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15. The Pegylated Interferon treatment I had in my late teens made me so ill that I couldn't function. I had uncontrollable shivers just as soon as I first self administered the injection. The treatment affected my mental state. I was drained and I dropped out of college. I was studying car body repair and mechanics there. I wanted to be a body repair engineer. I did some work experience in a body repair garage at school and I really liked it. HCV and the clearing treatment brought that dream/aspiration to an abrupt end.

16. I was supposed to be on the treatment for six months but I had to give up on it after one month. I went without further treatment until recently through waiting for a less intrusive treatment with better prospects of success. I have had problems sustaining employment. I did work at a warehouse in Wigan for a while but did not tell them that I had haemophilia. It has always been difficult for me to decide what to disclose to an employer. I was dismissed from that particular job after a serious bleed through having an accident at work.

17. I have encountered difficulties in finding a dentist and, at one time, had to go to the hospital for treatment. Luckily I have a good dentist now but at one time they wouldn't see me because of the HCV infection.

18. I have lived with the affects of having HCV for so long that I do not know what feeling 'normal' is supposed to feel like. I do know that I was extremely tired and I do not have the best of memory. Despite recently clearing HCV my liver function has to be very closely monitored for the remainder of my life. I have liver function bloods on a three monthly basis and liver scans every six months.

Section 6. Treatment/care/support

19. I never received any counselling but I have had good support from MRI.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

20. I received the ex gratia Skipton Fund payment of £20,000 in 2002. I receive an income through EIBSS without any problems. I have never asked for any grants.

Section 8. Other Issues

21. Having haemophilia alone can drag a person down and I have developed serious problems with my knees and ankle joints through bleeds. Whilst I was a child, an older man with haemophilia would come to visit me and mentor me in relation to living with haemophilia. He taught me a lot and he was a good friend to me when I was young. I was shocked to find out 8 or 9 months ago that we were both infected through contaminated blood and I didn't know it. He was co-infected with HCV and HIV and subsequently died of cancer. This news has shocked and saddened me.

Anonymity

22. I do not wish to remain anonymous and I would be willing to provide oral evidence to the Inquiry if required.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed.........Daniel Kitts.......................................

Dated......... 21/09/2020........................