

Witness Name: Stephen Carter

Statement No.: WITN4805001

Exhibits: Nil

Dated:

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

WRITTEN STATEMENT OF STEPHEN LESLIE CARTER

I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 7 December 2020.

I, Stephen Carter, will say as follows: -

Section 1. Introduction

1. My date of birth is GRO-C 1949 and my address is known to the Inquiry. I am divorced and I am a retired construction worker.
2. I have been asked to initially detail my interaction with Skipton Fund in this statement. Additionally I will give some details of my infection with hepatitis C (HCV) from a transfusion in 1967 and treatment, for context.
3. Then at a later stage, I will give a further statement with more detail about my illness, how the illness affected me, the treatment received and the impact it had on me and those people around me, who were also affected.

Section 2. How Affected

4. On 11 January 1967, (when I was 17 years old), I was in the Royal Navy (this was after conscription finished in 1963). I had two impacted wisdom teeth which were operated on at HMS Haslar, which was then a military hospital in Gosport, Hampshire, it has since closed. Papers I have, show I was in the hospital for 5 days.
5. I had a general anaesthetic for the operation, when I came round I was surprised to be surrounded by ladies in strange filly hats, it took me a while to realise that they were nurses from the Queen Alexandra Nursing Corp.
6. I will never forget one of the nurses said to me "We're glad to have you back, we thought we had lost you!" and "We had to put some blood into you, you lost so much in the operation". Apparently there is a large blood vessel in the back of the throat which had been punctured in the operation. Which I understand from a dentist friend, happened regularly in the 1960's.
7. At this time, I was a laidback sort of person and coping well with life in the Royal Navy. Almost immediately after my operation I became unusually anxious and found life generally very difficult to cope with. This was especially true of being in the Navy, eventually I had to leave in August 1968.
8. Throughout the 1980's and 90's, I had regular bouts of illness of various descriptions over the years, I had lost my self-confidence, I was always anxious. I had regular fevers and general illnesses. Every time I went to the doctors, they would say I was "just depressed" and do absolutely nothing about it.

9. The most important thing is I had been ill for 20 years and no one could tell me what was wrong with me. I kept being told there was nothing wrong.
10. I brought a blacksmith business and worked with the man who had owned it before but I had to sell it again as I couldn't deal with it. I then worked in construction of oil rigs. This work was usually done outside the UK.
11. In 1998, I was working in construction in Belgium and I was resident there, again I was struggling with work and decided to go to a doctor. I had private health care through my union. This doctor listened to what I said and decided to take blood tests. When the result came back, I was told that I had HCV. They offered my treatment in Belgium, but I had to come back to the UK as my mother was seriously ill.
12. In 2002, I returned to the UK, I told the Bradford Royal Infirmary that I had been diagnosed with HCV but they didn't appear to believe me. They made me take the blood tests again, which had the same result of course.
13. When I got the confirmed result as HCV, they told me that they had no money for treatment, at that time.
14. In 2005 or 6, I was contacted by Bradford Royal Infirmary (BRI) about starting a course of treatment for the HCV, I was at this time working in Norway. The BRI were not happy about this and stated that I would have to wait until the next round of treatment was available and they would contact me.
15. In 2007, I did start a 12 month course Interferon and Ribavirin to combat the HCV via the BRI. I had to administer this myself and didn't get any support from the hospital. This treatment would be very difficult for anyone but especially someone in my situation of living alone.

16. The side effects are best described in a single word as horrific. I has sores all over, like I had small pox.
17. I managed to complete the whole treatment and it did clear the HCV infection in 2008. I have been left with other medical issues that I think are related to the HCV infection, this include: pancreatitis, gall-bladder issues, I also have a problem with my prostate but I'm not sure if this can be attributed to the infection.
18. I have only ever had one transfusion of blood as described in 1968. I have never used intravenous drugs. I have tattoos, these were done in the late 1960's in reputable places in Portsmouth when I was in the Royal Navy.

Section 3. Other Infections

19. As far as I am aware, I have never had any further infections other than HCV.

Section 4. Consent

20. I do not believe that I have never been treated or tested without my consent

Section 5. Impact

21. I will detail this in my further statement at a later stage.

Section 6. Treatment/Care/Support

22. As mentioned, I feel that I was given very little support for my anxiety/ depression over the whole of my life by the NHS in general.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

23. In 2015, I heard about the Skipton Fund, I think from a friend. I sent in the application form with accompanying material from my doctor to support that I had had a transfusion in 1967 and been infected with HCV genotype 1b.
24. I heard back from them by letter, that I needed to get my medical records from the Ministry of Defence (MoD).
25. I therefore wrote to the MoD but heard nothing back from them. I also telephoned them but again, I got no result. As a result of this I never went back to the Skipton Fund to follow up on my application.

Section 8. Other Issues

26. None

Statement of Truth

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

Signed

GRO-C

STEPHEN LESLIE CARTER

Dated 04.03.21