

Witness Name: Jonathan Storey

Statement No: W7288-001

Exhibits:0

Dated: October 2022

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF JONATHAN STOREY

I, Jonathan Storey will say as follows:-

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Jonathan Storey. I reside at GRO-C,
GRO-C. My date of birth is GRO-C 1971. I am a widower, single and live alone. I work as a general assistant at Tesco and have worked there for 23 years.
2. This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my wife's full medical records. I did have her records in the house and when she passed away, a couple of months later I got rid of them, not realising that I would need them again. They were not the sort of thing I wanted in the house. I did read through them with Jo when she got them so do have a reasonable idea of what she had and how she suffered, but do not know the fine technical details and dates.

Section 2. How Affected

3. Jo was infected as a result of a blood transfusion after an operation she had for curvature of the spine in the 1980s.

4. I was not with Jo at the time of the blood transfusion. Her father has given a witness statement and is able to comment on what information was or was not provided at the time.
5. Jo was infected with Hepatitis C as a result of the blood transfusion.
6. Jo found out about her infection in 1995 which was 2 years before we got together, so I am unable to comment on what happened when she found out. Her father will be able to comment on this.
7. Jo and I got together in the summer of 1997. I remember it very well. Jo had many other medical issues and the Hepatitis C was the last one she told me about. She told me about it around 2 months after we had been seeing each other. She told me to sit down as she had got something else to tell me. She said before she told me the details that I might not want to proceed with a full relationship with her. I told her it didn't matter and to just tell me. So we sat down and she told me. I had heard a bit in the news about it in the mid 90s, and there was talk of the government possibly giving out compensation even back then, but didn't know anything else about it. Basically, she told me what happened. I was shocked and upset for her. She said that we would have to be quite careful in sexual matters. To be honest, I thought about it for less than a minute and told her it was ok, and we will still go ahead with our relationship.
8. My response to Jo telling me made her cry, she was crying tears of joy and was really happy. It did stay on my mind for a while but after we moved in together she had so many other medical issues at the time that for a while it was just only of many, she had a collective mass of problems.
9. As time wore on however it became more of a pressing issue, knowing it was something she could die from at any minute, but when she initially told me it was just one of many problems she had.

Section 3. Other Infections

10. To the best of my knowledge Jo was only infected with Hepatitis C as a result of the blood transfusion and no other infections.

Section 4. Consent

11. To the best of my knowledge, I am not aware of Jo being treated without her consent or knowledge. She was always totally on the ball and knew exactly what was going to happen before it did.

Section 5. Impact of the Infection

12. Physically Jo had a lot of conditions. I would say looking back that the Hepatitis C did cause her fatigue. She tired very easily and could not walk very far. When she did walk, she walked very slowly and couldn't do things like running. It was convenient that she was quite small, so I would carry her on my back. We did that for a few years until it became too much for me and we switched to a wheelchair.
13. As for mentally, on the surface, Jo was a chirpy person. She certainly taught me a lot about life and how to face stuff. She had a great personality, she had friends, a job and now she had me. I used to ask her how she could be so happy with the problems she had, she replied that there was always people worse off that don't have a life.
14. On the other hand, she would at times just sit down and cry. Although I knew, I would still ask her what was wrong and we would talk and many times the Hepatitis C would come up. She started to have panic attacks now and then, they seemed to happen in phases. She would have them for a few months and then none for a while. Sometimes they happened when she was driving so that was dangerous. The panic attacks did die down in the last couple of years before she passed away.

15. Being infected with Hepatitis C did affect Jo. The infection worried her very much and we would talk about it. She was upset as it was something that should have been prevented. It was something that couldn't be made better, she would die at some point much earlier than she should have.
16. At the time of her diagnosis Jo did turn down treatment when it was offered. She felt pretty healthy and was on so many other medications she felt she didn't want to take anything extra.
17. The Hepatitis C infection, to be honest did not really affect our social life. Jo had a set of friends who she would see. She belonged to an amateur dramatics association and she did that a lot, although in the last few years as she got progressively more tired she scaled it back to the odd pantomime. Over the last few years her social life contracted a bit but she still had her friends, she just went out less and less. Physically she was more tired, and I think she had a sense of what was coming as she felt weaker, so we both preferred to just stay in and watch movies together.
18. Jo had worked in several opticians, one pushed her to work quite hard, she was good at her job and was pinched from one optician by another. She worked full time until 3-4 years before she died when she went down to 4 days a week, she was still holding down a job.
19. We did not experience any stigma as a result of the Hepatitis C infection.
20. I remember when I told my family members about the infection, my Dad was quite shocked about it. My Mum always takes things as they come but I remember my Dad being quite appalled by it all and I had to calm him down, I had to tell him it was done with, and that's what is happening. I told other close friends and I remember one asked if it was a wise move moving in together and getting married, he was a long term friend of mine, he was more concerned for the pressure that would be put on me and the eventual grief I would have, but I was in love with Jo.

21. Jo studied teaching at a local college for 2 years. I worked in a local cinema in 1997 and she came to work as a summer job just before her second year at college. Teaching was her ambition, she did stay at college and passed her course, but she realised teaching as a career was too tiring for her so she didn't go anywhere further with that.

22. I don't know how much the Hepatitis C infection affected her in college, but I do remember her telling me something that always struck me. When I was first getting to know her, she told me that sometimes it could take her 45 minutes to walk from one side of the college to the other. It was not a very big college and most people would take 5 minutes or so to do the same walk, but that was what struck me, the impact of it, she had to walk so slowly and kept having to sit down as she was out of breath.

Section 6. Treatment/care/support

23. I am not aware of Jo encountering any problems with treatment, there was no discrimination or anything like that to my knowledge.

24. Jo did not have any counselling, in effect her parents and I were her counsellors, she would talk to us so we played that role. I was not offered any counselling and I didn't request it either before or after Jo's death. I did consider it, but grief is complicated certain things work for some and don't for others, I got books on how to deal with but after reading a few pages it made me feel worse so I stopped reading them.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

25. Jo received a lump sum payment from the Skipton Fund and some regular monthly payments, but not much. I know there was a scheme where she could hire a car for free for quite a while, that was really helpful it was a small easy car for her to drive until things got worse and she lost her confidence and ability to drive.

26. The process of getting the money from the Skipton Fund I believe it was something Jo's mum found out about, it was not something that was widely broadcast, I thought it would have been but it was not. Jo's Dad John dealt with the application process he is brilliant at things like that he helped greatly with it.

27. I have had no financial support since Jo's death and no one told me that I would have been entitled to anything. Someone again found out that I would be entitled and alerted us to it, apparently I could have received payments before, I knew nothing about this, no effort was made to contact me to tell me, it was not publicised very well, if at all. It is annoying no one let me know.

Anonymity

28. I do not wish to remain anonymous.

29. I do not want 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

2/10/2022