



Witness Name: Shendah Chalke

Statement No: WITN7389001

Exhibits: **WITN7389002 & 003**

Dated: **28 December 2022**

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

WRITTEN STATEMENT OF SHENDAH CHALKE

I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 18 October 2022.

I, Shendah Chalke will say as follows: -

Section 1: Introduction

1. My full name is Shendah Marie Chalke and my date of birth is **GRO-C** 1966. My address is known to the Inquiry. I am married and have 4 children. I work as a Team Manager at a manufacturing company
2. I wish to speak about my infection with Hepatitis C (HCV) as a result of a transfusion in child birth.
3. I have been married twice, my maiden name was Kemm. After my first marriage I was Shendah Rock, I had my 4 children under this name. I later remarried and became Shendah Chalke.
4. I confirm that I am not currently legally represented and that I am happy for the Inquiry Team to assist me with my statement.
5. I also confirm that I have had the option to seek anonymity and the Inquiry's statement of approach explained to me. I can confirm that I am not requesting anonymity.

6. The inquiries criticisms procedure and the 'right of reply' has been explained to me.

Section 2: How Infected

7. I had no health issues prior to my first child being born on GRO-C 1983, there was a problem in the birth and I had to have a blood transfusion on that day, as far as I'm aware I had a whole bag of blood. This happened at Odstock General Hospital, Salisbury, which is now called Salisbury Hospital.
8. There were no issues with my 3 other children. They have been tested for HCV but are all ok.
9. Over the subsequent years since (I cannot recall for how long - but many years) my health deteriorated. I have had numerous unexplained illnesses, infections and anaemia on and off. The doctors were unable to decide what the cause of these were and therefore no treatment was given until about 2 years ago. I was then put on 2 sets of iron infusions about a year ago.
10. In December 2020 around Christmas (this was in the main Covid pandemic) I developed an horrendous pain in my right-hand side. My GP Dr, Ressa said that it might be a bad back but decided to take a blood test. This showed I had a fatty liver; my enzymes were high. I had further blood tests and a scan.
11. I commenced to have yearly scans but as far as I am aware no HCV test was done.
12. In May 2022, I went to Turkey, to have a gastric sleeve fitted, in preparation for this operation the Turkish hospital did blood tests, and one of the medical staff said to me "You know you have hepatitis C?", I was 'gobsmacked' because I didn't know.
13. I spoke to another patient in the hospital, who knew about HCV because her husband had died because of it, he was a haemophiliac, she was really helpful. I decided to cancel the operation because of the HCV. I lost £800.
14. When I returned to the UK, I contacted my GP, who gave me another blood test, test time for HCV. When the result came back as being HCV+, I was told

over the phone, the Dr Ressa the Harcourt Medical Centre, Cranebridge Rd, Salisbury, was very matter of fact about it and said “there’s nothing to worry about” and “you’ll be fine”, which wasn’t very comforting.

15. I wasn’t given a full report on my HCV condition. I wasn’t given treatment initially, I was prescribed tablets for vitamin D deficiency. I was referred to the Salisbury Hospital.
16. When I got an appointment, which took 2 months, I went to the Liver Unit and saw the Consultant, 2 weeks later I saw the Liver Specialist Nurse and had a liver scan and more bloods taken, it showed that I have Fibrosis and it is F3 (meaning severe scarring).
17. All the results were sent to Southampton General Hospital for a decision to be taken about my treatment. 2 weeks later I started a 12-week course of Zepair, which I have recently finished. Initially I had a headache (for which I took paracetamol), also I was very tired, and had pains in my joints (I had previously been tested for arthritis). After about 3 to 4 these side effects went away.
18. I felt somewhat let down by the hospital, I had been told that I would have regular blood tests during the treatment but I only had one had to ask for that. The hospital also didn’t let me know the result, I had to call them. I was told that the HCV was now not detectable.
19. I had a scan in mid-November, but I haven’t had the result, I’m told I should have regular scans at least yearly from now.
20. I have no other risk factors where I could have contracted the HCV. I have never had any other blood transfusions, just the 2 recent iron transfusions. I have a small tattoo and had my ears pierced, but these were done in reputable places. I have never taken drugs intravenously and have never drunk alcohol to excess.

Section 3: Other Infections

21. As far as I’m aware I have not contracted any other infections, than HCV.

Section 4: Consent

22. I don't know that I have been tested without my knowledge or consent or used for research purposes.

23. I do not believe I was provided with adequate information about my infection or how to deal with it.

Section 5: Impact

24. I am still in pain on my right-hand side, and have to take Dunoxetine, for the pain, it is also an antidepressant.

25. The impact on me and my family has been massive, especially since my diagnosis:

GRO-C

has been very stressful. I feel like an emotionally a wreck

26. Since being diagnosed, I have obviously had to tell a few people at my work, my manager has been very supportive. I cut my leg quite badly at work and had to go to the medic, they didn't know about my infection so I had to tell them. There is still a stigma around HCV and it's very embarrassing, you feel like you have to explain how you were given it.

27. I recently at the end of June 2022 went on holiday to Benidorm I didn't enjoy it because of the worry about my HCV, I just wanted to come home all the time.

28. I have told my parents, they are elderly and it's very difficult for them.

29. I lost out financially because during the treatment I felt too tired to work, so I had to go sick.

Section 6: Treatment/Care/Support

30. No counselling or psychological support has been made available to me.

31. Some of my appointments have been in general clinics not specifically for liver patients, which is quite strange.

32. Generally, my treatment has been good but lately (since I have had the treatment) it seems there's a lack of information about what's going on with my treatment.

33. I feel I should have been tested for HCV much sooner, there were lots of indicators to show there was a problem with my liver.

Section 7: Financial Support

34. I have recently been in contact with the HCV Trust and the English Infected Blood Support Scheme.

35. I have also been in contact with Salisbury Hospital and luckily, they have been able to find documents to show that I had the transfusion in 1983. These exhibit as **WITN7389002**, this is a hospital note showing '1 unit of blood given, post-delivery' and **WITN7389003**, which is a Salisbury Pathology Service form showing 'Transfused 1 unit' collection date GRO-C83.

Section 8: Other Issues

36. I have no other matters that I would like to raise.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed _____ GRO-C _____

Dated _____28/12/2022_____

