

Witness Name: Geoffrey Roy Drew

Statement No: W7423-001

Exhibits: 0

Dated: November 2022

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF GEOFFREY ROY DREW

I, Geoffrey Roy Drew will say as follows:-

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Geoffrey Roy Drew. I reside at GRO-C
GRO-C. My date of birth is GRO-C 1946. I am a widower, my wife died last year. I now live on my own. I have 2 children who live very close to me and I probably see them twice a week, apart from one daughter who travels abroad for work on occasions. One is working with 2 children and is married, the children are now 18 and 15. My other daughter is divorced, she has two children of 23 and 18.
2. This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my mother, Mrs Marian Wood's full medical records. I am informed they have been destroyed.

Section 2. How Affected

3. My mother was a very happy and fit 67-year-old lady. Prior to her first hip replacement she used to ride her push bike around the town of GRO-C to meet her friends and do her shopping, the exercise helped to relieve the pain in her hip. She had her first hip replacement at St Saviours Hospital, Seabrook Road,

Hythe, Kent in 1988. This was arranged by the St Saviours Medical Trust, Hythe, for local residents who needed assistance in paying for operations at St Saviours. During the surgery my mother needed a blood transfusion, and this is when the Hepatitis C infected blood was given to her. The operation itself went as planned and she recovered very well from the surgery.

4. I do not know anything else about the transfusion, other than it was given to her during the operation to replace her hip.
5. As far as I am aware no advice was given to my mother whatsoever about the risks of having a blood transfusion, it was given during the course of the surgery so she would have been unaware of it at the time and would have only been informed afterwards.
6. My mother was infected with Hepatitis C only as far as I am aware.
7. In 1989 or 1990 my mother visited her GP surgery, she had received a call from the GP asking her to attend the surgery to see the GP, I believe this would have been a Dr GRO-D at Sun Lane Surgery in GRO-. At this meeting he told her that she had had a blood transfusion when she had her hip replaced and that they had given her infected blood and as a result she had been infected with Hepatitis C. She was told 'if they had not given her the blood transfusion, she would be dead and so at least she would now have another 10 years to live'.

My mother was very upset at being told this. My sister remembers being at home when my mother returned from the GP appointment and she told me that our mother was fuming and very upset.

As far as I am aware no treatments or support was offered to assist her following the diagnosis. I don't know whether my mother asked for any support, but my mother being my mother I don't think she would have.

No follow up appointments were offered to see how she was getting on, as far as I am aware. It would have helped had she been contacted to see how she was or for someone to have monitored her.

8. After being told of her diagnosis from my observations, life carried on as normal, but later on there were changes.
9. My mother had the blood transfusion in 1988 and she found out about the infection in 1989 or 1990 so not too long afterwards.
10. I think the way in which the diagnosis was conveyed to my mother was very harsh. She was called into the surgery without knowing what it was they wanted to speak to her about, she was left on a cliff edge wondering, not knowing what she would be told. Then to be told in those terms that she had been infected and was lucky as she would get another 10 years, I think it was a very harsh way to do it. She attended alone. Had she been given an indication of what the appointment was for she could have arranged for my sister or myself to accompany her, so she was not alone. We could have sat and listened and asked appropriate questions. Being given that information alone must have been quite frightening.
11. I don't believe she was given any advice about the risks to other people being infected. She was a widow, had lost her husband quite a few years back and had reunited with her old fiancé and married him in 1992, for some reason I felt that she didn't think she could tell her husband that she had Hepatitis C. My sister and I believe she may have felt guilty for having it, maybe she was scared of losing him. He never contracted it from her. He was a polite, old fashioned gentleman, he did not do much around the house all of that was left to my mother, she did all of the cooking and housework.

Section 3. Other Infections

12. I am unaware of any other infections other than the Hepatitis C.

Section 4. Consent

13. Due to the circumstances of the transfusion, I do not believe my mother would have been specifically spoken to before they administered the transfusion, being under anesthetic. I expect the consent form for the surgery included a comment that one may be required.
14. My mother never mentioned anything about tests, if she had tests I do not know how often she would have had them, if any. She wasn't a regular doctor person, she didn't go very often, she was a fit elderly lady.

Section 5. Impact of the Infection

15. I could see my mother was slowing down as a result of the infection and not doing things that she would have done. She loved going on holidays and travelling. For the 14 years she lived after having received the infected blood my mother loved and continued her holidays. She liked going to Europe on holidays with her husband and she also regularly went on trips across to France via the tunnel as she lived near there. They would go to France twice a month just to buy wine and sweets, they had friends they travelled back and forth with. My mother liked the sweets, biscuits, and wine. She didn't drink very often, she would occasionally have a glass of wine, but she liked to buy the wine, if she fancied the look of the bottle. In or around 2000 she started to slow down quite a bit as she was not feeling as fit or had the same get up and go. The holidays and French trips stopped; she did not have enough energy to do them.
16. When I visited my mother, she would ask 'why am I not feeling right', we knew the answer and we believe she knew as well why it was happening. I would travel from where I lived, around an hour away to see her, and she was much slower. My sister was calling in a little bit more to do jobs for her and to make sure she was alright like you do. She also mentioned that mother seemed to be getting a little confused at times, that was not like mother at all. I started

going down more regularly with my wife and spend the day there, there was not a lot else we could do. We would notice over a period of a month or so a decline in her, she loved to cook but when we went down, we took over the cooking for her.

17. When my mother was told she had been infected, we just thought ok, she has got it, we didn't know anything, I don't think my mother knew a lot about it either as she hadn't been told much about it, the doctor was not very forth coming, all he told her was you have 10 years. It does make me feel a little bit guilty now that I didn't explore how to get treatment with her. If I had done so the children would have grown up more with her. I remember my daughter Louise saying she had left the hospital, having been there with us visiting my mother all day and probably got 10 miles up the road and we had no way to get in touch with her to tell her to come back, but it was too late for her, and my mother had passed away. That really upset Louise and she has never forgotten it, she mentioned it again when my wife died because my other daughter was out of the house at the moment my wife was dying, and Louise said she has got to be called now. She did return in time. I now know how my daughter felt over her Grandma.

18. My mother missed seeing the grandchildren and great grandchildren growing up, she would have loved to have seen them in their early years. She would have loved that. She was a very caring person, she looked after my sister's son, her grandson for a few years when he was younger, he lived with my mother for a while, and she eventually helped him to get a flat across the road from her.

19. My sister was very close to our mother during my sister's divorce. Our mum and dad would go down to help her, then my mum and dad moved down to GRO-C so they could be closer to my sister to help her. The roles reversed later on in life. My father died, my sister divorced. My mother had a soft spot for my sister and her 2 boys, as it was just the 3 of them on their own, the boys meant a lot to her.

20. I don't believe any stigma was experienced, the only stigma would have been what my mother thought herself and I think she thought it as a bit like AIDS and so she never spoke about it as such and kept it all to herself bottled up. I think this was one of the reasons she never told her new husband.

Section 6. Treatment/care/support

21. I am not aware of any other medical complications or conditions that arose as a result of the infection.

22. My mother was never given any treatment for the Hepatitis C, as far as I am aware, I don't know if treatment was available or whether there was no treatment options available at the time. My mother never received any counselling or psychological support as a result of being infected.

23. As far as I am aware, my mother never encountered any difficulties with medical or dental treatment due to having the infection.

24. I would have thought that my mother should have been offered treatment if it was available, hopefully it would have extended her life a little. I didn't get involved in discussions about treatment with my mother, I don't know why I didn't, if she had treatment, she may have had a little bit of a longer life and maybe her early death might not have happened so early, this I feel guilty about.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

25. My mother did not know anything about the funds and trusts set up to help those infected. If she had known I am sure she would have applied for assistance.

Section 8. Other Issues

26. When my mother had a fall in 2002 my sister called me to say my mother had fallen down the stairs and had been taken to Ashford Hospital with a broken

femur. My mother had lived in the house for many years and knew where all the steps were, and for her to fall down the stairs very early in the morning just didn't seem right, possibly she was a little confused at the time. When my mother was admitted into Ashford hospital, my sister told the hospital doctors and nurses that she had Hepatitis C and that they should protect themselves, my sister told me they did not seem concerned.

27. Our mother died on 30th September 2002 and liver cirrhosis was included as a cause of death on her death certificate. We were asked if my mother drank, we advised them she only had the very occasional glass of wine. I believe the cirrhosis was caused by the Hepatitis C infection and I told them this at the Inquest in Folkstone in 2003. I asked the question whether the Hepatitis C was linked to my mother's death and the person on the stand at the time, just looked across at me and said no, and that was the end of the matter, and no further questions were put regarding the Hepatitis C.

28. I believe it did have a bearing and may have been a partial cause. I have been told my mother's medical records have now been destroyed unfortunately due to the Department of Health's 8-year rule,

Anonymity

29. I do not wish to remain anonymous.

30. 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... 11th November:

GRO-C

Dated: 11th November 2022