

Witness Name: O Dodd  
Statement No: WITN1194001  
Exhibits: WITN1194002-05  
Dated: December 2018

## INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

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### FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF MR OLIVER DODD

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I, Oliver Dodd, will say as follows:-

#### Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Oliver Dodd and I live at GRO-C  
GRO-C I was born on the GRO-C 1983. I am engaged and have a little boy called GRO-C
2. My mother, Elaine, has been the main support system throughout my life and it was just the two of us for many years. We endured my Hepatitis C infection together. My mother continues to be a wonderful mother and grandmother.
3. **This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my full medical records.**

#### Section 2. How infected

4. I have Haemophilia A and I received Factor VIII at Alder Hey Hospital in Liverpool and St. George's Hospital in London. **Exhibit WITN1194002** is an extract from a treatment record maintained by my mother which lists the blood

products I received and their respective batch numbers. I have received blood products for the majority of my life.

5. I believe that I was infected at St. George's Hospital and my consultant at that time was Dr Bevan.
6. My mother was given no advice by the medical practitioners in relation to the risks of receiving blood products. My mother was a nurse and she carried out her own research and as a result was concerned about the use of Factor VIII. However, her questions fell upon deaf ears; Factor VIII was the only available treatment.
7. From 1991 I was treated at St Thomas's Hospital under Professor Savidge and he examined my treatment regime and took charge and changed everything. I would describe him as a "legend".
8. In 1992, Dr **GRO-D** told my mother that I was infected with Hepatitis C. **Exhibit WITN1194003** is a letter dated 13<sup>th</sup> March 1992 from Dr Rowley to my mother which confirmed that I was Hepatitis C positive. This letter also confirmed that I was HIV and Hepatitis B negative.
9. My mother was given no information regarding the management or risk of transmission to others regarding my Hepatitis C infection. My mother researched everything herself.
10. No adequate information was given to my mother at this stage either. Fortunately my mother was a nurse and had researched the virus herself.

### **Section 3. Other Infections**

11. **Exhibit WITN1194004** is a letter dated 16<sup>th</sup> September 2004 from Dr Bevan to me which confirmed that I had an additional risk of acquiring vCJD.

#### **Section 4. Consent**

12. As far as I am aware I was not tested or treated without my knowledge or consent.

#### **Section 5. Impact of the Infection**

13. My mother was phenomenal and if it were not for her, I would probably not be here today. I escaped lightly in relation to the physical effects of Hepatitis C because my mother researched and implemented a diet which bolstered my immune system which meant that I, unlike so many other victims, managed to clear the virus without enduring harsh medical treatments. I remember one of the medical professionals saying, *"It looks like Oliver is one of the 6% who has seroconverted"*.
14. My mother does recall an occasion where I had a particularly bad nose bleed whilst I was at school. My mother had been summoned by my school and when she arrived she found me sat on the floor, holding my bloodied nose in a tissue. A bin had been placed next to me and I was surrounded by numerous members of staff, all clad in masks and wearing latex surgical gloves. Apparently I had a horrified look on my face and when I saw my mother I cried out *"Mummy, what on earth is wrong with me?"* My mother, although about to collapse in shock and horror, responded in the most normal and reassuring manner *"you have a nose bleed, and I do not know why these people are behaving like this"*.
15. My mother continued in her fight to ensure that I was treated as normally as possible. She wanted me to be a normal boy. My mother has shielded me, probably to her own detriment, over the years and I am so thankful to her for ensuring that my childhood was as normal as possible.
16. My infection with Hepatitis C had an enormous impact on my mother; she was bringing up a child who was not supposed to live for very long. She also had to treat me knowing that she may be adding to my death sentence.

17. I might have dodged a bullet but the detrimental and long lasting effects on my mother remain with her today.
18. My mother was my only family. My mother did not tell anyone about my infection and she dealt with everything alone. Following my clearing of the virus my mother has told some of her closest friends and my fiancé is also aware of my past.
19. Mentally I try not to think about things too much; I do get upset when I think about the fights that my mother had, alone, in trying to shield me from the full effects and enormity of what has happened to me.
20. Physically, I have been lucky but only due to my mother's ability to ensure that I cleared the virus. I have 6 monthly checks for my liver at St Thomas's Hospital and I am very happy with the care I receive from them.
21. There were no educational effects for me because my mother did not allow me to miss school. However, I was ridiculed at school following my use of crutches for over a year. Children at school used to call me names such as "cripple" and "metal man" and because I also wore glasses, unpleasant remarks were regularly made such as "don't go near a magnet, you won't be able to go past it".
22. My school refused to allow me to commence sixth form and, in retrospect taking the bullying into account, I am not too upset about this. However, the school should have been pulled up on their discriminatory and arbitrary way of going about things.
23. I do not feel that I suffered any work related effects although on one occasion I applied for a position at the NHS and during the interview process I was asked whether I considered myself to be disabled. I responded yes because I had Haemophilia. The interviewers then proceeded to ask me about Hepatitis C and HIV and when I told them my story their faces dropped. I was not offered the job and the interview had gone really well up to this point.

24. Financially my mother and I really struggled. We moved from Liverpool to Surrey and then we lost our home in Surrey. We went into rented accommodation because the local Council would only accommodate us on a bed and breakfast basis. Dr Bevan wrote a letter to advise that such living conditions were not a good idea in light of my condition and virus.
25. We were in a poverty trap; my mother earned £800.00 per month and paid £600.00 for rent. My mother, being the strong woman she was, was desperate for us to be independent and she would bang on the local Council's door everyday and say "*I am still here and I need help to be independent*".
26. When I entered senior school, we rented a flat over a shop. My mother, used to have to regularly carry me up the fire escape when I had had a bleed. I was a fairly large 11 year old and my mother was a very petite lady. I now realise how hard my mother's life was and that she sacrificed everything for me.
27. Finally, through my mother's tenacity, she managed to get the Council to listen to her and they gave us sufficient points to be nominated to purchase a housing association shared ownership scheme.

#### **Section 6. Treatment/care/support**

28. I do not have a dentist and in the event of a dental emergency, I have to go St Thomas's Hospital for dental treatment.
29. In or around 2010, I had a particularly bad stomach bleed and my mother took me to the local hospital. This turned out to be a bad idea. The A&E doctor at the time asked if I took Factor VIII in tablet form, thus illustrating his complete lack of knowledge regarding blood products.
30. I was then immediately put into a quarantine room. The doctors did not tell me why I was being placed in this room and I was told that I needed an

endoscopy. I waited for a very long time and when my mother and I questioned the doctors, we were advised that I would have to be transferred to St Thomas's Hospital for the endoscopy to take place.

31. My mother, being a nurse, confidently asked why on earth this would be the case. The doctor responded that St Thomas's was a specialist unit and my mother persisted with "*you do endoscopies every day of the week at this hospital*". The reply was that St Thomas's have a separate set of endoscopy equipment for "*infected*" people. This was extremely distressing for my mother and I.

32. Unless you had some knowledge and could confidently confront the medical professionals; you got pushed around. It was only because of my mother's knowledge and bravery in standing up to the doctors that day, that I received the endoscopy at the local hospital, without having to be transferred as suggested.

33. The feeling of being treated differently never really went away. It was evidenced during my endoscopy and the stigma was always there.

34. Neither my mother nor I were offered counselling or any type of psychological support.

#### **Section 7. Financial Assistance**

35. My mother found out about The Skipton Fund purely through her own research. Nobody told her about the possibility of financial help.

36. My mother applied on my behalf but our application was rejected and this was purely because my mother had managed to ensure that I cleared the virus. **Exhibit WITN1194005** is a letter dated 31<sup>st</sup> January 2005 from The Skipton Fund to me which confirmed that my application was unsuccessful because "*the evidence supplied by your clinician appears to show that you cleared the Hepatitis C virus without the use of past or ongoing interferon treatment....*"

37. I feel that The Skipton Fund was very unfair in refusing their financial help because I cleared my virus. I still received contaminated blood products which infected me with this virus.

***Conclusion***

38. My mother was told by my consultants that the blood donor mechanism in the UK was under-funded and therefore they could not continue to provide blood products utilising British blood. This is why the NHS had to go to the USA. The NHS should have screened the blood and in not doing so, were negligent.

39. My mother used to belong to The Haemophilia Society and received their monthly bulletins. However, the obituary at the back of the bulletin each month became longer and longer to the point that it became extremely depressing to read. Answers are required to allow victims to move on from the largest tragedy that has ever befallen the NHS.

**Anonymity, disclosure and redaction**

40.

**NOT RELEVANT**

**Statement of Truth**

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

Signed.....

GRO-C

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Dated.....**11/12/2018**.....