

Witness Name: DAVID JOHN FARRUGIA

Statement No: WITN1216001

Exhibits: 0

Dated: 2019

## INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

### FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF DAVID JOHN FARRUGIA

I, DAVID JOHN FARRUGIA, will say as follows:-

#### Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is David John Farrugia. I was born on the GRO-C 1971. I live at GRO-C I have 3 children, my son is 30, and my daughters are 29 and 25 respectively.
2. My Dad, Barry Farrugia (date of birth GRO-C 1949), was co-infected with the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and the Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) from contaminated blood products. He died on 22 September 1986.
3. Two of my uncles have also died after being infected from contaminated blood products, GRO-C  
GRO-C
4. This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my late father's full medical records. If and in so far as I have been provided with limited records the relevant entries are set out in the medical chronology at the end of this statement.

## **Section 2. How infected**

5. My Dad suffered from mild Haemophilia A.
6. He was treated at the Royal London Hospital in Whitechapel (under Dr Colvin).
7. According to his medical records he started home treatment in 1981.
8. There are no warnings of the risks of HIV in his medical notes.
9. In 1976 or 1977 I remember my Dad becoming ill with hepatitis. I think there was a period where he was in hospital so he was away from home. As I was a child I cannot remember how long he was gone for. I do recall him becoming yellow, and looking a bit puffy.
10. I remember my Dad wanting to watch a World in Action program. He told me to 'sit down and be quiet' because he was interested in the program. The program mentioned hemophiliacs and HIV. My Dad told me he was HIV positive in September 1985; the words HIV or AIDS were used. When he told me it was a shock but I knew there was something going on because we had seen the World in Action program previously. I asked my Dad if he was going to die and he said he did not know. Not long after I found out about my Dad's diagnosis I realised HIV was a death sentence due to things I had seen in the media. People that were infected with HIV were dropping like flies. I did not fully understand the extent of the contaminated blood scandal until the 1991 litigation, before this I thought it was just my family who were affected.

**Section 3. Other Infections**

12. I understand that there is a letter in my Dad's medical records which indicates that he was also exposed to Hepatitis A, CMV and EBV.

**Section 4. Consent**

13. I do not think my Dad knew he was being tested for HIV. The doctors had taken a blood sample before he found out he was HIV positive but there was a letter saying they had misplaced his results.
14. I consented to being tested for HIV at the request of the second Children's Home that I was sent to after my Dad died.

**Section 5. Impact of the Infection**

15. The year before my Dad died he was so ill. His mental health was greatly affected by the HIV. He ended up being sectioned and when I read the report for the day he was sectioned it did not sound like the Dad I knew. At 18.00 hrs or 19.00 hrs an ambulance arrived and they said that my Dad either had to voluntarily get into the ambulance or they were going to put him in a straight jacket. He was starting to become quite dangerous. I had to be careful with what I said to him because it could trigger him off. My oldest brother was 17 at the time and he was telling my Dad that 'they will make you better' to try and encourage him to get into the ambulance voluntarily. It took us an hour and a half to persuade him to get into the ambulance.

16. There had been a few incidents prior to this that lead to my Dad being sectioned, this included, not wanting to leave a customers house at work because he thought something was wrong and he wanted to fix it, walking down the street totally naked, being aggressive in his manner (not at me) and eating until he made himself sick.
17. My Dad's physical appearance had also suffered. At 36 years old he looked like an old man; he was grey and thin in the face.
18. In August 1986 (just prior to his death) he was on the following medications, Spironolactone, Lactulose, Septrin, Paracetamol, Miconazole, Amphotericin suspension, Dexa rhinospray, Corsadyl mouthwash and Aludrox. They were pumping him full of pills and giving him anything they could.
19. My Dad missed the AZT treatment by about a month. I am not saying if my Dad had the AZT treatment he would be alive as no body knows for sure but my Uncle Vicky was alive for 14 years after the treatment so it may have helped my Dad too.
20. I did not see my Dad for two weeks before he died. I think my family were trying to shield me from seeing him in that condition. However, I have since found out that when he died he was swollen and all his organs had failed. I believe he had a heart attack in the end.
21. My Dad split up from my birth mother in 1973, when I was 18 months old. In 1976 he married a nurse whom he had met in a Welsh hospital. I grew up believing that she was my birth mother rather than my step mother. My home life was difficult and my Dad being diagnosed increased the pressure on us as a family. After his diagnoses everything went from bad to worse.

22. Before my Dad was ill the haemophilia did not drastically affect his health as Dad did not bleed too often. He would play rugby with us, and he would be able to kick a ball hard without getting a bleed. The haemophilia did not affect him working as a plumber because he was only a mild haemophiliac. When they infected him with the Hepatitis that was when his health started to decline.
23. When my Dad died on the 22 of September 1986, I went to live with my uncle until after the funeral (which was on the Tuesday the week after). The day of the funeral (or the one after) I went into care. This was at the start of October. The care home was in Dagenham East, so it was still close to my school.
24. Prior to my Dad passing away I did not believe there had been a discussion about where I would live. However, there is a reference in my Dads medical records saying what would happen to me after he died as there had been a meeting with my step mum, and the doctors. It mentioned that I was going into the care; I do not know why I did not have any representation at that meeting. My step mum was not my legal guardian. My difficult relationship with my step mum was the reason I did not want to live there anymore.
25. Moving out of the family home was a relief as my relationship with my step mum was beyond repair. I never had any issues with the care home but I would not say they were there for me.
26. I did not see my twin brother, Tony, properly again until I was 18 years old and I had moved up to Bedfordshire. This was not easy. I was separated from someone who I was had grown up with and it was at a time when we needed each other most.

27. The main problem with social services was that they would never talk to me on my own. They never sat me down without my parents present, so I was not going to open up to them in front of my parents, especially when my step mum ruled me with a iron fist.
28. When I was first taken into care it was then decided that the council would provide my Dad's youngest sister with a counsel flat near my school so I could go and live with her. My auntie was only 25 years old at the time. This was a difficult time as I had just lost my Dad, I had been moved away from my brothers, and my twin brother was in care 100 miles away. When my auntie would not let me go to my brothers it put pressure on our relationship. I was with my auntie until the August and then she said me living with her was not working, I agreed with her, so she took me to live with my birth mum in Bedfordshire.
29. I did not want to go to live with my birth mum because I wanted to stay near my school and I knew I would end up in care in Bedfordshire. Therefore, I went up to my birth mum's house on the Saturday morning, and I said to her 'take me to social service on Monday morning and leave me there'. Due to my mother's personality she did exactly as I asked. I was at the children's home from August 1987 until I left school in June or July 1988.
30. I then moved into 'independent living', which involved me paying rent to live with 3 boys in a maisonette with a social worker living downstairs. My Dad's brothers and sisters were always around me but in a sense I was on my own.
31. I had to move out of the maisonette and move in with my mother in January 1989 as I was struggling to financially afford to live in the independent living. I was on a youth training scheme and I earnt £29.50 a week and I paid £12.50 rent, so it was a bit of a financial struggle. I only stayed with my mum for a

few months as I get on with her but I cannot live with her as we do not have that sort of relationship. I moved out, met my wife, and we got married in 1990, and I had my own children.

32. I started campaigning in 2005. Up until 2005 I had done what I was told and tried to forget about what happened to my Dad and raise my own children. However, the pain was still there. I started going to Parliament in 2010. My MP stood up in Parliament when they did the Penrose review in 2015 and said they needed to take into account the children of the infected. Nothing was done in the review, we told them our story and they completely blanked us.

33. In 2003 I did obtained my driving instructor licence and I was self employed until 2015. While I was working as a driving instructor I had an incident with a member of the public as we got into a disagreement and he ended up punching me in the face. I just lost the plot and ended up hitting him back. Part of my anger was because of the Contaminated Blood Scandal. Neither of us reported the fight but it pushed me to look for counselling. I rang the Hepatitis C Trust and asked for counselling. The government had provided money after the Penrose Inquiry for counselling as pressure had been applied to them. I received £1,000 worth of counselling.

34. I was pretty down and out at this point in my life. I was living with my brother Tony, my marriage had broken down in 2005 and I was tired of campaigning. In 2015 I just stepped away. I had to really.

35. I moved to Wales at this point because I needed a fresh start. I now work for a medical company that makes the HIV tests; I do the printing of the labels. I went to an agency and she told me about the job, and at first I said 'no way would I be able to do that job' (given the connotations), but she asked if I



could go for a couple of days and then after 9 months I accepted a full time contract. I have found the job has mostly helped with the Contaminated Blood Scandal.

36. When my Dad passed away there were rumors that they had already cremated him and had put his ashes in the coffin. My uncle also had problems with the funeral. We experienced the same problems when my uncle died as well, no one could see him and say goodbye.

37. Even though as a family we knew we should keep my Dad's infected status a secret I confided in a friend of mine. I was only a child and did not know any better. Before long the whole school knew. I do not blame my friend as we were only children; however, I was then picked on most lunch times. Children would say my Dad was 'gay', 'bent', or he 'takes it up the arse'. My Dad had a meeting with my head of year before he died because of the bullying I suffered. I remember one child being taken into the head masters office and his parents were called in because of comments he made to me. The bullying got even worse after my Dad died.

38. Over the years I heard all of the AIDS jokes. I have been in work places when they tell AIDS jokes and you have to laugh with them because otherwise others will ask what is wrong with you. It has only been in the last 3 or 4 years I have told the people I work with now about how my Dad died. Some of them had heard things over the year so they had been supportive.

39. My uncle Vicky had HIV and my children saw him pass away. When Vicky died it was 14 years after my Dad (early 2002) and it dragged my Dad dying up again. How he survived as long as he did is beyond me. He was reduced to a wheel chair just dribbling. My uncle Dave passed away 7 years ago and my children knew him as well.



40. My children would have found out about my Dad's infection at some stage. I did not tell them while they were at school because of the stigma they may have faced.
41. My youngest brother, Paul, was 3 when my Dad died and I did not see him again until he was 16. I did not see my eldest brother Vince again until 2008. No one was in touch with anyone who was in touch with Vince. The family had fallen apart. We were in touch in 2008 but all my brothers did not reunite until 2010.
42. This Scandal has driven a wedge between various members of my family. It very hard as the Inquiry should be a time where the family all pull together and draw a line under what has happened. If my Dad was alive this would not be happening. He was the glue that held us all together.
43. While I was staying in the independent living accommodation I received my exam results and they were not very good. Before my Dad was ill my education was going really well. I was expected to get 9 A-C grades but I came out with F's and G's. During the start of the most important two years of my education my Dad died, if I had a family behind me I would not be in a children's home and I may have received better results.
44. I applied to go back to school for 2 years and they accepted me so I handed my notice in where I was working. I turned up to school on the first day of term but the school threw me out. They said I could not attend the school because of my living arrangements but I do not know if that was true. I think it was because of the hassle I brought to the school because my Dad died of HIV.

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

45. Initially I was not offered any counselling when my Dad died. I also did not receive any support from social services. They just wanted us to go away and get on with our lives.

46. I eventually reached out and requested counselling myself. The counselling did not help because they did not understand what I was discussing. One of the problems with counselling is they can deal with the bereavement issues but the issues are not purely bereavement. I know I am not the only one who has faced this problem. I had my final session of counselling when the Penrose Inquiry did its final report.

47. I have been in touch with Haemophilia Wales recently and was told that counselling could be arranged for me again at the haemophilia centre in Swansea. I also asked the Inquiry about counselling but they said they had done all they could as they had provided a phone line.

## **Section 7. Financial Assistance**

48. From the Macfarlane trust we received £630 a year for 4 years and we also received the category G payment of £2,000. This is what I used to put a deposit down on a house.

49. When my Dad died I did not receive a penny in my own right. My step mum did split the Skipton money between the five sons and herself but that was only because she agreed.

## **Section 8. Other Issues**

50. I am hoping this Inquiry will find the truth. I would like them to look into how social services responded to the situation. The system seemed unprepared for what was going to happen and there was a lack of forward thinking. Things should have been in place because people like my Dad were being told they

had a limited life expectancy, but there was nothing to join the dots. Once I was in care and Tony was in care they thought the issue had been dealt with.

**Anonymity, disclosure and redaction**

51. I do not wish to apply for anonymity and I understand this statement will be published and disclosed as part of the Inquiry. I am willing to give oral evidence

**Statement of Truth**

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

Signed

GRO-C

Dated 09 April 2019

### **MEDICAL SUMMARY**

**(This summary is not intended to be exhaustive but sets out key points in the records relevant to the Statement)**

This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my full medical records. .