

Witness Name: Denise Anne Turton

Statement No: WITN1575001

Exhibits: 0

Dated: 1st March 2019

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN WITNESS STATEMENT OF DENISE ANNE TURTON

I, Denise Anne Turton will say as follows:-

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Denise Anne Turton. My date of birth is the [GRO-C] 1960 and I live at [GRO-C] North Somerset [GRO-C] with my husband, Colin George Turton. We married on the 9th October 1981. I currently do not work due to my ill-health; however, I used to be a carer for Lee and I have also worked at Waitrose. We have had four children, Lee, Kerrie, Robyn and Jack.
2. This witness statement is in relation to our late son, Lee Dean Turton who was born on the [GRO-C] 1981, and who sadly passed away on the 22nd January 1992 as a result of Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), which he had contracted through contaminated blood products. He was 10 years old.
3. This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my son'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 affected

4. Lee was diagnosed with Haemophilia when he was six months old in November 1981. He was originally treated with Cryoprecipitate (Cryo) when he was a baby then with Factor VIII.
5. As a direct result of being treated with contaminated blood products Lee contracted HIV.
6. In August 1985, Colin and I were called into the hospital and were told of the diagnosis. Lee was only four years old at the time it was just before he started school.
7. We were very angry, the doctor was very dismissive of us and arrogant. We were given no information about the infection, how to manage it or the way in which others could be infected. Our daughter, Kerrie, was only two years old at the time and she was at risk as was I as I treated Lee whenever he had a bleed, no one said anything. We were not happy with the way in which the results of the tests were communicated to us.

Section 3. Impact

8. Lee's illness had a tremendous impact on our entire family. Our life was never the same after Lee was diagnosed first with Haemophilia and then devastatingly with HIV.
9. I was the full-time carer for Lee from the time he was diagnosed with Haemophilia; until he was old enough to carry out the treatment himself however,

when we was diagnosed with HIV and became seriously ill I focused on caring for him again.

10. After Lee died I worked in Waitrose however about five years ago I was diagnosed with Fibromyalgia (FM). This causes me terrible musculoskeletal pain, and severe tiredness and as a result I am now unable to work. I believe FM has been caused by the acute stress I have suffered over the years related to Lee's illness and his death. As a result I am unable to do many basic everyday tasks.
11. Our life had been also made more difficult because of the stigma attached to HIV and other people's attitude to the infection. The doctors at the hospital disclosed Lee's condition to his school and some how the press became aware of Lee's condition. Lee had no friends at school and the press would often stand by the school gate or our home, waiting for us to give them an interview.
12. On one occasion the Headmistress of Lee's school rang me and I went to the school and picked Lee up to take him home. The press knew our surname and where we lived, but did not know his first name. This happened a few times and it did not stop even after Lee's death. The press not only harassed us at school but also at our home.
13. On another occasion the press came to our home, I had to take our children out through the back gate and I took them to friend's house. I then called Colin at work and he returned home.
14. People would not stand by me at our local shops nor would they speak to me at the school. People would stop me and say it was better if Lee was dead. It was stressful and extremely upsetting for all of us to the extent that we decided to move to Cornwall from the Bristol area.

15. When we moved to Cornwall I was asked by Lee's school if he had HIV, I said he did not as I could bear going through a similar situation as we had in Bristol.
16. Lee never had the same kind of experiences as other children his age had. He did not have friends, which I think could have helped him while going through his illness. Instead he was completely isolated.
17. It was also difficult to see Lee's health deteriorate and to see him go through the side-effects of the drugs he was treated with, particularly because he was so young.
18. The drug he was treated with was Azidothymidine (AZT), it was the only treatment available to treat him but it was toxic and was not good for him.
19. Lee's illness made us very isolated. We had lost the vast majority of our friends after they found out about him being HIV positive. We never told people about his illness when we moved to Cornwall to have a fresh start and give Lee and Kerrie an enjoyable childhood.
20. This isolation put a lot of pressure on us as a family, but also on our marriage, because of the constant stress and worry. We could not enjoy our lives, as we had to focus on Lee's illness.
21. This also affected Kerrie's childhood, as we did not have much of a social life or friends. She would never play with friends, and she was constantly with us when Lee had to go to hospital. I feel Kerrie missed out as well.
22. As a result of Lee's infection I have a mistrust of doctors. I trusted them with my son's health, as they were professionals but they broke my trust, and I am not able to look at them in the same way as I did before.

23. I was also very upset about the fact that a nurse at the hospital suggested that due to his HIV infection Lee could not be buried. I was angry about the decision although in the end we were able to persuade the hospital to allow Lee to be buried but we had only two days to arrange Lee's funeral.

24. When Lee passed away, Kerrie was still very young and Robyn was only five months old. It was even more difficult for us, as whilst we should have been able to enjoy the time with young children and giving more attention to our youngest child, we were in the process of grieving Lee. We were deprived of making great memories as a family.

25. Lee's infection and death still affects us to day. I often say that we have had three children, rather than four, as it saves us the pain of having to explain to people what had happened to Lee. It is extremely painful to us.

26. It is almost as if he never existed, particularly because he was so young when he passed away.

27. It is also hurtful knowing that Lee never met his younger brother, Jack, and Jack missed on the opportunity to have the experience of having an older brother.

28. I have never been offered any counselling or psychological support and remain on antidepressants prescribed by my GP.

Anonymity, disclosure and redaction

29. I confirm that I do not wish to apply for anonymity and that I understand this statement will be published and disclosed as part of the Inquiry.

30. I do wish to be called to give oral evidence.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed

GRO-C

Denise Anne Turton

Dated

~~February~~ 2019
15th March