

Witness Name: Sarah Dorricott

Statement No: WITN2893001

Exhibits: 0

Dated: March 2019

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF SARAH DORRICOTT

I, Sarah Dorricott will say as follows:-

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Sarah Dorricott of [GRO-C]
[GRO-C] I was born on [GRO-C] 1990 and I am 28 years old.
My mother is Ann Dorricott and I have a sister named Ellie Dorricott. I live with my son and currently work as a manager at Wagamama.
2. My late father Michael Paul Dorricott was born on [GRO-C] 1967 and sadly passed away on 3rd April 2015 as a result of being infected with the Hepatitis C Virus (HCV).
3. I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006. I am aware that my grandmother Jennifer Ann Dorricott, my mother Ann Dorricott and my sister Eleanor Dorricott will also be giving statements.
4. This witness statement has been prepared with benefit of access to some of my late father's medical records. If and in so far as I have been provided with limited records the relevant entries are exhibited to this statement.

Section 2. How Affected

5. My father was diagnosed with mild Haemophilia A, but I do not know when. Whenever he had any bumps or bleeds as a child he was treated with Cryoprecipitate. However, as his Haemophilia was only mild, he did not receive much treatment.
6. On 14th December 1982, when he was 15 years old, my father had had a routine dental operation at Huddersfield Hospital, where four teeth were extracted. Prior to the operation, his dentist, Mr I Chan, suggested using Cryoprecipitate. However, he was given Factor VIII instead. My father and grandparents never gave permission for him to be treated with Factor VIII and they were under the impression that he was being treated with Cryoprecipitate. They had not received any information about the risks associated with using Factor VIII. My father was not aware that liver function tests were taken before and after his operation. His liver function was higher than normal in contrast to his liver function tests before he was treated with Factor VIII, however, he was never told of this. He did not receive any further treatment with Factor VIII.
7. In 1996, after Ellie was born, my father went to the Haemophilia Centre for a check up because he had not been examined in many years. At the check up they advised that they were going to test him for infections and he was later diagnosed with Hepatitis C. He was then referred to Addenbrookes Hospital for treatment to manage his cirrhosis of the liver.
8. I do not know what information was provided to him when he was being informed of his infection.
9. My parents were advised that my mother may have been infected, so she decided to get tested. Fortunately the results came back negative.

Section 3. Other Infections

10. I am unaware of any other infections that my father may have contracted as a result of receiving contaminated blood products. However, he was diagnosed with liver cancer towards the end of his life.

Section 4. Consent

11. I believe that my father was treated with Factor VIII without his knowledge or consent. He was aware that he was being tested for infections when he attended the check up appointment in 1996. As such, I do not consider that he was tested without his knowledge or consent.

Section 5. Impact

12. I was twenty five when my father passed away. I first found out that my father had been infected with Hepatitis C in 1999, when I was nine years old. My father had his first liver transplant in October 2000. During that time, I had to miss a lot of school time to attend the hospital. This severely impacted my studies and whilst at the hospital I remember just staring at the clock all day. What happened to our family adversely affected my studies, concentration and overall ability to commit to education.

13. I went to university for a meaningless course as I felt that I was fulfilling my father's wishes, but I could not fully commit and eventually dropped out. My decision to do so was influenced by my insomnia and depression. My outlook on life changed as I was brought up in an environment where life was so short and the outcome of death on the doorstep came so frequently. My father was always in and out of the hospital and I felt that there was no point in studying when I could be out there living my life. After dropping out, I got myself a low skilled job with Wagamama and worked my way up.

14. Growing up with that experience has turned me into a very paranoid person in my personal life, with my relationships and in my approach to parenting. If

things do not go the way I want them to I feel overwhelmed and often get panic attacks. I am also a very controlling person like that and suffer from anxiety which I believe stemmed from the time when my father was on interferon treatment. In addition to this, my sister and I both suffered from eating disorders. Illogically, we would steal and hide food, but we were never starved or deprived. It was all about control. My mental condition has since improved, but it was a major problem for me in the past.

15. After university, I settled in Chichester whilst my parents moved to Cumbria. When my father told me that he had terminal cancer, I requested to be transferred to a Wagamama branch closer to my parents so that I could spend time with him. I moved to Leeds leaving behind my friends, peers, god son and colleagues. Unfortunately he died two months after I got there. I have since remained in the North of the country.

16. When I was in Chichester, after finding out that my father was terminally ill, I started counselling sessions. I also went to my boss and told him about my situation back home. As my work had not been efficient enough, my boss put me on performance review [GRO-D] In the end I contacted Human Resources who sympathised with me [GRO-D]
[GRO-D]

17. As I have mentioned, my father underwent the Interferon treatment. That time was especially troubling for us. My father became very aggressive and controlling; he often suffered violent mood swings and would occasionally lash out and strike me. Our family would walk on egg shells around him always talking in hushed tones as we did not want to aggravate him. I know he was depressed, but this was quite obviously a horrible thing to go through as I was only a teenager. My father never hit my mum or sister, but I would challenge him a lot, me being a stroppy teenager. One time my mother had to come between us as my father was about to push me down the stairs. Prior to his starting Interferon, my father was not a volatile person and he would have never hit me save for the occasional disciplinary smack. For relief I turned to self harm whenever nobody was looking and his health or behaviour had gone

beyond my control. No one other than my counsellor knows that I self harmed. Once his treatment stopped I had a conversation with him about it and we made peace. I do not hold anything against my father and I know that he never meant to hurt me. In fact we became very close with each other.

18. Since my father passed away, I am still a paranoid person, but the counsellor helped me a lot. I can now talk about all my issues and am still working on getting over them.

19. My sister Ellie never knew her father as a healthy man. She is six years younger than me and was born to a father diagnosed with Hepatitis C. She was also GRO-C which stems from the fact that she did not have a normal childhood. I practically had to mother her as our parents were always in and out of hospital, which was two hours from our house. I was pressured into passing my driving test early so that I could drive my sister to and from school. We had to stick out for each other. Having said that, now we are not close at all. We do not have a sisterly bond as I was more a mother to her.

20. My mother was always conflicted. She would witness the moments when my father was very volatile towards me and would wait until my father had calmed down before telling him that he reacted unfairly. She would contemplate the situation for a while and I felt that she was choosing her battles. After my father passed away, my mother and I became very close.

21. I found out that I was pregnant with my child two weeks after the funeral. He was my father's first grandchild and had my father been alive, had I not been grieving, I may not have continued my pregnancy. I feel as though my decision to have my son was affected by my father's death. I have no regrets about making that decision.

Treatment/care/support

22. My father was not offered counselling or psychological support at any point. When he was diagnosed with terminal cancer he was offered anti-depressants, but he did not take them because he did not want to suppress any feelings.
23. I was not offered any counselling or psychological support and had to seek it out myself. I do not have sessions anymore. It was either the Skipton Fund or the Caxton Trust who provided some financial assistance for the costs of counselling after I told my father that I wanted sessions. It helped me massively as I am now calmer and I no longer suffer from insomnia. Talking to someone unbiased helped me come to terms with everything and I managed to have a closer relationship with my father before he passed away. I said everything I wanted to say to him prior to his death to get closure. Without counselling I do not believe I would have been able to do so.

Financial Assistance

24. Prior to my father's death, he received financial assistance from the Skipton Fund. I cannot recall how much exactly. He also received a winter fuel allowance from the Caxton Foundation.
25. Following his death, my mother received a payment of £10,000 from the Skipton Fund. In order to receive this assistance, she approached the Skipton Fund and provided a copy of my father's death certificate.
26. My mother also received financial assistance from the Caxton Foundation, in order to help with funeral costs.
27. Personally, other than the assistance for counselling sessions which I received through my father, I have not received any financial assistance.

Other Issues

28. As a result of his infection, my father was unable to obtain any life insurance. There were also difficulties getting travel insurance. After he was diagnosed with HCV and had his first liver transplant, my father's outlook on life changed and he knew he was going to die so he wanted to travel and enjoy life; my parents did not let this stop us all from travelling.

29. I was actively involved in a lot of campaigns however it is hard to maintain these activities whilst working full time. I do have contacts in the media who occasionally ask if I could do a TV interview or go on the radio or write newspaper articles. As of current, not many people in Yorkshire who were infected are comfortable handling the media so getting the coverage for our region is important and that is why I volunteer myself. I feel like media attention encourages actions. I recall writing to an MP about the issue and they simply ignore our letters, but with the right positive push from the media, they started responding. I feel there should be more urgency and attention being paid to these people.

Anonymity, disclosure and redaction

30. I confirm that I do not wish to apply for anonymity. I understand this statement will be published and disclosed as part of the Inquiry and I am happy to give oral evidence if necessary.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed: **GRO-C**

Sarah Dorricott

Dated: 28/03/2019