

Witness Name: Andrea Willimott
Statement No.: WITN4200001
Exhibit: WITN4200002
Dated: 11 November 2020

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF ANDREA WILLIMOTT

I, Andrea Willimott, will say as follows: -

1. I am the Director of Governance for the University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay NHS Foundation Trust.

Structure of the Trust

1. The Morecambe Bay Hospitals NHS Trust (UHMBT) was formed in April 1998, following the merger of the Lancaster Acute Hospitals NHS Trust (responsible for Royal Lancaster Infirmary and associated hospitals), Westmorland Hospitals NHS Trust (responsible for Westmorland General Hospital and associated hospitals) and Furness Hospitals NHS Trust (responsible for Furness General Hospital and associated hospitals).

In the early part of 2006, the Trust obtained University Hospital status as part of the introduction of a medical school and dental education centre of Cumbria and Lancashire.

On 1st October 2010, the Trust was authorised as an NHS Foundation Trust (without compliance conditions).

University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay NHS Foundation Trust (UHMBFT) has five main sites:

- Furness General Hospital

- Royal Lancaster Infirmary
 - Westmorland General Hospital
 - Queen Victoria Hospital
 - Ulverston Community Health Centre
2. The Haemophilia service in Lancaster was run by the Lancaster Blood Transfusion Centre until 1988, when it was transferred to the Royal Lancaster Infirmary, although any patients requiring admission would have been treated at the Royal Lancaster Infirmary before then. From an internet search, Dr Gunson's obituary and speaking to Dr Lee (sadly now deceased), Dr Christina L Kozlowski, Consultant Haematologist, advises that the Lancaster Blood Transfusion Centre was established in the late 1960's as a subsidiary of the Manchester Blood Transfusion Centre. Dr Harold Gunson was the Head of the Manchester Centre at that time and Dr Douglas Lee, his deputy, managed the Lancaster Centre from around 1979. The Lancaster Blood Transfusion Centre closed down in around 1995. Dr Kozlowski tried to discover where relevant documents or minutes would have been stored when the Centre closed down, by telephoning round any colleagues she thought might know but she was unable to find out.
3. The current Haemophilia Service in Lancaster operates on a 'hub and spoke' model with the Manchester Haemophilia Comprehensive Care Centre, so except for individual patient records, more recent information should be held by Manchester.

Section 1. Searches, including search terms used

1. Dr Christina L Kozlowski, Consultant Haematologist, conducted the searches for the Lancaster Haemophilia Centre in response to question 1.
2. Dr Kozlowski advised that the searches she was able to do, as a clinician, were limited to what she was able to find in the Haematology Department.

Physical search

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1. Dr Kozlowski identified some information from the 1990s, which her former colleague, the late Dr David Gorst, Consultant Haematologist, had retained in a Haemophilia file in his office and was still preserved in the Haematology Department.
2. In around September 2018, Dr Kozlowski asked Nigel Nelson, Pathology Service Manager, Rachael Williams, Technical Services Manager and Rachel Banks, Pathology Quality Manager where archived information was kept. Some was stored in a secure room in the laboratory at the Royal Lancaster Infirmary. Dr Kozlowski went through these paper documents and records by hand to identify any that appeared relevant to the Inquiry. She reviewed each document looking for anything relating to or mentioning: Haemophilia; Haemophilia treatment; Hepatitis C and Haemophilia; HIV and Haemophilia; blood products and recombinant factor treatments for Haemophilia. This yielded a further small amount of information.
3. Dr Kozlowski asked about further archives and was directed to a large storage room in the Pathology Department at Westmorland General Hospital, where there were large cages of boxes (unlabelled) containing papers and documents. Dr Kozlowski went through all these paper documents and records by hand, using the process described above. Most were unrelated to haemophilia but this yielded a little further information for the Inquiry.
4. Dr Kozlowski asked the staff named at paragraph 3 above to provide her with all the minutes of haematology management meetings, and transfusion meetings, dating back to the 1980s onwards. She was advised that as there was no requirement to keep paper records from so far back, paper records were unavailable.
5. Dr Kozlowski contacted Jill Livingstone, Transfusion Practitioner but no further information was forthcoming.

Online search

1. Rachael Williams, Technical Services Manager, has advised that the records relevant to the Inquiry predate the Trust's electronic haematology records, so no online searches were carried out. The current TD Nexlab has access to haematology records from 2009 to present. Therefore, searches were limited to searching for hard copy records, as detailed above.

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Section 2. The Trust's information repositories (from 1950 to present day) such as local authorities, University archives and The National Archives

1. The Trust holds some old documents and some older documents are held by either Lancashire County Council or Cumbria County Council. Both have advised they have been contacted by the Infected Blood Inquiry team. No specific record of the Trust's archiving policy has been identified.
2. I am not aware that any conventions are currently in place to archive documents with our local archivists.
3. I am not able to find out where documentation from the Lancaster Blood Transfusion Centre (subsidiary centre of Manchester Transfusion Centre) was stored after the centre shut down in 1995. The blood transfusion service had been reorganised and I am unaware of their historical storage policies.

Section 3. Repositories and archives searched

1. No repositories or archives have been searched by the Trust. I am not aware of previous destruction policies and how these were applied.

Section 4. Destruction of Records

1. The Trust retains documents in line with NHS Records Management Code of Practice for Health and Social care 2016 and the Trust's Clinical Records Management Policy (Exhibit W4200001)

Statement of Truth

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

Signed

GRO-C

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