

Witness Name: J Filer-Cooper

Statement No: **WITN4718001**

Exhibits: 0

Dated: July 2020

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF JO FILER-COOPER

I, Jo Filer-Cooper , will say as follows:-

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Jo Filer-Cooper, my date of birth is **GRO-C** 1969 and my address is **GRO-C** Devon **GRO-C**
2. I make this statement to assist the Inquiry in its work in relation to the Terms of Reference following my involvement in investigations in the HIV Haemophilia Litigation in the late 1980s/early 1990s as part of a medico legal team instructed by J Keith Park Solicitors.
3. I first became aware of the Infected Blood Inquiry when it was announced in the news in or about 2017.
4. I first contacted one of the foundations involved in the Inquiry but they didn't follow matters up. I was then put in touch with Jason Evans at Factor 8 and, on 17 June 2020, did a podcast with him which led to me being asked by Collins Solicitors to provide a more detailed written statement.

5. I became involved in the HIV Haemophilia Litigation when my father, Roger Filer-Cooper, was approached by J Keith Park Solicitors who were instructed by the Claimants. He was a GP by profession but had taken early retirement. He later retrained to become a Consultant Psychiatrist and he became involved in medical legal work in the intervening period. He was also involved in the tranquiliser addiction litigation.
6. I was only about 20 at the time and had just finished a youth training scheme on computers so my father recruited me to the team to assist with the data gathering and processing.
7. The third member of the team was Dr Bill Pickering who was also a GP.
8. My role in the team was to go through individual sets of medical records and pick out heat treated or un-heat treated batches after a specific date. I was essentially a glorified PA.
9. My father and Dr Pickering went through the records to look for early signs of AIDS (in particular PCP) and other medical information which was relevant to the case. My role was limited to batch numbers.
10. We were asked to go through all the medical records of anyone with haemophilia who had been given human or porcine Factor VIII although we were more focused on human FVIII. J Keith Park had provided a list of hospitals and names for us to look at. We were only asked to look at treatment after a certain date (1985/6) which I believe was the date that heat treatment was introduced to ensure that all Factor treatment was safe. We were looking for batches given which hadn't been heat treated or where the heat treatment had failed and batches had been withdrawn.
11. We travelled up and down the country doing shifts of two weeks away at a hospital looking at records followed by two weeks at home collating, processing and passing across the data to J Keith Park.

12. I recorded the following information in terms of data – name, type of factor given, where the treatment was from (NHS/commercial), whether the treatment was heat treated or not, the date the treatment was given and the batch number. This data was then printed out on old computer paper in reams and sent to J Keith Park. We also made notes as I remember we created folders for each hospital.
13. We travelled to major hospitals up and down the country. The only hospitals my father and I were not involved in were our local hospitals due to confidentiality reasons, so Dr Pickering did the Devon hospitals because he was from Cumbria.
14. We also travelled to Wales and Scotland during the course of our investigations.
15. Often we would look at the records at the hospital. However, on some occasions the hospitals refused to accommodate us and J Keith Park arranged for rooms to be made available in other solicitors' offices for us to go through the records which were then delivered to us. I recall that there were several occasions when we had to chase records because either a patient's records had not been provided to us at all or because the records provided were incomplete.
16. Going through the records was horrendous. What made it worse was that, back then, a lot of the injuries caused by haemophilia such joint injuries were recorded photographically so we really felt that we got to know people through their records because of the pictures. It was horrendous to then realise that some of these people had been infected with an incurable disease.
17. The other devastating fact that we learnt was that because FVIII was delivered at home there were cases of mums and dads who had needle stick injuries and themselves contracted HIV as a result. Due to the passage of time I can't now recall how many of these cases there were. I do recall that there were a number of these cases in the town

where British Leyland were based which I think was Coventry at that time.

18. We also spent time doing this work at Treloars. I remember it being the most incredible place. I enjoyed being there because the children seemed so happy. It was a lovely place but it made it all the more horrendous because amongst these children were those who had been given contaminated FVIII. I always wondered if I had seen some of those who had been infected running around whilst I was at the school.
19. Whilst we were at one of the Welsh hospitals (I cannot recall which one due to the passage of time) my father discovered a letter regarding Armour's FVIII product. I think the letter was from Armour itself although I cannot be sure. The content of the letter remains fresh in my memory. The letter withdrew Armour batches x, y and z and, through our previous investigations, we already had evidence that the named batches had been used after the date of the recall letter.
20. Armour knew the heat treatment had failed but the batches were given to patients because the recall was not followed.
21. We believed this to be a significant discovery in terms of the litigation and reported it to J Keith Park. Very soon after that there was an offer of payment to families and the litigation was settled.
22. As a result of the settlement the information that we had discovered was never made public.
23. Following the discovery of the Armour letter I felt something changed at the Centre – my father raised the letter with the hospital and felt afterwards that there was a change in attitude to the work we were doing. It wasn't as friendly – the staff started speaking Welsh around us all the time after that. I cannot recall which individuals we were dealing with – we would definitely have had contact with the records staff and possibly clinical management but either way I recall there was a distinct change in attitude.

24. I saw first hand that treatment batches which had been withdrawn by the manufacturer were used on patients after the recall date.

25. I knew that it was wrong and was covered up. We had suitcases full of evidence of use of batch numbers after the 1985/1986 withdrawal dates and it should have been allowed to go to Trial.

26. I was devastated when settlement was reached. I knew families were desperate but it was all so wrong.

27. I was very angry then and remain angry about it now. I don't have the evidence any more as when Mum and Dad sold their house about 6 years ago (before Dad died) the suitcases of papers they had kept relating to the HIV Haemophilia litigation were burnt. This included individual folders for every single person that we had researched – Dad kept a copy of everything that we had sent to J Keith Park. The folders held all the FVIII batch numbers that J Keith Park were given as well as when signs of HIV infection (Pneumo Cystis Carinii) were first detected, whether the individual had Hepatitis B etc.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed....Miss Joanna Filer-Cooper

Dated...26th August 2020