



Witness Name: J E Austin

Statement No.: WITN5505001

Dated: 20 January 2021

## **INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY**

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### **FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF JULIE AUSTIN ON BEHALF OF SALISBURY NHS FOUNDATION TRUST**

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I, Julie Elaine AUSTIN will say as follows:

1. I am currently employed by Salisbury NHS Foundation Trust in an ad hoc role as Legal Projects Manager. At the relevant time I was in post as the Trust's Head of Legal Services, a role from which I retired on 31 January 2020.
2. I have been asked to make this statement on behalf of Salisbury NHS Foundation Trust in response to a letter from the Inquiry to our former Chief Executive dated 14 February 2020 sent further to a request made under Rule 9(2) sent to Salisbury NHS Foundation Trust on 15 August 2018. I propose to answer each of the questions posed in the letter of 14 February 2020 in turn.
3. This statement does not cover the searches that were made in response to separate requests made for copies of records relating to individual patients as these were specifically excluded from the original request for documents made by Inquiry's letter of 15 August 2018. Requests for patient specific documentation were managed separately on a case-by-case basis.
4. **Question 1: Of the searches undertaken to comply with our Rule 9 request, dated 15 August 2018, please provide a list of searches, including search terms used.**

5. In summary, the steps taken to identify, locate and collate the surviving generic documentation that responds to the descriptions in the Inquiry's letter of 15 August 2018 were as follows:

- a. On 24 August 2018, in my former role as the Trust's Head of Legal Services I asked the current clinical lead for Haemophilia Centre for background information as to how the Centre was managed and organised historically, and the likely location and identifiers of relevant generic (as opposed to patient specific) documentation, in accordance with the list in the letter of 15 August 2018. He advised that as he was newly appointed as lead for the Haemophilia Centre it would be best to ask the Haematology & Blood Transfusion Laboratory Manager ("the Lab Manager") to assist with this as she had been in post much longer and he was unable to provide specific information about historical documentation.
- b. The Lab Manager confirmed that she had been in post since 2003. She was duly asked by the Trust's former Head of Legal Services to locate any/ all historical documents responding to the list in the Inquiry's letter of 15 August 2018, including those kept in paper and/or electronic formats.
- c. The Lab Manager produced several boxes of paper documents which had been retained (ie they had not been destroyed in line with the then current destruction policies) and electronic documents.
- d. The documents provided by the Lab Manager were collated, indexed, and checked for their apparent completeness by the Legal team. The Lab Manager was asked to double-check for any additional documentation and/or to confirm whether it was possible to fill in gaps in the documentation provided, including both paper and/or electronic formats. She confirmed that, to the best of her knowledge as Lab manager, she had produced every document that still exists.
- e. In addition, on 03 September 2018 in my former role as Trust's Head of Legal Services I contacted the former clinical lead for the Haemophilia Centre, who now works at another hospital. She confirmed that when she took over the service in about January 2018 her predecessor (who had run the service single-handed) had not left behind any generic documentation (ie documentation that didn't relate to the care of individual patients) in either paper or electronic format. She also confirmed that there had been no written policies in place when she

took over the service and advised that the best person to consult about surviving historical documentation (other than individual patients' records) would be the Lab Manager. She was unable to provide any specific information about what documentation might still exist or where it might now be kept.

f. In addition, on 03 September 2018 in my former role as the Trust's Head of Legal Services I asked the Trust's Head of Information Governance whether she had any knowledge of any other physical locations and/or electronic systems which should be searched to locate any further documents (paper or electronic) which responded to the Inquiry's letter of 15 August 2018. No additional physical locations/ electronic systems/ paper documents were identified.

g. Following assurances that all possibly relevant physical and/or electronic locations had been carefully and thoroughly searched, all of the documents provided by the Lab Manager were scanned (from paper) and uploaded with previously existing electronic documents to the Inquiry team's cloud-based repository (Egress) on 03 December 2018. An index was provided.

**6. Question 2: A list of all Salisbury NHS Foundation Trust's information repositories (from 1950 to present day) such as local authorities, University archives and The National Archives, for which the Trust has or has any control, responsibility, or oversight.**

7. Salisbury NHS Foundation Trust is a relatively new organisation formed in 1994. The predecessor organisation, Salisbury Health Care NHS Trust, was established on 01 November 1993. Prior to 01 November 1993, local hospital services were split across three hospital sites: the General Infirmary in the centre of Salisbury which managed general hospital services; Odstock Hospital (on the current expanded site on the outskirts of Salisbury) which managed specialist services for the Wessex Region, and Newbridge Hospital at Harnham which managed elderly care services. During 1992-1993 all services were brought together onto the current Odstock hospital site.

8. I am informed by the Trust's Head of Information Governance that the current repositories over which the current organisation has any control, responsibility or oversight are:

- a. Medical records of current patients;
- b. IT network shared areas;
- c. On-site departmental storage locations;
- d. National Archives, Devizes office;
- e. Off-site storage: Restore Limited

9. **Question 3: With reference to (2) please provide a list of the repositories and archives searched in response to the Rule 9(2) request dated 15 August 2018.**

10. I am informed by the Trust's Head of Information Governance that the answer is as follows:

- a. Medical records of current patients;
- b. IT network shared areas;
- c. On-site departmental storage locations;
- d. National Archives, Devizes office;
- e. Off-site storage: Restore Limited

11. **Question 4: If the records that were requested in the Rule 9 request dated 15 August 2018 have been destroyed in line with Salisbury NHS Foundation Trust's document retention and destruction policies, please provide copies of the relevant document destruction record or policy as exhibits to the written statement.**

12. I am informed by the Trust's Head of Information Governance that a search of the Trust's destruction records has confirmed that no destruction documents of relevance to the Rule 9 request are held by the Trust.

**Statement of Truth**

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

Signed:

GRO-C

Dated:

20 January 2021