

Witness Name: Katherine Victoria Burt
Statement No.: WITN6392284
Exhibits: None
Dated: 6 June 2023

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

WRITTEN STATEMENT OF KATHERINE VICTORIA BURT ON BEHALF OF THE HAEMOPHILIA SOCIETY UK

I provide this statement on behalf of the Haemophilia Society UK in response to the request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 17 April 2023.

I, Katherine Victoria Burt, will say as follows: -

Section 1: Introduction

1. My name is Katherine Victoria Burt, and I am known as Kate. I am the current Chief Executive of the Haemophilia Society ("the Society") whose registered address is 52B Borough High Street, London, SE1 1XN. My date of birth is GRO-C 1965. I have held the position of Chief Executive of the Society since 5 October 2020. All references hereafter to "the Society" are to the Haemophilia Society unless otherwise indicated. I am authorised by the Society to make this statement.
2. Prior to joining the Society in October 2020, I was an Executive Director at Leonard Cheshire, a global disability charity, leading their marketing and fundraising work. I have also worked as:
 - a. a director at Police Now, recruiting individuals to be police officers;
 - b. as the chief operating officer at Greenhouse Sports, a charity working with young people in inner cities helping them to release their potential through sport; and

- c. from 2012 to 2014, I was the chief executive of British Rowing;
 - d. as well as a number of other roles, including the Director of Business Development at The Prince's Trust.
3. This is my third statement to this Inquiry. My first statement to the Infected Blood Inquiry ("the Inquiry") is dated 9 August 2022 [WITN6392001] ("my first statement to the Inquiry"). My second statement to the Inquiry is dated 16 December 2022 [WITN6392268] ("my second statement to the Inquiry"). The Society has also made a closing submission to the Inquiry on its own behalf, and on behalf of its members, to include those designated with Core Participant status in the Inquiry and represented by Eversheds Sutherland (International) LLP [SUBS0000065].

Section 2: Response to Criticism by Witness W3602

4. In this statement, I address the matters that this Inquiry has requested that I respond to in the Rule 9 letter dated 17 April 2023 in relation to criticisms made by Witness W3602.
5. The relevant criticism is made at paragraph 9 (page 4) of Witness W3602's statement:
- "... To top it off, the Haemophilia [S]ociety at the time let me down very badly, as they published the fact that an HIV positive Haemophilia patient had died that week. It didn't take much for people to work it out as we lived in a small village. Two years after John's death, I made the decision to move to another area, uprooting my son away from his paternal grandparents and all his friends. Thankfully, we had support from my parents."*
6. Witness W3602's reference to her husband is to John Buchan Strachan, who died on 23 October 1987.
7. The Society's approach throughout the Inquiry has been to support the work of, and to assist the Inquiry. The Society has taken Witness W3602's criticism seriously and made efforts to further understand it, including to:

- a. Instruct its Recognised Legal Representative (“RLR”), Eversheds Sutherland (International) LLP, to conduct searches of the Society’s documents available to it to determine where the Society might have published information about a HIV positive Haemophilia patient that had died (see further paragraphs 9 and 12 below);
 - b. instruct its RLR to liaise with the Inquiry to request additional information about the criticism from Witness W3602 (see further paragraphs 10 to 11 below);
 - c. contact the former Secretary of the Society, from the time relevant to Witness W3602’s criticism to determine if he has any recall of Witness W3602’s criticism (see further paragraph 13 below).
8. Unfortunately, none of the steps outlined above (and explained in further detail below) have assisted in locating the article referred to in Witness W3602’s criticism; nor in obtaining any further information about what happened from the perspective of the Society at the relevant time.

Steps taken by the Society in response to Witness W3602’s criticism

9. Following receipt of Witness W3602’s statement, the Society instructed its RLR to conduct a number of searches of the Society’s documents available to it to determine where the Society might have published information about a HIV positive Haemophilia patient that had died. I have been informed that the relevant article could not be located.
10. The Haemophilia Society subsequently instructed its RLR to ask the Inquiry if it could liaise with Witness W3602 to provide additional information about the criticism. I have been informed that in an email to the Inquiry dated 3 April 2023, the Society’s RLR asked the following query of the Inquiry:

“We note that [Witness] W3602 has not specified the exact date and publication to which they are referring to at paragraph 9. In order for our client to provide the most helpful response to the criticism made by [Witness] W3602, it would very much assist our client if the Inquiry could please indicate the source in which [Witness] W3602 saw the Society publish “the fact that an HIV positive Haemophilia patient had died” which then led to the family’s eventual move

away from their home town. We have conducted a number of searches of our client's document database but due to the unspecified nature of [Witness] W3602's complaint, we have been unable to locate the relevant source that W3602 is referring to. Therefore, we wonder if it would be possible for the Inquiry to contact [Witness W3602] to ask if they can recall this detail?

It would be most helpful if the relevant document could be provided to our client but if this is not possible, then details of the publication and relevant date would be most appreciated."

11. Witness W3602 subsequently provided additional information about the criticism via their legal representatives. On 28 April 2023, the Inquiry provided the following information to the Society's RLR:

"We have now heard back from witness W3602's representatives. They informed us that, as far as witness W3602 can recall,

"the article was published in the Press and Journal or the Evening Express. She believes the article was an investigative journalist's interview with the secretary of the Haemophilia Society at the time. She recalls that she had a haemophiliac son and "made sure that everyone knew he was in the clear". [Witness W3602] thinks the article was published only a few weeks after her husband's death, certainly before Christmas of 1987. [Witness W3602] advises she phoned the secretary to voice her concerns, she does not recall her name. [Witness W3602 told her representative that] she was very apologetic and did not think how this article would affect others. [Witness W3602] did not keep a copy of the article."

12. After receiving the additional information from Witness W3602 on 28 April 2023, the Society's RLR also conducted searches for any articles published in the "Press and Journal" and "Evening Express" dated between 23 October 1987 to 25 December 1987 which included interviews with the Society's staff and mentioned that a HIV patient had died. I have been informed that the relevant article could not be located.
13. The Society subsequently instructed its RLR to seek permission to share the statement of Witness 3602 and additional information provided in the Inquiry's email dated 28 April 2023 with David Watters, who was the Secretary of the Society at the

time relevant to Witness W3602's criticism. The Society wanted to make every effort to understand the events that Witness W3602 described in their statement and considered it would be helpful to ask Mr Watters whether he had any recollection of the events, as described by Witness W3602. After permission was granted by the Chair of the Inquiry, the Society's RLR contacted Mr Watters. I am informed that Mr Watters could not recall the incident described by Witness W3602.

Section 3: Conclusion

14. As noted in the Society's closing submission [SUBS0000065], the Society knows that some of its members are angry and disappointed by actions taken by the Society in the past. Some felt unsupported and believe more should have been done to help them. I and the Society of today, with the full support of the Board, have taken on board the contents of the statement to which I am responding. As I noted in my second statement to the Inquiry (which addressed criticisms made by Witnesses W1122, W5739, W1055, W1056, W1210, W1791, W3988, W4120 and W3261), I recognise that there is hurt and an enduring feeling by some that the Society let them down. I would like those individuals, including Witness W3602 and all reading this statement, to know that the Society is assisting the Inquiry in every way it can. It wishes to face its past so that it can do better in the future. The Inquiry provides an opportunity for healing. The Society has done what it can to respond to Witness W3602's criticism but unfortunately, has been unable to locate the original article upon which Witness W3602's criticism is based. Therefore, all I can do is offer an apology for the hurt the witness clearly feels.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed

GRO-C

Dated 6 June 2023