



Witness Name: Dr Philippa Edwin

Statement No: WITN6429001

Exhibits: Nil

Dated: 29th May 2022

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

WRITTEN STATEMENT OF DR PHILIPPA EDWIN

I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 27 July 2021.

I, Dr Philippa Edwin, will say as follows: -

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Dr Philippa Rachel Xanthe Edwin. My date of birth is GRO-C 1952.
I live in Shropshire and my address is known to the Inquiry.
2. I am a retired doctor. I started training in 1970 and qualified as a Member of the Royal Colleges of Surgeons (M.R.C.S); Licentiate of the Royal College of Physicians (L.R.C.P) in January 1976.
3. I wish to speak about my late aunt Dr Freda Milner Roberts, who was the Regional Blood Transfusion Director for Liverpool (Merseyside) from 1976 to 1986. In particular, I wish to speak about her views on imported blood and blood products in the 1970's and 1980's.

4. I am not legally represented, and I am happy for the Inquiry team investigators to assist me with my statement.

Section 2. Background on Dr Freda Roberts

5. My aunt's date of birth was GRO-C 1923 and she was born in the Merseyside area. She passed away in May 2003.
6. She qualified as a Bachelor of Medicine and Surgery (M.B.B.S.) doctor in 1948. Her first senior job was as a "Preregistration Houseman" for the then Professor of medicine. As a female in the 1940's, that was quite a big deal.
7. I had a look at Liverpool University's website and it states that she was also Lady President of the University of Liverpool, Guild of Undergraduates, at the same point as being an Undergraduate.
8. Initially she began further training in Obstetrics and Gynaecology. But she hit a 'glass ceiling' and was only able to get so far. She progressed to registrar level but realised she was not going to make any further progress. She changed to Pathology; I believe she made that change in the late 1950's and further specialised in Haematology in the 1960's.
9. She had a special interest in Rhesus Disease in pregnant women and eventually became Director of the Liverpool and North Wales Transfusion Centre in 1978.
10. Her special interest was in Rhesus babies, that was her area. She worked in the management and transfusion support of Rhesus sensitised pregnancies, and the treatment of Rhesus haemolytic disease in pregnancy.
11. She was a Fellow of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists. She was also a Fellow of Royal College of Pathologists.

12. She attended conferences in the U.S.A. with the International Society of Haematologists.

13. She retired in 1986, when she was 63.

14. She has a son and a daughter. My cousin John is in the medical profession too.

Section 3. Dr Freda Roberts' involvement with blood and blood products

15. My aunt was very, very keen on blood *donation* rather than paying for blood. She felt very strongly about that.

16. She worked in several of the Liverpool Hospitals such as the old Southern Hospital as well as the Women's Hospital. I visited her once at the blood transfusion centre there. She covered Merseyside and part of Lancashire. She also covered North Wales as far as South as Welshpool. She would travel to donor sessions as far afield as Bangor and Welshpool as she felt it was important to support Blood Donation.

17. She instilled in me to not be blasé about giving people blood transfusions. She told me that blood is an extremely dangerous product, and not to be misused.

18. She informed me about the blood imports from the United States, and how they came from prisons and drug addicts. She was very concerned about Hepatitis B to start with, and then Hepatitis C. I'm not sure when Hepatitis C became recognised and "labelled". Then in the early 1980's, HIV hit the headlines. The issue about blood imports was regarding Factor 8 (and Factor 9 later on) being imported to treat haemophiliacs.

19. My aunt was doing her Pathology, (M.R.C. Path) exams when I was doing my A levels. That was the spring of 1970.

20. At the time my mother had a major car accident with life changing injuries. I was at boarding school, Christ's Hospital Hertford (we were a single-parent family). The school arranged for a staff member to drive me to visit her in Stafford Hospital for several consecutive weekends and I used to then travel by train on to Liverpool, stay the night with my aunt and uncle, and return to school on the Sunday. Incidentally, the Headmistress arranged to pay for the travel arrangements.
21. I had many conversations with my aunt about blood and blood products. The first conversation I had with her would have been in the mid-70s. We certainly had lots of conversations after I qualified (in 1976) but we had had some before that too.
22. We would meet and she would drill me about the danger of people receiving blood. It came up time and time again, particularly when I was a junior doctor. Not because I was giving blood every two minutes, but because she was very certain of it being a dangerous product, because of the risk of infection.
23. She told me about the meetings she had with the other Blood Transfusion Directors in London. She was one of twelve directors, and she was the only woman.
24. The other directors were insisting on getting Factor 8 imported from the USA. She claimed that there was production capability in the UK.
25. She was very worried about importing Hepatitis, and of course HIV, when it came in. I remember her telling me that. If they had not imported the USA blood products, the situation regarding Factor 8 would have been very different. She was very indignant about it.

26. She was pro voluntary, un-paid donations. She was against the American system, and particularly against the UK buying American blood.

27. After she retired, we visited my aunt and uncle in Liverpool. On one occasion, she told me that she was giving advice on a Haemophilia and HIV case. I did not see the details. I assumed she was giving professional advice for a specific person.

28. She felt very strongly about all of this, and I'm sure she wrote about it. The Liverpool University website says some of her papers are with her children. I have been in contact with my cousins about her papers. They informed me that all her professional paperwork was retained at the Blood transfusion Centre. They went through all her papers after her death (my uncle predeceased her) at their Liverpool residence and found no relevant paperwork.

29. The Inquiry Investigators have checked the minutes of the Transfusion Directors meetings and my aunt's comments are not recorded in the Haemophilia Directors meeting minutes. Her presence is recorded but not her comments. I cannot explain this, as she definitely informed me that she had spoken against blood product importation at the meetings I referred to earlier.

30. We spoke about it over a period of many years. She was always drumming it in to me: "Be careful with blood." But I think my aunt was sort of outvoted in the meetings - she was a lone voice.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed

GRO-C

(29th May 2022)

Dated 29th May 2022