

Witness Name: Brian Prendergast

Statement No: W7289-001

Exhibits: 1

Dated: 27 Oct 2022

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF BRIAN PRENDERGAST

I, Brian Prendergast will say as follows:-

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Brian Prendergast. I reside at
 My date of birth is 1961. I am married with 2 children and 3 grandchildren. I am in full time employment as a construction manager.
2. This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my mother Margaret Prendergast's full medical records.

Section 2. How Affected

3. My mother was infected with Hepatitis C as a result of a blood transfusion following surgery on 21st March 1991. My mother died as a result of the Hepatitis C infection on 1991.
4. On 9th March 1991 my mother had a fall at home, whilst reaching into a wall cupboard, she had been standing on a chair to reach into it when she fell. As she went to climb down from the chair, it slipped causing her to fall. As a

result, she went to Manchester Royal Hospital where she underwent a hip replacement operation on 21st March 1991 during which she received a blood transfusion.

5. I do not know what information was given to my mother prior to her receiving the blood transfusion.
6. As a result of the blood transfusion my mother contracted Hepatitis C, although at the time they were not sure what it was.
7. We didn't really know what was wrong with my mother, and it was more or less kept from her. She was unaware of the discussions going on between the consultants. We didn't know how serious it was or wasn't at the time. It was only when they started talking about a liver transplant, we knew it was obviously something serious. It was a shock to us she was so seriously ill. I don't feel it was properly explained to my father or I. It was a very quick onset.
8. Inadequate information was given to us, although I am not sure what the hospital knew themselves.
9. It would have been helpful to have had information earlier, but we had the impression then they didn't know themselves. As we were given very limited information I started to try and research myself. I tried to get information from the blood transfusion place in Manchester. They told me that hepatitis C was not checked for in the blood in this country unlike in European countries, that was told to me at the blood transfusion service by one of the consultants. As we were not provided with much information I had to try and find out myself how serious the situation was.

Section 3. Other Infections

10. I am not aware of my mother having contracted any other infection from the infected blood other than Hepatitis C.

Section 4. Consent

11. I am not aware of my mother being treated without her knowledge or consent. However they did not tell her how seriously ill she was. Our main aim was to try and get her better

Section 5. Impact of the Infection

12. Not long after the blood transfusion my mother developed jaundice, she had this for several weeks before she was admitted to hospital on 24th July 1991, up until then she had had no other symptoms.
13. My mother had been a very fit and well person, she had looked after herself well, she never smoked, and she never drank with the exception of a port wine at Christmas. Before the fall, I think the last time she saw the doctor would have been 23 years previously when my brother was born. She had 3 siblings and all died in their mid-80s.
14. She got over the hip surgery and was back to walking around at the time she developed the jaundice.
15. My mother's infection developed rapidly, and she died on GRO-C 1991 GRO-C after receiving infected blood. At the time of my mother's death my father had a breakdown. It took him 2 years to get over the shock of losing her and to start being himself again. He let himself go after her death, they had been married for 42 years, he was being threatened with eviction from the council house he had shared with my mam as he was now living on his own in a 3 bedroom house, the council said they needed it for a family, I was then forced to move him closer to where we were so my wife and I could keep an eye on him.
16. Before my mother's death, my father had been a fit and active person and very independent. After my mother's death my sisters and I had to look after him and do everything for him.

17. My father only passed away GRO-C at the age of 98, we had expected to have my mother with us for a similar length of time. They had both led an active life, they looked after their diets. We lost at least 20 years of time with my mother.

18. At the time of my mother's death, I was in between buying and renovating a new house for me and my wife and 4 year old daughter to live in, as we needed a bigger house due to my wife being 3 months pregnant. I decided not to sell the house we already owned and used it to move my father into as he was being offered by the council small flats in high rise tower blocks in some of the most deprived areas of Manchester. The decision by me to now own 2 houses, so I could take care of my father, had a massive burden on me and my young family, which resulted in me having to work most days, 12 hours a day, 7 days a week for many years, apart from the emotional pressure I was under, having just lost my mother and seeing my father in the state he was.

19. I was close to my older sisters and they took our mother's death badly. I didn't see so much of my brother but expect it would have affected him as well.

Section 6. Treatment/care/support

20. My mother didn't have the opportunity to have treatment for the infection due to its rapid onset.

21. No counselling was offered to my father or to myself.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

22. We were not aware of the Trusts and Funds and of the financial assistance that might be available. No one told us about this. I have only been made aware of this very recently by my solicitors when we were advised to register

for my father. Now my father has passed away I will be making an application on behalf of my mother's estate.

Section 8. Other Issues

23. When my mother was unwell, one of the consultants spoke to me and said that my mother was a secret alcoholic after I had suggested that the severe damage to her liver had been caused as a direct result of the contaminated blood given to her in the operation. This statement from him upset the family and I knew at that point there was a cover up and they were trying to blame my mother's liver disease on other causes rather than admit the fact they gave her contaminated blood.
24. On the Medical Report to HM Coroner, it is stated there was a suggestion that one of the sons is considering litigation re the possibility of infection from blood transfusion. I am not sure where that came from, this was not the case at the time, I did undertake some research to try and find out about what was happening to my mother, but this was so we could try and help her get better. No one seemed to know what was happening with her so I tried to find out myself.
25. The evidence that was presented at the Inquest included the Registered Medical Practitioner Report, and this report stated "the rapidity of the onset of the disease however suggests it is more likely that the disease came from the blood transfusion. The Consultant Virologist, John Craske, on oath, also stated "Mrs Prendergast did have an infection which could be C or F...both could have come from infected blood.... It is the most likely cause". I exhibit a copy of these documents to my statement as Exhibit 1.
26. After my mother died, we did eventually engage a solicitor in 1991 but we hit a brick wall and didn't get anywhere, we were going around in circles and this was causing my father to be upset so we did not press it further.

Anonymity

27. I do not wish to remain anonymous.

28. I do not want to give oral evidence to the Inquiry.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed  GRO-C

Dated 27-10-2022