

Witness Name: Elizabeth Meecham

Statement No.: W7650001

Exhibits: Nil

Dated: 20th January 2023

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

WRITTEN STATEMENT OF ELIZABETH MEECHAM

I provide this statement in response to the request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 18th January 2023.

I, Elizabeth Meecham, will say as follows: -

Section 1: Introduction

1. Authors details:

Retired Nurse.

DOB GRO-C 1956

My address is known to the Inquiry.

Professional nurse qualifications: State Registration of General Nursing: John Radcliffe School of Nursing - operative 29/07/1978.

Arthritis and Allied Conditions and Management of Arthritis: Keele University 2004.

Graduate Certificate in Rheumatology Practise: Brighton University 2006-2008.

Principles and Practice of Joint and soft tissue injections: Keele University 2011.

Left Midwifery and Nursing Council General Nurse Register January 2022 as fully retired from nursing practice.

Previous position with East Cheshire NHS Trust:

Rheumatology Specialist Nurse

Rheumatology Department
Silk House
Macclesfield District General Hospital
Macclesfield SK103BL

'Recent' employment history with East Cheshire NHS Trust:

Clinical Effectiveness Facilitator 2000-2003

Rheumatology Research Nurse 2000 - 2001

Rheumatology Specialist Nurse 2003 – 2020 (Retired July 2019).

Returned from retirement to assist in the pandemic as a Vaccinator 2021- 2022

Section 2: Responses to criticism by W3103

SUMMARY OF CARE

1. I make this statement in response to professional criticism raised within a witness statement obtained during the course of this inquiry. My statement is made under Rule 9(1) of the Inquiry Rules 2006. This statement is written from my own recollection.
2. The service user was under the care of Rheumatology. They were undergoing testing prior to receiving therapy.
3. It was normal practice to run routine pre-screening blood tests prior to starting treatment including a Hepatitis B & C screening.
4. Their Hepatitis screen came back showing an anomaly. From memory, the service user's regular consultant was off on sick leave around that time. From the witness statement I see that the Locum or Registrar wrote to the Gastroenterology Consultant for an opinion as to what these results meant and of possible consequences. I do not recall if I was asked by them to call the service user or if I called them due to concern over the consequences of an ongoing delay to commencing the new treatment.

5. Generally, service user's awaiting to start new therapy are struggling to cope with their disease activity and often in considerable pain. Therefore, delays can be hard for them. I see from my clinic letter of 12th February 2019 that I was already concerned over their level of disease activity and that interim short-term treatment had been necessary.
6. I duly rang the service user to explain the cause of the delay to their new treatment regime as there was an issue with their Hepatitis screening results and that we needed input from a Gastroenterology specialist to understand the results and possible consequences.
7. The service user, in their statement, reports they thought I said Hepatitis C and that I was giving a diagnosis of infection over the phone. I would not have had the expertise to make or give a diagnosis and would have been explaining that there was an anomaly in the screening results that would lead to a delay in starting treatment until we had some further clarification from the specialist team, who are the experts in this field. Speaking to service users over the phone was normal clinical practice.
8. I always endeavoured to record significant service user telephone conversations at the time. I believe from the witness statement evidence that I did in fact write a clinical note to the Consultant which confirms that it was the Hepatitis B results that were of concern.
9. I am glad this individual, along with many others, are being heard over the damage and distress caused from contaminated blood and blood products.
10. I wish to offer my apologies that the service user felt they were failed at a difficult time.

Section 3: Other Issues

No further comments.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed _____

GRO-C

Dated 24th Jan 2023

Table of exhibits:

| Date | Notes/ Description | Exhibit number |
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