

Witness Name: Kenneth Nicholls

Statement No.: ~~one~~ WITN0027001

Exhibits:

Dated: 24th August 2018

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF Kenneth Nicholls

I, Kenneth Nicholls, will say as follows: -

- My name is Kenneth Nicholls. My date of birth is [GRO-C]/46. My occupation was a floorer, I retired 6 years ago. I have 1 son and 1 daughter.
- On 23rd December 1983 I was involved in a road traffic accident. I was immediately taken to the QEII Hospital, Welwyn Garden City. I have little recollection regarding my time in this Hospital, I believe I was there between 1 and 2 weeks. My wife informed me that I had had significant blood transfusions and she remembered asking the clinicians whether the blood was safe.

In January 1984 my care was transferred to Heatherwood Hospital, Ascot. Whilst in this hospital I received periodic oxygen tank therapy for 1 hour a day for infection and here my right leg was amputated and I believe I received further blood transfusions. My first memory of the accident was when I was in the ambulance being transferred from the QEII to the Heatherfield Hospital.

After 6-8 weeks in the Heatherwood Hospital I was transferred to the Wexham Park Hospital, Slough where I remained for roughly 2 months and had a number of further operations to stabilise my left knee and pins inserted into my left foot as I had foot drop, I don't believe I had any blood transfusions at Wexham Park.

My care was transferred to the Stanmore Orthopaedic Hospital, under Mr. Angel, I stayed there between May 1984 and November 1984. I had 6 operations during this period, each was under a general anaesthetic and I believe I may have had further transfusions during these procedures.

On discharge from Stanmore Hospital my weight had dropped from about 12 stone 10 to 7 stone 5. Before my accident I was very active and still played football regularly.

Once discharged from hospital I returned to work, initially running my own carpet shops for a few years before becoming employed as a floorer again.

- I was not infected as a result of a relationship with another person.
- There was never any mention of the risks associated with blood transfusions, I was never offered alternative treatments and I do not recall being asked or providing consent to the treatments involving transfusions.
- In 2012, after 6 months of feeling unwell with symptoms of a throbbing head, sweating and feeling hot, I attended a 'Well-man' clinic where I underwent routine blood tests and was informed about 2 weeks later that I may have a liver problem.

I was referred to the North Middlesex Hospital for further blood tests and a liver biopsy, I was diagnosed with Hepatitis C (HCV), cirrhosis of the liver and iron overload.

In 2013 I was transferred to The Royal Free Hospital, under the care of Professor William Rosenberg for the HCV infection and Mr.Sharma a liver specialist.

Mr.Sharma performed a liver biopsy and told me I had a liver tumour resulting from the HCV infection that I needed the tumour removed within 2 weeks otherwise I would die. I had the operation, in April 2014, hepatocellular cancer resected, and remained in Hospital for a month. I was told that I would likely require a liver transplant, and that my liver was too scarred to regenerate but it is functioning fine at present. A letter from my clinician dated 27/05/2015 refers to alcohol misuse, but I have only ever been a moderate drinker, couple of bottles of wine a week and a few pints. I have not drunk alcohol since being diagnosed with HCV.

I received treatment for my HCV infection from Professor Rosenberg for HCV began in 2015, with a medicine called Harvoni, I was told I was lucky to receive this and that it cost £55,000 for a course of treatment. Treatment was for 9 months, taking tablets 3 in the morning and 3 in the afternoon. The treatment cured my HCV infection and I did not suffer any side-effects. Presently I attend

follow-up clinics every 3 months with both Professor Rosenberg and Mr.Sharma.

- My care from the North Middlesex Hospital and The Royal Free Hospitals was generally good, particularly from the specialist nurses, Katie Portou (North Middlesex) and Gemma Keating (Royal Free). They provided the most information, although I didn't receive much in relation to management of the HCV infection. I was told by the North Middlesex Hospital of the small risk of infection with family members and to take care when having sex and to let previous sexual partners know. I was also told to moderate alcohol intake. I was advised by the North Middlesex Hospital that the infection was likely from the blood transfusion's I had received. I was generally happy with my care within the NHS, but feel the Heatherwood Hospital and other Hospitals where I received blood transfusions should have advised me to take a blood test once they knew that the blood transfused was contaminated.
- I was involved in a research project, for which I gave my consent and I provided 1 sample of blood, there was not a follow-up. This was whilst under the care of Professor Rosenberg at The Royal Free Hospital.
- My life was significantly affected as a result of the accident, the damage to my legs and the amputation but not as a result of the HCV infection, I use 2 crutches to walk. I do not feel there have been any obstacles due to HCV. My dentist is aware of the infection and I attend regularly without any difficulties.
- My family and friends are aware my HCV infection. I have not drunk alcohol since my diagnosis but other than that there has been no impact on my family and social life as a result of the infection.
- I have not experienced any stigma as a result of my HCV infection.
- I have experienced little financial impact as a result of the infection. I was diagnosed with HCV aged 65 (7 years ago) and I was due to retire at about that time, so the impact financially was not significant. I have not experienced any difficulties relating to mortgages or obtaining insurance.

- I have not been told that I have been tested for other infections related to blood, such as vCJD or HIV, although I assume that this would have been done.
- I separated from my wife as a result of the accident, this was more to do with the physical injuries than the HCV.
- Regarding financial assistance the specialist nurse at the North Middlesex Hospital recommended that I apply to the Skipton Fund for financial support. I received an initial lump sum payment 4 years ago, I then received a second lump sum payment which I believe was £35,000. Currently I receive £1500 per month, or £18,000 per year tax free. I am waiting to hear from my application regarding the new scheme. I have not had to sign any waivers or agree to any pre-conditions relating to these payments.

15 I have never been given access to counselling services related to HCV.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed

GRO-C

Dated

31/08/18