

Scottish Covid-19 Inquiry

Witness Statement

Statement of **Bartlett Jacqueline (nee mcGhee) Known as' Jackie'**

Introduction

1. My name is Jacqueline Bartlett and I am 55 years old. My date of birth is Personal Data My address Personal Data
2. I have been a qualified registered nurse since 1988. I worked in medicine for the elderly, assessment and rehab in Bridge of Weir Hospital. I moved to the Larkfield Unit in Inverclyde where I was a senior nurse for many years. I did a degree in Gerontology in older people and interprofessional working. I worked in Glasgow as a hospital falls coordinator and had a job working with inpatient safety, falls and harm.
3. I worked in GGC (Greater Glasgow Council) as a band 6 nurse for twelve years. Two years ago, I moved to NHS Ayrshire and Arran, which was a promotion to set up an inpatient falls service in the acute hospitals. That's where I am working at the moment. I've also worked with the Scottish Ombudsman for the past six years as a professional nurse advisor and working towards masters in Dementia as well as being a dementia champion.
4. I have met today with witness statement takers from the Covid 19 Inquiry team and am happy to provide a statement about my experiences of the Pandemic. I have already shared a statement that I provide to Amer Anwar Solicitors and am happy that it assists in forming part of my statement.
5. I have signed the consent form provided. I am happy for my name to be contained in my statement, reports or publications I would be happy to provide Oral Evidence at the public hearing.
6. I wish to give a statement to the inquiry about my dad.

Name Redacted

7. My dad was born on Personal Data and he passed away on 22nd November 2020 at Inverclyde Royal Hospital, **Greenock**. Dad was 72 years old when he died. The cause was Covid 19 and Aspiration Pneumonia on dad's death certificate.

8. Dad lived at his home at Personal Data on his own for a long time until Covid hit and then my brother moved in full time with him. He was separated from my mum for about twenty years, but they were still married. Mum was always dad's next of kin and we all had Power of Attorney for dad when his dementia came along.
9. When my brother NR moved in, we cancelled the carers that dad had been getting in so there were less people coming in and out. Up until then, dad had been getting carers in four times a day, seven days a week doing meals, personal care and tuck ins at night. We got the carers through the local authority at Inverclyde and they were called 'Evergreen'. They were great.
10. My mum was living at home with me, and together we decided we would all just be support for my dad and each other.
11. Dad had a number of strokes when he was in his early sixties. His mobility was affected, and his vision wasn't good. He was able to walk about, but we had noticed a change in his cognition and he was a bit more forgetful. We took dad for a mental health assessment and dad got a diagnosis of mixed dementia, which is Alzheimer's and Vascular Dementia. He was diagnosed with this a couple of years before he died.
12. He was diagnosed with Essential Thrombocythemia, which is a chronic form of blood cancer which made him more vulnerable to infection. It didn't have a massive impact on dad though. He got chemotherapy, tablets for it every day five days a week, which my brother would administer. He would attend the hematology clinic every now and again for it also. It wasn't a cancer that was going to kill him imminently, it was something he had for a long time, as was the dementia.
13. Physically, dad had deteriorated but he always knew who his family were. He was content with us looking after him and giving him the support, he needed.
14. Dad couldn't do anything much for himself in the lead up to the Pandemic. We would take him out for some runs in the car to one of our houses for a visit but mainly he was quite content in his own house and being looked after by us. He would love watching movies on the TV and that was fine for him.
15. Dad's social worker was NR from Inverclyde HSCP (Health Social Care Partnership) who did dad's social care assessment which helped getting Evergreen carers initially.
16. When lockdown hit, I was a registered nurse and I was deployed to the front door of Inverclyde Royal Hospital. I was doing triage for Covid and

getting people in and out. So, I still had to go to work and my partner, who is a mental health nursing assistant still had to go to work.

17. Although mum is in good health, she is getting older, we were worried about her as well and it was at that point my brother said he would move in with dad and became his full-time carer and we cancelled Evergreen. We managed on our own looking after dad as best we could for many months up until the October when dad went to the nursing home. Lockdown went on for longer than we had thought it would.
18. As the months went on, Lockdown started to take its toll on everyone, including my brother. We had started the carers back in the mornings and at nighttime, just for getting my dad to bed at night and to get him up in the morning. That happened in August or September as things had opened up a little.
19. Around that time, we thought we would look at weekend respite in Hillend House for my dad as he had previously had a weekend there, but **NR** **NR** said that they weren't taking in just now and that only option would be a nursing home for respite.
20. The minimum time allowed was for a two-week period. We didn't want dad to go into a nursing home, but we had to think about how **NR** was feeling and his welfare too. My brother was exhausted. We agreed to that. I knew **NR** the manager of Larkfield View Nursing Home and respected her as a nurse so thought it would be a good place for dad to be.
21. **NR** the deputy Manager of Larkfield View Nursing Home, came up to do an assessment of dad and spoke to my mum and brother at dad's house. I wasn't there. He was there to assess dad's needs, see what he was like and could they accommodate him.
22. That's where things went wrong. It was not a good assessment. I got a copy of the assessment later. It really did not reflect my dad's needs. **NR** said my dad was fine and communicating well but my dad couldn't string two words together. He wouldn't be able to communicate well other than smiling at you maybe.
23. Prior to dad's assessment, I had got the mental health team to do a mini mental health assessment on dad as I was worried about his cognition. It's a score out of thirty and dad got one out of thirty.
24. **NR** reassured us at that point that they had a special place that families could visit within Larkfield View. He said that three family members from 2 different households could come up every day so we thought that it would be ok and we could keep a close eye on dad.

25. I had filled in a document called 'Getting to Know Me' which had been produced by Alzheimer's Scotland. I put in information about dad and his needs. In it, I spoke about how dad had to take his time eating and how he had a cough sometimes, which was normal for him. I wrote about how dad's skin was sensitive and vulnerable amongst other things. They never even took it out of the bag to read it when I took it with dad to the home, as I found out later.
26. I never saw a care plan for dad at that point. It was just that dad had been accepted and had a place to go in on the 28th of October 2020 and stay there until 11th of November 2020.

Larkfield View Care Centre, 207 Burns Road, Greenock, PA16 0PR

27. Larkfield View Care Centre is a nursing home owned by Holmes Care Group and comes under Inverclyde Local Authority area.
28. It has around 90 residents and has nursing practitioners onsite. It's a two-story building, and dad had his own room within the home.
29. On the 28th of October 2020, my mum and I drove my dad to the home with his wheelchair, pajamas, clothes, the food that he liked and the 'Getting to Know me' paperwork right on the top of all his stuff.
30. On arriving at the front door, we were told we weren't allowed in. We were told that a staff member had tested positive for Covid, and no one could come in or out.
31. I said I wanted to speak with someone senior as no one knew anything about my dad.
32. A nursing assistant came down and said she would get him settled in. I was concerned that they didn't know what his needs were and didn't know anything about him. I said that we could visit him at some point, and she said there wouldn't be any.
33. They told us also that dad would have to isolate for two weeks and spend it in his room. We, as a family hadn't been told any of that either.
34. What did annoy me when we were at the door dropping dad off was that I saw staff coming in and out for cigarettes and sitting in cars together, but we couldn't take my dad in and settle him. I then asked for NR to come out and he did. I asked him what about the visiting he had promised the family and he denied he had said that to us. We reluctantly left dad there and after that had to phone in every day for a few days and everything seemed fine with dad we were told by staff.

Treatment & Care

35. On the third day when I phoned up, I was told that they had to suction my dad by putting a suction catheter down his throat. They said he was coughing, and they were worried he was aspirating. I told them that dad does cough, and it was just what he does. He's also on a softer diet because of that I told them. I asked why they had done it as it's an invasive thing to do, especially to someone with dementia. I was fuming at this point as he was in there for respite, and they put a suction catheter down his throat. Dad wasn't acutely unwell when he went in, so I wouldn't have expected them to be suctioning him after three days for just coughing.
36. Much later on, I spoke to the male Nurse called [NR] who had done the suctioning and asked him why he had done it. I said if they had read the document I had written about my dad they would have known that he coughed all the time. Later on, all of the registered nurses in there were put forward for further training following my dad's experience and the challenges I made further down the line about his treatment. [NR] the nurse no longer works there.
37. Anyway, I asked if we could come in and see dad and they said sorry, we couldn't as they were closed and that he would be fine.
38. The next day, they said that dad was in his bed and not eating much and said they had phoned the doctor. They said they would get him anti-biotics and I asked why they were doing that. I asked if they thought he had an aspiration or pneumonia and if so, to get him up and get him x rayed, check his bloods or maybe he needed IV antibiotics. They ended up getting anti-biotics off the GP, which turned out to be big capsules which dad couldn't have ever swallowed. I was asking them what his observations were and if he had a temperature, was he breathless or did he need oxygen because aspiration pneumonia is a critical thing and would need hospital treatment. But they wouldn't let us in.
39. The next day (2nd November 2020), I called and said that we were going to come up and do a welfare check on dad. My brother and I went up. The deputy manager, [NR] and [NR] met us talking through a half-closed front door. I explained that I was a registered nurse and would wear PPE, which I had done a Covid test, and it was negative. I asked to come in and check dad to see if he was ok as we were worried. I was told 'No'. [NR] actually asked me if I thought my dad might have dementia.
40. I couldn't believe she asked me that She was the dementia unit manager, so

41. should have known that. This was day five, and dad was in their dementia unit, so obviously he did and that should have been a clue.
42. **NR** asked me if my dad ever lay with his legs in a frog like position. I asked her if my dad had fallen or had a sore hip and she just said that they were worried because he hadn't eaten. I asked again to get in to see him and again I was told 'No', so we didn't get in.
43. I had to laugh though, as there was a maintenance guy coming in and out the door, yet I couldn't get in to check on my dad.
44. The next day, dad still wasn't eating and drinking when we called in so we decided to just go and get dad to bring him home.
45. On 4th November 2020, my brother and mum drove to Larkfield View in the wheelchair adapted car to get dad. He had been in for a week and we had been unable to see him or do a welfare check. He wasn't eating or drinking which was worrying us and he hadn't been out of his bed.
46. The staff had dad sitting at the door in his wheelchair ready to go with all his belongings. My mum had already called ahead that morning. They took him straight to his house and put him in bed. He looked like he was dying. He looked horrific and very changed in that one week period. He was acutely unwell and had delirium, which meant he was agitated and more confused than normal. He was in pain with his hip and terrified. He had a pressure wound on his backside that he didn't have before. His tongue was swollen and twice the size it had been, bright red and swollen mouth.
47. Mum called **NR** the district nurse who knew dad well. She cried when she saw Dad and dressed the wound on his bottom. She was shocked at dad's state. Mum called dad's GP, **NR** from Cochrane Practice in Greenock. He came right up. I did take photos of how Dad looked and I have them if you want them.
48. Within four hours of Dad being home, he was in a blue light ambulance taking him to Inverclyde Royal Hospital.
49. I saw the GPs notes showing correspondence between the home and GP practice which showed that before dad went into the hospital, he had been prescribed antibiotic capsules which I mentioned earlier. Nobody examined dad. The home called the GP practice who triaged what they were told about dad by phone. The home said that dad didn't have a temperature but had cough. So the large capsules and the next day another medication for his mouth (thrush) were prescribed by a nurse practitioner from Cochrane Practice. Why he was prescribed the amoxicillin in capsule form, or at all I don't know, as he never had

temperature or other sign of infection. Again, that's something I later complained about.

50. When dad arrived at the hospital, I called them and said I would be visiting Dad as I knew we could get essential visiting. I don't know why the rules were different for the Nursing or Care homes or why they didn't come under the Scottish Government guidance.
51. The hospital was a bit reluctant at first but I told them dad couldn't communicate and had dementia, so I was then allowed. I was allowed into A&E with him. The hospital were very good. They did Dads bloods, arranged a chest X-ray, gave oxygen and IV fluids. Dad had severe acute kidney injury is what they said so he was totally dehydrated. They also put him on IV antibiotics just to cover any aspiration, although they said his chest was clear and arranged for a hip X-ray as his hip was flexed. There was no fracture or injury found.
52. They checked dad's mouth. He couldn't swallow and noticed cuts at back of dad's throat. That could have been because [redacted] told me that she had to put her fingers in dads' mouth to scoop out food, but I don't know.
53. My dad was a wee soul and was just so terrified. He got admitted to J North Ward, which was an acute medical receiving ward. I was allowed to the ward and did a 'Getting To Know Me' document for my dad and added to his admission notes for his needs. The staff were great and got him settled. I did initiate a conversation regarding a DNAR for my dad after a conversation with my mum and brother. We agreed that dad would not survive a cardiac arrest. We just wanted him treated for the conditions he had for when he went in. The doctor was in agreement with us also.
54. Dad was in that ward for 24 hours and then got admitted to G South, which was a medical ward. I advised that mum would be the essential visitor from then and that she would be visiting every day. Nobody challenged that.
55. Dad got tested for Covid when he went in to the hospital and was negative. He was negative early admission, so we knew that. People over the age of 65 were getting tested every three days at that point.
56. Dad got a bit more settled when he started to get oxygen and fluids. In G South, dad was put in a four-person room. Dad was previously shielding when he was living at home due to his chronic blood cancer, so we were concerned he was in a room with other patients. But the shielding had lifting at that point apparently. When I spoke to the hospital much later on, they told me that they didn't have enough single rooms for everyone.

57. Dad was getting monitored by the speech and language therapist as he still wasn't speaking, eating or drinking. His kidney function came back to normal and he got a bit brighter in himself.
58. The plan was to move him to Larkfield Unit for some rehab, this is a hospital connected to Inverclyde Royal for the assessment and rehabilitation and try to help him eat and drink. That was before he got Covid. Dad was in the hospital for 14 days before he tested positive – from 4th November until 18th November 2020.
59. Mum was the only visitor and wore PPE and watched all the comings and goings. On the 18th November 2020, mum heard a patient in dad's room coughing and was quite ill, and called me to tell me about it. He had just been admitted the previous day
60. My dad then got tested as they were in the same ward and they were positive for Covid. I got a call from someone I knew at the hospital, who worked in dad's ward, to say that Dad had tested positive. She said mum couldn't visit anymore. The ward got closed as some staff had also tested positive. Staff weren't getting routinely tested at that point but when there was an outbreak, some people were testing and going off sick.
61. My mum never got any advice from anyone at the hospital about going to get tested. I made sure she did it and she was ok.
62. I had a phone call with dad's consultant a few days later to say that I could come visit as dad was dying. Dad was put into a side room at that point. I sat with dad for about 10 hours in his room on 21st November 2020. I was in full PPE (gown, gloves and shield. Dad was unresponsive and wasn't aware I was there. I left for a shower and then I got a call in the early hours of morning on 22nd November 2020, to say he had taken turn for the worst and that he had passed away.
63. I went back to the hospital to visit Dad and asked about a death certificate. It had been reported to Procurator Fiscal due to it being a Covid Death. I got the certificate the next day. I've been told I will get a letter about the outcome of them having that information.
64. It stated cause of death as Covid 19 and Aspiration pneumonia.
65. There were no real issues organizing the funeral, although it was only twenty people allowed but that's just the way things were.
66. The hospital care in itself was fine and we had no real issues with that. Mum did notice a few things and that perhaps nurses weren't changing their gloves moving from patient to patient.

67. When I made my complaint, the consultant said that some staff let their guard down a little in the second wave, but the care was good, consultants excellent and speech therapists and physios were fantastic. Dad had the best shot he could have had in hospital. It was the neglect he got at the nursing home; I am more unhappy about.
68. It was also the fact that, in the hospital, a vulnerable patient was in beside a symptomatic patient and my dad got Covid because of that. I'm not happy then that their Infection, Prevention and Control wasn't good. Many of the staff were positive within that ward also and the ward was closed due to the outbreak.

Impact on Family

69. My dad wasn't a well man, but his death was untimely. We have a tremendous amount of guilt at what happened to him after we put him in for respite.
70. We looked after my dad as well as we could and he was so vulnerable. My brother was exhausted and stressed looking after dad and that's really why we put dad in respite. I feel bad as I wish I had just went into the nursing home anyway even though I was told we couldn't.
71. After Dad died we went up to the nursing home and met with NR the manager, who had been away visiting family her own family in Portsmouth when Dad was in care there. She apologized to us and said that if she had been there, she would have let us in. I asked for a copy of dad's notes and got them.
72. Personally, I believe that if we hadn't taken dad out of the nursing home when we did, then he would have died earlier and in the nursing home.
73. I made my own formal complaint to the Nursing Home on 4th January 2021, to NR at head office in London. I complained about nine different things to them, and they upheld most of it. They put some of their staff on further training packages to meet competencies in relation to skincare and managing a deteriorating patient as dad should have went to hospital.
74. I contacted the Care Inspectorate and voiced my concerns. They said they had already arranged for an unannounced visit of the nursing home and I never heard anything back after that.
75. I have a lot of correspondence of the complaints I sent to the nursing home, Care Inspectorate and many communications I have made over

that period and since. [NR] at Aamer Anwar Solicitors have much of that if required. Recommendations were made by Nursing Home Head Office following my complaint.

76. Mum complained to the Scottish Ombudsman for the SPSO who deal with health and the NHS. I put a complaint to Inverclyde Royal Hospital due to concerns we experienced such as lack of Infection, Prevention and Control and also symptomatic patients being in beside vulnerable ones. I also raised the issue around lack of testing for staff, them saying that shielding had stopped at that point and that they didn't have enough single rooms. I also have the correspondence for that and replies.
77. They had nurses who had tested positive who were in the wards and we were being told that they weren't testing staff at that point. Tests were available. As far as I was aware some areas like the Beatson at that point and there were tests being done as they were working with highly vulnerable patients.
78. The Ombudsman read it and didn't proceed with the complaint and that Inverclyde had answered the complaints, answered the points and apologized for what's happened. Unless there was anything glaring then the Ombudsman would not progress any further'. Our complaint had never been about the care and treatment.
79. It's annoying to think now that when I spoke with [NR] the Nursing Home manager that she said if she had been there, she would have let me in. The staff that we dealt with, I wouldn't have given them a dog to look after.

Hopes for Inquiry

80. I'm a loyal NHS employee and cherish the NHS. The biggest thing for families was not being able to get in and see their loves ones. That to me, is the thing that hurts the most. Many of my colleagues, who were in ICU or worked in hospitals were traumatized as they couldn't let families in.
81. Young people were dying and the stories I hear are horrendous. Dad was frail and nearing the end of his life and I can almost put that into compartments. There are some really sad stories.
82. I was deployed to the front door of Inverclyde Royal and had to triage who could and couldn't be let in. That was my job. Many of the families would ask me to drop off belongings to their family member and would say that they had dementia or other issues. I would tell them that they would be allowed in and many of them didn't know they could have essential visits. People just didn't know.

83. Nurses and folk working in hospitals could come and go and go out at that point, as could a lot of us. But families of patients or residents of homes couldn't wear PPE and go in and visit our family member: the ones we loved and advocated for them, if they were unable to.
84. Dad was a good dad. He was a gentleman and still knew who we all where. I feel really sad that dad went through the trauma that he experienced and that he had the ending he did.

I certify that the above statement is true to the best of my knowledge and belief. I verify this I have signed and dated as below.

Signature Jacqueline Bartlett

Date:

Signature