

Witness Name: GRO-B

Statement No.: WITN0328001

Exhibits: Nil

Dated: 01/02/2019

**INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY**

---

**WRITTEN STATEMENT OF** GRO-B

---

I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 1<sup>st</sup> November 2018.

I, GRO-B will say as follows: -

**Section 1. Introduction**

1. My name is GRO-B and my date of birth is GRO-B 1941. My address is known to the Inquiry. I am a widow with two children. I used to work as a parliamentary secretary, but I am now retired.
2. I intend to speak about my infection with Hepatitis C, which I contracted through blood transfusions. In particular, the nature of my illness, how the illness affected me, the treatment I received and the impact it had on my life and family.

**Section 2. How Infected**

3. On Monday GRO-B 1970, my first son was born in GRO-B Maternity Hospital. On 3<sup>rd</sup> December 1970, I was taken into the high

dependency unit. I had low iron levels and the nurse said it was because I had not been taking my iron tablets. I had taken all medication that was issued to myself at that time. I was given an eight-hour infusion of Imferon due to the low levels of iron. I was discharged on the 6<sup>th</sup> December.

4. On 9<sup>th</sup> December 1970 I was rushed in an ambulance back to the hospital because the afterbirth had not been expelled, and I underwent surgery to remove it. I lost a lot of blood and was given a blood transfusion on 13<sup>th</sup> December 1970. I was not told about the risk of infection before I received this transfusion.

Diagnosis with Hepatitis

5. After the transfusion on 13<sup>th</sup> December 1970, before being discharged from hospital the doctor told me that I had Hepatitis in my bloodstream. I was told that there was no cure or treatment, but also that it might never bother me; they didn't know how the illness progressed back then.
6. I do not know how the doctor knew that I had Hepatitis in my blood. They had been doing blood tests, but they never told me that they were testing for Hepatitis. Two months later I developed jaundice and was admitted to GRO-B in GRO-B on 13<sup>th</sup> February 1971 for three weeks.
7. In 1984, two days after my youngest son's third birthday, I was taken to the Glasgow Royal Infirmary for a chest scan. It was discovered that I had Lymphoma and they put me on chemotherapy for nine months. This was between 1984 and 1985, and I received three blood transfusions over this period of time. The risk of getting an infection through transfusion was not explained to me before these transfusions were administered.

## ANONYMOUS

8. In October 2010, I was visiting my niece in Switzerland when I tripped and got a small graze on my right ankle. My niece immediately bathed and dressed it. I made an appointment with my doctor upon my return from Switzerland, who said that it had turned into a leg ulcer.
9. Over the next five years I attended many different clinics, hospitals and consultants for my leg ulcers, which would not heal. I always asked why the ulcers would not heal, but no one could give me an answer.
10. My consultant, Dr Wainwright, said that I was a mystery; no one knew why the ulcers would not heal. In 2014, I was taken to Wishaw Hospital because of the intense pain all up my legs - I was there for around 3 weeks. By this time I was very ill and had developed ulcers on both legs. I was given morphine every two hours. On 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2014, he sent me on a day visit to Dr Musgrave at [GRO-B] Hospital for more blood tests and a second opinion.
11. Dr Musgrave issued a letter dated 27<sup>th</sup> May, which told me that I had Hepatitis. She informed Dr John Murphy (Consultant Haematologist at [GRO-B] Hospital), Dr [GRO-D] (Consultant of Infectious Diseases at [GRO-B] Hospital), and my own General Practitioner, Dr Martin.
12. When I was being discharged from Wishaw Hospital the on-call doctors asked if I knew that I had Hepatitis C. I said that I had known that I had Hepatitis since the birth of my first son, but this was the first time I had been told that it was Hepatitis C. I was told while standing in the hospital; I was not taken into a private room, they just stated that I had it and nothing was done about it. They sent me home with morphine for the pain. At no point was I told how to manage the infection, nor was I offered any support.
13. Soon after being discharged from Wishaw Hospital, I became so ill that I collapsed at home. I was sent to [GRO-B] Hospital on 16<sup>th</sup> June 2014 and was not discharged until April 2015. I was in the dermatology ward

until Dr [GRO-D] the Consultant for Infectious Diseases, requested for me to be taken to his ward because I had an infectious disease. At this point Dr [GRO-D] did not have any conversations with me about the risk of infecting others, what the infection meant, or how to manage it.

14. Dr [GRO-D] referred me to Dr Campbell who was the Consultant at [GRO-B] Hospital. My eldest son flew home from Ireland, to take me to [GRO-B] even though Dr [GRO-D] said he should not bother because there would not be much of a change in my circumstance.
  
15. Dr Campbell was the best consultant I had; he explained the disease and gave me information and hope. He explained what Hepatitis C was and how I could manage it. He told me about the experimental drugs, and applied to the Skipton Fund on my behalf. However Dr Campbell did not explain the risk of passing the infection on to others. He did some specialised blood tests to see the level of Hepatitis in my blood. The results were passed to Dr [GRO-D], who commenced treatment with the experimental drugs while I was in the infectious disease ward at [GRO-B]

### Section 3. Other Infections

16. I have been infected with Hepatitis C only.

### Section 4. Consent

17. To the best of my knowledge, I gave my consent to all blood tests. Due to my worsening condition my son had power of attorney, and he consented on my behalf.
  
18. I am not sure whether any tests for Hepatitis were done without my consent.
  
19. I consented to all treatments for Hepatitis C.

## **Section 5. Impact**

### *Impact of Hepatitis C Virus*

20. I never thought that I would be sat here unable to do things for myself because I was so fiercely independent. My independence has suffered a severe blow. I need help with my shopping, and can just about manage in my house by holding on to things and using my stair lift. I can't really do much outside. My hobbies were gardening and line dancing, but my line dancing days are over and I had to hire a cleaner and a gardener because I can't do these things myself anymore. There are regular visits from the care team to assist with bathing and dressing. I loved to walk – I walked everywhere because I didn't drive. My husband passed away sixteen years ago, and he loved nothing better than going to our caravan in the Highlands where our family and friends could join us. We used to go for long walks on the beach. For the last few years I have not been able to get onto the beach or use the caravan, so we gave it up this year. Having Hepatitis C has taken away a lot of my life and memories. One of the hardest things to accept is not being able to assist, play, or even lift any of my grandchildren.
21. Mentally, I just had to accept what was happening to me and hope that things would eventually go the right way. Things slightly improved, but it was a long hard road to get there. The Hepatitis C takes a lot of your life away and has had a massive impact on my life due to missing numerous family events, births, birthdays, christenings etc. Due to my time in hospital and being incapacitated at home, I have also not been able to attend a number of the social events that I regularly attended.

### *Other Medical Complications*

22. Dr Musgrave confirmed that the Hepatitis was preventing my ulcers from healing and causing the rashes I had on my legs - even after the Hepatitis C cleared, I was at home for a long time while the ulcers

healed. There were daily visits from the district nurses during this period to change dressings and apply medicated creams.

23. While I awaited the results of the blood tests taken by Dr Musgrave in May 2014, I remained in Wishaw Hospital where I had to be given morphine every two hours because of the immense pain in my legs. Despite this, the pain was still there. To this day, I am still on morphine-based medication called Longtec for the pain.
24. The Hepatitis C has caused diminished mobility in my legs. I had tests done at Southern General Hospital that showed there has been considerable muscle damage, which means that my mobility has been severely affected and is getting worse as I get older.
25. I do not know if the Hepatitis C caused the Lymphoma or was the reason why it was so aggressive. I also had a miscarriage, but I am unsure whether the Hepatitis C played a role. I asked various consultants if the infection caused the above, however they did not have an answer.

#### Treatment for Hepatitis C

26. After seeing Dr Campbell in June 2014, Dr [GRO-D] put me on a twelve-week treatment consisting of two drugs a day. One had recently been legalised, while the other one was a new trial drug. I was given the choice whether to go on these treatments, and I agreed because they were the only options. I had the treatment at [GRO-B] Hospital.
27. Approximately half way through the treatment I got pneumonia and was transferred to a high dependency unit for five days because my organs were shutting down. My sons were contacted and a priest was called, as they did not expect me to wake up again. The treatment for Hepatitis C was stopped because my body could no longer take the medication. However after a two-week break from the medication my body recovered and I continued with the twelve-week treatment.

28. After the twelve-week treatment, in early to mid March 2015, I was told that the Hepatitis C had completely cleared. I remained in hospital for my leg ulcers and was finally discharged in April 2015. Although the ulcers had not completely cleared, they had started to heal during the Hepatitis C treatment. I was handed over to my local district nurses who continued to look after my legs. The Hepatitis has not returned to date.
29. One of the side effects of the Hepatitis C treatment was that I was bed bound for about six months. I just had no energy to do anything.
30. I still have to take ten different tablets a day since being discharged from

GRO-B

Treatment by Others

31. I have not experienced any difference in the treatment I receive from my dentist or doctors since my diagnosis. I have not suffered from any stigma.

Impact on Family and Social Life

32. My family and friends know that I have Hepatitis C. They just accepted it and it never stopped them coming to visit me. During the time in hospital, visitors had to wear protective clothing and masks. My daughter-in-law was unable to visit me while in hospital, as she was pregnant.
33. The Hepatitis has had an astronomical impact on my social life due to my lack of mobility. I still go for the occasional lunch with my friends, but I hardly go out, not compared to before when I was out every day. If I go out I must use a mobility aid and I am unable to walk any distance due to the muscle deterioration from the infection and being bed bound.
34. The impact on my family has been immense because it is very hard for them to go to work and get on with their lives when they have to worry

about me. When my son's wife was due her first baby it should have been a very special and happy time, but it wasn't because I was unable to see my granddaughter for a couple of months as I was still in hospital.

35. My main bugbear is being unable to help with my grandchildren or even just sit and play with them, because I am not steady enough to do that.

Impact on My Career and Finances

36. Having Hepatitis C has not impacted my ambitions to take further education.

37. At the time of the first blood transfusion I was still working. The Hepatitis C did not impact my professional life at this time, however as stated previously, no one can confirm if the Hepatitis contributed towards the Lymphoma. By the time I fell and developed the ulcer on my leg I had retired, so it did not affect my work.

Section 6. Treatment/Care/Support

38. Until I was referred to Dr Campbell, it was five years of hell because no one knew what was wrong with me and why the ulcers would not heal. For five years I had to go up the stairs on my hands and knees because I could not walk up and down the stairs. I had to attend numerous clinics and appointments during this time. As I did not drive and was unable to use public transport, I had to rely on family, friends and the ambulance transport service to get to the appointments.

39. Once Dr Campbell put the request in for the Skipton Fund, there were no issues and it all happened quite quickly. From this point on I had no issues accessing the treatment – it was sent to GRO-B Hospitals where I received it during my 10-month stay.



40. I have never been offered counselling or psychological support in dealing with Hepatitis C. My sons had to fight to get support network in place for my release from hospital, which included 4 visits a day from carers. These visits have since been reduced, however I still require assistance for bathing. I have not been offered any physiotherapy, however I attend a weekly class at our local community centre to assist in strengthening my legs.

### **Section 7. Financial Assistance**

41. Dr Campbell applied to the Skipton Fund for me in July 2014. I was awarded two separate payments – one for £20,000 and the other for £30,000. The Skipton Fund did not request further information from me after the initial application had been made, and there were no preconditions imposed either before I made the application or before I received the money.
42. Recently the Scottish Government have been granting payments of £1,500 per month to people infected with Hepatitis transmitted through treatment. The form asks whether you have been severely affected, moderately affected, or not affected at all from Hepatitis transmitted through treatment. I have no doubt that I had been severely affected. I am paid on the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month and I received my first payment just before Christmas, which they backdated for the previous three months.
43. Between the Skipton Fund and the recent money I received from the Scottish Government, I did not receive any further financial assistance.

### **Section 8. Other Issues**

44. No doctors or consultants ever explained to me that there was a risk of passing the infection on to my sons. Dr GRO-D's Head Nurse had explained that the infection was unlikely to have been passed to my eldest son because I didn't get the infection until after his birth. She

ANONYMOUS

said that I could get a special test if I was concerned. No advice was given regarding my second son.

45. I am just in amazement at the whole thing. To think that I had this for so long and it never came to light until a fall created a small cut/abrasion on my lower leg that has led to years of physical pain. The dynamics of my life have completely changed due to the medical negligence at the birth of my first son and the subsequent blood transfusions.

**Statement of Truth**

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

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ 

GRO-B
-------

 \_\_\_\_\_

Dated 19/03/2019