

Witness Name: Marilyn Munn

Statement No.: WITN0806

Exhibits: nil

Dated: 26 February 2019

## INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

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### WRITTEN STATEMENT OF MARILYN MUNN

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I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 13 February 2019.

I, Marilyn Munn, will say as follows: -

#### Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Marilyn Munn. My date of birth is GRO-C 1962 and my address is known to the Inquiry. I am the sister of Christopher Munn ("Chris") who was infected with Hepatitis C ("HCV") following a blood transfusion. Chris is also a witness to the Inquiry. I will speak about Chris' illness and the impact it has had on our lives.
2. I live with my long-term partner David and we have two grown-up sons. I am currently not employed, having previously worked as a project manager for a local charity.

3. I can confirm that I have chosen not to be legally represented and that I am happy for the Inquiry team to assist me in writing my statement. The Inquiry team has explained anonymity and I do not require any information to be kept private.

## **Section 2. How Affected**

4. Chris was infected with HCV following a blood transfusion in 1981; however, I didn't become aware of Chris' infection until years later.
5. On the morning of 17 November 1981 I was awoken by my mother's screams. She had woken Chris up for work and had found his bed was covered in blood. Chris had been out the night before at a family event, and had been assaulted in an attempted mugging on his way home. We only later learnt that Chris had actually been stabbed. Chris was taken to Walton Hospital, Liverpool in an ambulance that morning.
6. I visited Chris in hospital and saw that he was receiving blood, and was also hooked up to another drip. I recall Chris was in hospital for roughly one to two weeks.
7. Soon after Chris left hospital, he moved out of the family home. Chris subsequently moved to GRO-C and then moved around quite a bit after that. After Chris left the family home I did not see him as frequently as I'd used to. There was quite an age difference between Chris and myself; we are 12 years apart, but despite this we were still close.
8. I only found out about Chris' infection with HCV when my mother called me around 1996. She was in floods of tears and I went over to her house to console her. She became very depressed and would have days in bed, which could turn into weeks and eventually months in bed. I could see that Chris did not look well, his physicality was not as it used to be; I noticed his weight had changed significantly. He was

always a bigger man, but had lost so much weight that I thought he also had cancer. When I found out about Chris' diagnosis I remember feeling devastated. It was only later I realised that he had known for quite some time but he had not said anything because of the stigma attached to HCV. I understand it was in the early 1990s when he was informed of his diagnosis.

### **Section 3. Other Infections**

9. Apart from HCV, I am not aware that Chris has been diagnosed with any other infections.

### **Section 4. Consent**

10. I am not aware of any issues concerning Chris consenting for treatment or testing.

### **Section 5. Impact**

#### **Mental and Physical Health**

11. I can only speak for myself but Chris' deterioration in health was really hard to witness. He became thin and his attitude turned so significantly. I still do not think that he has recovered to his former self, and I am not sure he will ever fully recover despite now being clear of HCV.
12. Before his diagnosis Chris had a love for life and was very active. At one point he was even running a number of small businesses. Since the diagnosis, his illness has engulfed him and it has become a huge barrier for him moving forward.
13. Post-diagnosis, you could see Chris' mental health went all the way downhill; he was always angry, upset, low in confidence and seemed to have no happiness. I can also see there has been a decline in Chris' memory and he gets brain fog. You can see that he sometimes

struggles with not being able to perform the simplest of tasks, which cause him to get frustrated and angry.

14. When Chris was being treated with Interferon he had very bad adverse reactions. He had massive rashes; it looked like he had scabies and his skin was flaking. It was as if his body was completely rejecting the medicine.

15. Just before his liver transplant, Chris' health was deteriorating and we all made an extra effort to support him. After he had his transplant, my partner and I went to see Chris in the hospital in Birmingham. It was horrible to see him in such a state, his head was swollen, he was hooked up to a machine and there were tubes everywhere.

16. Since his successful transplant, Chris' attitude and lifestyle has remained the same and has not improved. I think it has been quite hard for him to cope following his transplant.

#### Family

17. In 2008 my mother passed away. In the ten years leading to her passing, my mother's health significantly deteriorated; essentially she took herself to bed and stayed there. I could see that my mother's depression was made much worse by Chris' infection and his change in attitude. I believe she felt she did not know how to treat Chris anymore and she could not fix him. Every time my mother would see him, it was as if she would take three steps back in her recovery. My mother turned cold towards Chris and would not hug or kiss him. Occasionally Chris would visit her and lean over the bed and give her a kiss on the cheek and that would be the only affection they had. I am not sure of the reason why she became cold towards Chris, but it may have just been because she was afraid of the infection spreading.

18. At times I would feel angry towards my mother because of the way she reacted to Chris. I felt she could have enjoyed the time with Chris, but she took his infection to heart and isolated herself.

### Stigma

19. In the early days, the only information we knew about HCV was through Chris and the fear mongering in the media. HIV and HCV were treated as one, so there was a lot of confusion and stigma towards it.

20. I never saw any information or pamphlets on how to deal with the infection or how it could pass to others. I'm not sure if Chris ever received such information either.

21. Thinking back, if society had been made more aware of the ways HCV could have been transmitted, I believe Chris would have been treated completely differently. Instead, we were all worried. People did not know what to think, they did not know if it was airborne or touching could transfer it. I know that our family felt that too. Peers, neighbours and the media at the time were all stirring a huge amount of confusion and stigma towards the disease.

22. It wasn't until a lot later that the connection was made between Chris' infection and the blood transfusion he received in 1983. Unfortunately, people would think that Chris was a drug user, and there would still be people today who would not believe that Chris was infected by a blood transfusion. People could see that Chris was not well, I am ashamed to say it, but I feared the worst for him and wondered if there was a side to my brother that I wasn't aware of. There was no empathy among his friends, and he started to become more reclusive.

23. I was always curious why Chris continued to move house until I finally realised that it was largely because of the stigma that kept following him around. Neighbours would find out and then people would stop talking to him.

## **Section 6. Treatment/Care/Support**

24. In terms of his medical treatment, Chris always told me about his appointments. In the past I would offer to take him, and still do offer to go with him, although he declines my offers. It is really Chris' partner, Maria who has been his main carer.

## **Section 7. Financial Assistance**

25. Although Chris has been open about his financial situation with me, I have not had any involvement in his applications to any funds. In the past if Chris was ever short of money I would offer to help him out or pay a bill, but no more than I would for my other siblings.

## **Section 8. Other Issues**

26. Chris has been heavily involved in campaigning concerning the contaminated blood scandal. It's a subject that Chris is very passionate about, and he often speaks to me about it. Although he often repeats himself, I do listen to him as attentively as possible. In providing this statement I hope to show my support for Chris.

## **Statement of Truth**

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

Signed

GRO-C

Dated

11/3/19