

Witness Name: Christopher Hackney

Statement No:1258001

Exhibits:1258002-7

Dated:9 December 2018

## INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

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### FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF CHRISTOPHER HACKNEY

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I, Christopher Hackney will say as follows:-

#### **Section 1. Introduction**

1. My name is Christopher Hackney, I was born on GRO-C 1948 and I live at GRO-C Nottingham, GRO-C I am an old age pensioner and live alone.
2. This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my full medical records. If and in so far as I have been provided with limited records the relevant entries are set out in the medical chronology at the end of this statement.

#### **Section 2. How infected**

3. I was diagnosed with mild Haemophilia (15.7 iu/dl) by Professor Ingram of St Thomas Hospital on 29 January 1979 at the age of 31. I had been sent to Professor Ingram when I was a Private in the Royal Army Medical Corp (RAMC) based at Queen Elizabeth Military Hospital, Woolwich, after a stress injury from the gym left me with a large bruised shoulder.

4. On 22 February 1979 there is a letter from Professor Ingram to Major Foxley in which he considers giving me DDAVP if I needed a foot operation in the future. This is attached at **WITN1258002**.
5. I had an operation on my right foot on 9 July 1979 and this was carried out by Professor Ingram at St Thomas' Hospital. I was given three batches of Factor VIII. The blood products which I received were: one bottle of Abbots / Armour Factor VIII on 9 July 1979 (Batch 030902); two bottles of Armour Factor VIII on 21 July 1979 (Batch 032303) and on or around 24 July 1979 two bottles of Immuno Factor VIII Kryobulin (Batch 012378). My records are attached at **WITN1258003**.
6. I was not provided with any information about possible risks when receiving blood products. I was part of the RAMC and was not spoken to about any other options available. I was told I would go to St Thomas' Hospital where I would be given whatever they deemed fit.
7. I started vomiting sporadically when I was at St Thomas' Hospital but was still discharged on 3 August 1979. As I was on sick leave I went to my in-laws farm in Devon to recover. On 6 August 1979 I woke up and went to walk across the farm yard but I couldn't even walk across the room. I looked in the mirror and saw the yellowness in my eyes. I knew from the yellowness that I was jaundiced and had a strong belief that it was Hepatitis. Serving in the RAMC, I had seen people suffering with Hepatitis in the past and I knew needed to go to the doctors. I attended my in-laws GP and I was told to go straight to the hospital.
8. On 10 August 1979 I was admitted to the Royal Naval Hospital (RNH) Plymouth and my notes state '*viral Hepatitis non A non B?*' These are attached at **WITN1258004**. As far as I can remember I was not informed about the possibility of Hepatitis non A non B. I was just kept in isolation and told not to drink alcohol for six months.

9. On 9 November 1979 there is a document (attached at **WITN1258005**) which states that a blood sample was sent to St Thomas' Hospital while I was at RNH Plymouth. I am also aware from my medical records that someone else also contracted Hepatitis C from the same batch of Factor VIII as I did.
10. I went back to work at the Queen Elizabeth Military Hospital, Woolwich and was told that I had had viral Hepatitis. No one knew what it was and nothing was made of it. I cannot remember whether non A non B was mentioned at the time.
11. When I went for a check up for my foot with Mr D R Urquhart in late 1979. I remember Professor Ingram clearly saying to me that *'the Factor VIII must have been one of the rogue batches that missed the heat treatment'*. When I saw Professor Ingram he was very apologetic. In hindsight, looking back, I believe he knew what had been done. I believe this was the reason for him being overly apologetic.
12. Around November or December 1994 (the period when they had just found out about Hepatitis C) I was watching TV one evening when I caught a couple of words and stopped and listened. I thought that the symptoms fitted my situation. I had already suspected from all the stories on the news as my symptoms were the same. I went to see my GP and he did the tests.
13. I was formally told about Hepatitis C by Dr Wilkinson at Derriford Hospital, Plymouth around December 1994. The doctor told me I would have to learn to live with it. At the time no one knew how to deal with it. I was not given any further information about the infection.
14. I believe I should have been given more information about the infection but at the time I believed no one knew what it was. No one was sure if Hepatitis C was linked to HIV. My biggest fear was of HIV.

15. One of my Haemophilia doctors was always going on about the boozy culture of the army. I believe he was trying to insinuate that I got my liver disease from drinking. This is nonsense. I only drank socially and I have never drunk 1-2 litre bottles of cider a night as is stated in my medical notes dated 2 July 2003.
16. At the time I was told I was Hep C positive, I was never given any information about transmission. I have been married and divorced twice and have three children and seven grandchildren. Neither of my ex wives or children have contracted Hepatitis C as far as I am aware. I did have GRO-C tested for Haemophilia and Hepatitis C did not show up.
17. Years later I was told the only way it can be transmitted is blood to blood and even then it needs to be a substantial amount of blood.
18. I do believe I should have been informed sooner about my infection but I was not contacted. I think it might have been a good idea if the hospital had contacted the MOD who would have told them where I lived. The whole investigation into Hep C was instituted by me as I found out on the TV report.

#### **Other Infections**

19. I did receive a letter dated 14 November 2005 regarding the warning of vCJD. I questioned this with the doctors at Plymouth who sent the letter out but they told me everyone who had received blood products during the specified time had been sent a letter.

#### **Section 4. Consent**

20. I believe I have been tested with my knowledge or consent.

21. During my hospital stay at RNH Plymouth from 10 August to 28 August 1979 I was in isolation and I was not aware that my bloods had been taken and sent to St Thomas' to be tested.
22. After I was given Factor VIII in 1979 I refused Factor VIII during any other treatment. In 1995 and 1998 I was given DDVAP in Plymouth. In 1992 I was given a Replinate Factor VIII which I believe is a type of DDVAP drug. In January 2004 I was trampled on by a horse and received Recombinant Factor VIII **WITN1258006**. In 2005 I was in the Royal Navy Hospital for a spontaneous nose bleed and refused to be given any Factor VIII. I was there for a total of 5 days.

### **Impact of the Infection**

23. The mental effects of being infected with Hepatitis C were that I felt as though I had been put in a bowl and left there with no way out. No one was able to tell me anything; I tried to find out what I could myself. General information and the possibility of treatment came out in dribs and drabs over the years as a result of me questioning the doctors rather than information being volunteered to me.
24. When new information started coming out I went through depressive stages. There was a lot of new information that suddenly came out and it did get me down. I was very down and depressed and then I realised there was no point in being like that as no one could do anything about it. I decided to push it to the back of my mind and get on with my life.
25. I started taking anti-depressants around 2004. I am still on anti-depressants at present but am trying to reduce my dose. I was awarded a War Pension in 1996 and had to undergo reviews when my condition deteriorated. I attach the record of examination on 13 April 2004 when a doctor came to my home which details my mental state at the time at **WITN1258007**.

26. On dark nights when I am in pain is when my demons start. It is difficult to say how I have been impacted because of the type of person I am. I simply try to cope with it.

27. A friend of mine describes me as a gated bull with brains. If I cannot get any answers and no one else can give me any answers then I don't worry about it. However, I am always conscious of my Hepatitis C.

#### Further medical affects

28. I don't know if I have had further physical medical complications or conditions from Hepatitis C. I have always treated it as a separate entity, as a separate part of my body. I do know that it does have an effect on my energy and being able to do things. I run out of energy very quickly as this is all tied in with my liver.

#### Treatments for Hepatitis C

29. I was treated for Hepatitis C with Ribavirin and Interferon at Derriford Hospital in 2005. It was a 12 month course which I completed. The treatment was a long hard struggle.

30. After about 3 or 4 weeks on it, it was like a ton of bricks coming down on me. The effects were tremendous. There were days where I would stay in bed all day and I was unable to do anything. The treatment was hell on earth.

31. I went to see a doctor who happened to be the head physician at Dartmoor Prison. He had experience of dealing with people who had Hepatitis C and signed me off work until further notice. I ended up having to stop work completely. I was working in the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) in the Child Support Agency at the time. I felt like it was better for me to resign at the time, as DWP didn't like paying sick pay and I was 3 or 4 years off retirement age anyway.

32. I administered the treatment myself in an epi pen form which I collected from Derriford Hospital on a monthly basis. I still get reactions from the injection sites.

33. Shortly after the 12 month treatment the Hepatitis C came back.

34. I commenced a 6 month drug trial (I do not recall the name), but did not complete this course as I was told there was no point as the virus had returned.

35. I have never faced any difficulties in accessing treatment. I have been offered new treatments but I declined this as it is selective. Treatment is expensive and there are younger people with a greater need than myself. If the treatment becomes non-selective then I will take it.

#### Impact on Dental care

36. I used to go quite regularly to the dentist but when I became infected with Hepatitis C there always seemed to be a problem. Everyone was wary of treating a Haemophiliac with Hepatitis C. Since contracting Hepatitis C, I have had to be treated at the Hospital.

37. I have been trying to get my teeth sorted for years. Half my teeth in the upper and lower jaws of the left side of my mouth were removed a couple of months ago at Nottingham University Hospital. I had injections above each tooth and the treatment was so painful I did not go back after this to get the teeth in the right side of mouth removed. I would like to have the rest of my teeth taken out under general anaesthetic, but the hospital refused my request. My next appointment is January 2019.

#### Impact on social life

38. My second marriage was affected due to the constant strain and worry about

how Hepatitis C will affect me and those around me.

39. There has always been a stigma associated with Hepatitis C, but I have always been up front about having Hepatitis C. The government infected me with Hepatitis C and that is the end of it. I have tried not to let this stigma impact on my life.

40. I have not seen my family for 10 years because of the fear I have about my children or grandchildren contracting Hepatitis C from me. I didn't even want the remotest possible chance of my children or grandchildren being infected and I have not seen them since. I told one of my daughters in law earlier this year that this is why I have moved away but I am unsure if the rest of my family know.

41. If I had stayed there and been a normal grandfather, it would have always been in the back of my mind that one of them could contract this infection from me. I felt that the only way not to infect them was to move away and remove myself out of the situation.

#### Affect on work

42. At the time I was infected, I had been in the RAMC for 6 years. I didn't want to leave the RAMC so when the problem with my foot started, I moved into the administration area. I left the RAMC after 12 years, which was the standard time of service.

43. I had three jobs when I came out of the RAMC and working for the DWP was my last job. My work was affected when I was signed off permanently sick after I became very ill when I started the treatment for Hepatitis C. After the Hepatitis C treatment I was unable to go back to work due to my physical health.



### Financial effects

44. I receive both a War Pension and a Mobility Pension and before I was in the RAMC I had one other pension and a private pension. I receive about £2,000 a month. I had a mortgage a few years ago but I am now renting. I cannot complain about my financial situation.

45. I have never had travel insurance as I have never needed it. I do not have life insurance and have never really thought about getting it.

46. I had £9,000 of debt to clear when I received the Skipton Fund payment, which I used to pay it off. This was made of bank loans etc.

### Impact of those close to me

47. I was married to my first wife when I was infected. I had all my children with my first wife. We split up about 18 months before I came out of the army.

48. I remarried 2 or 3 years later. I am unsure where the second marriage went wrong. We were together for 12 years.

### Section 6. Treatment/care/support

49. I have faced difficulties receiving dental care. Being a Hemophiliac and a patient infected with Hepatitis C, dentists have told me previously to go to the Hospital to be treated.

50. I was never been offered counselling or psychological support since being infected.

### Section 7. Financial Assistance

51. I was told about my possible entitlement to a Skipton Fund payment around 2004 - 2005 by another infected haemophiliac who was more informed than I

was. I applied for the Skipton Fund by phoning them and they sent me out a form to fill out. I then had to get it signed by my doctor at Derriford Hospital. I had no difficulties in obtaining payment from the Skipton Fund. My application was accepted immediately and I received a Stage 1 payment from the Skipton Fund of £20,000.

52. I do not have any personal observations about the Skipton Fund as I have only spoken to them on a few occasions. I have never had to jump through any of the hoops that I hear that other people have had to jump through. In a way I feel lucky because of my War Pension. I am aware there are a lot of people who do not get the financial assistance that I do.

53. Around this time I was also told about a class action that was being conducted by Mitchelmores but I was too late to join that. However, I instructed Mitchelmores GRO-C to investigate a claim against I believe the Department of Health and legal aid was granted. Mitchelmores obtained all my medical records and for 18 months we were working together until it came to an abrupt halt. I did not receive any compensation. A lot of the contact was done over the phone. I do not recall receiving any letters from them. At the time everything was quiet around the country. Mitchelmores did start off in all good faith but I think they kept coming up against stone walls like everyone else.

## **Section 8. Other Issues**

54. I have not been involved in any other litigation.

55. I am involved in Tainted Blood. I had great hopes for this when it started but as it has gone along, and no one was getting any further, I lost hope. I would like to see the perpetrators sorted out.

## **Anonymity, disclosure and redaction**

56. I confirm that I do not wish to apply for anonymity.

57. I would like to give oral evidence to the Infected Blood Inquiry.

**Statement of Truth**

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

Signed.

GRO-C

Dated.

09/2/18

## Medical Summary

(This summary is not intended to be exhaustive but sets out key points in the records relevant to the statement)

- 17/1/1979 letter from Major Foxley, Queen Elizabeth Military Hospital to Professor Ingram at St Thomas Hospital referring PTE Hackney for a Factor IX assay
- 22/2/1979 letter from Professor Ingram St Thomas to Major Foxley diagnosing mild haemophilia with factor-VIII clotting activity of 16 iu/dl. Private Hackney might well respond to DDVAP (Desmopressin), but whether he were given this or blood products his factor-VIII levels should be carefully monitored by assay immediately before the operation and during the healing period
- 9/7/1979 operation on right foot by Dr Ingram at St Thomas Hospital. Given 1 bottle Abbots Factorate – Armour FVIII (Factorate) batch 030902
- 21/7/1979 given one bottle Factorate – Armour FVIII (Factorate) batch 032303
- 24/7/1979 2 bottles FVIII – Immuno FVII (Kryobulin) batch 012378
- 28/7/1979 date jaundiced in National Haemophilia Database records
- 3/8/1979 discharged from St Thomas
- 10/8/1979 jaundiced and unwell - admitted to Royal Naval Hospital (RNH) Plymouth. Kept in isolation as *?Viral Hepatitis (?Non A – Non B)*. During stay blood serum sent to St Thomas to test
- 27/8/1979 discharged from RNH Plymouth
- 9/11/1979 Discharge summary 'suffering from Non A – Non B'  
Follow up appointment at St Thomas – missing this document
- 16/12/1994 test results confirmed Hep C positive
- 13/3/1995 Liver biopsy done
- July 2002 soft tissue injury to thigh – given Factor VIII - Replenate (BPL)
- 2/7/2003 consultant said he drank 1-2 x 2 litre bottles of cider per night and red wine available and larger OK

Sept 2003    trampled by his horse – given 5,000 units of Recombinate Factor VIII  
for haematoma in left calf

2004           signed off permanently from work by locum GP after one year Hep C  
treatment Interferon and Ribavirin at Plymouth Hospital

                6 month trial of another cure for Hep C

14/11/2005   vCJD exposure letter in National Haemophilia Database notes