Witness Name: Andrew Whyte
Statement No.: WITN2283001
Exhibits: **None**
Dated: 9th January, 2019

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF ANDREW WHYTE

I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 5th November, 2018.

I, Andrew Whyte will say as follows:

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Andrew Whyte. My date of birth is GRO-C 1965. My address is known to the enquiry.

2. I can confirm that I have chosen not to have a legal representative and that I am happy for the enquiry team to draft my statement based on the statement I have submitted to them.

3. In this statement I intend to speak about my infection with hepatitis C. In particular, how I was infected, how the hepatitis C virus has affected

me, the treatment I received and the impact it has had on me and my family.

Section 2. How infected

4. I contracted hepatitis C from having contaminated Factor VIII blood products in either 1983 or 1988, when I had nose operations. As a result of playing rugby or boxing as a child, I developed with a nasal problem that required surgery. I had an operation on my nose at City General Hospital in Carlisle, this was in 1983. In 1988 I had to have a further operation on my nose. On this occasion I was admitted to the Royal Victoria Infirmary in Newcastle. The operation took place on 9th June 1988. When I came round from the operation, my head was swollen and my face was severely bruised. I was extensively bandaged and my nose was packed. I was told at the time that the medical team had struggled after the operation to stop the bleeding from my nose. I stayed in hospital for two weeks and I was under the care of Dr Piggott. He was the same doctor I had been under in 1983 at Carlisle Royal Infirmary. I assume he worked at both locations as it was him that performed both my operations in 1983 and 1988. It was commonplace at the time to give a blood clotting agent during operations to assist when there was severe blood loss and to help prevent severe bruising. I believe I was given Factor VIII blood products during both my operations on my nose in 1983 and 1988. This is how I believe I was infected with hepatitis C.

5. I was not given any information prior to either of the operations that I may receive blood products. You trust medical experts that they will do their best during any medical procedure.

6. In 2006, I went on holiday to Andorra with my wife Stephanie. Whilst on holiday, I noticed the whites of my eyes had turned from white to a yellow colour. When I returned from holiday, after about two weeks my skin turned a brown colour. I looked like I had a good suntan but it

wasn't a healthy look. I started to feel very ill. I was very lethargic and just didn't feel myself. I made an appointment with my GRO-D Dr GRO-D This was at GRO-D GRO-C This practice has now merged to GRO-D Practice. The practice is now based on GRO-D Dr GRO-D took my bloods to send off for examination. A few weeks later Dr GRO-D asked to see me. At my appointment he told me that the results of my blood tests had shown I had mild hepatitis C. I did not know what hepatitis C was but he made me believe that it wasn't a serious condition and that I would just get over it. He did not prescribe me with any medication so I left feeling it was a minor infection that I would just get over.

7. Dr GRO-D did not give me any information about hepatitis C. I had no idea that this infection could be passed on to others.

8. I certainly was not given adequate information to help me understand and manage the infection.

9. I do believe the Doctor sent for me and told me about me infection as soon as he had the results of my blood tests.

10. I was given no information on the infection at all. This, in my opinion, was disgraceful if the doctor himself knew how serious this condition was. He asked me all the usual questions that Doctors do, like if I smoked or drank alcohol. He left me with the impression that it was just an infection and it would go in time. When I got home I phoned my friend Angela Sherdley who lives on GRO-C I knew she had a friend who was a nurse and I asked her to try and find out what hepatitis C was. Angela later rang me back and told me that Hepatitis C was a blood disease and it affects your liver.

11. I should not have had to find out information myself through a third party. I should have been given all the information I needed to know

what hepatitis C was and how to live with it.

12. I was not given any information from the Doctor about the risks of others being infected as a result of the infection.

Section 3 other infections

13. I contracted hepatitis C but did not receive any other infections as a result of being given infected blood products.

Section 4 consent

14. I do not believe I was treated or tested without my knowledge or consent. I do not know if on many occasions when I had my blood taken, it was being used for research I suspect it was although I have no evidence to prove this. I just trusted the nurses or doctors that took my blood for tests.

Section 5 impact

15. Physically, the impact of contracting hepatitis C on me, saw me go from a strong fit man to skin and bones. I lost a tremendous amount of weight and was very weak and lethargic. My legs swelled up and my stomach also swelled. Eventually, on 17th June 2007, I received a liver transplant. Mentally, I became extremely depressed. I went from a loving, happy go lucky man to a very verbally aggressive one. I was very short tempered.

16. I went back to the doctor and he referred me to Carlisle infirmary, I was under Dr Macdonald. I was admitted in to hospital and I was on Larch C Ward. This is a psychiatric ward and I was surrounded by patients who were mentally ill. Dr McDonald was saying that I had been drinking too much alcohol and this had affected my liver. I found this hard to believe as I was a moderate drinker. I eventually discharged

myself from hospital.

17. I was totally exhausted and could barely get off the couch, a week later I went back to see my own doctor, he referred me back to Dr Macdonald. Dr MacDonald prescribed me with medication. I had to take 12 pills a day. He said I had a fatty liver. I had to take 12 pills a day. It was clear to me that he believed I had damaged my liver by drinking alcohol to excess. I can't remember what the pills were called. I felt terrible taking the pills. I was totally exhausted and became very anxious. My wife was very worried about me as I could hardly get out of bed at this time. She read the leaflet inside the box of pills and it clearly said 'Do not take the pills if you have a liver problem'. I was unable to drive, I had no energy, my wife was driving me around and we went back to see Dr MacDonald regarding the pills he had prescribed. Dr McDonald took the pills and read the leaflet and threw them in the bin and said "We will put this down to experience". I totally lost my confidence with the doctor and I told him so. I told him that I did not believe he knew what he was doing. I told him I was leaving and going to the Freemans hospital at Newcastle. My wife and I got in the car and as we were driving out of Carlisle Royal infirmary car park, I received a phone call from an Indian doctor at Freemans hospital, Newcastle. Doctor MacDonald must've phoned him immediately after I'd left. The Indian doctor told me that when I got to Freemans hospital, to go to Ward 12, floor 5 and see him. Ward 12 is a liver and kidney ward. On arrival, I met with the Indian doctor who said he was admitting me onto the ward. I remained in hospital and I was having my blood taken on a regular basis, every morning at one stage. Five days after being admitted they gave me a local anaesthetic and took a liver sample. During the procedure, the surgeon had nicked my neck and I remember the hospital staff struggled to stop the bleeding. A few days after my liver sample had been taken Dr Manner, the consultant, came to my bedside and said I needed a liver transplant. He said because my condition was so urgent I had been put to the top of the list awaiting the donor. Whilst in hospital, I developed an infection, this made me

delirious, I remember I was hallucinating and seeing people that weren't there. As a result of the infection I was told I was off the list because they couldn't do the operation whilst I had an infection. I remember they pumped me with antibiotics, cefuroxime. It was discovered I was allergic to this particular antibiotic. I remember my head swelled up and I was unrecognisable. They gave me another course of antibiotics and fortunately this was successful and I was put back on top of the list. I was gravely ill and my wife was told to prepare for the worst, on 17th June 2007 a donor was received and my liver transplant went ahead.

18. From February 2008 until December 2008, I was given interferon to treat my hepatitis C. I had to self-inject the interferon into my stomach. I remember I got an infection to the area where I was self-injecting.

19. I did not face any difficulties or obstacles in accessing this treatment.

20. I do not know whether there were any other treatments available that were not offered to me.

21. The interferon made me very ill. I can only describe it as the worst flu and hangover that I have ever had. Physically I was extremely tired. I couldn't do anything for myself. I was in bed or on the couch all the time. Physically, I lost weight and went down to skin and bones. At this time, I still had to go to Freemans every week for observation. This was extremely exhausting. I obviously couldn't drive so my wife had to take me. It is over an hour to get to the hospital from Carlisle. Nearly three hours there and back. This was exhausting physically for me and very time consuming for my wife. Emotionally, I became very depressed whilst on the interferon I was also extremely short tempered with everyone around me.

22. I do not believe my infected status impacted upon any treatment, medical or dental care, for any other conditions.

23. As a result of contracting hepatitis C, the impact has been profound. I was ill for many years and could do very little for myself. Before I became ill I was a very sociable and outgoing person, I became very withdrawn and insular. It put a tremendous strain on my marriage as I became a different person. It put a strain on my wife as for many years I could do little for myself.

24. I realise there is a stigma associated with the diagnosis of hepatitis C but I was so near to death, the stigma did not concern me at the time.

25. At the time of my diagnosis I had my own business. This was the biggest independent bottle gas company in Cumbria and South-West Scotland. I employed five full-time people and four or five part-time workers. My turnover was £600,000 a year. I was no longer fit enough to work. At the time I had a three-year contract with BP supplies. When they became aware of my illness they would no longer renew my contract. In the end, my business folded. This left me with no money and I had to use my savings to survive. I had to sell my vehicle and the vehicles I used for my business. In the end I had to go to the Department for Work and Pensions and I was put on disability benefits. For a proud and hard-working man, having to go the government for benefits was a very stressful time for me. My wife also had to take much time off work, not only to transport me to and from Freemans hospital, but also to look after me before and after my transplant.

Section 6 treatment/care/support

26. I did not face any difficulties or obstacles in, or in obtaining treatment as my case was an emergency situation.

27. I have never received counselling or any psychological support as it has never been made available to me or indeed my wife.

Section 7 financial assistance

28. I have never received any financial assistance from any of the trusts or funds setup to distribute payments.

29. Whilst I was in hospital awaiting my transplant, I do recall a Professor Mrs Bassendean, at the Freeman Hospital approached me. She said that many people had been infected with contaminated blood and that they were entitled to compensation. At the time, I was gravely ill, awaiting a transplant and clearly after the transplant my focus was on recovery. I therefore did not look into compensation at the time. I do remember I saw something on the television regarding a blood infected enquiry that was being run by Thompsons Solicitors. I did get in touch with a lady called Sarah Irving and a man called Frank Maguire. They were instructed to act on my behalf to apply for compensation to the Skipton fund. I do know that I was asked to supply my medical notes to Thompsons Solicitors. This was a long and arduous task and took a number of months. Eventually when I received my medical notes from the various hospitals, I supplied these through to Thompsons solicitors. Eventually I was informed that I had not met the criteria for compensation from the Skipton fund. To date I have not received any compensation from any trust or any fund.

Section 8 other issues

30. I am in possession of my original medical notes and can provide them to the enquiry team for evidence.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed GRO-C

Dated 1/3/19