

Witness Name: Samuel Marsden

Statement No: WITN2924001

Exhibits: 0

Dated: April 2019

## INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

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### FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF SAMUEL MARSDEN

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I, Samuel Marsden will say as follows:-

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

1. My name is Samuel Andrew Marsden. My address is,   
. My date of birth is  1992. I am 27 years old. I am single and I currently live in rented accommodation. I work full time in software for Ocado's technology.
2. I make this statement in relation to my Dad, William Trevor Marsden (date of birth  1959) who was infected with Hepatitis C as a result of being given contaminated blood products. My Dad has given a statement to the Inquiry. His witness number is WITN1372001.

#### **Section 2. How affected**

3. I refer to my Dad's witness statement regarding the background of how he was infected, the advice he was given prior to receiving blood products, consent and how he found out he was infected

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

4. In April 2019, I discovered that in addition to Hepatitis C, my Dad has also been exposed to parvovirus, CMV, Hepatitis A and Hepatitis B. He has also previously been told that he may have received blood from a donor who died from vCJD.

### **Section 4. Consent**

5. Please refer to paragraph 3.

### **Section 5. Impact of the Infection**

6. When I was growing up, I often saw my Dad frustrated and not himself. He was regularly tired. He would also get confused. He would often ask me to get things for him, but then get confused about the instruction he was giving me, which would lead to him getting frustrated and generate tension between us.
7. My Dad's occupation as a farmer meant that in his younger years he was a fit, strong man, but as time went by he became overridden with tiredness. If he caught a bug, it hit him much harder than the average person.
8. My Dad is limited in what he can eat and drink. Sometimes his body can't tolerate what he eats and it makes him feel unwell and he has to lie down. I recall him felling quite unwell after having fish and chips once, which was a worry for us.
9. When I was younger I couldn't fully appreciate the impact of Hepatitis C, but looking back, there were obvious signs, such as his drinking habits, which indicated that something was not right with him. He rarely drank alcohol and when he did it would have a disproportionate effect on him.
10. Due to the Hepatitis C infection, my Dad's liver has been significantly damaged. I can see this affecting him more as time goes by. He appears to

feel worse after fatty food or drink. He's not one to complain, but he now will comment fairly often that he doesn't feel well after a big meal. This is hard for my family and I to see, as we don't know how to help him. He is also more confused when he has these episodes.

11. None of my family have medical degrees, so we can only see what is going on on the surface.
12. In respect of the course of my Dad's illness, he is dealing with the lasting effects of Hepatitis C and what it is doing to his body.
13. From my understanding, my Dad had two courses of treatment. The course I remember more vividly was the second course in 2006, as I was sitting my GCSE's. When he had the first round of treatment, I knew he was taking medication, but I didn't understand what it was for as I was young. My knowledge of my Dad's infection has evolved over time.
14. I recall that my Dad had to take two drugs: the first was to clear the virus from his system and the second was to prevent his white blood cell count dropping, which affected his bones and made him feel very weak and tired.
15. Any difficulties or obstacles in accessing treatment will be better addressed in my parents' statements. I remember that my Mum was very stressed about the treatment and I remember that she had to fight to get it as there was some resistance from the hospital.
16. I do not know whether there are any other treatments which ought to have been made available to my Dad, as I do not know what else was available. However, had some form of care or support been offered to him during the course of treatment, it would have gone a long way. Instead my Mum, my sisters and I nursed him at home.
17. I love my Dad, but if somebody is sick, it should have been the responsibility of the NHS to assist him. At the very least, my Dad should have had some home support. Had he had this, our family would have had some peace of

mind that on returning home from school or work that he would still be there and had been cared for in our absence.

18. The physical effects of my Dad's treatment were dramatic. It was shocking to see the change in him. He went from being a farmer who did manual work to being like a ninety year old man.

19. In terms of the immediate effects, just half an hour after having an injection of his treatment, my Dad was bed ridden and shivering violently, unable to move his head off the pillow. We did everything we could to keep him warm, using hot water bottles and duvets.

20. My Dad became a shell of a man and was physically unable to do anything for himself. We had to help him lift his head off his pillow to give him water to drink. He was falling to pieces and we did not know if he would make it through the treatment. It was terrifying for my family. To see someone go from being a fit man to being unable to move and debilitated in bed, particularly when it happened so quickly, was shocking.

21. Mentally, I could tell that my Dad was distraught whilst he was going through the treatment. The way he talked and spoke, I could tell he was scared. He felt very low and would lose his patience easily when he was in these stressed moods.

22. Throughout that time, my parents tried to conceal things from my siblings and me. I sometimes caught them having discussions in the kitchen at night when I popped down for a drink of water. I was not meant to hear, but I could tell that they were not okay.

23. I do not know if my Dad's infected status impacted upon his treatment for any other medical or dental care.

24. My Dad is unable to full engage in family events in the manner he would have been able to had he not been infected. The damage to his liver means that

even at Christmas, one glass of wine can be too much for him and he will need to lie down.

25. At my graduation, it was difficult to share a bottle of Prosecco with my parents due to my Dad's liver.

26. The Hepatitis C virus has wrecked my Dad. His social life was non-existent during his course of treatment and has improved slowly. During the treatment, he was physically unable to work or go out. For a year and a half, he must have felt completely isolated.

27. Growing up, I didn't have what I'd consider to be a normal relationship with my Dad. Emotionally, my Dad was not there for me growing up.

28. My Dad is the kind of man a child should have been able to look up to, but instead I had to fill his shoes alongside my siblings.

29. When my Dad was unwell, particularly when he was undergoing the treatment, my Mum, siblings and I had to take over the running of the farm. My sister's boyfriends also helped out. It was crippling for us all to keep the farm running and generate enough income to keep a roof over our heads, especially as my sisters and I were still at school at the time.

30. I would go to school for 7 to 8 hours and then come home and farm. I would not end up being able to do my homework until 9pm.

31. Because of my responsibilities on the farm, I was unable to stay behind after school and socialise with my friends. My friends were able to enjoy normal childhoods, going to concerts and doing things I would have loved to have done. My friends also had after school jobs to earn pocket money so that they could socialise on the weekends, but even on weekends, I had to help run the farm.

32. My childhood and teenage years were emotionally traumatic. With all the tension at home, I couldn't even spend quality time at home. I would have liked to have done more activities with my Dad, such as fishing or having him

support me in extracurricular activities. Since then I have worked on my relationship with my Dad and things have got better between us. As I matured, I could appreciate the pressure that my Dad had lived under and continues to live under. He may not have always been the Dad I wanted him to be, but he did an admirable job in the circumstances and in many ways, I respect him more for that. He is the type of man that I would be proud to grow into.

33. When I moved to England, I listened to people talking about their normal childhoods and teenage years. This would make me feel jealous about how much I missed out on. My parents worked hard to minimise the impact of my Dad's Hepatitis C infection on my siblings and I, but the impact on my Dad was so dramatic it was hard to protect us.

34. I have been a workaholic as an adult. I believe this stems from my time as a child juggling my work on the farm with my school work. Because of my approach to work, I feel that this has previously prevented me from having a balanced life.

35. Emotionally, I have not put myself first and have taken on the responsibility of helping other people, as this is what I learnt growing up, to sacrifice yourself for others.

36. My girlfriend became a teacher a couple of years ago. After some time in her job, GRO-C she needed support, which I provided. I gave up my social life and hobbies in the evenings to spend more time with her. However, over time this has affected my own mental health and I have struggled for not taking care of my own mental health. I bottled up my emotions, as that was what I was used to doing as a child, not caving or letting those close to you down. It got to the point that I could not cope. I boiled over and broke down.

37. I went to the GP and was diagnosed with depression. We did discuss some formal counselling being arranged for me. I didn't know if I could cope with counselling. Receiving counselling, to me, would feel like an admission of

failure. As an alternative, my GP also recommended the Samaritans. I have spoken to the Samaritans a couple of times and I find it really helps. These are one off calls whenever I need it. Talking to someone about how my day has been without worrying about the effect on them is a relief. They are a stranger as opposed to people I know.

38. I have not discussed my feelings with my family, as they all have their own issues surrounding my Dad's infection and it would be too difficult for me to add to this. I feel as if my family have been through too much to also have to deal with my stress. I saw what my parents battled through and in comparison it feels pathetic to say that my life feels tough.

39. I modelled myself after my Dad, as a normal son would do, and so I grew up with the ideology that I could not show weakness and had to stay strong. If life gets tough, you carry on and you do not give up. If someone close to you needs you, you do all you can to help them. I still believe in this but also in seeking balance in my life for my own mental health.

40. My girlfriend and I split up GRO-C  
We are back together now and working on our relationship, however we are now living separately, when we previously lived together. I find it immensely difficult to see another person I care about struggling GRO-C it brought back depressing memories for me and resulted in many sleepless nights.

41. Since reaching boiling point, I have worked on my emotional state of mind. I have focused on developing healthy coping techniques and on becoming more expressive and open about my feelings. Three years ago, I would not be able to give this statement in the way I can now, as I lacked the emotional capability and I would have been unable to process the information.

42. I am also trying to work on my broken relationship with my girlfriend and this has slowly begun to improve.

43. I knew there was a massive stigma associated with Hepatitis C. I didn't want to deal with that, so I never told anyone close to me about my Dad's infection. I also did not think anyone else would understand my situation.
44. When I was 23, I told my martial arts instructor about my Dad's Hepatitis C infection. He was the first person I had told. He was someone I could talk to and trust when I was having a bad week.
45. I can't comment on my Mum's or my sibling's experience of stigma.
46. In terms of the impact of my Dad's infection on my Mum, there was an immense amount of pressure on her. There were so many things she had to deal with. My sisters were very upset by my Dad's health problems. I once spoke with them about it and we were all in floods of tears. When my Dad was undergoing the treatment, we were all scared and worried and we all lost sleep over it.
47. For my sisters, what has happened to my Dad made them think about whether they wanted their own children. They are carriers of Haemophilia and having seen how our Dad has been treated, our trust in the NHS has been completely shattered. We are terrified that we could go into hospital and potentially come out more unwell than when we went in.
48. Nicola, my oldest sister, recently found out she was pregnant. She is anxious that her child may be brought into this world sick. I know the stress of this must be killing her inside. The results on the gender and health of the baby are due shortly.
49. All of my siblings felt the same responsibility for caring for our Dad. When he was told he had cleared the Hepatitis C virus, we were all so relieved and happy. We felt as if a massive weight had been lifted off our shoulders.
50. In respect of the impact of the infection on my Dad's work, the treatment affected his memory. He would not remember tasks that needed to be done and he would often misplace objects. In terms of his work, it is a physically strenuous job to run a farm, but even with his Haemophilia in his younger

years, my Dad was able to deal with heavy machinery. When he was undergoing the treatment, he was bed ridden for almost a year and a half and he was unable to work.

51. My Dad's Hepatitis C virus may have been cleared, but it has had long lasting effects on him and he has never fully recovered. This has meant that he has been unable to properly return to farming.

52. As a teenager, when I assisted with the running of the farm I had to take compressors off the back of lorries, bring in the cattle and handle repairs. In fact, the night before my physics GCSE exam, I went out at midnight to bring in cattle as my Dad was unable to get out of bed.

53. Having to balance the farm work with my education was extremely difficult, especially fitting in the time to do my homework. Sometimes I was simply unable to submit any homework and other times, my homework would not be of the standard expected or required from me. I am severely dyslexic which made matters even more difficult as it would take me three or four times longer to read and understand a question. I needed assistance throughout my education. In class, I was designated an assistant, the first student in my grammar school to receive one.

54. If I needed help with my homework, my parents were unable to help me as my Dad wasn't up to it and my Mum's priority was my Dad, so I turned to my sisters for help. I felt guilty about asking them for help, as if they paid attention to me, no one would be there to support my Mum with my Dad.

55. When I was choosing my University degree, my parents did not have time to sit and discuss my career prospects or future with me. I never properly thought about what I wanted to do with my life. In the end, I chose engineering as I thought it would be a good route to employment and financial security.

56. I went to Queen's University, Belfast, only because it was close to home which meant that I was able to return home on weekends to help out. I had the option to study in the USA for a year, but I was unable to take that opportunity due to commitments with my Dad. I feel that my time as a student

would have been different if I had not had to support my family due to my Dad's infection.

57. Since I graduated, I have had some amazing highly paid jobs, including working in Formula1 as a mechanical engineer. As glamorous as it may sound, I hated it. My focus at that time was on getting good jobs rather than my happiness. The fact that I wanted to make my Dad proud and have enough money to look after my family was also a factor in my career choices.

58. If I had been able to discuss my career options before leaving school, I think I may have followed a different route. I only discovered later on in life that I have an interest in computing and software. I have fortunately managed to transition into that industry.

59. When my Dad's health and the impact on my family is at the forefront of my mind, it can lead to me having very bad days at work. If I am experiencing stress at work, which I recently have due to one of our warehouses burning down, then I find that work related stress takes more of a toll on me than I think it otherwise would, due to the other stress I have had in my life due to my Dad's infection and his related health problems.

60. Because of my childhood, and the fact that I took on so much responsibility on my Dad's behalf, I am now the kind of person who needs to work very hard to ensure that I always have enough income to provide for myself. I feel that I need to be prepared if something were to happen to my girlfriend, my Dad or myself. I feel that I need to have enough money to support everyone because that's what my dad couldn't do.

61. In the past, I have felt the pressure to succeed and not be vulnerable. This resulted in me prioritising work and neglecting other aspects of my life. Even though people say I am successful, I feel there is more to life than work. I want to be happy too. My past experience has taught me that I cannot crumble. I have to work in order to be self-reliant and happy. I have worked hard to get that security in my life.

## **Section 6. Treatment/care/support**

62. No care or support has ever been offered to my Dad or my family in relation to his Hepatitis C infection. As I have previously mentioned this would have been particularly useful when my Dad was undergoing treatment.

63. I have never been offered any counselling or psychological support in consequence of my Dad's Hepatitis C infection. I am not aware of such assistance being offered to my Dad.

64. Any counselling I have been offered in recent years was sought out myself.

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

65. To the best of my knowledge, no financial assistance was offered to my parents. I have never been offered any financial assistance. I am not aware of what is available in terms of financial assistance.

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

66. What happened to my Dad still affects me today. Following the recent discovery that my Dad was also exposed to other infections, I have recently been for blood tests to ensure that I am not also infected and to ensure that my girlfriend is not infected.

67. The lead up to giving this statement has caused me to lose sleep for the last few days. Every time I speak about the worst parts of my life and how I have been impacted, I feel humiliated and degraded. That is how I have felt throughout the Inquiry process.

68. From my perspective, the whole experience has been extremely traumatic. The opportunity to have a normal healthy Dad was stolen from me. My family have had to deal with the consequences of my Dad being infected with Hepatitis C through infected blood products. I want answers as to why this was allowed to happen. We are now in 2019. This is something which started

forty years ago, so I cannot understand why it has been going on for so long. Why is there still new information being brought to light that we have been unaware of for years? I believe there have been serious shortcomings in the full truth being revealed and accountability.

**Anonymity**

69. I do not wish to be anonymous.

70. I want to give oral evidence to the Inquiry.

**Statement of Truth**

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

Signed.

GRO-C

Dated.....

29/04/2019