

ANONYMOUS

Witness Name: **GRO-B**
Statement Number: WITN0761001
Dated: 14th February 2019

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

WRITTEN STATEMENT OF **GRO-B**

I, **GRO-B** will say as follows: -

Section 1: Introduction

1. I am **GRO-B** and my date of birth is **GRO-B**. I am the daughter of the late **GRO-B: M** and live not far from my father, the widower of my late mother, **GRO-B** who I help with day to day tasks.

Section 2: How Affected

2. My late mother underwent a blood transfusion on **GRO-B** in the maternity ward at **GRO-B** after giving birth to me. I obviously have no recollection of the event and cannot, therefore, confirm the name of the Doctor who carried out the transfusion. From what I have later been told by my late mother or my father, I understand that no warning of any risk of infection or disease was given to my mother before or at the time of the transfusion.
3. Unfortunately it has become apparent that my late mother was infected with Hepatitis (I am not sure whether this was Hepatitis B or C) during the transfusion and from infected blood. Neither my late mother nor my father were informed of the infection at the time and my late mother was not informed until many years later, when in her 70s. I believe that she was first told at **GRO-B** and was then transferred to the Tropical Disease Clinic at North Manchester General Hospital. She was given a leaflet on Hepatitis, but unfortunately she was too old to start any treatments for it. In my opinion, she was not provided with sufficient information and was told of the infection far too late. She should have been told of any risks prior to the transfusion and then of the infection as soon as it became apparent, which I presume was soon after the transfusion. I have never been provided with any advice as to the risk of the infection spreading to myself or others.

Section 3: Other Infections

4. I do not believe that my late mother was infected with anything other than Hepatitis.

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Section 4: Consent

5. My late mother was treated without being given adequate or full information regarding the risks of infection prior to the transfusion. I also believe that she would have been tested for the infection following the transfusion without her knowledge or consent. Or at the very least, I believe that it would have been picked up on following later blood tests.

Section 5: Impact

6. I believe that my mother felt great shame and embarrassment from having the infection. I do not presume to know or understand the full extent of the same but, from my conversations with her, I know that the shocking discovery of the infection was devastating on her mental wellbeing. There is a stigma around the infection and this, I believe, had a huge impact on her. I believe that the knowledge of her infection degraded her self-esteem and confidence, as she thought that people would see her as "dirty" and "disgusting" and this had a negative effect on her ability to socialise. I felt incredibly sorry for my late mother who was a proud person and to see her so distressed was upsetting. Furthermore, the obvious shock and feeling of disappointment in the NHS also gave way to anger for the denial of treatment and secrecy. It is important to remember that my late mother was a Landlady by trade and, as you can imagine in such a profession, was very sociable by nature. The knowledge of the infection, however, made her more reclusive and insular and had an impact on this part of her personality.
7. The infection also seemed to have physical effects on my late mother. She had significant problems over the years related to her blood, such as anaemia, and also experienced severe weakness, feverish symptoms and episodes of fainting. Most notable however, was the unexplained mark on her liver. Due to this mark, my late mother was advised to have no more than one small glass of wine per week and if she ever exceeded this the consequences would be likely to lead to cirrhosis of the liver and possible death. This was from the date of the transfusion in GRO-B to the date of her death in GRO-B.
8. My late mother, as far as I am aware, was not offered any treatment for the infection. As I mentioned previously, she was not informed about the infection for many years, until her late 70s. I believe that she was offered some trial medication in 2017 but refused the same, given her age and that these were not yet proven to help. I believe that any treatments for the infection should have been made available from the earliest opportunity, which was, presumably, soon after the transfusion. Even counselling at any point would have been appreciated and could have been helpful, but was not offered.
9. My late mother was, however, asked to attend her Doctor at the North Manchester General Hospital regularly. This was, my late mother was advised, so that they could keep an eye on her condition, especially that of her liver, so that if she were ever taken ill into hospital the records would be up to date. This put a physical strain on both my late mother and my father who accompanied her each time, as they were using public transport to do so. Eventually, the strain was becoming too much for them and I started transporting them myself in order to relieve some of this physical pressure. As I have said my late mother was a Landlady of a public house and before she passed away, my mother told me of how she would be bought drinks by customers but would have to dispose of the alcohol secretly before pretending to

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drink it. I believe that a significant impact of the infection on her, whilst it was unbeknown, was that she was unable to sociably drink alcohol whether at work or not. I feel that when she became aware of the infection, the shame and embarrassment which she felt had a big impact on her social life and her relationship with members of her family, including myself.

10. The impact that the infection had on me was also devastating. Not only was I shocked and upset on behalf of my mother and for the pain I could see she was in but I also felt an element of shame myself. I felt that there was a chance that I too was infected and this was of great concern to me for a long time. I was too anxious to speak to professionals at first and did not raise the topic with my late mother as she was already going through so much. I was also unable to raise the matter at home due to the sense of shame it gave me. Eventually I did speak to my Doctor. This was very difficult for me and I became upset. Fortunately the results were negative but the experience was awful.
11. Another impact that my late mother's infection had on me was that it became necessary for me to keep information secret from members of my family and this continues to this day. I was unable to initially tell my husband until I could be sure that I was not infected and to this day we have not told one of my sons of my late mother's infection for fear of the community hearing of it and applying the stigma which would bring shame and embarrassment to our family. I also regret that I was unable to enjoy social drinking with my mother, who as mentioned could not have more than one small glass of wine per week. I believe that we missed out on many happy occasions, especially around Christmas and birthdays because of this.

Section 6: Treatment/care/support

12. As far as I am aware, counselling or psychological support was never been made available to my late mother during her life and I have certainly never been offered any. I believe that my late mother was prescribed lots of medication, including aspirin, amlodipine, atorvastatin, buprenorphine and atenolol but towards her later years she refused to take the same. At the age of 83 she was asked to trial a new medication but refused. Once my late mother had been informed of the infection, scans in the Tropical Disease Clinic at North Manchester General Hospital were done, with a focus on her liver.

Section 7: Financial Assistance

13. With regards to financial assistance, around ten years before my late mother's death, she stated that she had been awarded £20,000 in compensation and was asked to sign an agreement not to pursue further legal action. It was clear that she gained no satisfaction from the money and the shock and shame of the infection completely overshadowed this. We do not, in fact, know if this payment was ever made. I believe that this was "hush money" in an attempt to keep my late mother from going to the press or legal professionals. Looking back, I also believe that she was so frightened by the way this was dealt with that she felt she could not speak to anyone, including friends and family, about the infection and this must have caused her considerable emotional turmoil.
14. I am aware that following my late mother being told of the infection, she received letters from the NHS, Caxton and Skipton House, offering financial assistance. I know this as I helped her

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and my father to complete forms and return to said institutions. They received £590 from Skipton House as a winter fuel allowance and my father received £3,399 as a one off payment from the NHS following my late mother's death in order to cover funeral costs. He also continues to receive a £1,000 monthly top-up from the NHS Business Services Authority.

STATEMENT OF TRUTH

I, **GRO-B** believe that the facts stated in this Statement are true.

Signed: **GRO-B**

GRO-B

Dated: 14/2/19

Ref: **GRO-B**