

ANONYMOUS

Witness Name: **GRO-B**

Statement No: WITN1179001

Exhibits: 0

Dated: February 2019

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF **GRO-B**

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

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is **GRO-B**. I was born on **GRO-B** and live at **GRO-B**
GRO-B. I am a widow living on my own.
2. I make this statement on behalf of my two **GRO-B** **GRO-B: S1** and **GRO-B: S2**
3. **S1** was born on **GRO-B** and died at the age of **GRO-B** years old on **GRO-B**. He died from liver failure as a result of Hepatitis C (Hep C).
4. **S2** was born on **GRO-B** and died at the age of **GRO-B** years old on **GRO-B**. He died from Septicemia and severe Haemophilia.
5. This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my late sons' full medical records.

ANONYMOUS

Section 2. How Affected

6. [S1] had severe Haemophilia A. He was diagnosed at about [GRO-B] after I took him to [GRO-B] following a bleed.
7. As [S1] was diagnosed with Haemophilia A, [S2] was also tested after birth and was diagnosed with severe Haemophilia A at the same hospital.
8. I knew Haemophilia ran in my family but I did not realise that I could be a carrier. Nobody told me that I was a carrier until after [S1] was diagnosed.
9. Both [S1] and [S2] were treated mainly at [GRO-B] until they were [GRO-B] years old, after which they were treated at [GRO-B] in Birmingham.
10. Every time they had a bleed, I would take them to the hospital where they received Cryoprecipitate. I cannot recall when the treatment changed from Cryoprecipitate to Factor VIII (FVIII). However, I do recall treating them with FVIII at home and I believe this was in or about the mid 1970s or late 1970s. I was trained to administer FVIII by a nurse called [GRO-B] at [GRO-B]
11. I was given no information or advice beforehand about the risk of being exposed to infection/s when using FVIII. I remember at that time, FVIII was a better alternative as Cryoprecipitate had to be defrosted whereas FVIII could be kept in a fridge at home and was easier to administer. Our hospital times were also reduced.
12. For someone who was at the hospital for three quarters of the year, administering FVIII seemed easier. I remember going to and from [GRO-B] by ambulance as I did not drive at the time and sometimes I would go twice a day because the [GRO-B] required treatment. When FVIII was given to me to administer on the [GRO-B], I was able to give it to them as and when they required it.
13. [GRO-B] contracted HIV and Hepatitis (Hep C) and died from liver failure.

ANONYMOUS

14. When he was about [GRO-B] years old, he was called into [GRO-B] and I drove him in. However, he refused to let me into the appointment and went alone inside. He came out and would not speak to me, so I knew he had been diagnosed with Hep C.
15. [S2] contracted HIV and Hep C but I did not know he had Hep C until after he died, as he had no symptoms of Hep C. [S2] died from Septicemia and severe Haemophilia. He had a cut on his leg as a result of weight training and due to his HIV, he got a bacterial infection from which he died.
16. I believe I found out about both the [GRO-B] HIV infections in or about the mid 1980s by a [GRO-B] at [GRO-B] at a routine hospital appointment. I was shocked when she told me; I did not know what to think. Both the [GRO-B] were at the appointment with me and they were scared because they did not know what was going to happen to them. There was a lot of bad media around this time and it scared me and my [GRO-B]. I do not recall receiving any information about HIV, other than they had tested positive.
17. [S1] and [S2] were very close and spoke a lot about their situation with each other. I do not know what information they received from the hospital, if anything regarding the infections. I do not know if they received any information in relation to how to manage the infection. I was not provided with any information about my [GRO-B] infections.
18. I definitely believe that information regarding the infections should have been provided earlier.
19. The only information I recall was what was in the newspapers and media at the time but the hospitals never gave me information to understand or manage the infection.

Section 3. Other Infections

20. From what I remember, my [GRO-B] did not have any other infections.

ANONYMOUS

21. I did notice my [GRO-B] suffered from symptoms which may have been from other infections but they refused to go to the hospitals to find out.

Section 4. Consent

22. I believe both my [GRO-B] were treated and tested without my knowledge, consent and without being given adequate or full information. I do not recall a doctor or a nurse ever telling me that they are going to test them for HIV. I was just told at a routine appointment with the [GRO-B].

23. I do recall that [S1] was on a AZT trial drug for his HIV. However, prior to that I do not know if they were tested for the purposes of research.

Section 5. Impact of the Infection

24. [S1] was mentally affected when he found out about his HIV. He was [GRO-B] years old and preparing for his O-levels when he started to get paranoid and delusional about our house being attacked by people. He constantly thought that people wanted to come in and harm us. He was like this on and off until the end of his life. [S1] was a bright child and I believed he would have got himself a good education had it not been for the HIV infection.

25. He was also affected physically. His eye lashes started to grow abnormally long and he was kept at [GRO-B] for 24 hours to have tests done. He also suffered from weight loss, sickness, fits, hair loss, skin infections as well as tiredness and I believe the symptoms were as a result of the HIV.

26. [S1]'s hobby was [GRO-B] which he really enjoyed. However, because of the HIV symptoms, he was not able to focus on any of it. He soon isolated himself from his friends because of the stigma attached and his social life was affected tremendously.

27. [S1] did not suffer as much as [S1] did as I believe he was a keen weight trainer and did this regularly to keep him going and keep his mind occupied. However, he did later, near to the end of his life get angry with me saying that if he was not born with Haemophilia, he would not have contracted HIV.

ANONYMOUS

28. I recall the doctors asked **S2** if he was on steroids and he told them that he has never had drugs, smoked or even had alcohol. He just loved to keep fit by going to the gym which also kept his mind off things.
29. **S2** was put on AZT treatment for HIV soon after he was diagnosed, but stopped after 4 weeks due to the side effects he was experiencing. I believe there was no treatment for Hep C at that time.
30. **S2** refused to go on AZT treatment because of the side effects that **S1** experienced. He also refused it because at the time AZT was a trial drug and did not want to take any risks.
31. **GRO-B** My **GRO-B** had each other to confide in and their close bond kept them going even after their **GRO-B** **GRO-B** **GRO-B**
32. It is too emotionally distressing for me to talk about how all of this has affected me, physically, mentally and emotionally. It was a very difficult time for me.
33. Due to the stigma attached to the HIV and Hep C and how the media portrayed the infections, we kept my **GRO-B** infections to ourselves and only told close family. My husband knew that our **GRO-B** were not well but we did not tell him about the infections as he was poorly himself and we did not want to worry him.
34. **S2** liked to get out and about cycling, so was not too focused on studying. He left school completely and was training to become a hairdresser, whilst going to the gym.
35. Their lives were ruined as a result of infections and as a result, my life has been affected tremendously.

Section 6. Treatment/care/support

36. I do not remember if any of my [GRO-B] were offered counselling or psychological support. I was not offered any counselling or psychological support when they were diagnosed or after their deaths. I think if it was offered it would have definitely helped us get through it and understand it.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

37. I do not know if my [GRO-B] received any financial assistance.

38. I did not receive any financial assistance from any of the trust or funds.

Section 8. Other Issues

39. I want answers. However, I do not know if I am ever going to know the truth about what happened, but I am putting my hope into this Inquiry to give me have some sort of closure.

40. [GRO-B]
[GRO-B]
[GRO-B]

Anonymity, disclosure and redaction

41. I confirm that I wish to apply for anonymity.

42. I do not wish to give oral evidence to the Inquiry.

ANONYMOUS

Statement of Truth

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

Signed.....GRO-B.....

Dated 18 - 2 - 2019