

ANONYMOUS

Witness Name:

GRO-B

Statement No. WITN2507001

Exhibits WITN2507002

Dated: 19th February 2019

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF

GRO-B

I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry rules 2006 dated 12th December 2018. I adopt the paragraph numbering in the Rule 9 request for ease of reference.

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

1. Introduction

1. I am married with **GRO-B** grown up children and I am a **GRO-B**. At present, I work for the **GRO-B** as an **GRO-B**.
2. I make this statement to speak about my father **GRO-B: F** and how he became infected with hepatitis C and HIV as a result of a transfusion using contaminated blood.

2. How affected

ANONYMOUS

1. My family were a normal "working class" family. My father and I had a close relationship and shared many interests such as [GRO-B] and [GRO-B]. We were both [GRO-B]. My father, who was very [GRO-B] minded and worked as a [GRO-B] would often work on and [GRO-B] that I owned.
2. When my father was young, he was very proud to say that "he was the [GRO-B] haemophiliac in the [GRO-B] to be given a [GRO-B] [GRO-B]". The [GRO-B] would send for him at regular intervals to attend for medical examinations. It was a very sad time for my father when he failed a medical examination and lost his [GRO-B] as a result of his illness.
3. I can remember as a child, enjoying travelling in the [GRO-B] with my father on Saturday mornings. We would go to the [GRO-B] in [GRO-B] and [GRO-B] [GRO-B].
4. I am unsure of the type of haemophilia my father suffered from as we did not really discuss it within the family.
5. I am unsure of the blood product my father received, but I believe it may have been Factor VIII. My [GRO-B] [GRO-B] who will also be making a statement to the Inquiry will be able to confirm this information.
6. My father attended the [GRO-B] [GRO-B]. His consultant there was [GRO-B].
7. I remember my father going into hospital [GRO-B] in or around the [GRO-B] for traction because he was experiencing problems with his knee joints. His one knee was permanently frozen. I remember visiting him in hospital. He must have been in there for about [GRO-B] weeks.

ANONYMOUS

8. I believe my father became infected between [GRO-B] through the use of blood products.
9. I remember my mother keeping Factor VIII in vials at home just in case my father had a bleed if he should knock or cut himself to control the bleeding. If this did not stop the bleed then my father would be taken to the [GRO-B] for 1 or more injections. I believe it was this product that infected my father.
10. I do not remember any information or advice being given to us about infection. I am surprised that my mother had not become infected due to the lack of information known at that time. No preventative measures would have been carried out. I remember there being a discussion about AZT treatment with the Haemophilia Centre at the [GRO-B] but the long term prognosis was not known.
11. I remember my mother discussing with us about my father contracting HIV. She wanted to dispel the myths that were surrounding the infection at that time, such as being able to catch the infection via saliva etc. I remember my father being very careful with his shaving equipment, no-one else was to touch or use it. My father found it difficult to discuss his illness and to share information.
12. My father became infected with HIV in [GRO-B] and hepatitis C in about [GRO-B]. He found out about his infection when he was called for a discussion with, I believe, [GRO-B]. My father was quite an emotional person and did not find it easy to share, so there was not much discussion about his infection at this time.
13. It was a long time before my mother told my [GRO-B] and I. She was so terrified that it would "get out". She was very protective of her family. My mother was worried out the stigma associated with HIV. My [GRO-B] and I were told to keep it a "secret" and not to tell anyone outside the

ANONYMOUS

family. My mother said she had visions that if anybody found out, she would be afraid that they would be "hounded out of the house".

14. I believe my mum would have fought hard for as much information as possible. She would have asked for information from GRO-B. I believe the information was limited, I do not remember being told of any do's or don'ts.

15. I remember my parents attending a group called GRO-B. GRO-B It was a group for haemophiliacs to attend for socialising and to obtain and share information. I believe my parents obtained more information from this group than from the hospital or GRO-B.

16. I believe that information and or diagnosis of my father's infection could have been provided sooner. My father spent a lot of time at the GRO-B over the years and I believe that information would have been available from various tests carried out on his blood.

17. It was so hard on my mother, she found it difficult to deal with the situation without adequate information or advice.

18. My GRO-B and I were given no further information other than that was provided by my mother. My mother made sure she was very "clued up" on any information that was out there at that time and would actively seek it from various sources.

3. Other infections

1. My father was diagnosed with HIV and then hepatitis C. He also suffered really bad with shingles. He was constantly ill with different things, always picking up various viruses because his immune system was so poor through the HIV infection. His health declined quite rapidly.

4. **Consent**

1. I believe my father was treated and tested without his knowledge and without his consent. Without being given adequate and full information, and for research. I believe that when my father was prescribed Interferon it was for research purposes.

5. **Impact**

1. Before my father lost his GRO-B as a result of his illness, my parents were living in a nice comfortable house with a good living with two sets of wages coming in. However the first house had lots of steps that my father could not manage because of his bad joints, so they moved to a Council house which was easier for my father. My father had to give up his job as a result of his illness and subsequently my mother also had to give up her job to become my father's full time carer and they then continued to live on benefits. My GRO-B also lived at home at this time. I am unaware of the affect on my GRO-B education.
2. My father was prescribed Interferon. The effect this had on him was that it affected his memory. It was very upsetting when he could not remember our names or who we were. When my children were young, it was difficult for them to engage with their grandfather because he was unaware of who they were. He missed out on his grandchildren and they in turn, missed out on a loving and active relationship with their grandfather. I really missed spending time with him and doing things together like we used to.
3. It was the hardest thing to see my father's decline physically. He lost a lot of weight and became withdrawn. He knew he had limited time. He also suffered with really bad shingles, pneumonia, coughs and colds. They were always worse for him because he did not have the resistance to fight them off.

ANONYMOUS

4. I am not aware that my father faced any difficulty in obtaining treatment, but I do know that he spent a lot of time at the hospital and that his GP who was a family friend, used to do home visits, so I believe he did not experience any difficulty.
5. I believe my father was experimented on with a cocktail of drugs but I am unaware of any treatments he ought to have been given and was not.
6. My father's memory was affected when taking Interferon. He could not remember our names or who we were. We all found it extremely upsetting. He became to look gaunt, and lost a lot of weight. He had no energy and became very lethargic.
7. My father only ever attended the **GRO-B** for dental treatment. He had never attended a normal dental surgery.
8. The impact on my mother was hard. She looked like a different person. She lost a lot of weight and went down to approximately 5 ½ stone. She had her own health problems but combined with the worry of my father it took its toll on her. She was taken into hospital for a **GRO-B** **GRO-B** operation. My mother was the "rock" of the family and just got on with things, never asking for help. She was always concerned about the stigma though associated with my father's illness. She wanted it kept secret in case of intimidation and/or discrimination because of the associated stigma with homosexuals etc. People were ignorant and would draw the wrong conclusions.
9. My father and mother were very family orientated and loved family gatherings such as weddings, birthdays but they missed out on a lot of these when my father was ill because he was too ill to attend or be part of these occasions.

ANONYMOUS

10. I believe it also had a substantial affect on my [GRO-B] who was still living at home. [GRO-B] was very close to my father and to this day, [GRO-B] is still unable to bring [GRO-B] to visit my father's grave as [GRO-B] finds it too upsetting.

11. My mother died [GRO-B] years ago and has been buried with my father.

12. I feel emotional on reflection. I feel cheated and angry that my father died at the age of [GRO-B]. Now I am [GRO-B] and have my own family, I appreciate just how much my father has missed out on and just how much we miss him.. I believe that the whole thing was a "cost cutting exercise" and the funding was not there or in place for the appropriate screening.

13. We made sure that when my father died that his death certificate did not mention HIV or hepatitis C. It just says liver failure and states the symptoms of death rather than the cause to stave off any stigma attached to the hepatitis C infection. Confirmation of my father's hepatitis A, HIV and hepatitis C infection is exhibited at WITN2507002 in a letter from the Department of Haematology dated [GRO-B] to [GRO-B] at the Coroner's Office, [GRO-B]

14. I have not spoken to my children about the cause of my father's death and think I would find it difficult to explain.

6. Treatment/Care/Support

1. I have no knowledge of my father having problems in obtaining treatment.

2. I or my [GRO-B] have not received counselling or the offer of this treatment. I am not aware of my mother having or being offered this either but I think my mother may have attended counselling after my father died. She arranged this herself through her GP.

7. Financial Assistance

1. I remember my mother being involved with the McFarlane Trust but I am unsure as to what she received from this Trust. However, I remember her receiving a relatively substantial sum as she was afraid to declare it to the Benefits Agency. I believe she had to obtain a letter from a barrister to explain how and why she was awarded this money so they would not take it into consideration when calculating her benefits.
2. I do not have any information as to how they applied for financial assistance.
3. My parents were awarded a car through Mobility and I believe their rent was paid for them by the local Council.
4. I have never received any financial assistance.

8. Other issues

1. I have no comments to make in this section.

ANONYMOUS

Statement of Truth

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

Signed.

GRO-B

Dated

17/11/19