

Witness Name: GRO-B

Statement No.: WITN2209001

Exhibits: None

Dated: 12th November 2018

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 November 2018.

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

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is GRO-B. My date of birth is GRO-C 1971. My address is known to the Inquiry. I am currently employed as a lorry driver. My dad is GRO-B. I intend to speak about my dad's infection of Hepatitis C, which he contracted through a transfusion or blood products during treatment following an accident work in around 1974. In particular, the nature of his illness, how the illness affected him, the treatment received and the impact it had on him and our lives together.

Section 2. How Affected

2. My dad was infected, I believe, in 1974, following an accident at his place of work. I do not recall the name of the mines where my dad

worked, but he worked down in the pit at the time of his accident. A colleague of his, who I do not know, had been burning something and for whatever reason, what they were burning exploded. My dad suffered badly with burns that he received during this explosion and he was treated at Bangor Hospital in Livingston, in the burns unit there. This treatment involved him having to receive a blood transfusion as well as other blood products, although I am not aware of the names of any of the products used. I believe that plasma may have been referenced at some point. I was a small child at the time of my dad's accident, and as such do not remember beyond what I have since been told.

3. I am unsure who told my dad about his infection and any aftercare advice that would have followed this.
4. I am unsure if the advice given to my dad was adequate or not. I do not believe a lot of information was provided. I am therefore unable to comment upon:
5. Whether information should have been provided earlier or
6. how the results of tests and/or information about the infection were communicated to my dad.
7. I am unaware about what was said about the risk of others being infected by my dad.

Section 3. Other Infections

8. I am unaware of if my dad was infected by anything other than Hepatitis C.

Section 4. Consent

9. I am unaware as to if my dad was treated or tested without his consent.

Section 5. Impact

10. Long before my dad's diagnosis, I recall from childhood that he had always seemed quite ill. I would see the usual things that dads would do with their sons - by this I mean the likes of football, walking and cycling. I did not realise at the time why he was unable to do this with my brothers and I. This all made sense when he was diagnosed. He was always lying in bed often with a heat lamp on his back. At the time my dad drove a minibus. I believe they thought at the time that this was what caused his back pain. I recall that he suffered from flulike symptoms. He was always sniffly and I thought he had hayfever. He is not one for running to his doctor. No one thought for one minute that it would be what it turned out to be stop it was bad enough he had to get over the accident when he was quite badly injured. I believe he was getting his life back together around the time of his diagnosis. It really knocked him. It really affected his confidence. I believe that the stigma was a big issue for my dad. He did not want people to know. I believe he was partially either paranoid or depressed about what people would say about him.
11. I recall that at one point my dad developed a rash on his face, after he was diagnosed, and I believe that this was at some stage after his diagnosis. I am not clear on what the cause of this was. I believe this was psoriasis, and he was very self-conscious about this. My dad worked with the public, so I believe his appearance was of some concern to him.
12. My dad would have been infected around 1974, and diagnosed in the mid-1990s.

13. I am unaware of the treatments my dad received and their effect on him as I did not live at home at the time of his diagnosis.
14. I am unsure if my dad had any difficulties getting treatment.
15. I am unsure if there any treatments which ought to have been made available to my dad;
16. I am unaware of the treatments my dad received and their effect on him as I did not live at home at the time of his diagnosis.;
17. I am unaware how my dad's infected status impacted upon his treatment, medical and/or dental care for any other conditions.
18. I believe that the stigma was a big issue for my dad. He did not want people to know. I believe he was partially either paranoid or depressed about what people would say about him.
19. At the time he had three boys in the house, including me. I was a teenager and did rebel. There was a period of time that we did not get on at all. Before my dad received his diagnosis he was often crabbit. I was not aware until they sat me down and told me what the issue was. I do not recall exactly what age I was when they told me this information. I felt terribly guilty when they told me. My dad and I, as I have said, have not always got on. I believe this was in part due to my impatience at his condition.
20. I have noticed over time that my dad does have problems concentrating. He is the sort of person that is mechanically minded as I am I. I noticed that he could not concentrate when his symptoms were at its worst. My dad could not pick up on obvious things that others might. He did seem to be struggling with concentration. He was not very good at problem solving.

21. When my dad became a traffic warden he had to disclose to them that he was infected with hepatitis C. I recall that my dad was embarrassed about this, and he found it very hard to do this, as he is very old school. I think this was also a source of frustration for him.
22. My mum really had to take charge while my brothers and I were growing up. My mum took charge of any financial matters that would typically have been dealt with by a man back then. I do not have a specific example of what sort of things this entailed. My mum was the one who disciplined us, and I believe this was partially due to the fact that my dad was working all the time, and because of what we now know to be his condition, he would always come back from work and go to bed. Dad was always quite short tempered.
23. I am sure that my dad was affected in his social life by his symptoms, but I did notice that he became more withdrawn socially once he was diagnosed. My parents kept his diagnosis from the wider family, and they started to notice that he was quiet. Before his diagnosis he would have chatted away quite contently. My dad was fairly social prior to his diagnosis, although I recall that he always had aches and pains. He hardly went out anywhere after being diagnosed. I believe his issues with concentration now mean that you can hardly have a conversation with him now.
24. My dad hid his condition from the wider family, and they wouldn't know about his health issues. There were times when family would ask questions but these would be avoided. My parents kept to themselves for a long time. This, I believe, has caused some issues in their relationships with other people, as I'm sure that people do not want to meddle, but they would like some indication as to what is or was going on with my dad's health.
25. When I was younger, my dad was unable to do many things that a dad would have normally done with his children, such as cycling and football. I played football when I was a child but I do not remember my

dad coming to watch any of the games I played. I feel like my dad missed a lot of my childhood by not being there a lot. It did not make sense at the time, and I did not understand why he was not able to be like normal dads. I do believe that this affected my relationship with my dad, especially when I was a rebellious teenager. I do believe there was some resentment that he was not there when I felt he should have been.

26. I do now feel that my relationship with my dad was helped when he was diagnosed. I felt guilty for when I had rebelled and resented things. My dad had no idea what was wrong with him until he received that diagnosis, so he could not offer an explanation as to why he was the way he was. When he was diagnosed it all fell into place. It definitely does not make up for all the lost time we had due to his illness, but we do now have a better relationship now that we both know what was really going on.
27. I do not really know how much this all affected my parents financially as I am sure they would not have discussed their finances with me as it is their business and they would not have wanted to worry me and my brothers. I recall that my dad was never off of work. He was not the type to take any sick leave from his work. My mum would be the best person to speak to about their financial situation.
28. As time goes on, I have noticed my dad having issues with his health on an ongoing basis. He does not keep right, and is often ill. He still has the back pain that I remember him having when I was a child. He has flu-like symptoms, which I understand to be a part of his having hepatitis C. I believe that this has also caused him to have liver damage. I am aware that my dad is always been back and forth to Gartnavel Hospital. When he was working he needed a fair bit of time off to go to these appointments.

29. I believe that one of the biggest impacts, beyond my dad's health, has been the bother he has had with getting a mortgage and with any life insurance. My parents had to sell the house that we grew up in because of these issues, as far as I know. They are now renting a property that they live in. They cannot get a mortgage nor any life insurance because of my dad's condition. I believe it was around 4 years ago that they had to sell the house. From what I understand they kept feeling like they were getting doors slammed in their face when they would try and get a mortgage or any life insurance.

Section 6. Treatment/Care/Support

30. At no point was my dad offered any counselling as far as I am aware. I believe he was seeing a 'Chinese guy' for depression. I was not living with my parents at the time of my dad receiving his diagnosis, so I may not be fully aware of the situation at home and what was offered. I think that my mum did not want to worry my brothers and I, so she may have kept some of the situation from us. I do not consider the support offered to my dad, and to the family, to be sufficient.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

31. As I do not involve myself in my parent's finances, I am unaware of any funding received by them, and any circumstances surrounding this. I have not received any funding as a person affected by infected blood.

Section 8. Other Issues

32. I went with my dad to some Haemophilia meetings when he first started going, as he was nervous to go himself. He now goes regularly by

himself. I know he followed the Penrose Inquiry previously, and I tried to support him as much as possible with that.

33. I believe that the Penrose Inquiry left my dad feeling frustrated. He did not think that the government really gave much support to it. I think it was frustrating for him that there was no apology, nor any sort of clarity about what happened. This must be very hard for my dad to deal with.
34. I am flabbergasted about the whole concept of convict blood being used. Of all people to take blood from. I wonder who sat down and made the decision. They are meant to be intelligent people, those in charge of the NHS. It seems to have been a cost cutting measure, and there must be someone to blame for this. I feel that this has been a total government cover up, and we must find out who was responsible. From what I understand there are records missing from medical records, so it feels like cover up after cover up.
35. I find it frustrating that it must just come down to money. I feel as if they are just biding their time hoping that more and more people pass away.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed **GRO-B**

Date: 27th February 2019