Witness Name: Ian McPhail
Statement No.: WITN2214001
Exhibits: WITN2214002-013
Dated: 22nd October 2020

# INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

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# FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF IAN MCPHAIL

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I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 5th November 2018.

I, Ian McPhail, will say as follows: -

## Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Ian McPhail. My date of birth is GRO-C 1958. My address is known to the Inquiry. I am single and live by myself. I do not work due to my ill health. I intend to speak about my infection of hepatitis C and the impact it has had on my life.

## Section 2. How Infected

2. I was infected due to a transfusion I received in May 1975 at the Western Infirmary, Glasgow. I recall that I was vomiting blood which was due to having a hematemesis. There is a letter in my medical notes dated the 14th May, 1975 that describes the blood transfusion, I received 2 units of blood. I exhibit this letter as **WITN2214002**. I assume that the doctors received permission from my parents to give me the blood transfusion, as the doctors

never said anything to me at the time and all my GP, Dr Kearney said later was that there were enough units administered to me to classify it as a blood transfusion. Dr Kearney is based at Old Kilpatrick Medical Centre.

3. I have uncovered an entry in my hospital records that indicates that there were signs that all was not well in 1993. I was admitted to hospital and I had been vomiting blood. The doctor who saw me, had clearly reviewed my records as he referred to the 1975 incident in his note, but nothing else was explored. I refer to this and exhibit it as **WITN2214003**.

4. I remember in approximately July 2005, I came home from work and there was a message on the phone saying that I had a GP appointment the next Monday. When I attended, I was told that my cholesterol level in my liver was high. I was then referred onto Gartnavel Hospital for further investigations. They took a large volume of blood and I never heard anything about this for quite some time, other than to change my cholesterol medication.

5. I had a heart attack in 2003 and lots of blood was taken then as well. As a result of this heart attack, I had further procedures and received stents. I remember in 2005, I found out about my diagnosis of hepatitis C when I was asked by a doctor how I was coping with hepatitis C. He then just walked away from me. This was the first time I had heard anything. The doctor then got a nurse to come and discuss hepatitis C with me. At that time, a large volume of blood was taken. I was never given much information.

6. I came home after finding out about my hepatitis C and my GP contacted me saying that he had received word of what had happened as the hospital had told him. I was very angry and upset. I have identified a letter in my medical records from Peter Mills, Consultant Physician & Gastroenterologist and my GP that confirms my diagnosis and I exhibit this as **WITN2214004.**

7. From 2005, I began to receive regular blood tests. After I was cured of the infection in 2009, I also attended Harley Street clinic privately for blood tests,

to make sure that the virus was truly gone because I was quite worried about this. Thankfully it is gone.

8. I cannot remember the name of the doctor who casually mentioned hepatitis C to me.

9. My GP said that he did not know a lot about hepatitis C. He said he would try to find out more and I was to come and see him if I had any problems; he was not terribly helpful. Once my doctor looked into it he said that it does cause damage to the liver and if I had any problems I should go and see him. I believe my GP did find out more than I could have found out myself, he gave me as much information as he could at the time. The lack of information overall though and uncertainty left me feeling quite distressed. I was given further information when I attended the hospital in January 2006. This is shown in a letter between my GP and Elizabeth McCruden a Consultant Virologist in January 2006 which I exhibit as **WITN2214005.**

10. I should have been told earlier than May 2005, due to previous blood tests I had taken which showed deranged LFT results that were in my medical records. The doctor that made the insensitive comment, should have given me more information rather than just asking me about my condition that I had not yet been told about. It was as if he did not want to be involved. That doctor also said to go my GP to find out more.

11. My GP was the only one who talked about cross infection. I asked about my daughter and he said it was unlikely that she was infected. They also advised me about safe sex options and advised me not to share toothbrushes. They put it in a nice way and advised me to also tell my dentist. I was also advised to be careful if I had any cuts.

## Section 3. Other Infections

12. I am not aware of being exposed to any other viruses from the blood transfusion.

## Section 4. Consent

13. The hospital took blood at the beginning of 2005 and I found out about the infection in July 2005 around three or four months later. They had plenty of time to tell me. I never consented to be tested for hepatitis C. There is a letter in my medical records that identifies the continued pattern of troubling LFT results in 2004 between Dr Mary Todd Clinical Assistant to Dr I D Smith to my GP, which I produce in evidence and identify as **WITN2214006.**

14. I do recall that after my heart attack in 2003, the practice nurse and the hospital both took blood. I was there every six months at my GP and every six months after that at the hospital.

## Section 5. Impact

15. I did mention to my GP that I was feeling very tired. I had aching bones. This was just before I found out I had hepatitis C. Over the years I did feel tired. I put it down to everyday living and raising my daughter. I was a painter and decorator when I worked and I stopped working in this role around 2007 or 2008.

16. I noticed that I struggled with brain fog over the years. I found that people would sometimes even snap their fingers at me because I had drifted off during a conversation. This started to occur long before my diagnosis. I would be sitting watching TV and I would realise that I was just staring. I had not taken in anything that I had been watching. I was always feeling the cold and had the heating up. My symptoms got worse over time prior to my diagnosis

17. I always felt like I had flu with my aching joints and I had terrible night sweats. I did not suffer from sickness but I did have an upset stomach quite often.

18. Dr McNab at Clydebank Health Centre had my blood taken after my diagnosis and he said that my liver levels were a bit high in the mid to late 1990s. I don't believe this was followed up on.

19. The only treatment I ever received was Interferon and Ribavirin. This was for a period of 48 weeks. I started the treatment on the 4th February 2008 and it continued on until the 5th January 2009. There is a letter in my medical notes regarding the treatment I received, which I exhibit as **WITN2214007**. This involved three pills in the morning and three pills at night and an injection once a week. My haemoglobin was affected and I had to reduce my pills to twice in the morning and twice at night. I started to test negative for HCV in April 2008. I exhibit this lab result as **WITN2214008**.

20. I attended Gartnavel Hospital for the treatment. They would take my bloods regularly and every four weeks I received a supply of injections and pills. They would also check my vitals regularly. After seeing the hepatitis C nurse, I would attend the Brownlee Centre to ensure I was coping emotionally. Prior to the treatment, I also had to be evaluated by Dr Roger Wong at the Brownlee Centre where they checked my heart by conducting an ECG. Every fortnight I would see Dr Wong and I continued to see him for a year after treatment as well.

21. I was clear of hepatitis C at the end of my treatment. I was advised that I was in remission and I believe it was a hepatitis C nurse who told me this. This was also repeated to me in a final visit with Professor Mills who I did not get on with. I did not see him during my treatment regularly. He is retired now as far as I believe.

22. There was no other barrier to treatment other than the psychological evaluation I had to undergo. The hospital said that the treatment was

expensive and they advised me that they could offer it to me, but I did not have to take it. I believe I should have been given the option to start the treatment sooner than when I ultimately did. I had months of different tests and it was as if the hospital were spinning it out to get to the start of another year, possibly waiting for more funding to be in place. I have identified two letters in my medical records that illustrate the significant amount of time I was forced to wait. The first letter is between Shouren Datta, Specialist Registrar in Gastroenterology and my GP in June 2006 when I am added to the waiting list and a second letter in March 2007, acknowledging the significant amount of time I had then been on this waiting list. I exhibit these letters as **WITN2214009**.

23. I was given hardly any information about the side effects I ended up experiencing. I received a leaflet, but nothing else. In terms of my symptoms while undergoing treatment, physically I first noticed them when I went home after the nurse gave me my first injection and three tablets in the morning. I got home that day and fell asleep and I woke up shivering. My bones were aching and I felt sick and tired. It was a shock to my system. I actually filled the bath with cold water that day to try and shock my system back to normal.

24. I went to see an emergency doctor shortly after I commenced treatment, who said that I should go to hospital. I went the next day. I was prescribed amitriptyline as I ended up having nerve damage from the treatment. The pills did help and I am still on them now. I am also on co-codamol and tramadol for ongoing joint pain as a result of the treatment. I find that my shoulders are affected particularly. During the treatment I would get bad upset stomachs with diarrhoea and sickness. I also lost my appetite.

25. The symptoms I had during treatment continued throughout, there were a few times that I was going to stop the treatment altogether. I got through it without stopping though. I even found myself having to crawl to the toilet it was so debilitating. I was affected from day one. Some of my family and friends asked if I had cancer because I was so ill. There is a letter in my

medical notes dated 16th September 2008 that depicts the adverse effects I had on the treatment. I exhibit this letter as **WITN22140010.**

26. I only told my immediate family about the diagnosis. My father had just been told he had cancer and he died just before the Christmas when I started on treatment. I believe that I told my family at the beginning of 2006.

27. I still have nerve pain and joint pain. My memory is not as good as it was and I still suffer from brain fog. I feel that I have to write everything down now, whereas before I would not have had too. I was a trustee with a charity but I had to give that up.

28. I still get sickness and diarrhoea every now and again. I still have a generally unwell feeling. I find I cannot commit to doing things because I do not know how I will be. The levels of my symptoms are different but they are still there. I do not have a life. I sometimes just want people to leave me alone.

29. When I went through the treatment I was not put on any medication until I raised it with a practice nurse who was taking regular blood tests from me. I told her I was not coping. She passed this onto a doctor and then he put me on antidepressants. I am not on anything now for this. My system cannot cope with some medications now as well. I attended a clinic in West Dunbartonshire for counselling in relation to my liver which I attended for around nine months. I cannot remember the name of the place. There is a letter in my medical notes that refers to this counselling. I exhibit this letter as **WITN22140011.** I asked my GP and heart specialist if hepatitis C had contributed to my heart attack and they said it was unlikely, but they are not entirely sure. I have to be careful because there are four stents in my heart.

30. I still suffer from depression now and my appetite has never properly returned. I eat only to sustain myself now, I do not enjoy eating food otherwise.

31. I did not notice ever really being treated differently because of my hepatitis C. I have never had any issues with my dentist either.

32. My condition has also had an effect on my family life. I do not see my daughter now. Other than that, my family has been great. I always have someone that can come with me to hospital. It affected my family at the beginning because I did keep stuff from them. They were angry at not being told.

33. I no longer have a social life. I do not drink. People question why I don't drink anymore. My answer is that I am worried about causing any further liver damage. I asked my GP about even having an occasional pint and they said it was better not to. A nurse however said it was fine to maybe have a couple, so the advice is not always clear. I miss the social aspect of going to the pub which I used to enjoy doing on a Friday night. I also used to go to the football but I cannot sit for that long anymore. I just find it too cold and uncomfortable now. I used to go every week and I have lost out on the social aspect of that as well, which is quite isolating.

34. I have not had a holiday since 2008. I did not feel motivated to take any more holidays like this afterwards. My energy levels are affected by my condition. I have not tried to get travel insurance because I feel like it is going to be a problem if I do try.

35. In terms of the stigma, I linked my condition with HIV. When I was told that I had chronic hepatitis C I thought that no one would want to be around me and no one would invite me to things. I was always in hospital so a lot of my interactions were with drug addicts. I remember being asked if I was a drug user. I am not.

36. I stopped working in 2006 or 2007. The doctor noted that I had reactive stress on my sick line. The Department of Work & Pensions keep calling me for assessments after this. I am now signed off until 2020, when I will have

to go in again for another assessment which takes place every two years usually.

37. I ended up going part-time at my job because of my heart issues and hepatitis C symptoms. I was with the company I worked for, for 8 or 9 years at this point. I was also worried about other people's reactions to me, especially when I was putting up wallpaper with sharp blades. I feel that this ultimately stifled my earning capacity. I have also struggled in my earning capacity, due to the aches and pains that were caused from hepatitis C. The aches and pains were the main catalyst for me stopping work. Prior to knowing about the infection, I did put these symptoms down to my heart but I realise now that these were more likely to have been hepatitis C symptoms.

38. I took out life insurance in 1985, which was on a fifteen year policy. I have taken out another life insurance policy now. The insurers have not asked me about conditions like hepatitis C so I am still covered. I do not have a mortgage.

## Section 6. Treatment/Care/Support

39. After my treatment finished, my last contact was with Dr Wong, who I saw a couple times after treatment. I felt cast adrift after those appointments. I think it would have been helpful to have had a follow-up. What was on offer was entirely inadequate.

## Section 7. Financial Assistance

40. I received a heating allowance of £1000 from the Caxton Fund. I received £166.66 per month in around 2016 or 2017. I also received a clothing grant at one point which was for £200.

41. I received £20,000 from the Skipton Fund in 2006 or 2007. I was looking for a lawyer about medical negligence and I spoke to someone at Ross Harper Solicitors. I got an appointment there and they mentioned the Skipton Fund.

I got the form and the doctor filled out part of it and I filled out the other. I found this to be an easy application process.

42. I received £30,000 from the Scottish Government in approximately December 2016. This was an automatic process.

43. Now, I receive £18,000 per year from the Scottish Infected Blood Support Scheme. I also now receive £1575 per month, I found that applying for this was also quite a straightforward process.

44. I do not believe the money will ever really be enough. I am however grateful for what I have been given.

45. I exhibit articles that I have saved about the financial funds for the Inquiry's consideration as **WITN2214012**.

## Section 8. Other Issues

46. I was involved in Penrose Inquiry and provided a written statement to them. I feel that the Penrose Inquiry was a whitewash and a waste of money.

47. I exhibit further articles that I have saved about the scandal for the Inquiry's consideration as **WITN2214013**.

48. I do not require my statement to be made anonymous.

## Statement of Truth

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

Signed GRO-C

Dated Oct 27, 2020