Witness Name: James Brian Miller
Statement No.: WITN2217001
Exhibit: NONE
Dated: 1st March 2019

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF JAMES BRIAN MILLER

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

I, James Brian Miller, will say as follows:

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is James Brian Miller. My date of birth is GRO-C 1946 and my address is known to the Inquiry. I am married to Jean Elizabeth Miller. We do not have any children. I intend to speak about my experience of becoming infected with Hepatitis C. In particular, the nature of my illness, how the illness affected me, the treatment received and the impact it had on me and my family.

Section 2. How Infected

2. I suffer from severe haemophilia type A.

3. At the time when I became infected, I was living in Scotland and attending the Glasgow Royal Infirmary. Initially, before my infection, I used to be dealt with at the Western Infirmary in Glasgow. This was mostly to deal with my joints and other physical problems that I had as a result of my haemophilia. This was in the 1950s and 1960s. Back then, the way to deal with haemophilia was deb rest as there were no prophylactic treatments for it. Later on, when a treatment for haemophilia came out, I was dealt with at the Glasgow Royal Infirmary. Currently, I suffer from joint problems and arthritis due to the bleeding that I experienced before any treatment for haemophilia became available. I have to walk with a stick, and this is due to not having any treatment for my haemophilia in the early stages of my life. When treatment became available in the mid-1960s, I would have to travel to the Glasgow Royal Infirmary for treatment, whereas now I treat myself at home. I would attend Ward 3 at the Glasgow Royal Infirmary. Sometimes, my visits would be quite frequent and sometimes I would be kept in. I would attend a few times a week or spend a week or two without attending, as required. At the Glasgow Royal Infirmary, I was treated by Professor Gordon Lowe, but there was also some other doctor whose name I cannot remember.

4. From 1965 onwards, I was given cryoprecipitate. Factor VIII came out in the early 1970s and that is when I started receiving it. It was human-sourced and imported from the USA. When I was diagnosed with Hepatitis C, I was taken off the Factor VIII and put on cryoprecipitate again, which caused me to have a bad reaction, even though I had never had a bad reaction to cryoprecipitate in the past. Cryoprecipitate is a concentrate of plasma, but not as concentrated as Factor VIII. Afterwards, heat-treated Factor VIII came out and I was

given recombinant Factor VIII, which is the treatment that I am on now.

5. In 1975, I became very unwell and attended my GP. This was Dr Woods at the Whiteinch Medical Practice in Glasgow. Dr Woods said that my eyes were yellow and that I had an infection. He said that it was non A/non B Hepatitis. I was then sent to the Belvidere Hospital for Infectious Diseases in Glasgow. There, I was treated by Dr Chowdry. It was determined that the infection had come from blood products. I cannot remember the details of it, but it was automatically assumed that the infection had come from Factor VIII imported from America. I was also tested for HIV, but the results came out negative. Dr Chowdry was an Indian doctor, and he did not believe in using medical products or drugs to treat Hepatitis C, just bed rest. Later on in life, I was asked at Nottingham Hospital if I ever received Interferon to treat my Hepatitis C, and I could confirm that I never did. The virus was cleared out of my body naturally, which what Dr Chowdry believed in doing for treatment of my Hepatitis C. Although I have been exposed to the virus, it is not active.

6. Nothing was ever mentioned beforehand about the risk of infection from blood products. Nothing was known at the time and I believe that they only started to heat-treat the blood products when there was evidence of contamination. I don't think heat-treatment was available early on. Only when cases of celebrities and other people becoming infected with HIV appeared on the media did this become a big news item, but I do not believe that there had been any previous warning about the possibility of infection.

7. When I attended the GP due to feeling unwell in 1975, Dr Woods had to notify the hospital, as it was a matter of public health. I was then admitted to the Glasgow Royal Infirmary and spent three or four days there being tested. I was then transferred to Belvidere Hospital for Infectious Diseases and put in isolation. I was asked things such as if

I had been on a Mediterranean holiday or if I ate a lot of seafood. They did not know what the cause of the infection was and they later went on to name it non A/non B hepatitis. I did not really get to know much about it myself, as I was not really kept informed about what was going on. I only found out latterly that I had Hepatitis C, and cannot remember if I was actually told. Hepatitis C was a new strain that had come out and I do not know when the name "Hepatitis C" was given to it.

8. I was not really given any information to understand and manage the infection, I had to go through a lot of tests and cannot remember what details, if any, were given to me at that point. Nothing was discussed regarding lifestyle choices or alcohol consumption, but I do not drink or smoke anyway. I might have received letters later on in time, when the infection was actually named Hepatitis C, but my recollection of this is not very clear.

9. I believe that maybe there should have been more information available on what the medical team had found out and the progress of my disease. That would have been very helpful. I cannot remember ever being told officially that I had Hepatitis C.

10. My view is that the medical team could have given me more information, it would have been helpful if they had let me know what was happening and why there was a change of treatment for my haemophilia. I say this because I was being given recombinant, which generally only younger people were given at the beginning.

11. Nothing was discussed with me about the risk of others being infected as a result of my Hepatitis C. This might have been because I was not actually infectious. At first, I was in isolation at Belvidere Hospital, but when it was found out that I was not infectious, barrier nursing was dropped. There was no information given.

Section 3. Other Infections

12. I do not believe that I have contracted any infection or infections other than Hepatitis C as a result of receiving contaminated blood products. I did receive a letter later on in time about the risk of CJD. This was at the time when someone in London died of CJD, but I do not have any symptoms of CDJ and do not believe that I contracted the disease.

Section 4. Consent

13. I do not know whether I have been treated or tested without my knowledge or without my consent. I was never provided with much information. I might have had tests that I am not aware of. Hepatitis C was quite a mystery back then and people did not know much about it. The doctors could not tell me anything because they themselves did not quite know what was happening, hence all the questions that they asked me about whether I had been on a Mediterranean holiday or eaten a lot of seafood.

14. I don't know and cannot say whether I have ever been treated or tested for the purposes of research. I was never asked to take part in any research.

Section 5. Impact

15. The effects of being infected with Hepatitis were that I was very uncomfortable and nauseous during my illness. It would go away and then come back. It was very upsetting, but it was mostly physically rather than mentally. Mentally, I was constantly wondering when the illness would go away.

16. After the illness, my liver recovered well and I do not have any ongoing liver problems. There were no other health issues caused by the Hepatitis C.

17. By way of treatment, I was told to rest in bed. The beds at home were not suitable for this. Hospital beds were firm and I had to go in and lie flat most of the time. I had multiple admissions to Belvidere Hospital, as the illness went away and then came back, on and off. The illness made me feel tender across the ribcage. This might have been because it affected my liver. I only got relief from these symptoms at hospital. I would stay in for a period of about two or three weeks every time I was admitted. Initially, I was in for a period of six weeks. Every time that the disease returned, I would feel unwell and turn yellow. Ironically, when I turned yellow and looked really ill, that is when I would start to feel better. My skin and eyes would be yellow. The yellowness would fade eventually and I would be discharged. Then, nausea would come back in a period of about two or three weeks. The illness came in waves.

18. The doctors and the medical staff at the Belvidere Hospital were very good. However, I had so many questions and did not really know what was happening to me. The worst part was the uncertainty of it all, as no one was giving any answers. This was traumatic, also for my mother and father. Sometimes I would think I was going to die, this is the way in which the illness affected me mentally.

19. I was discharged from Belvidere Hospital for the last time in late 1976, when the infection had completely cleared out of my system. This happened within a period of 18 months. I do not know how the doctors knew that all was clear, I cannot remember the details. I just felt better and did not need to be admitted again. I was told at the Nottingham Hospital that the infection was cleared. This happened when we moved to England, I cannot remember the year. It was Dr Dollan QMC Nottingham who told me.

20. I think that a lot of people who were treatment with Interferon were not allowed for their bodies to deal with the infection naturally and have come out worse. There is no treatment which should have been offered but wasn't. I believe that bed rest was the best way of dealing with the infection, rather than Interferon and other drugs.

21. I always had my dental treatment at the Glasgow Royal Infirmary, and they would know from my notes that Hepatitis C was in my background, but they didn't show any special preparations in dealing with me. Otherwise, I just attended my GP as normal when required.

22. Becoming infected with Hepatitis C had no effect on my private and family life. My wife got tested at one point in the past, and she is not infected. I did not really disclose to anyone that I was infected with Hepatitis C as I was aware that this was something that people would have been wary of.

23. Had I disclosed it, there could have been a stigma about it as people would not have understood. Hepatitis C used to be associated with homosexuality and everyone was put in the same box. Attitudes were different at the time.

24. My education was affected by my haemophilia, not by my Hepatitis C. My whole school life was affected because I had to miss school very frequently. I did not have any special school arrangements and attended mainstream school, but the teachers were very good and allowed me to work from home. This is because when bleeds affected my joints, I had to be immobilised for a period of ten days until my next episode. I also had to cancel holidays due to this.

25. It was also my haemophilia, not my Hepatitis C, which affected my employment. I do not really wish to go into detail about my employment, but at one time I was off for about six months and had to go down to half wages. The Hepatitis C did not really affect my wages

as it only caused me to be off work for successive periods of time, not for a continuous period of time.

26. Becoming infected with Hepatitis C did not really have an effect on my finances and my income overall was not affected by the infection.

27. My becoming infected with Hepatitis C was a source of worry for my parents because we did not know what was going to happen, but it did not really affect my wife as I had not met her at the time. My wife and I got married in 1993.

Section 6. Treatment/Care/Support

28. I am sure that I would have been offered counselling and support through the Glasgow Royal Infirmary if I had asked for it. However, I did not feel this was necessary.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

29. I found out that financial assistance was available when I read about it in a magazine. It was also then that I contacted Thompsons to say that I was part of the group affected by contaminated blood.

30. I received £20,000 from the Skipton Fund and £30,000 from the Scottish Government. I cannot remember when I received these amounts. The last lump sum came from the Scottish Office, as the system is different in England.

31. All the details about how to apply were sent from the Skipton Fund. I had to sign a form in order to give them permission for data protection purposes, so that my details could be passed on to them in Edinburgh to deal with my application.

32. In order to apply for financial assistance, I had to fill in forms and pass them to the Skipton Fund. My recollection of the process for applying for financial assistance from the Scottish Government is not clear.

33. I did not experience any difficulties or obstacles in obtaining financial assistance, they were very good. I have also applied for living allowance and currently receive £1,000 every year. I got this for the last time in 2018 and it was the second lot. I have to apply for it every year.

34. There were no preconditions imposed on the making of an application for, or the grant, of financial assistance. I did not really have to provide any details.

35. I do not have any other observations of further comments to make about the various Trusts and Funds or about the amount of financial assistance received. I am grateful for the financial assistance that I received. I am retired now and also receive my state pension.

Section 8. Other Issues

36. I have never been involved in litigation as a result of becoming infected with Hepatitis C. In the past, I submitted information to the Penrose Inquiry, but nothing really transpired from it at all.

37. I feel like it has taken a long time to help the people who have been involved in this and who have had very little recognition over the years. There have been no questions answered. A lot of public money was spent on the Penrose Inquiry, but nothing ever came of it. There are people whose relatives are ill or have died, who have not received enough compensation. I feel like there has been some sort of cover-up.

38. I cannot say that any parts of my medical records are missing. However, I have never asked for this to be verified. Nothing was computerised at the time.

39. I do not wish to be anonymous in this Inquiry and hope that my contribution can help other people.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed GRO-C

Dated 8/3/19