

ANONYMOUS

Witness Name: **GRO-B**

Statement No: WITN2512001

Dated: 23rd 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. My name is **GRO-B** My date of birth is **GRO-B** and my address is known to the Inquiry. I am married to **GRO-B: H** We have **GRO-B**

2. How Affected

1. My husband **H** has haemophilia A. My husband was infected with Hepatitis C through blood transfusions and contaminated blood products. I am not certain of the time period in which my husband was infected. My husband did not tell me that he had been infected until a number of years later, when he became ill.

ANONYMOUS

2. We were not married at the time that [H] told me that he had been infected, we subsequently married in 1996. [H] has told me that he was treated with factor 8 products including cryoprecipitate from early childhood and into the 1970s and 1980s. He also told me that he received this treatment at the [GRO-B] up until [GRO-B] and then [GRO-B] at the Haemophilia Centre at [GRO-B] [GRO-B] My husband was not aware of the risk of being exposed to infection from these products.

3. My husband informs me that he was told of his infection during a routine clinic appointment in the middle of the 1980s. At that point, my husband was informed of the consequences of the diagnosis and that he had a life expectancy of between 10 and 15 years. I believe that my husband should have been prepared by the clinic to receive this information and offered more support. He did not share the diagnosis with me at that point and therefore was left to deal with the diagnosis/prognosis with no support.

3. Other Infections

1. My husband has not received any other infections as a result of being given infected blood products.

4. Consent

1. Prior to being diagnosed with Hepatitis C ('Hep C'), my husband had no knowledge of any tests or treatments which were undertaken. My husband was tested for Hepatitis C without being given adequate or full information.

5. Impact

1. The infection and the treatment for the Hep C made my husband very ill. He suffered with fatigue, depression and abdominal pain. The treatment caused flu-like symptoms, hair loss, memory loss and damage to his thyroid gland. There were a number of occasions when I thought he was going to die. His

ANONYMOUS

hair went grey and lost a significant amount of weight. Our friends often asked about his wellbeing and queried whether he had cancer. We never told our friends of his infection and were therefore unable to explain to our friends the reason why he was so unwell.

2. My husband's personality also changed. He used to be a confident person however he became quiet and withdrawn and very anxious. He worries more about the future and continues to worry, even though he no longer has the infection. The infection has caused permanent liver damage, and therefore we live with the on-going worry of the risk of liver failure and my husband developing cancer of the liver.
3. My husband was so ill that I had to take the reins because he was physically unable to help or support me. This meant that I had to attend to all household chores whilst continuing to work and support him.
4. It also impacted upon us financially because it restricted my ability to work. I am self-employed and was unable to earn the money I would usually earn due to needing to support my husband, which included transporting him to and from hospital appointments. For instance, I was unable to take on any work that involved me travelling abroad.
5. The infection also meant that we could not have children. I underwent three courses of fertility treatment, but these were unsuccessful. Therefore we have had limited family life. What I had mapped out in our life in terms of having children just couldn't happen.
6. Due to the stigma attached to the infection, my husband and I have never told anyone that he has Hep C.

ANONYMOUS

7. The situation also impacted upon my mental health. I suffered with depression from the middle of the 1990s for approximately 11 years. I was treated with anti-depressants.

6. Treatment/Care/Support

1. There was a delay in receiving the final treatment which led to my husband becoming infection free. This delay was due to a delay in the granting of the approval of the financial costs.
2. My GP has offered me counselling and I attended counselling on two occasions but I did not find this beneficial.

7. Financial Assistance

1. I am aware that my husband received money from the Skipton Fund. He received the Stage 1 and 2 payments. The process did not appear simple and there was delay and an appeal before receiving the Stage 2 payment.

8. Other Issues

1. The infection and the side effects of the treatment prevented us going on holidays, and there have been occasions when we have been on holidays and we have had to return. I have always wanted to emigrate at some stage however this has not been possible, because my husband has been so unwell and needed to remain in this country to access treatment.

ANONYMOUS

Statement of Truth

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

Signed

GRO-B

Dated

23.2.19