Witness Name: BEN STOCKS
Statement No: WITN4717001
Exhibits: WITN4717002
Dated: November 2020

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF BEN STOCKS

I, Ben Stocks, will say as follows:-

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Ben Stocks. I was born on GRO-C 1975 and I live at GRO-C Derbyshire GRO-C I am currently unemployed due to ill health with haemophilia related problems. I am single but have a daughter of 6 years.

2. I was infected with the Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) through contaminated blood products.

3. My brother, Daniel Stocks (born on GRO-C 1974), was also infected with HCV (as well as the Hepatitis B Virus) through contaminated blood products. He

has provided a Witness Statement to the Inquiry (WITN0458001). My mother, Susan Earnshaw, has provided a Witness Statement to the Inquiry (WITN4716001)

4. This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my full medical records.

Section 2. How Infected

5. I am the youngest brother of four brothers. I have severe Haemophilia A (2% clotting factor). Daniel has mild Haemophilia A, diagnosed at 3 years old when he fell down the stairs and sustained a head injury. At that time and because of the injury, we were all tested. Daniel is the closest to me in age. My eldest brother was also found to have haemophilia and my other brother does not have it.

6. We were treated at the Birmingham Children's Hospital (BCH) under the care of Professo GRO-D We were treated in hospital initially, involving long stays on Ward 6 under Sister Marion, with bed rest, elevated limbs where necessary, Cryoprecipitate and with Factor VIII (FVIII) concentrate. My first instance of treatment was in 1979 due to a head injury where I was treated with multiple FVIII concentrates and Cryoprecipate. We were very familiar with the staff and got to know other children and their families. After a while we learned to self-administer the FVIII concentrate at home.

7. I refer to my UKHCDO record at WITN4717002, with particular reference to my Patient Annual Treatment Record. I was treated with a number of products now known to be contaminated and I was likely to have been exposed to/infected with HCV more than once. The list is deficient in any event. Four years of treatment (1984 to 1988) is missing from the record. There is no information entered on

the database with regards quantity, times and dates of treatment and batch numbers. Having reviewed the data, it is my belief that I was infected with HCV in 1979 or 1980 at the age of 4 or 5 and may subsequently have been infected again. The Factorate product brand appears to be the source of my infection being the main pool of product used by BCH in the first instance.

8. Daniel and I were given no information whilst registered at BCH. My mother was given no warnings about the risk of treating us with blood products or any information regarding the risk of potential contaminants.

9. I found out that I was positive for HCV (initially referred to as Non-A Non-B Hepatitis) when I moved to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital (QEH) under Dr Wilde in the winter of 1993. At our first appointment Daniel (the previous year) and I were given a brown envelope with a vague letter stating 'Non-A, Non-B +'. Dr Wilde had said it was nothing to worry about and that they knew nothing about the virus. We were given condoms for safe sex and a leaflet stating very little. I was very angry and wanted to hit Dr Wilde. Nothing more was offered by way of support or information. In my opinion I must have already had HCV as up until then I had not yet had any tests and treatment at the QEH. BCH already knew Daniel and I were infected. We could have been told up to 13 years earlier or any time in between. I was not informed of any risk to others in any way as the whole thing was played down and humourised by Dr Wilde.

10. Referring again to Exhibit WITN4717002, The Hepatitis C Lookback Data wrongly states 1994 as being the first HCV positive test result.

11. In or around 1989/1990, Daniel remembers that we were sent for liver biopsies (without any reason or explanation). We were never informed of the result. I can only assume that we were already known to be infected with HCV then.

Section 3. Other Infections

12. Referring again to Exhibit WITN4717002, I was unknowingly tested for HIV in 1990. Whilst it doesn't appear on my record, I suspect that I was also tested for HCV at that time. I remember many times during my childhood sitting around with my mum waiting for tests that we didn't know what for.

13. When I was 21, I was sent a letter stating I had received treatment that came from a donor who had developed full blown vCJD. I have never received any clear information regards risk, problems and future testing, absolutely nothing.

Section 4. Consent.

14. I believe that I have been tested on multiple occasions both at BCH and QEH. I had no knowledge of this but can remember arduous tests as a boy with my brothers and having no knowledge of what was happening. We were never asked for consent and never received any type of information. I believe that we were used by GRO-D as what can only be termed as lab rats, for the purposes of research.

Section 5. Impact

15. When I found out I had HCV from contaminated blood, I had already seen my brother Daniel spiral out of control and was going through the same mental challenges as me. I went through the same traumas. I felt dirty and contaminated. It has given me mental paranoia. To this day I do not have haemophilia treatment due to that fear and paranoia. I don't know what I will be infected with next and whether I would pose as a danger to my family. Subsequently my body has suffered. I treat bleeds with rest and ice. This has had a dangerous affect of my muscles and joints and I am therefore suffering on

an ongoing basis. I cannot pick up my 6 year old daughter or walk very far. I haven been tortured mentally and physically over the last few decades in being infected with HCV. Having a mental block on what has happened to me has impacted my whole life.

16. The first instance associated with the stigma of having haemophilia and the associated viruses was when I was 8 years old. A new Head of my primary school took a dislike to me and my brother and wanted us out of the school simply because the risk she believed we posed to others. The whole incident was very traumatic at such an impressionable age. I was never the same confident little boy after that. I felt alone and isolated. Going into secondary school was really difficult and I was subjected to humiliation by students and teachers. I became volatile, aggressive and lacked compassion. Going into adulthood and being told I had HCV was a traumatic time. GRO-C GRO-C I often considered suicide and once attempted it. GRO-C GRO-C

17. My mother struggled hard with my diagnosis and Daniel's. She supported us as best she could but GRO-C her anguish. She felt ashamed that she had no idea how it happened and felt like she had let us both down.

18. I was always interested in graphic design and studied at night school whilst holding down a full-time job. I was offered an apprenticeship but later someone at the workplace I had confided in told the other staff members and they wanted me out. I was forced out the position. The following year, having always been a keen artist I got asked to do a 5 year apprenticeship as a tattoo artist. I served 4 years of that apprenticeship, building my reputation, skills and customer base and then went to Lagos in Portugal to run a studio there. I returned the following year to complete the final year of my apprenticeship and then take up a full-time position here. I always maintained best practice in hygiene. It was just after I

had completed my apprenticeship that I came into contact with someone who knew an old friend of mine. The news that I was infected with HCV came out and spread to my customer base. Within a very short time I was asked to leave. After 6 years of hard dedicated work in a job I loved I was left devastated. I sunk into depression and started using drugs again.

19. There is a medical evidence that your state of mind affects your haemophilia factor levels and this direct correlation is a fact in my experience as following my dismissal and damaged reputation, I started to have more bleeding episodes and was put on DLA. The adverse financial implications have been far reaching. I was renowned as a tattoo artist for my niche Japanese style work. I was highly paid with most amounts reaching six figures.

20. When I was 16 years old, I found the love of my life. Within two years of being diagnosed with HCV our relationship fell apart due to the stigma associated with having HCV and being unable to get the information and advice we needed in the face of her family slowly but surely forcing me out of her life. I was left devastated for over a year. My mother became GRO-C as a direct result of both me and my brother Daniel being diagnosed with HCV. The entire family bond broke down completely.

Section 6. Treatment/Care/Support

21. I have never received any support whatsoever for either HCV or vCJD. The one consultant appointment where Daniel (present) and I were informed of the diagnosis is the only medical professional's advice I have ever received, and this was lacking in compassion and seriousness and no information was provided. I have never been offered any kind of psychological support.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

22. I have apparently (self) cleared the infection but there is no guarantee that it will not become detectable again. To date, I have received no financial assistance from the trusts and funds. I applied to EIBSS for assistance at the beginning of the year but was refused. With the help of my brother I have lodged an appeal and that will be decided at the end of January 2021. I have had to supply my UKHCDO database records and have requested information from them regarding their initial decline of my claim.

Section 8. Other Issues

23. I want the Inquiry to be aware and clear that I have never used drugs intravenously and that my UKHCDO documents are incorrect. I was sent what I believe should be information from the national database that would be essential to the Inquiry had it not been for the fact that critical information is missing. I believe the deficiency in the recording of important details about me to be deliberate. I would not have known this had it not been for the Inquiry. I understand that this has happened to many haemophiliacs in addition to the destruction of their medical records. It was a known fact by medical professionals going back decades that haemophiliacs were catching viruses to include Hepatitis B. My care at BCH is not fondly remembered. I recall multiple treatments for things I have no knowledge of and there are things that I must not even remember.

Anonymity, disclosure and redaction

24. I do not wish to apply for anonymity.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed [redacted] GRO-C

Dated 1.12.2020