Witness Name: Frederick John Elliott
Statement No.: WITN0183001
Exhibits: **N/A**
Dated: 15th april 2019.

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

WRITTEN STATEMENT OF FREDERICK JOHN ELLIOTT

I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 18 January 2019.

I, Frederick John Elliott, will say as follows: -

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is name is Frederick John Elliot. My date of birth is GRO-C 1930 and my address is known to the Inquiry. I currently reside with my wife and I retired 23 years ago, having worked in the motor trade industry carrying out and managing body-shop repairs.

2. I intend to speak about my infection with the Hepatitis C virus ("HCV"), which I contracted as a result of being given contaminated Factor VIII products to treat my mild Haemophilia A.

3. In particular, I intend to discuss the nature of my illness, how the illness affected me, the treatment that I received and the impact it has had on my life and the life of my family.

4. I confirm that I have chosen not to be legally represented and that I am happy for the Inquiry team to assist me with my statement. My wife is also present to assist me with recalling events.

Section 2. How Infected

5. I was informed of my infection with HCV in 1982. It is very difficult to say how I was originally infected with the virus. I can confirm however, that it must have come from a series of Factor Products I was receiving as part of my treatment for haemophilia A.

6. I have suffered with bleeds all my life. I was diagnosed with Haemophilia A and from that point on I had to make sure I was careful: to prevent my bleeds from taking place. When I was younger, I used to bleed around two to three times a year. This became less frequent as I got older.

7. My bleeds were treated at Hammersmith Hospital – Haemophilia Department. Dr. Laffan, now known as Professor Laffan treated me. Currently I am seen at St. George's Haemophilia Centre under Dr. Austin.

8. Once I was diagnosed with Haemophilia it was decided that I start treatment to help control my bleeds. Originally, I was placed on cryoprecipitate and eventually, moved onto Factor VIII. At this time I cannot recall what make of Factor VIII I was given.

9. I do remember asking for Factor VIII from England, but my doctors told me that the National Health Service ("NHS") could not afford it.

10. Around 1982, I was informed that I had contracted HCV. I was not told what the virus was or how I contracted it. I was not given any information on how to manage it or any precautions that I should take.

11. I was then asked by the hospital, along with a number of fellow Haemophiliacs receiving treatment, to attend a meeting with medical students. I was asked several questions in relation to my Haemophilia and HCV. I was still not informed of what had caused the virus. I was simply told that I was an interesting patient, but was never told why I was so interesting.

12. Once I was notified I had contracted HCV, I was subject to a series of liver tests that have continued to the present day. I am now tested once every six months. At Hammersmith Hospital they were very helpful in treating me after my diagnosis. However, I still found it strange that I was not told how I had contracted the virus.

13. I was eventually made aware that I had contracted the infection from the Factor Products used to treat me. I believe that my doctor told me whilst I was being seen at Hammersmith Hospital. I do not remember when this information was communicated to me. I do remember that it must have been in the Haemophilia department and that it was during the course of regular conversation concerning my Haemophilia treatments.

14. I do have some thoughts and feelings about the way in which the results were communicated to me. To this day I have never been told how it was discovered that I had contracted HCV. I was simply told that it was the blood products. I believe, that they must have been testing me but not telling me what the tests were for. In this instance, I also believe that the results could have been communicated to me earlier.

15. As stated I was not given much information on how to manage my infection. I did ask if HCV was infectious, but the doctors and nurses did not seem to know if it could be passed on by bodily fluids or not. Furthermore, neither my wife or I were provided with much support. Nobody told us whether the virus could be transmitted sexually. The lack of knowledge caused me to be fearful for other people around me mainly,

my wife. Thankfully, my wife has been tested for HCV and the results came back negative.

16. I would like to add that the doctors were always pretty good with me at Hammersmith Hospital; I do not have any complaints about my actual treatment although more explanation of the virus and it's possible implications would have assisted my wife and I as we tried to carry on and live our lives as normally as possible.

Section 3. Other Infections

17. I do not believe that as a result of being given infected blood products I have contracted any infection other than the HCV. However, I do remember receiving a letter informing me that I am at high risk of developing Variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease ("vCJD").

Section 4. Consent

18. I have been asked if I have ever been treated or tested without my knowledge or consent and the answer is yes. Although, I had consented to being tested and receiving blood tests I was never told that I was being tested for HCV. I feel that specifically telling me what I was being tested for would have been the right thing to do.

19. I was also never told about the possible risks of contamination associated with taking blood products. I feel as though I should have been given more information surrounding the possible consequences of infection when taking blood products, particularly, Factor VIII.

Section 5. Impact

20. The thing that I am most worried about is the possibility of getting vCJD. I was given information and literature surrounding the illness, but this

information has caused me great anxiety. Every time I lose balance – one of the symptoms - I start to think that it could it be the vCJD. However, it is hard to tell, as I am getting old and stability suffers as you get older. Living with the possibility of getting vCJD has been and still is a big worry for me; it is like living with a ticking time bomb. It is always in the back of my mind. My wife and I just try to carry on with our lives but mentally it is a strain. If I am ill then straight away I wonder if it is my HCV or worse, vCJD flaring up. My doctors told me that there is nothing that they can do about it and have even asked if I would want to know if I did have vCJD. For the past twenty to thirty years I have had that hanging over my head.

21. I have not suffered many physical effects since contracting HCV. The main effect is on my diet. I cannot eat fatty foods due to my liver and I avoid alcohol. I do sometimes feel tired and drained and I get swelling in my legs. At times I think the HCV is back or that it could be the onset of the vCJD. However, it is hard to say that the two are correlated. Apart from that I cannot think of any other way the virus has physically affected me.

22. When my wife and I found out about my HCV, we did not want it curtailing our lifestyle. We started to do everything that we could do to experience life and make the most of our time together.

23. Although we never had children of our own my wife and I did adopt and in later life we also fostered children through the local authority. My infection never impacted on this area of our lives. I was always careful around about cuts and avoiding any blood contact but not any more so than during my day to day life.

24. In terms of Stigma, I never really told anyone about my infection with HCV. The only stigma I can think of is that ever since I have been diagnosed with HCV the doctors use rubber gloves. This could simply be a medical precaution but I don't recall it happening previously.

25. My infection with HCV did not really affect my work, as it lay dormant for almost all of my working life. However, financially, my wife and I always had to be frugal with our money, to ensure we had sufficient funds for things such as travelling to and from hospital.

Section 6. Treatment/Care/Support

26. I have never had any treatment for HCV. I have often asked if it was necessary but was told that my liver function is ok. I don not believe that there was any possible treatment that I was denied for any reason.

27. I can confirm that I have never been offered psychological assistance. My wife and I have always just got on with it, and put the infection to the back of our minds. Furthermore, in those days they never gave you any psychological help, it is more of a modern thing.

28. I can also confirm that during my interview with the inquiry, we have been informed about the access to the support mechanism that the British Red Cross provide.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

29. I recall a time around the nineties, a few people from the Haemophilia Society; myself included (as I used to be their group-liaison officer), came together to pursue legal action. We had received information that Bayer Pharmaceuticals, supplied contaminated Factor VIII and in turn we filed an action against them. The action was filed in Exeter.

30. This action was successful and resulted in compensation being paid. I received around £3,000. I recall this process was arduous and drawn out. Unfortunately, I have no records from this time any longer and it did not receive coverage in the press.

31. I have also had a payment from The Skipton Fund equating to £23,000 that I received around sixteen years ago. I remember a condition in the contract that we could not speak to anyone about the money, if we wanted to receive further payments.

32. I would like to add that my wife and I thought it was terribly unfair that Scotland received double the payments that we received in England.

33. Currently I am receiving income payments from the England Infected Blood Support Scheme ("EIBSS"). I receive around £350 from them, which certainly helps. The money is particularly useful as my wife and I do not have a private pension. Due to my infection with HCV we could never get insurance, investment or endowment policies.

34. The process of applying to the Skipton and EIBSS funds was easy enough; I just had to make sure I filled out the necessary forms.

35. I would like to say that the shortage of money caused in part by the virus has impacted on the quality of life experienced by my wife and I, together with that of our adopted family. Although we have coped well with the difficulties the question of how things may have been different is always there to be asked.

Section 8. Other Issues

Statement of Truth

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

Signed GRO-C

Dated 15-04-19