Witness Name GRO-B
Statement No: WITN1605001
Exhibits: WITN1605002
Dated: November 2018

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF GRO-B

I GRO-B will say as follows:-

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is GRO-B My date of birth is GRO-B and I live at GRO-B I am a self employed café/sandwich shop owner/manager in partnership with my wife GRO-B and I live together with our son GRO-B

2. This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my full medical records. If and in so far as I have been provided with limited records the relevant entries are set out in the medical chronology at the end of this statement.

Section 2. How Infected

3. I have Haemophilia A, classed as moderate. I was diagnosed at aged 10 or 11 at the GRO-B after an injury sustained when I was hit over the head with a bar by another child.

4. I have been under the care and supervision of the Manchester Royal Infirmary from diagnosis. I attended six monthly check ups. I have only ever been treated with clotting factor when needed/on demand for heavy bruising and/or accidental injury.

5. I contracted HCV in the mid to late 1980s. I believe the likely source of the infection to be that of a blood batch either administered at Ealing Hospital in or around 1985/86 or that of a blood batch administered at Manchester Royal Infirmary in 1987. I believe the former to be the more likely of the two sources of contamination as I believe Ealing Hospital to have admitted liability in 2004 when I sought recompense. I could have been contaminated at both hospitals. I have been unable to access my file from the firm of solicitors conducting my case in 2004. I believe beyond doubt that I was infected as a direct result of being given blood products.

6. In or around 1985 or 1986 I was treated with what I believe to be unheated Cryoprecipitate at Ealing & Hanwell Hospital after I was attacked from behind and suffered a scalp wound. I was at that time residing in West London at the GRO-B having gone to University in the area.

7. In 1987, I was treated with Cryoprecipitate at the Manchester Royal Infirmary. Again, I was attacked and this time sustained an injury to my head and face and a serious injury to my groin. I refer to Exhibit WITN1605002 being a copy of my Patient Annual Treatment Record obtained very recently from UKHCDO. The treatment I received at Manchester in 1987 appears on the record but the treatment I received at Ealing Hospital does not. I therefore believe the UKHCDO record to be wrong/deficient.

Discovery of Infection

8. In 1995/96 my then-partner and I were trying for a baby. I attended at my local GP surgery being the GRO-B for what I believed was a routine blood test. I recall my doctor at that time, Dr GRO-B first informing me that my sperm count was low and I was highly

unlikely to be able to father children. He then calmly informed me with what I would describe as a morbid and consoling expression that in the blood test Hepatitis C had been identified as being present and that, he, Dr GRO-B was 'very sorry'. I did not know what to make of this news as I had never heard of it before. I was then basically dismissed. I left the surgery and went home, reeling from the experience.

9. Soon after, I researched the virus and learned something about the seriousness of the infection. The information I was able to find by myself was of course very basic and of a limited nature. I was later referred to the Blackpool Victoria Hospital at my request. If I had known just how dangerous the infection was I would have taken myself off to Blackpool that very same day.

10. I find it shocking, disturbing and upsetting that I had been carrying such a deadly virus in my body for so many years (a decade) without knowing and without being told.

11. I was not given any information about risk to others at that time even though I had visited my GP about a fertility issue. I recall one doctor (another GP) wrongly told me on another occasion that there was an extremely low/rare possibility of a partner passing the virus on through bodily fluids (ie saliva and sexual contact). This poor and negligent advice is in my view appalling given the many that have died through such contact.

Section 3. Other Infections

12. I am not aware of having contracted any infection than that of HCV. However it is a concern to me that I may have something else floating around in my body through blood contamination. I have relatively recently been tested negative for HIV, which is good to know. I have very recently applied for my medical notes and records. Within the application I have been asked if I want to know whether I have been placed at risk of vCJD. I have confirmed that I do.

Section 4. Consent

13. Before being told of the HCV, I think it highly likely that I was tested without my knowledge and consent for a variety of infections and potentially for the purposes of research.

14. I am aware that hospitals administering blood products test blood as part of their normal administrative protocol. At my six monthly routine haemophilia appointments as many as 7 or 8 vials of blood would be taken from me. I would now query why that would be and what they would do with it all, if not for testing and/or research. The facts speak for themselves, it took years for patients to be told that they were infected. I believe that the test results were purposefully withheld from patients to include me. Many lives lost could have been saved if that information had not been withheld. I believe the test results were instead used for research and/or to compile data.

15. I further believe that I was used as a guinee pig in being treated with unheated Cryoprecipitate in the 1980s. I believe the risks were known.

Advice Given regarding the Risk of Infected Blood Products

16. No information or advice was given to me before or after the blood products were administered at either hospital by any member of the medical staff to include doctors, nurses and medical administrators about the risk of being exposed to infection.

Section 5. Impact

17. My current physical state of health is not too bad. I have been told that the clearing treatment I had in the early part of last year (second attempt) looks to have been successful albeit my liver is scarred.

18. In 1996 or 1997 I was treated for six months with interferon tablets and ribavirin that I had to self inject into my belly when pinched. The treatment was horrific and it failed. I was very sick. I was irritable and extremely moody

and generally behaved in a manner outside of my own character. I was left deflated and depressed.

19. I was left devoid of much hope until 2017 when I was treated with a new drug Zepatier (after my doctors convened a meeTing and agreed at the meeting to give it to me). I am having another blood test next month to check that the HCV is still in remission.

20. The impact upon my mental wellbeing has been enormous. I have suffered with constant anxiety waiting for blood test results which are always in arrears. When I attend an appointment for a blood test I am given the results of the previous blood test. There is no way of knowing for sure that you have cleared the virus because a negative result is historic and the virus may have returned. The worry and uncertainty has brought on anxiety attacks.

21. I have been prescribed Sertraline (often prescribed for those suffering with PTSD). When I first learned that I had cleared the virus I was over the moon but this year it has just all hit me. I think of all the horrible times. It has made me paranoid because they say I have cleared it but it could creep back in. I have been referred for psychiatric counselling to deal with the accumulation of events over the years.

22. I have been psychologically affected and stigmatized since being told I had Hep C. I was fearful of passing the virus on to my then partner and consequently future partners. I withdrew from relationships with women and became paranoid and isolated. It affected my confidence socially and sexually. The knowledge of the infection prevents you from being sexually spontaneous because you do not want to pass it on and that affects your sex drive. When I confided in someone I started to care about, the relationship soon ended as that person would get cold feet. Because of the nature of the media at that time, explaining to a potential girlfriend that you were a haemophiliac with Hep C at that time was synonymous with telling them that you had HIV/AIDs. I could not have contemplated the possibility of ever becoming a father at that time and not for very many years.

23. Due to the general lack of awareness of HCV, the stigma of having it was devastating and made me wary of anyone finding out to include friends, neighbours and work colleagues. There are times when my wife GRO-B has become very upset at how we have both been treated. People she thought were friends have let her down and talked about us/played at chinese whispers behind our backs. This has put pressure on our relationship.

24. GRO-B and I also made the decision to have a child which was a worry. It was a risk for both GRO-B and the unborn baby. GRO-B our son, is now 11 years old.

25. My job prospects were adversely affected. Initially I disclosed my health status in the medical history section on applications and was hardly ever offered an interview and then always turned down. I was without work for long periods of time. When you see a disclaimer on the medical history section when applying for a course or a job or an insurance policy or a mortgage alerting you to the fact that it is 'an offence' to lie it makes you think twice. I applied for anything and everything I could and was pretty much turned down for everything even after widening my net to include general administration or warehouse work. I have been unable to obtain certain insurance and mortgages and loans.

Section 6. Treatment/Care/Support

26. When I was first informed of my HCV diagnosis I was given no help, advice or offered any counselling of any kind. It was dismissed out of hand as if it was nothing and I left the surgery and went home.

27. I have recently sought counselling and psychological support and the support I am receiving is helpful.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

28. I receive regular financial assistance initially through the Caxton Trust and now currently through EIBSS on the 27th of each month. It is very useful to us as it helps pay our household outgoings.

29. The process is thorough but fair. The process takes a long time as you have to provide proof of earnings and details about your medical condition(s) that need to be confirmed and then you have to wait for the confirmation of decisions. The length of time it takes is in my view pretty much to be expected given the number of applicants they have. I have found the doctors, haemophilia nurses and medical staff all cooperative in providing the medical reports required to be cooperative in advancing the process.

Section 8. Other Issues

31. I refer to Section 4. There are no other issues.

Anonymity, disclosure and redaction

I do not want to give oral evidence and I am seeking anonymity and would like my Statement redacted before publication. However I understand this statement will be published and disclosed as part of the Inquiry.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed. GRO-B ....

Dated 15/11/2018