

Witness Name: Brian [GRO-B]

Statement No: WITN1660001

Exhibits:0

Dated: January 2019

## INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

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### FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF BRIAN [GRO-B]

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I, Brian [GRO-B] will say as follows:-

#### Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Brian [GRO-B], DOB [GRO-C] 1956 and I live at [GRO-C]  
[GRO-C] with my wife.
2. Both of my sons died after being infected by contaminated blood products.  
Brian David [GRO-B], DOB [GRO-C] 1977, died on [GRO-B] 1994 aged 16.  
Stephen Robert [GRO-B], DOB [GRO-C] 1980, died on [GRO-B] 1989 aged 9.
3. I divorced the children's mother, Susan, in 1982 and my ex-wife and I had little contact after this date.
4. This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my late sons' 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 Affected

5. Brian was diagnosed with severe Haemophilia A from birth. We had to take him to the hospital fairly frequently; it could be as much as three times a week or as little as twice a month. The hospital told us that, on a scale of 1 to 10 (with 10 being the most severe haemophilia), Brian was a 6.
6. Stephen also had Haemophilia A but required more treatment than Brian and was in hospital regularly. He was probably a 10.
7. Both boys were treated at the Alder Hey Hospital in Liverpool.
8. When Factor VIII became available it was thought of like a magic potion that stopped bleeding. We were told by the doctors that it was the best thing ever and would solve a lot of our problems.
9. As the hospital was so local neither of the boys had home treatment whilst I was still at the family home (ie. prior to 1982).
10. I divorced Susan in 1982 [GRO-C] My mother acted as a go between and kept me informed about the boys but [GRO-C] [GRO-C] I unfortunately saw a lot less of Brian and Stephen after we separated.
11. I did not find out about the boys' infection until around 1986 when Susan told me that they had been treated blood contaminated with something – she didn't seem sure what exactly. She also told me that the boys were still receiving Factor VIII so in our own minds I think we thought whatever was in the blood couldn't be that bad because the hospital was still using it.
12. It then became apparent that they had been infected with HIV. This was around the time that Stephen became noticeably ill.

### **Section 3. Other Infections**

13. I am not aware of any other infections that Brian and Stephen may have been exposed to.

### **Section 4. Consent**

14. I am not aware of what tests Susan consented to but I never consented to any tests for HIV or Hepatitis.

### **Section 5. Impact of the Infection**

15. By the time I became aware of the boys' infection I had remarried and Susan also had a new partner with whom she had another child. GRO-C

GRO-C I didn't want to upset the apple-cart and thought it would be best for everyone (particularly the boys) if I distanced myself. I used to still see the boys when I could but it was very difficult because I always felt like I was walking on egg shells.

16. Brian was initially the piggy-in-the-middle between me and Susan and was very conscious not to upset either of us. He wouldn't divulge things to me and was very cagey when I asked him how he was.

17. Stephen always told me he was ok when I asked how he was but it was clear just from looking at him that he was far from ok.

18. Over time neither of the boys were well enough to go out so when I did see them we weren't able to do things together like a normal family.

19. About a month before Stephen died I received a call from the hospital telling me that he was in a really bad way. This was very hard for me. My poor relationship with Susan it impossible to see the boys in the way I would have liked; particularly when it became apparent that Stephen didn't have long left.

The few times I went to see him I went to their house either first thing in the morning or last thing at night to spend time with him.

20. I remember that a lot of the time I just wanted to scream "Why has this happened? Why are they like this?"
21. On the day Stephen died I got a phone call at 8 am from my mother telling me that he had passed away in the night at home. I went to the house and Susan was still holding him in her arms. She wouldn't let go of his body. Whilst I was consoling Susan a number of us helped to take Stephen's body from her. Seeing him like that was hard; one of the hardest things I have ever been through.
22. There were difficulties making Stephen's funeral arrangements because we struggled to find a vicar who was prepared to bury him given his HIV positive status. We were frustrated by this because it meant there was no one we could go to when we initially couldn't find someone to bury Stephen; we couldn't complain to the press or anyone else because of the stigma surrounding HIV/AIDS at that time.
23. The hardest thing for me after Stephen's death was knowing that Brian would be next and it we would have to go through all the pain, loss and grief all over again. I couldn't get it out of my head. It was horrendous knowing it was going to happen and that there was nothing we could do to help him. I felt so useless.
24. Brian went into his shell and distanced himself from me after Stephen's death, so I didn't get to see Brian much towards the end of his life.
25. When he passed away I was told by some people to consider whether I should go to the funeral at all in case it caused a scene GRO-C I didn't want to make a scene and overshadow the day, but I also knew I had to go to my son's funeral, so I decided to go and stand at the back.

26. I feel guilty about it all. I took them to hospital to make them better, but it ended up killing them and there was nothing I could do about it. I couldn't stop them dying. I can't get that out of my head. It is always with me; the grief and the loss. I am still angry about it. Somedays I go to the beach and just scream to let it out so that I can carry on.

27. My wife has supported me throughout but she sees how the loss of Stephen and Brian still affects me today and how upset I get. No parent should have to bury a child.

28. I was working at the time that Stephen and Brian were ill and at the time of their deaths. I hated it when people asked how many kids I had because I couldn't tell them what was going on or that I was going to lose both my children. When they died and I wanted time off I was asked how they died. I told people that it was due to their haemophilia because I was terrified of saying the wrong thing because of the stigma around HIV/AIDS. I overheard people talking about AIDS and it being a gay disease and it made me want to scream but I couldn't say anything so it all just went round and round in my head.

29. There are always dates that remind me of Brian and Stephen and everything that happened; it never really goes away – there is always an anniversary on the horizon. I try to just go on because I can't bring them back but it is a struggle every day. I hope the result of the Inquiry is able to provide me with the peace closure that I need.

#### **Section 6. Treatment/care/support**

30. I am not aware if the boys were ever offered counselling.

31. Counselling was never offered or made available to me.

32. I never received any financial assistance and I am not sure what assistance the boys or Susan received.

**Section 8. Other Issues**

33. Kids died, families suffered and someone, somewhere made decisions that allowed that to happen. Someone must be held accountable to ensure that something like this can never happen again.

**Anonymity**

34. I do not wish to remain anonymous.

35. I would like to give oral evidence to the Inquiry.

**Statement of Truth**

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

Signed..

GRO-C

Dated

24.1.19