

Witness Name: M Dodd  
Statement No: WITN1743001  
Exhibits: WITN1743002-15  
Dated: January 2020

## INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

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### FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF MAUREEN DODD

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I, Maureen Dodd will say as follows:-

#### **Section 1. Introduction**

1. My name is Maureen Dodd and I was born on GRO-C 1933. I live at GRO-C I am retired and married to Leslie Dodd who has provided a witness statement to the Inquiry under **WITN1193001**. My son, Jeffrey Dodd has also provided a witness statement to the Inquiry under **WITN3962001**.
2. I make this statement as an affected mother of my late darling son, Graeme Jonathan Dodd, who was born on GRO-C 1966 and passed away on GRO-C GRO-C 1993, aged only 27, as a result of contracting HIV from contaminated Factor VIII concentrates.
3. **This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my late son's medical records.**

## **Section 2. How Affected**

4. We were initially terrified that our darling son was suffering from Leukaemia because of bruising after just being cuddled.
5. After many visits to our GP and even Paediatric Doctors at Clatterbridge Hospital (CH), we were assured by a Dr Llewellyn that it was just weak walls to Graeme's blood vessels, which he would grow out of. He told us to let him do anything without worry.
6. Graeme was 11 months old and just learning to walk with the inevitable falls which resulted in what turned out to be a very painful joint bleed into his knee.
7. At this point we were taken seriously and at last sent to Alder Hey Children's Hospital (AHCH) in Liverpool, where in no time at all we were told that Graeme had Haemophilia. We were overjoyed on hearing this news. We had no idea what Haemophilia was but we knew that it was not cancer and the relief was immense.
8. However, we were then sent back to CH, where, because of the medic's lack of knowledge he injected Factor VIII into Graeme's head and then sent us home.
9. Within no time at all, Graeme's head started to swell. We were so worried that we took Graeme back to AHCH, where at first we were welcomed but then a Mrs Mainwaring ordered us back to CH.
10. We struggled for a few years with the poor treatment both at CH and at the Children's Hospital at Birkenhead (CHB) but thankfully eventually our GP agreed to our request to be referred back to AHCH; which was such a wonderful relief.
11. In terms of Graeme's treatment, he initially received some fresh frozen plasma and then Factor VIII concentrates from around the age of 1. He

received this on demand and mainly for joint bleeds which predominantly occurred in his knees.

12. Neither my husband nor I were given any information or advice regarding the risk of infection from Factor VIII concentrates.
13. When Graeme was aged around 7 AHCH taught me how to treat Graeme so I was therefore then able to treat him at home. We also purchased a freezer to store the factor in. Whilst Graeme was at AHCH he was under the care of Dr Martin.
14. Graeme's treatment was then moved to the Royal Liverpool University Hospital (RLUH) under the care of Dr Boulton, Dr McVerry and Dr Hay. He spent most of his time here on Ward 7Y.
15. When Graeme was aged 14 he began to suffer severe fevers to which Dr McVerry remarked "*could be something that is affecting boys with Haemophilia*". When I think about this now, I believe that the medical world knew about the contaminated Factor VIII concentrates.
16. The next thing that happened to Graeme, when he was still aged 14, was that he had to undergo a circumcision operation on Ward 7Y at the RLUH. The medical professionals said that the fevers had caused Graeme to require this surgery. The operation was carried out successfully and Graeme returned home. We attended a check up appointment at RLUH shortly after the operation and a stupid doctor, whose name I cannot recall, ordered that Graeme's stitches had to be removed. However, the stitches were dissolvable and did not require any form of removal. The terrible consequence was the massive and uncontrollable bleeding which occurred during the entirely unnecessary removal which led Graeme to become an inpatient again. Graeme had to be given a large number of doses of Factor VIII concentrates to try to stop the bleeding. This, in my opinion, is when Graeme was infected with HIV.

17. The conditions on Ward 7Y were horrific and wholly unsuitable for children. The policy at RLUH was to put boys with Haemophilia into the same ward as Geriatric old men. The old men were pooing their beds and the stench was terrible. Graeme was in and out of hospital because of bleeding caused by the terrible negligence of the Doctor who ordered the soluble stitches to be removed. Graeme was finally given a side room, despite the fact that I had to find a mop and bucket to clean the floor of blood, so at least Graeme was out of that awful main ward.
18. On visiting Graeme the next afternoon I found that he was again back in the main ward with all the old men. During the evening visiting hours, a young unknown Doctor was passing in the corridor and could see that I was upset. He asked if I was ok. *"No, I am not"*, I replied. I then said *"And if I were you I'd get onto the phone to Dr McVerry and tell him that if Graeme Dodd is not back in that side ward when we come tomorrow that Mrs Dodd is going to ring the Liverpool Echo and tell them about the terrible mistake that has happened here"*.
19. The next day Graeme was back in the side ward!
20. In despair I telephoned Dr Martin from AHCH and literally begged him to come and help Graeme at the RLUH. When I telephoned he was watching a big football final but he was superb and came to the RLUH straight away. The staff at the RLUH were letting Graeme walk around but Dr Martin said that he must lie flat. With the excellent help from Dr Martin, Graeme finally became sufficiently well to return home.
21. Graeme was also treated at the Newcastle Royal Hospital (NRH) which was close to Graeme's first university, which was the University of Newcastle.
22. Graeme learned about the existence of contaminated blood/blood products by reading about it in the newspaper when he was on the train on his way to Newcastle University to start his degree in geography. He read that many boys with Haemophilia had been infected with HIV from Factor VIII concentrates.

23. On his arrival at Newcastle, he therefore immediately went to the NRH to obtain a test for HIV which sadly came back positive. It was 1984 and Graeme was only aged 18 and had his whole life ahead of him. He told me about his diagnosis and I did not know what HIV positive meant and I remember saying to him something like "*that means you won't get it*". I don't know which doctor (however, when I spoke to Linda on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2020 she told me that his name was Dr Jones and he was not particularly kind and he also treated Graeme) imparted this news to him as Graeme did not talk about this aspect with me or my husband. However, Graeme did later speak to a journalist called John Mullin about being HIV Positive and an article was published in the Guardian Newspaper which included some information about when Graeme was told about his HIV status for the first time. The attitude of the medical professionals leaves a lot to be desired. A copy of this article is attached at **Exhibit WITN1743002**.

24. The information was conveyed directly to Graeme whilst he was alone because at the age of 18 he was deemed by the hospital to be an adult. My husband and I telephoned the NRH to try to find out some further information so that we could help Graeme but staff at the NRH refused to speak with us on the subject.

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

25. As far as I am aware, Graeme did not receive any other infections from contaminated blood/blood products.

### **Section 4. Consent**

26. As far as my husband and I are aware, Graeme was not tested for any viruses prior to the test he had done, with his knowledge and consent, at NRH when he was aged 18.

## Section 5. Impact

27. Graeme attended primary school in the **GRO-C** and we moved to a house opposite the school so that I could be on hand as and when Graeme needed me. However, the teachers insisted on sending Graeme home for lunch and would not let him play outside or join in any games. Graeme became extremely frustrated and was missing out on a good portion of school life.
28. We therefore found a lovely private school in Oxton, Birkenhead with a wonderful Headmistress who encouraged Graeme to take part in every aspect of school life including staying for lunch. I was never once sent for in an emergency during all the years Graeme enjoyed there. It was at this school that Graeme passed the 11 Plus Exam to Wirral Grammar School and also the Entrance Exam to Birkenhead School, where our older son Jeffrey was already attending.
29. Graeme decided upon Birkenhead School where he gained excellent "O" and "A" level results. **Exhibit WITN1743003** is a copy of a letter dated 15<sup>th</sup> October 1982 from Derek E Baker, Unilever Industry/Education Liaison Manager to Graeme, which states *"Mr. Gwilliam has told us of your award of a Unilever prize for individual attainment and I want to convey our warm congratulations. To participate in school activities and to gain seven "O" levels in the face of your physical problems earns our respect. (the) Headmaster uses the words "courage, "determination" and "remarkable spirit" in his letter. It is personal assets such as these which enable people to overcome great adversity and attain greatness in life"*.
30. Graeme was a true, brave hero. It was only my husband and I who knew about the terrible tragedy of his HIV infection. We kept it from our other son, for about 5 years until Graeme started to become ill and had to go on AZT. However, even at that stage, we still only told very close family members.

31. Graeme also suffered from a number of physical ailments and conditions: a stroke, shingles, toxoplasmosis, epilepsy, pneumonia and he had to have his tonsils removed.
32. However, despite this, Graeme showed terrific courage, bravery and fortitude and never let anything get him down. He enjoyed every aspect of school life with a long and bright future ahead of him and even after being diagnosed with HIV at age 18, he still went on to thrive in every aspect of his life with a wide range of interests to include art, sport, music and literature.
33. Graeme packed so much into his life whilst carrying this dreadful burden. He gained his 2:1 degree in geography at Newcastle University, and after this, whilst being treated for HIV, he opted to go and live in [GRO-C] Scotland for a while, instead of taking a holiday like his peers, to work at a Special Educational Needs Unit to look after physically and mentally disabled teenagers. Graeme put the needs of these teenagers above him and he thrived on this role and he assisted with every aspect of their lives. He even learned sign language to ensure that he could fully converse with all of the teenagers. Sadly a bout of ill health meant he had to leave [GRO-C] earlier than he would have liked.
34. It was when Graeme had to return from [GRO-C] and was admitted to RLUH with shingles on his face that I asked a Doctor outside the room "This is nothing to do with this dreadful HIV is it?" He replied "*I'm afraid it is*". I ran so that Graeme couldn't hear me scream.
35. At this time, Graeme and Linda, who was Graeme's lovely girlfriend from Newcastle University, had planned to go to Amsterdam together and Graeme asked me to ring Linda to tell her the news. Linda, who was still in Newcastle, insisted on coming down to see Graeme. Linda stayed with us and we loved her immediately. Linda knew full well of the dreadful situation and after visiting Graeme told me that all Graeme was worried about was how I would cope with what was happening.

36. Even though Linda is now married with a 15 year old daughter, she still comes to see us and we talk and remember Graeme which is lovely. **Exhibit WITN1743003A** is a photograph of Linda and Graeme together.
37. Graeme then went on to obtain his P.G.C.E at Liverpool University where he gathered many friends who still keep in touch with us and miss him dearly.
38. Graeme then went on to teach at Riverside Primary School in Wallasey, on the Wirral, for two years and was loved and respected by all who knew him here. He rose to the challenge and did such a fantastic job with the children he taught. They thought the world of him.
39. **Exhibit WITN1743004** is a photograph of Graeme and some of the children in his class at Riverside Primary School when he took them on a trip to the Museum in Liverpool.
40. **Exhibit WITN1743004A** are photographs of Graeme playing Elvis when he organised a production of *"Joseph and the Technicolour Dream Coat"* at Riverside Primary School. These photographs were brought to us as a lovely surprise one night by a large group of the staff at the school.
41. **Exhibit WITN1743005** is a copy of a letter dated 15<sup>th</sup> November 1992 from the author, Terence Blacker, to Mr Dodds (Graeme) which states *"Since you enthused your class at Riverside Primary so effectively about my Ms Wiz books, I thought you'd like to see Power-Crazy Ms Wiz, the new title, which was indirectly inspired by one of the letters I received from 12D (which was Graeme's class). I was very sorry to hear that you've had to retire from Riverside from ill health- the country needs all the good teachers it can get! I hope you'll be back again in action soon"*.
42. The effects of the HIV, the general weakness, low immune system and the resultant physical problems that went with the diagnosis meant that after two years of both happy and successful teaching, Graeme was forced to give up his career.



43. Although from that time Graeme was *"unemployed"*, he was, in fact, very busy within his health restrictions by voluntarily helping in Adult Literacy work and becoming deeply involved with the various bodies in Merseyside dealing with HIV. This included talking on the subject at schools and colleges. Graeme was also accepted at Liverpool University to take a Masters Degree commencing October 1993, but sadly, because of his worsening health, Graeme was not able to take up this new venture.
44. It was during his time in Newcastle that Graeme met the lovely Linda, who despite Graeme telling her of his status, insisted on loving him. Thankfully for us Graeme spent five happy years in a little house in Liverpool with Linda before he became too ill to be independent and had to return home to us.
45. Despite and throughout all of this, Graeme was always brave, funny and witty until the very last minute. Graeme was a wonderful son who had so many friends. All who knew Graeme marvelled at his courage. My husband and I were blown away by his attitude and the admirable way he dealt with everything that was so unfairly thrown at him.
46. However, Graeme did once say to me *"This has ruined my life"*. This was the only time I had ever heard any hint of self pity. There was no bitterness but Graeme also said *"They knew about it"*. He was referring to the medical profession and the Government.
47. At one point, Dr Hay had told Graeme that he could go blind as a result of the HIV. This was a heartless, cruel and untimely comment that, although possibly true, was never the less only a possibility and delivered to Graeme when he was unaccompanied and at a very low ebb. It was about this time that Graeme said to me *"I love life Mum but I can't live like this"*. Graeme actually asked his Dad if he would help him to end his life if it got to the stage where he was unable to carry on. We found such a situation, and still do, deeply upsetting.
48. I never let Graeme see me cry but there was one time when I succumbed to my own rule. He was so poorly and I wanted him to put a scarf on to go

outside and he refused. I just started crying and he told me that I was a “*self-indulgent woman*”. This still makes me strong whenever I am feeling self pity.

49. Graeme had a wonderful open minded personality. Despite the HIV condition being largely attributed to the Homosexual community, Graeme held no bitterness and remarked “*We are all victims*”.

50. Graeme joined “*Body Positive*” which was an organisation largely for homosexuals which helped and supported people with HIV. Graeme was known there as “The Heterosexual Haemophiliac”. Graeme gained great comfort from this group, writing articles for their magazine and gaining so much from not feeling isolated.

51. When Graeme became really poorly he came back home to live with my husband and I whilst Linda remained in Liverpool. She was only in her 20's and was struggling to cope with his failing health.

52. The last twelve months of Graeme's life were progressively taken over by severe infections and many periods in hospital suffering great pain. All this was borne without any complaint, self-pity or bitterness. It was during this time that Graeme let many of his close friends know of his HIV status. It was also in this period that Graeme came to terms with the inevitability of his early death and, in his inimitable style, “*educated*” his father and me on how to cope with his death, at the same time assuring us that he would always be with us.

53. Graeme attended “*Bethany*” which was a retreat in Bodmin, Cornwall for HIV sufferers for two weeks in October 1993 which was less than two months before he passed away. We drove Graeme there and my husband and I then spent two days in Exeter and then returned home. We collected Graeme after the two weeks and brought him home. Although he was at a very low ebb, one can see his brilliant wit and composure in the attached postcard he sent us which is attached at **Exhibit WITN1743006**.

54. He also wrote a letter to Jo, who was Graeme's close friend from Liverpool University, which was only weeks before he died and I attach a copy of that letter at **Exhibit WITN1743007**.
55. Graeme was determined to gain his independence once more and found a flat in **GRO-C** **GRO-C** where Graeme had spent happy years before the catastrophe of his HIV.
56. For a few short weeks, Graeme spent many happy hours on his own in the flat writing cards to friends and looking forward to when he could properly move in. The reality was a fear that Graeme was so ill that it would not be possible. However, we promised Graeme that we would spend Christmas together in his flat and one of the last things Graeme said was "*Christmas is going to be lovely*".
57. On the evening of Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> November 1993 Graeme was so cold and he just couldn't get warm. We sat up with him that evening and I put a big dressing gown on him and we all had a glass of port and something to eat. He told me to go and fetch him a hat which I did. He then asked me to go and get him a list of music and we played music late into the evening as I knew how much he loved his music. I then said to him "*why don't you go and sleep with dad tonight*" which he did and I went and slept in Graeme's room. He walked along the landing the next morning and told me that he needed to go into hospital because he had pneumonia again.
58. Graeme was admitted to RLUH on Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> November 1993 and passed away there at 10.30am on **GRO-C** 1993 of HIV related Broncho- Pneumonia.
59. A service to celebrate the life of Graeme Jonathan Dodd took place at Christ Church, Higher Bebington on Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> December 1993. Graeme's personally stated maxims were "*Quality not quantity*" "*Seek Beauty, Truth and Love, and always do your best*" "*Ever onwards and upwards*". **Exhibit WITN1743008** is the Order of Service.

60. **Exhibit WITN1743009** is a copy of the Eulogy which was read by Graeme's brother at the funeral.

61. When some of Graeme's old teachers found out about Graeme's passing they wrote the most beautiful letter to us and brought us a big bunch of flowers. A copy of the letter is attached at **Exhibit WITN1743010**. The letter is dated December 1993 and states *"Graeme made a much valued contribution to school life. He was a gifted teacher who had the ability to bring out the best from the children in his care. He was very modest about his abilities and talents, of which he had many. His quiet inner strength and professionalism gained the respect of all those with whom Graeme had contact. We often like to remember Graeme's sense of humour. He was fun to be with, often raising a laugh at appropriate moments and when handling difficult situations"*.

62. We also received the most wonderful and lovely letter from the children's author, Terence Blacker, dated 17<sup>th</sup> January 1994, in which he stated *"I deal with quite a few schools in the course of my work. Very, very occasionally one comes across a class that's positively buzzing with life, ideas and optimism. As soon as I received the batch of letters from Graeme's class, it was obvious that a very unusual and talented teacher was at work there"*. I attach a copy of this at **Exhibit WITN1743011**.

63. A group of Graeme's friends from Liverpool University, where Graeme did his P.G.C.E, including his very good friend Jo meet up every year. They meet in London and it will be 27 years this year. This shows how many people he touched with his wonderful and uplifting attitude. Jo also sends me flowers and she told me that Graeme was always there to help other people and said that if one of Graeme's fellow students had made a mess of the exam he would fight for them to be allowed to resit. He always championed for the rights of others.

64. When my husband told Carolyn (who was the person Graeme worked with and rented accommodation from in **GRO-C**) about Graeme's passing she was distraught. We also received a signed photograph from those who had

worked with Graeme in **GRO-C** in the Special Educations Needs Unit. This is attached at **Exhibit WITN1743012**.

65. **Exhibit WITN1743013** is also a signed photograph from Amanda, Tracey, Caroline, Angela, Yvonne and Wendy who were all students at the College in **GRO-C**

66. Following Graeme's death, my husband and I undertook to try and raise some funds for an additional retreat like Bethany. Sadly we were unsuccessful although we were able to send £2,000 to Bethany which was fantastic.

67. I would like to attach (**Exhibit WITN1743014**) a number of newspaper articles, some written by Graeme. There are also articles which referred to us raising funds for an additional retreat.

68. My husband and I endured a living nightmare and are still doing so today. We are both devastated but we feel that Graeme's wonderful, inspiring strength is always with us.

69. I would just like to add a paragraph or two about our darling eldest son, Jeffrey, as he was the most kind and loving brother to Graeme and made huge allowance for the extra care we had to give Graeme during the growing up years.

70. Then during the last year of Graeme's life, when Graeme was so very ill, Jeffrey now married to Karen with their first baby daughter Charlotte, living just a few miles away from us, was a brilliant source of strength and support to us all. He was always here during the many crises.

71. We were all together with our darling Graeme until the last minute but it was Jeffrey who stayed behind to sort things out because Les and I had walked out of the hospital without talking to the medics because we were so unhappy about the way Graeme had been treated in their hands.

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

72. **Exhibit WITN1743015** is a copy of a letter dated 19<sup>th</sup> March 1982 from Graeme to his school friends which he wrote when he was an inpatient on Ward 7Y. This letter states "*The doctors range from eye-brow raising to downright psychopathic; one of the latter category was let loose on me and landed me in here again....*". Graeme was referring to the awful time when a doctor removed his dissolvable stitches which led to him being hospitalised.
73. Graham was placed on AZT when he was around the age of 22, and at times there were grave difficulties and issues with the prescribing of some of the other medication required for his HIV status. The quality of care at the RLUH left a lot to be desired. Graeme was often given drugs that should not have been prescribed to him, which at one point caused him to have an epileptic seizure and on another occasion resulted in my husband driving madly through the Mersey Tunnel while I tried to prevent Graeme from swallowing his tongue.
74. Whilst attending "*Body Positive*" Graeme learned that the Homosexual members there were all being treated at Fazakerley Hospital (FH) in Liverpool for their HIV and were all very satisfied with the way they were being looked after.
75. Graeme felt so unhappy about his treatment at RLUH that he wished to transfer to FH. We therefore took Graeme to FH and the Doctor there agreed to accept Graeme and said that he would talk to Dr Hay about it. However, Dr Hay refused the transfer and registered his annoyance by an angry telephone call to me which is when I voiced my opinion of the way Graeme was being treated under his care.
76. The way in which Graeme was treated because of his HIV was one of the worst things that we had to witness. He was not looked after properly by the medical professionals and I would go as far as to say that he was treated terribly by them.
77. My husband and I were also treated like enemies by the medical professionals and not like the parents of Graeme.

78. I also refer to paragraphs 16-24 of this statement.

79. None of our family has ever been offered any counselling or psychological support in consequence of Graeme's infection.

### **Section 7. Financial Assistance**

80. Neither Graeme nor any member of our family received any financial or practical assistance from any of the Trusts.

### **Section 8. Other Issues**

81. I want the truth and I want justice for our darling Graeme.

### **Anonymity**

82. I do not want to apply for anonymity and regrettably my age and health would make it very difficult for me to travel to the Inquiry to give oral evidence. However, if my presence would be beneficial I would somehow manage.

**Statement of Truth**

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

Signed..... **GRO-C** .....

Dated... 10.3.20 .....