Witness Name: GRO-B

Statement No: WITN2856001

Dated: 25th April 2019

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF GRO-B

I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 12th December 2018. I adopt the paragraph numbering in the Rule 9 request for ease of reference.

I, GRO-B will say as follows: –

1.Introduction

1. My name is GRO-B My date of birth is GRO-B and my address is known to the Inquiry.

2. I intend to speak about my infection of hepatitis C (HCV) which I contracted from a blood transfusion in GRO-B In particular the nature of my illness and

how the illness affected me, the treatment I received and the impact it has had on me and my family.

2.How Infected

1. In GRO-B I was GRO-B and had to be rushed to GRO-B GRO-B Subsequently, I had to have a blood transfusion during an operation to save my leg. I did not know about the transfusion until after the operation. This was the transfusion that resulted in me contracting hepatitis C. Before I had the transfusion I was working as a GRO-B and after the operation I had a long and extensive period of recovery. Due to this I could not work for many years until I eventually got work as a GRO-B which I continued until GRO-B My relationship with my wife broke down due to the diagnosis of hepatitis C and from the onset of the effects of the diagnosis.

2. In GRO-B ten years after my blood transfusion, I found out I had Type 2 diabetes and haemochromatosis. Due to the haemochromatosis, I had to attend GRO-B once a week for six months to get a transfusion to clean my blood.

3. In GRO-B I was rushed into GRO-B as I had collapsed without reason. While at the hospital they did many tests but told me that they could not find anything wrong. Three weeks later I was sent to GRO-B GRO-B and had further tests. After I had been tested one of the doctors came over to me and proceeded to ask me questions such as "have you ever been with a prostitute, taken drugs or are you a big drinker?" I was shocked and confused as to why I was being asked these types of questions. I asked the doctor to explain why he was asking them. He then told me that the blood tests had shown I had hepatitis C and they were trying to work out how I had contracted it.

4. The doctor asked if I had ever had a blood transfusion which I explained I first had in GRO-B It was then explained to me that during this time period I could

have been given infected blood that contained hepatitis C. I was then informed that because I was never treated for my hepatitis C I had developed liver cancer and would need a liver transplant.

3.Other Infections

1. As far as I am aware, the only infection I have contracted at any time is the hepatitis C.

4.Consent

1. Since I have been diagnosed with my infection, I have always been told when and why medical staff were taking blood from me. I am not aware of them treating or testing me without my knowledge. When I had my transfusion of blood it was during an operation I had to have after being GRO-B in the leg in GRO-B Due to this, I was not asked specifically for my permission for the blood transfusion to take place as it was an emergency. After the operation I was told of the blood transfusion, but there was no mention or warning of possible risks from the blood transfusion.

5.Impact

1. The impact of being infected with hepatitis C has had a bearing on my mental health and family life. I never stop thinking about it and it always plays on my mind. I have suffered from bouts of depression and worry for what the future will hold. Physically, I have chronic fatigue, I am always tired, nauseous and I have spells of itchy skin.

2. Since being diagnosed with hepatitis C and subsequently having a liver and kidney transplant I must constantly attend check-ups. Every three months I get my kidneys checked and every six months I get my liver checked. The

check-ups are not only to see how my liver and kidneys are doing since the transplants but to check if the hepatitis has come back. If the hepatitis C were to come back it could affect my liver again. This is a constant worry for me and I dread the check-ups because I just never know what the results might be.

3. In GRO-B the doctors treated me with a twelve week course of medication for my hepatitis C. I was informed that the twelve week course of medication was paid for by the Government. After the twelve weeks the hepatitis C had cleared but I must still go for check-ups in case it comes back. The mental effects of this treatment were that I was always worrying whether the drugs were going to work or was my future going to be limited.

4. The impact on me and my family when I found out that I had hepatitis C was that it caused great concern and worry. It impacted me with regards to my relationship with my wife of GRO-B years. The constant worry and money problems due to me not being able to work meant we drifted apart which resulted in a divorce. I have dated since my ex wife but I have found it unsettling when having to tell new partners that I have hepatitis C which makes me feel dirty. Subsequently I now abstain from dating.

5. My children found it hard when I told them that I had hepatitis C and one of my GRO-B would not leave me alone in the house as he was worried in case something happened to me. They would not bring friends round to the family home. I was given leaflets from the doctor to give to my family which were helpful when explaining what hepatitis C was and how it would affect me and them. My children have a constant fear that something bad will happen to me.

6. I have friendships but I do not tell them about my infection due to the stigma that surrounds hepatitis C. If I were to tell friends that I was infected I would have to experience the feeling of being ashamed and embarrassed all over again and the worry as to what their reaction would be. I do still manage to have somewhat of a social life but nothing like it used to be.

7. The diagnosis of my infection has had an impact on my family and they all had to be tested for hepatitis C in case they had contracted it from me as there was such a delay in me being diagnosed. This was a daunting and stressful time as I feared that I could have passed the infection onto them. Thankfully, that did not happen and they did not get the infection. However, I constantly worry about the possibility of passing it onto them or others around me.

8. When I found out I had hepatitis C I was working as a GRO-B but when I had to have the liver transplant I had to stop. I would not have been able to cope with the stress and strain of working due to my constant fatigue. I have not worked since GRO-B

6.Treatment/Care/Support

1. I was told that I needed a GRO-B transplant in GRO-B and I was provided with an extensive explanation on the process of the liver transplant, how the hepatitis C would affect me and my future and I was made aware that other patients were given infected blood in the past as well as me. I was given adequate information about the potential risk of passing on hepatitis C to other people including my family. No information or support was offered to my family and I had to inform them of my diagnosis as best I could. I did however receive help and support from the Liver Support Group at the GRO-B which I still associate with to this day. The group have been a massive support and a place for me to feel safe.

2. Once I was told that I would need a liver transplant I had to go to chemotherapy every week for one year. Just as I was reaching the end of my chemotherapy I was told that they had found more tumours in my liver. Subsequently they could not give me any chemotherapy for three weeks. As a result of this I was then made a priority on the liver transplant waiting list.

3. Within three weeks of being made a priority on the transplant list I was told to go to the airport and there would be an air ambulance waiting for me to take me to GRO-B to receive a transplant. Unfortunately, while in the air, it was communicated that the liver was no good and the air ambulance turned back for GRO-B A further two weeks passed and I was told again to go to the airport and an air ambulance would again take me to GRO-B for a liver transplant. This time there were no issues with the liver. I was taken to King's College Hospital GRO-B to receive my transplant in GRO-B and the operation went well.

4. During my time at King's College Hospital, for reasons unbeknown to me, the hospital would not give me my insulin which treated my diabetes. After a week I was moved to GRO-B where I stayed for a further four days. Six to seven months later, when I went for a check up on my liver transplant, my bloods showed that my kidneys were starting to fail due to lack of insulin.

5. In GRO-B I was told that I would need a kidney transplant. I received the transplant at GRO-B and the kidney was donated to me by my GRO-B If King's College Hospital had given me the insulin I required for my diabetes around the time of the liver transplant then I may not have needed a kidney transplant.

6. I was not offered counselling support from my doctor when I found out I was infected or at any time after my diagnosis. The emphasis was more on the treatments for my physical problems rather than my mental ones. I feel that counselling should have been offered to me on many occasions.

7. I did receive a lot of support from the Liver Support Group. The support group helped me to meet others who were in a similar situation to me. It helped me to rebuild my confidence and showed me that I was not alone. The group aided me in being able to talk to people who understood what I was going through.

7.Financial Assistance

1. I have received payments since 2008/2009 of £1500 per month from The Skipton Fund, which I was informed I was entitled to by my doctor. I still receive these payments and I have found them helpful but, if I was able to work full time, my financial prospects could have been higher. I also still receive benefits as well as my pension.

2. My doctor told me that to receive the funding from The Skipton Fund I would need my medical history from when I had the blood transfusion. However, due to the amount of time that had passed GRO-B no longer existed and everything was moved to GRO-B When I asked for my medical notes I was told that they were all destroyed and there was only one sheet of information that explained I had an operation and a blood transfusion but no further information. However, I was still able to receive payments from The Skipton Fund even without my full medical history.

8.Other Issues

1. I have not sought legal litigation before.

2. I have been asked if I would like to put questions to the Inquiry:
    - Why was the blood not screened?
    - Why did it take so long to be dealt with?
    - How could it have happened?
    - Why was it allowed to happen?

Statement of Truth

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

Signed.. GRO-B

Dated..25/04/19..