

Witness Name: Paula Bateman

Statement No: WITN7118001

Exhibits: 0

Dated: July 2022

## INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

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### FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF PAULA BATEMAN

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I, Paula Bateman, will say as follows:-

#### Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Paula Bateman. I was born on GRO-C 1970, and I live at GRO-C  
GRO-C Cumbria GRO-C
2. My brother, Michael Kane (born on GRO-C 1969), was co-infected with the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and the Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) through contaminated blood products. He died on 29<sup>th</sup> January 1992, aged 22.
3. This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my brother's full medical records.

## **Section 2. How Affected**

4. My brother, Michael, had severe Haemophilia A. He was treated at the Royal Victoria Infirmary (RVI), Newcastle Upon Tyne under the care of Dr Peter Jones.
5. Michael was treated with Factor VIII (FVIII) concentrate at home. It was kept in our fridge. Mam did the injections for him at first and, after a while, Michael was taught to do the injections himself. The treatment was thought to be a god send. It gave Michael more freedom. Before it was introduced, Michael wasn't able to play football. The merest bump or bruise would result in Mam having to take Michael on an ambulance trip to the RVI, 90 miles from our home the other side of Newcastle. I remember coming home from school and being taken in by neighbours because Dad was at work, Mam was at the hospital with Michael, and I couldn't get into the house.
6. When Michael went on the FVIII home treatment, we had days out and holidays. I still remember the cooler bag we took away with us to keep the FVIII concentrate cool on journeys. My parents were not prewarned of any risk of infection through the treatment products.
7. I remember that we (my parents, Michael and I) were sat in the open clinic area (where they took blood samples) at one of Michael's routine appointments at the RVI when we were told that Michael was infected with HIV. It was in or around 1982 and I think that it was Nurse Sister Ferns who told us. She mentioned a medical term none of us understood at the time (but it was HIV) and said, 'Michael is positive, and you are all negative'. None of us were expecting any bad news and my Dad (always a jokey character) turned to Michael and laughed, saying 'Ha ha Michael, we are negative, and you are positive'. It was one of the two biggest things that Dad said he regretted before he died, that he had made light of it. He didn't understand.

8. We did not know that Michael was co-infected with HCV until after his death and it appeared on his Death Certificate.

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

9. I am uncertain as to whether Michael was also infected with the Hepatitis B Virus (HBV).

### **Section 4. Consent**

10. My parents were not pre-warned of any risk involved with Michael's treatment. The other of my Dad's two biggest regrets was that they had been given the stuff to inject directly into Michael. My parents were left wondering whether Michael had become infected through one (or more) of the vials of FVIII concentrate administered to him by my Mam.

11. A lot of blood samples were taken at Michael's hospital appointments. My blood samples were quite often taken, and I used to wonder 'why me?' They were never open and transparent there about what the blood samples were for. Michael, my parents and I had all been tested for HIV prior to being informed of the results. My parents didn't know that we had been tested for HIV, hence my Dad's confusion and reaction.

### **Section 5. Impact**

12. My parents never talked openly about Michael's diagnosis, not even to me. It was never spoken of. It was kept hidden, and they were tight lipped about it. As a result, the strange exchange we had at the RVI when Michael was told

that he had been tested positive (for something) became a bit of a distant memory. I suppose they thought that the less I knew the better it would be for me, and I left home at aged 16 (to work away with horses) so I wasn't around when Michael's health started to decline. Michael (a severe haemophiliac) always lived a restricted life and that is something I have always felt sad about. The gravity of being infected with HIV is something an adult would find hard to process, let alone a teenager.

13. Michael was the clever one of the two of us. He had a job at Sellafield in his late teens as an Instrument Mechanic. The diagnosis had a huge psychological effect on him when he realised what was going to happen to him. He had been given a death sentence. He would leave for work in his car and not turn up at the other end. He would just disappear. When Mam worked out that Michael hadn't been to work, she would question him. He was pretty much in a daze like state. He said to her that he was just sat in a car park and that he didn't even remember how he had got there. His head must have been battered.

14. Michael was very much into computers. When they finished him at Sellafield, he set up his own little business at home, with a phone line installed in his bedroom.

15. I have a love of horses that I shared with my best friend. We worked at a polo yard in West Sussex in the summer and with dressage horses in Spain in the winter. I could see that Michael was ill on my latter visits home. I started badgering Mam as to what was wrong with Michael especially after another lad we knew (with haemophilia), living not far away, died (through contaminated blood). She always dodged my questions, and she didn't want me to come back home when I asked her if I needed to. When Michael went into hospital in September 1991, Mam finally told me. I came home and asked her outright 'has Michael got HIV?' and she said 'Yes he has got AIDS'. To hear the words out loud came as a shock to me.

16. I had been home for about three months when Michael died. He never complained but we had a heart-to-heart conversation about two days beforehand about how unfair it all was. He was just 22 years old. He was my only sibling, a much-loved older brother.
17. The fear and stigma surrounding HIV/AIDS was tangible. It weighed heavily on my parents and they lived in each other's pockets. They didn't talk about their feelings to anyone but each other. They told anyone that asked that Michael had died of pancreatic cancer, and I went along with it. My maternal aunts and uncles didn't even know any different. I remember on the day of the funeral our neighbours told us that someone from the local 'Times and Star' newspaper had been in contact asking questions about Michael. The neighbours didn't know anything, but the interest on the part of that reporter only served to make my parents more wary and insular than ever.
18. My Dad was broken hearted when Michael died. He never worked again. I was acutely aware that I was all my parents had left. I was going to return to the work I loved but I knew I had to stick around instead. I ended up working at a local riding school, but it wasn't the same and I didn't earn the same money. It wasn't really what I wanted to do. Moreover, it destroyed my relationship with my best friend. She and Michael were very good friends. We all became close through our high school years together and she knew that Michael had haemophilia. I couldn't tell her the circumstances surrounding Michael's death and the real cause of death, but she knew the truth and we drifted apart.
19. Out of loyalty and respect for Michael and my parents, I only ever told one person the truth, my husband, and only when I became pregnant with our first child. I was tested at the RVI when I was a child, and I was told that I was a haemophilia carrier. What happened to Michael has had a profound effect on me. I would never want to be a mother to a son with haemophilia. I wouldn't want a child of mine to go through what Michael went through. I had to await the results of a 20-week scan before knowing whether I was carrying a girl or

a boy. If I had been carrying a boy, I would not have gone through with it. I had an amniocentesis with my second pregnancy and a CVS at 11 weeks with my third. After the birth of my third daughter, I received a letter informing me that I was not in fact a carrier. I had had three daughters. I would have terminated all three if that had not been the case, believing that I am a haemophilia carrier. I have only now recently told my three daughters what happened to Michael and what he had to endure.

20. Without Michael, my daughters (and notably my first daughter born in 1996) became the focus of my parents' world. My parents carried a lot of grief, secrecy and guilt about Michael. Dad became Mam's carer when she had a stroke, and they have now both passed away. Dad was aware of the Inquiry before he died. He finally opened up a little bit and, in addition to sharing his feelings of sadness and regret, he told me to make sure that Michael is accounted for amongst those lost.

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

21. I had no counselling or psychological support. I had to keep everything I felt bottled up and I struggle to open up to people as a result

## **Section 7. Financial Assistance**

22. I do not know what level of financial help or assistance was provided by any of the Trusts and Funds.

**Anonymity**

23. I do not want to apply for anonymity, and I understand that this Statement will be published by the Inquiry.

**Statement of Truth**

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

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

Dated..... *17<sup>th</sup> August 2022* .....