Witness Name: GRO-B
Statement No: WITN4177001
Exhibits: 0
Dated: May 2020

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. I was born on the GRO-B and I live at GRO-B.

2. I was co-infected with the Hepatitis B Virus (HBV) and the Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) through contaminated blood products.

3. This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my full medical records.

Section 2. How infected

4. I have mild to moderate Haemophilia A, diagnosed when I was four years old because I had some internal bleeding. I have one brother. He is three years older than me and he does not have Haemophilia.

5. I was treated at Birmingham Children's Hospital (BCH) under Dr Hill. I was treated with Cryoprecipitate initially. I then moved on to Factor VIII (FVIII) concentrate from the early to mid 1980s. I was given Factorate made by the Armour Pharmaceutical Company. My cousin, a fellow Haemophiliac, was also treated with Factorate from BCH. He was co-infected with HIV and HCV as a result and he died at just 25 years old. My aunt has provided her own Witness Statement to the Inquiry (GRO-B).

6. My parents were not warned of the risk of exposure to infection before I was given FVIII concentrate. It was supposed to have been safer and better than Cryoprecipitate.

7. I had an immediate reaction to what I remember to be my first ever FVIII treatment. I had blood tests and it was confirmed that I had HBV. I was with my mother at the hospital appointment but remember little more about it than that. Despite contracting HBV, my family were assured that FVIII concentrate was safe for me to use.

8. It was a real worry for my parents when HIV/AIDS became high profile news. I was tested for HIV in or around the mid 1980s. I remember being told that I was HIV negative. I did not know beforehand that I had been tested for HIV.

9. I was told that I had HCV in or around 1995 by a doctor (I do not recall his name) at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham. I was 20 years old and I was there for treatment for a bleed. I remember the doctor looking at my notes and casually saying 'Yes, Hepatitis B and C'. I said 'No. I only have Hepatitis B' and he said 'No, no your notes say C too'. The news of the diagnosis was a shock to me.

10. Dr Wilde at the QEH sat me down at a subsequent appointment and gave me some basic advice (and some leaflets). I was told not to drink alcohol and to eat healthily. I was referred for a liver biopsy which leads me to think I had had HCV for quite some time. Fortunately the result revealed that very little damage to my liver had been done.

Section 3. Other Infections

11. I was also notified that I had been at risk of exposure to vCJD.

Section 4. Consent

12. I have routine Haemophilia appointments at 12 month intervals and blood is taken to test my levels. As stated above, I had no idea that I was being tested for infections and to find out that I had HCV as well as HBV came as a complete shock to me. I was tested without providing informed consent.

Section 5. Impact of the Infection

13. Only very close friends and family ever knew that I was infected with HBV and HCV. I was working as an Electronic Engineer repairing computers and printers when I was first told of the diagnosis. I did not even tell my employer and do not disclose it now. I deal with it on a need to know basis. I work as a Web Developer now.

14. My cousin had died the previous year having developed AIDS. His immune system was lowered. HCV had attacked his liver and it was inflamed. I have had to learn to live with having HBV and HCV for all these many years and it has been tough psychologically. I have lived with the constant worry about what will happen to my health in the future and/or if the HBV/HCV and the physical effects of having HBV/HCV will get worse. It was only relatively recently (2018) confirmed that I had cleared both HBV and HCV through my natural antibodies.

15. In terms of physical effects, I have a few cysts on my liver and polyps on my gall bladder which need to be monitored through an ultrasound scan annually. I have issues with my digestion system and up until recently, since my antibodies have cleared the viruses, I often had pain on the right side of my ribs.

16. Being infected with HBV and HCV has affected my ability to start relationships with others and it has held me back. When you are infected with a virus that can be spread to others, you always wonder when it is the right time to tell someone what has happened. It really isn't easy, I'm single, and my life could have been very different. I might be married with children if it wasn't for this. It is something that always plays on your mind and the mental and psychological effects for me have been far worse to contend with than the physical effects.

Section 6. Treatment/care/support

17. I believe psychological support was available when I was first diagnosed with HCV but I didn't think I needed it as I had already been living with HBV for a decade and knew how to cope with it.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

18. I have had no financial support from the Trusts and Funds. I did try to apply for the Skipton Fund and am unclear as to why I was rejected. I do not think that my liver was sufficiently affected to make me eligible for funding.

Section 8. Other Issues

19. I would like answers from the Inquiry as to why this has happened and how so many people became infected with these viruses.

Anonymity

20. I am seeking anonymity.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed GRO-B

Dated 26.05.2020