

Witness Name: NICO FLETCHER

Statement No: WITN4548001

Exhibits: 0

Dated: SEPTEMBER 2020

## INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

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### FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF NICO FLETCHER

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I, Nico Fletcher, will say as follows:-

#### Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Nico Fletcher. I was born on **GRO-C** 1992 and I live at **GRO-C** **GRO-C**, West Midlands **GRO-C**
2. My father, Craig Christopher Fletcher (born on **GRO-C** 1971), was infected with the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) through contaminated blood products. He died having developed Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) and died at New Cross Hospital, Wolverhampton in January 1994, aged 22.
3. This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my father's medical records.

## **Section 2. How Affected**

4. My father was one of two sons. He and his brother, Nicholas, both had Haemophilia A. They were treated with Factor VIII (FVIII) concentrate. I am uncertain as to the Haemophilia Centre responsible for my father's care. Given the GRO-C locality, it may have been the Birmingham Haemophilia Centre at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. My paternal grandfather administered the FVIII concentrate to my father and my Uncle Nicholas at home.
5. My grandfather told me that a Social Worker knocked on his door and informed him that his children had HIV. In short, he received a knock at the door and was told that his children would die. My Uncle Nicholas was just 17 years old when he died.
6. I do not believe that my father and/or his parents were pre-warned of the risk of infection through FVIII concentrate. The death of two sons had a terrible effect on my grandfather. On one occasion, he GRO-C. He went quiet and would shut down when I spoke about my father but I do know that he blamed himself for administering the FVIII concentrate to his two sons. He said 'I pumped that shit into my kids'.

## **Section 3. Other Infections**

7. I do not know whether or not my father was infected with anything other than HIV.

## **Section 4. Consent**

8. I am unable to comment on the issue of consent.

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

9. My mum and dad were young when they met and became parents. My mother already had my older sister from a previous relationship. My brother Lee was then born on **GRO-C** 1991. I was the youngest, born on **GRO-C** **GRO-C** 1992. Our parents married in December 1993 just before my father died in January 1994. I was just 21 months old.
10. I was what I would describe as an angry child through growing up without a father. My friends and cousins had fathers and had great relationships with both parents. I spent my entire childhood wondering about my dad. My mother never got over the loss of my father. She **GRO-C** **GRO-C** Our relationship suffered.
11. When we were young, our mother told us that it was cancer that had killed my father. Without me knowing why, we were ostracised by the people in our local community. The news that my father had died from AIDS spread through the grapevine. Out of ignorance my father was thought to have been gay or a drug addict. Because of the associated stigma, the parents of the children in our street were told not to play with us. I used to say to my mum 'Why can't we play with them?'. She would call us in and it was very hard.
12. In my early teens, my mother sat me down. She told me that my father had died from AIDS and that it wasn't his fault. My father had apparently been a very bright child. My mother described my father as a very quiet, timid and loving man. He was a good husband to her. She was widowed at the age of 23 with three young children and never got over it. She **GRO-C** before **GRO-C** My mother never did a day's work. We suffered financially and were dependent upon benefits.
13. I have suffered with anxiety and depression since the age of 14. I am on antidepressants even now. My ability to form friendships and relationships has been affected. I struggled to go to work for a long time until I found my current vocation as a Care and Support Worker and I love my job.

14. I would like answers as to why this was allowed to happen to my father and our family.

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

15. We were never offered any counselling or support.

**Section 7. Financial Assistance**

16. I believe my mother to have received some support from the MacFarlane Trust.

**Anonymity, disclosure and redaction**

17. I do not seek anonymity and understand that my 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.....09/09/2020.....