

Witness Name: Mary Elizabeth Kerslake

Statement No.: WITN5307001

Exhibits: None

Dated: March 2021

## **INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY**

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### **WRITTEN STATEMENT OF MARY ELIZABETH KERSLAKE**

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I, Mary Elizabeth Kerslake, will say as follows:-

1. I have come to this after the miracle of the cure - and with the more measured view that age brings with it - despair too - for those who have lost their lives and won't see any compensation - and for those of us left, who, in a way, if we are still remaining, will be rather old to feel we can have a grand celebration of thanks - relief. We had our praise three months after the end of the third treatment - which was successful. We are so grateful for the scientists, doctors and nurses who invented and administered the drugs which eventually cured the Hepatitis C.
2. To go back I time and re-live the years was a decision of some conflict. Blame culture and looking for justice is not really in my nature. But there are so many heartbreaking disasters all over the world which we can't stop or avoid. The least we can do is try to eliminate disaster which happens through neglect, bad choices or penny pinching decisions.
3. So I've turned the clock back to our newly married days when we discovered Arth had haemophilia - bad enough - mild they said. Go ahead and have children. Getting insurance was hard - but we had no idea what was in store. The fact that Arthur then ate, slept, talked, dreamt, lived for, played football didn't help. We went through many dramas of injuries - and a few suggestions from medical staff that he might choose a gentler sport - all to no avail.

4. Little did we realise that when Arth was rushed up to St Thomas' by ambulance and given clotting factor before a lumbar puncture to verify meningitis - he was taking into his body the dreaded Hepatitis C. When we went for his routine blood tests his liver function tests were never normal, but no-one knew why - until eventually the name was given - Hepatitis C.
5. From then on Arth was monitored regularly with ultrasound scans of his liver, fibroscans, and many blood tests. The fact that we never touch alcohol (he takes milk thistle) has protected his liver well. However, all through the years, every few days Arthur has had 'flu like symptoms - achy limbs, headaches, weary - for maybe 24-36 hours. These we believe have been the Hepatitis C. Compared with many we have not suffered too badly. But badly enough.
6. When the first "cure" was introduced Arthur eagerly accepted - he had injections of Interferon which he gave himself. I did one or two I think. He felt very 'flu-like for most of the time so it wasn't simple. But it didn't work and with hindsight it was the easiest of the trials.
7. A few years later, a second trial was offered - this time interferon injections with Ribovarin tablets. This was to prove a nightmare experience. From the start the tablets upset Arthur's digestive system. Very soon the weight fell off. He was able to eat less and less. Soon he was being sick, even while he bathed and we pleaded with him to stop the trial, but stubborn Arthur would not. A close friend said she had never seen someone so ill on their feet. Arthur's personality changed dramatically while he was on the trial cures. He became so short tempered and aggressive in his manner and upset us all regularly. It just so happened that I took out a book from the library about a couple where the husband was on Interferon for leukemia and he was a changed man. He was extremely unpleasant in his behaviour towards his wife. She planned to leave him. I think I must have been led to this book even though it was fiction.
8. We somehow struggled on; and a nurse with whom I worked suggested I give Arthur just a teaspoon of Ready Break with honey. My GP cousin told me to buy protein powder and sprinkle it on every morsel of food and drink that Arthur could manage.

9. Arthur did have to stop the trial eventually when it was found that it was not working, - so that the long road of building him up again continued. We told him: "NEVER AGAIN."
10. Some years passed and we lived, as had become our normal, with Hepatitis C - and then one day, Jenna, the wonderful nurse from Haemophilia at St Thomas' rang and told us of a 90% certain cure from it. I was terrified, for I knew that Arthur would try.
11. He did. It was a success!
12. We give thanks every day. Our life with haemophilia and Hepatitis C has been rather difficult to say the least. Writing in hindsight can't capture the pain and sad times in the same way.
13. Just to add that I have taken, and still take, the maximum allowed quantity of a cocktail of anti-depressant and anti-anxiety drugs every day since the early days of Arth's diagnosis and had therapy both privately and within the NHS over many years.
14. I do not have the amazingly stoical nature that Arthur has, and I feel these illnesses have had a very large effect on our 50 year marriage.
15. Someone in the "money chambers" made a life-changing mistake for many innocent men and women by purchasing the cheapest (infected) blood, to give them in their hour of need by unsuspecting doctors.
16. SHAME ON THEM.

### **Statement of Truth**

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

Signed	GRO-C	
	GRO-C	GRO-C
Mary Elizabeth Kerslake		
GRO-C		

Dated... 23 - March 2021, .....