Witness Name: GRO-B
Statement No: WITN3386001
Exhibits: WITN3386002
Dated: August 2019

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 GRO-B

2. I am currently with my partner GRO-B: P and we have been together for approximately 8 years. She has also produced a witness statement for the Inquiry GRO-B

3. For the past 10 years I have been unemployed and had to retire early because of ill health. I was employed as a project manager and also worked in a small utility company in areas between Camden to Oxfordshire.

4. This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my full medical records. If and in so far as I have been provided with limited records the relevant entries are set out in the medical chronology at the end of this statement.

Section 2. How Infected

5. In GRO-B I was given a blood transfusion during and after what was described as a particularly savage regime of chemotherapy at Hammersmith Hospital,

London (HH). I also had platelet transfusions for approximately 8 weeks. The transfusions were arranged by GRO-B who was also my treating doctor. I exhibit at **'WITN3386002'** the details of above products that I received.

6. The chemotherapy was to treat secondary Teratomas in my lungs and abdomen. A previous regime of chemotherapy in GRO-B was thought to have cured me but the cancer returned in the summer GRO-B

7. I believe the above transfusions that I received were contaminated, and as a result, I was infected with Hepatitis C (Hep C) which led to Hepatomas in my liver. I believe I was infected at HH where I had the transfusions.

8. I don't recall being told of the risks of being exposed to infections from the transfusions. It wasn't even an emergency blood transfusion and therefore I believe I should've been provided with proper information in relation to possible risks involved. I didn't know that there were risks until much later. I would've remembered if I was told.

9. I found out that I had Hep C in either late 2004 or early 2005 from my GP. I had a random full 'MOT' health check with a private health care provider and I had presented a (company sponsored) Bupa report to him a year previously. I was asked to refrain from drinking alcohol which I did for 9 months. At that time, I was not told why I should refrain from drinking; I just did what the doctor told me. The doctor asked me if he had mentioned to me that I had Hep C. I said 'no this was the first that I am hearing about it'. He told me he made arrangements for me to see Dr GRO-B a specialist liver consultant at the GRO-B Dr GRO-B confirmed the diagnosis of Hep C and organised a 6 month regime of Pegasus treatment. I completed the course and I was told there was no sign of Hep C and it was cleared.

10. I believe that my GP made a genuine mistake when I visited him the first time by not informing me that I had Hep C. I feel that it was known that patients were exposed to infected blood but nothing was done about it and patients were not told until after a long time. I believe I should've been tested a long time before any symptoms even began to appear. I had to do my own

research on Hep C and that was how I came to know about the infection. I believe that people who had transfusions should've been pulled up for tests. I don't know why everyone who had blood transfusions wasn't tested in the beginning when they first realised that the blood was infected. Initially I thought it was just the haemophiliacs who were infected through contaminated blood but then realised that it was also people who had blood transfusions as well. This should've been communicated properly to everyone, but it wasn't.

11. For approximately 2½ years, I had really bad chest infections and ankle pains. In February 2018 I asked the doctors to check me for Hep C but they wouldn't do all the tests. I couldn't even walk for about 6 weeks. Finally in October 2018 when I asked a consultant how these problems were related to Hep C he kept trying to talk around it rather than give me an adequate answer.

12. After my diagnosis, in or about 2005 my ex-wife and son were both tested and they tested negative. I think enough information was given about the risks of others being infected but I believe this should've been communicated to me much earlier, as there was a possibly risk of infecting others.

Section 3. Other Infections

13. I don't think I received any other infections other than Hep C. I believe that all the other infections that I did have may have come as a result of the Hep C.

Section 4. Consent

14. I don't believe that I was treated or tested without my knowledge, consent and without being given adequate or full information. As previously stated, I had a full 'MOT' health check and I did not know what tests were involved. I do believe that when I did find out, that more information and advice should have been provided. I also believe that I should have been told about the possibly risks that the blood was contaminated.

Section 5. Impact of the Infection

15. I suffer from the mental effects as a result of the Hep C. I am not usually a depressed person and used to be very positive, but it is so difficult for me now. When I had cancer, I had to go past the children's ward where children had cancer. Seeing them every day really changes a person mentally to become grateful for their lives. However, for someone who has had cancer twice already, it was a big deal to then be told about having Hep C.

16. I also suffered and continue to suffer from the physical effects of being infected with Hep C. I was always tired and I used to think it was work-related and old age. I can now relate the tiredness to the Hep C. I had to quit work which I really enjoyed, because I was unable to cope. I did try and continue with work after having the treatment, but I couldn't do it. My blood tests and check-ups came back normal even though I knew there was something wrong but the doctors were unable to give me a proper diagnosis. I felt like I needed something more like a CT scan. As mentioned previously, I had a terrible chest infection for about 2½ years but the doctors just couldn't figure out the cause of it. I was given antibiotics for it, but the treatment did not help. I was later told that I needed to get my liver sorted and that the rest of the infections would then be cleared. I can't do certain things anymore due to the extreme tiredness I suffer which in turn causes me to feel depressed. I also suffer from brain fogs and my mind goes blank sometimes and I believe the above is as a result of the Hep C.

17. About 2 years ago I asked for a liver function test and a kidney test because I thought there must be something wrong with my immune system as I was constantly having chest infections, which I was unable to get rid of. The doctor said I was fine and that my liver was better than most peoples. I now know that this was as a result of the Hep C. Just before I started treatment, I had a liver biopsy and I was told that I had scarring of the liver directly as a result of the Hep C.

18. As a result of the Hep C I developed 3 Hepatomas. I had two courses of chemotherapy treatment and the last treatment that I had was about 2 months ago. Recently, I had a CT scan on the 30 July 2019 as I was told that I still have another Hepatoma. The only option that I have left is to have a liver transplant.

19. I get random blisters in my gums and I don't know if they are related to the Hep C.

20. In or about October 2005 I started Pegasus treatment for Hep C. As stated above it was a 6 month course. I took injections as well as tablets. I received this treatment from the GRO-B

21. I faced some difficulty in getting treatment. There was a delay of approximately 9 months because the GP did not tell me that I had Hep C and then there was the usual NHS wait.

22. The treatment made me feel very tired and a friend of mine once described me as the 'walking dead'. It drained me out both mentally and physically both during and after treatment.

23. The infection also impacted me on my private, family and social life. The diagnosis led me to make some significant changes in the way I lived. I carefully paced myself and had to give up my job. I don't socialise anymore or go on holidays, because a travel insurance company would not insure me. My social life is non-existent. My family have been very good to me and very supportive. Once, my family booked a holiday for us but I had to cancel it as I didn't know what was going to happen after the diagnosis with regards to treatment. That was quite upsetting. I still do visit my family but I'd rather they come and see me regularly, as travelling long distances can get difficult for me.

24. I have not suffered any stigma as a result of the infection as my friends and colleagues at work were lovely and fantastic. I told my colleagues that I had Hep C and told them not to drink from my glass. Each and every one of them told me that it did not brother them and they all drank from my glass. This

was a very emotional time for me. The infection still plays at the back of my mind. If I went anywhere for drinks, i.e the pub I would tell people that I had Hep C even though I have cleared the infection.

25. After the Pegasus treatment, I wanted to resign from my job but the company refused to accept my resignation. They gave me 3 months of paid leave and even told me to take 6 months if I needed it. They let me use the company car as well. I tried to repay my employers with their kindness by working for another 2 years, but the extreme tiredness took over. This was the very first time that I struggled to work. It was killing me for 2 years and I just physically couldn't do it. My job entailed long hours and I just couldn't manage it. I am now retired and receive a pension. Had I not been infected with Hep C, I would've worked until retirement age.

26. I was taking home a lot of money (approximately £3,000) a month from work but when I stopped working, I lost out on that income. I decided to sell my house in London, freeing up equity, which I used together with my savings to live on, and moved to the GRO-B for 2 years then moved to GRO-B where I met P We have suffered financial effects as a result and the impact has been a much curtailed lifestyle due to being overtired a lot and with having little to spend financially.

27 P has suffered emotionally due to what has happened to me. She really worries for me and she is more emotional when I'm not in front of her.

28. My children took my diagnosis quite well as I would always tell them that I'm fine. They are probably upset but they don't say it to me as they probably believe it would upset me.

Section 6. Treatment/care/support

29. When I was told that I had Hep C, the doctors treated me well and I was happy with everything they did. However, initially, I was not provided with adequate information and was confused about what was going on with my health.

30. I was not offered any counselling or psychological support as a consequence of what happened to me. I believe counselling might've helped if it was offered to me, but no one ever mentioned it to me.

31. I had one blood test following the successful treatment of Hep C, before I moved up to GRO-B The hospitals have never scanned or tested me ever since I moved up. I believe there was a mix-up with the appointments when I moved to GRO-B I believe I should be tested regularly for Hep C especially because I was told that the Hep C doesn't clear completely, but just remains dormant. You just never know when it will return.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

32. I started receiving £250 a month from the Skipton Fund on the 11 November 2016 which increased to £330 a month from April 2017 and later increased to £341 a month from April 2019. This is now in the process of changing to approximately £2,400 a month as I now qualify for the Stage 2 monthly payments.

33. On the 14 February 2017, I also received a lump sum payment in the sum of £20,000 from the Skipton Fund.

34. In or about 2016 P and I found out about the Skipton Fund after seeing a newspaper article about financial assistance from the Scottish Government. I therefore did further research on the internet and found about the financial support from English Government.

35. The application process for the Skipton Fund payments was quite long winded. We applied for the Stage 1 payment in late 2016. We had to chase them and also had to pay to obtain information from the GP and the HH. Once this information was forwarded to the Skipton Fund and I then started receiving financial support in February 2017, which was backdated to November 2016. The people were very nice but they did not advise us of other Income Support Top Ups that we were entitled to and subsequently lost.

36. When I found out that I had Hepatomas in early 2019, I applied to the EIBSS for the Stage 2 payment. I had to chase my GP and consultant a number of times as the information that they provided wasn't enough for the EIBSS. The Stage 2 payment has been approved and I am waiting for the payment in the sum of £50,000.

37. The EIBSS required very special information (which is understandable), but if the information was not sufficient they would wait until the very last minute (30 day period) to state that require further information or it was not sufficient. I had to constantly chase them up to provide us with a response and update.

38. I found out through further research that I actually qualify for a lot more financial assistance than I was given but I didn't realise at the time. I wasn't provided with any help in that respect. As I am not working and I receive a pension, I qualified for top-up payments but I have missed out on the payments as no one ever told me anything. We had to do everything on our own.

Section 8. Other Issues

39. Due to the diagnosis of Hep C and the subsequent illnesses, I can't go on holiday with my partner as I cannot get travel insurance. P and I love snorkelling, but we are unable to do this. We have tried lots of different insurance companies to no avail.

40 P once filled out half an application form and further down it asked about whether I had Primary Liver Cancer. P stopped the application form and when she did, she got a phone call from those insurers asking why she stopped the application. She told them that I had Primary Liver Cancer and I was still receiving TACE Procedure, P was then told they were unable to insure me and no other Travel Insurance Company would insure me.

41. I was told that the Pegasus treatment was no longer available at GRO-B as there were no funds and as a result the department closed down. I felt so upset for those people who weren't offered it and I guess I just got lucky in that respect.

42. I believe the doctors must've had an idea earlier that we were infected. They should've tested everyone earlier, as soon as they found out that there was a possibility that the blood was infected.

43. I want answers as to why this happened. What's surprising the most is that so much was covered up about what was done to Haemophiliacs.

Anonymity, disclosure and redaction

44. I would like to remain anonymous.

45. I do not want to provide oral evidence at the Inquiry.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed..... GRO-B ....

Dated 5/8/19.