

Witness Name:

GRO-B

Statement No: WITN4022001

Exhibits: 0

Dated: MARCH 2020

## INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

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FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF

GRO-B

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I, GRO-B will say as follows:-

### Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is GRO-B I was born on GRO-B and I live at GRO-B with my husband, GRO-B:H H and I have two sons aged 36 and 33.
2. My husband, H (born on GRO-B 1957), is infected with the Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) from a transfusion of contaminated blood at the Blackpool Victoria Hospital (BVH) in 1980. He was only informed that he had HCV in July 2019. H has provided his own Witness Statement to the Inquiry (under Witness Number: GRO-B).
3. This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to H medical records.

## **Section 2. How infected**

4. [ H ] had a serious industrial accident at work in 1980 when he was in his early twenties. His legs were crushed and he needed emergency surgery to include a blood transfusion. .
  
5. Around 10 years after his first accident, [ H ] was involved in a serious road traffic accident and his legs were crushed again. He was in intensive care for three weeks at Preston Hospital and had his left leg amputated. He had a blood transfusion at that time too but the blood transfusion he was given at BVH in 1980 has been identified as being the cause of the HCV infection.

## **Section 3. Other Infections**

6. I do not believe that [ H ] was infected with anything other than HCV.

## **Section 4. Consent**

7. [ H ] was not in a position to give consent when he had the blood transfusion(s) as it was major surgery on an emergency basis. We were not subsequently informed that [ H ] had been placed at risk of infection.

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

8. I was away from home on holiday for a week with a friend in Tenerife [ H ] (I will not fly) when [ H ] was told that he had HCV. He was identified as having type 2 diabetes after feeling fatigued and washed out for a very long period of time. He also had quite a few blood tests which kept coming back as abnormal. The HCV positive diagnosis was made from a blood sample taken on 27<sup>th</sup> June 2019. [ H ] was informed of the diagnosis by our GP towards the end of July 2019 just after I had gone away. I stayed in daily telephone contact with [ H ] whilst I was away. Knowing [ H ] as I do, I knew that something was wrong but he said nothing until the day before I was due to

return home. He didn't want to ruin my holiday. When [H] finally told me what was wrong, he was extremely upset and emotional. We were both in a state of shock. We didn't know what to think. We thought that [H] was going to die.

9. When I got home we were in emotional turmoil. We had to wait for an appointment at the BVH before we could see anybody about what it all meant. It seemed so unreal, like a bad dream. I tried to help and support [H] by trying to take his mind off it, whilst dealing with the shock and worry of the realisation that I might have HCV and the boys might have it too.

10. We all had to be tested for it. It was a complete nightmare. We had to see so many people. Luckily none of us were infected but to watch what [H] had to go through was horrible. I was so worried about being infected with HCV through him and I didn't want him anywhere near me physically. It was a terrible time in our family. The boys couldn't understand it all and they questioned how [H] had caught it. At the time we had no idea where it came from. We were racking our brains about the times he had been in hospital, wondering whether he had been infected when he had the industrial accident, the car accident or possibly the triple bi-pass he had had 10 years previously.

11. The HCV clearing treatment [H] had to go through for 16 weeks really changed him. It was like living with another person. The tablets were horrible and it would make him short-tempered and you could see in him that he wasn't right. It near enough destroyed him. We were warned that [H] would experience suicidal thoughts and depression and we were told that I had to monitor [H] and report any worrying behavior but we weren't told that the medication could be changed and/or adjusted if necessary.

12. The HCV clearing treatment was successful but we still fear that it could return. We have been under so much uncertainty. I have tried to reassure

[H] as best as I can but I have been under enormous strain. I have been under the doctor suffering with anxiety and depression.

13. I have recently been diagnosed with cancer which I feel has been brought on by stress. I was fine before [H] diagnosis. Our health has gone downhill since.

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

14. We have not been offered any counselling.

#### **Section 7. Financial Assistance**

15. In September 2019, [H] received a Stage One ex gratia payment of £20,000 through EIBSS. He also receives a monthly payment and a £500 cold weather payment. Liability is not in dispute. We are disappointed that [H] payments cannot be backdated to when he was infected with HCV in 1980.

#### **Section 8. Other Issues**

16. There are no other issues.

#### **Anonymity, disclosure and redaction**

17. I am seeking anonymity and would like my Statement redacted before publication. However I understand this statement will be published and disclosed as part of the Inquiry. I do not want to give oral evidence to the Inquiry.

**Statement of Truth**

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

Signed

GRO-B

Dated.....

03-04-2020