

Witness Name: **GRO-B**
GRO-B
 Statement No.: WITN5399001
 Exhibits: WITN5399002
 Dated:

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

WRITTEN STATEMENT OF **GRO-B**

I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 21 July 2021.

I, **GRO-B** will say as follows: -

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is **GRO-B** My date of birth is **GRO-B** 1967 and my address is known to the Inquiry.
2. I am a qualified nurse and work in **GRO-B** Hospital on the surgical assessment ward. I live with my partner and have two grown up children. I intend to speak about my father, **GRO-B: F** who was born on **GRO-B** 1930 and his infection with Hepatitis C ("HCV"). In particular, the nature of his illness, how the illness affected him, the treatment received and the impact it had on him and our life as a family together.
3. I can confirm that I am not legally represented and that the provisions of the anonymity rules have been explained to me **NOT RELEVANT**
NOT RELEVANT

Section 2. How Affected

4. My Dad was born with haemophilia A. This is hereditary on my father's side of the family, and I also have an uncle who was born with haemophilia A.
5. When I was six years old, I remember attending an outpatient clinic with my Dad and he vomited blood. I believe this to have been from what the doctors later found to be a perforated ulcer. My Dad subsequently had a laparotomy, and had two thirds of his stomach taken away due to the damage the ulcer had caused. I remember my Dad being in the Heath hospital for 6 weeks, and going backwards and forwards with my mum to visit. I can actually remember seeing the blood bags from his transfusion.
6. My Dad had 32 units of blood prior to this operation in 1973 and I clearly recall conversations about this amount with my aunt.
7. I don't remember any other times my Dad was hospitalised and required such a vast amount of blood or blood products.
8. In fact, I don't really recall my dad having many episodes that led to him receiving either cryoprecipitate, or later on Factor VIII. There may have been an instance in the late 1980

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9. The risks of infection from having blood or blood products were not discussed with my Dad at any point he received treatment. From what I can remember, my Dad was not aware, and had no idea of any of the risks involved with receiving blood or blood products. He certainly never mentioned anything about this.
10. My dad was never a drug user of any kind nor did he have any tattoos. He was devoted to my mother and was never medically treated overseas.
11. I have been made aware that Dad was likely diagnosed with HCV sometime after September 1994. I had started nurse training in 1986 in GRO-B Hospital and I remember my dad coming to the hospital to see Dr Moffatt from haematology. Later on, Dad told me he felt too embarrassed and ashamed to tell me exactly why he was there. I know it's not something to be embarrassed about but that is just the way my dad was. At that time, it must have been haemophilia related as his HCV diagnosis had not yet been made. I wasn't really aware where, or when Dad was diagnosed with HCV - Mum and Dad wouldn't discuss it with me or my brother.
12. I believe it was suggested that Mum get tested for HCV, and I recently found the letter that said the test came back negative. It was not suggested that my brother and I get tested, and I was only tested later on due to my work as a nurse.

Section 3. Other Infections

13. Apart from HCV, I am not aware that Dad was infected with any other infections.

Section 4. Consent

14. I am not aware that Dad was tested or treated without his consent. However, I do not know all the details surrounding his diagnosis and treatment. I remember my Dad saying later on, after the HCV diagnosis, that he luckily didn't have HIV, however I don't know how and when he was tested for this.

Section 5. Impact

15. Dad retired in 1994. My parents moved from the GRO-B home GRO-B together to a house in GRO-B. There was a big garden and Dad was really happy there. Dad was an intelligent, happy go lucky type of person and we were very close.
16. Unfortunately, Dad seemed to turn over night, and went downhill from there. He had a breakdown, became isolated and was a hypochondriac for the last years of his life. I don't know what led to the breakdown. Dad turned into a man I didn't know - he had massive weight loss, he didn't eat and he chain smoked.
17. Being a hypochondriac, Dad would constantly complain about his health - it seemed like he had every symptom, although he refused to go to the hospital or get treatment. Doctors would prescribe medication however, he wouldn't take anything that would interact with his liver - Dad wouldn't even take a paracetamol following his diagnosis.
18. I remember Dad had a lot of joint pain and rheumatoid arthritis and throat and swallowing issues. Dad did not sleep well for a long time and near the end he would not lie down or go to bed, instead he would just sit in a reclining chair in the dining room.
19. Mentally, Dad was not himself from 1994 after his diagnosis. Dad had severe anxiety, mostly about his health, and was almost suicidal for the last two years of his life. I initially put it down to the breakdown, however I think the HCV diagnosis would have exacerbated this and may have been the actual cause. Dad would ring me up from work and say he was going to kill himself and I would have to leave work to go and be with him.

20. A doctor and psychological community nurse came out to assess Dad, however he refused to be admitted. I personally wanted Dad sectioned for his own good however, my Mum wouldn't allow it. She wanted to look after him herself.
21. Fortunately, Dad didn't make any suicide attempts, however his mental health issues affected the whole family. Someone had to be with Dad continually to keep an eye on him and to try and keep his mind off things. It was extremely difficult – and stressful to manage with work and family commitments as well as travel but what can you do? You try to do anything you can for your loved ones.
22. Dad's downturn had a massive impact on Mum's daily life. Mum would have to sit with him, and if she wasn't there, he would be constantly on the phone saying that he was ill and didn't know what was wrong with him. Mum couldn't go anywhere without having someone come and sit with him. Dad was so weak and emaciated by the time he died, Mum also had to help Dad wash and use the commode. She took on all his personal care on an almost round the clock basis. Yes, I and the family helped where possible but the main burden fell on her.
23. Socially, it impacted them greatly. They used to go out and do everything together from car boot sales to GRO-B market which they were unable to do in the end. Psychologically, Dad's illness had a massive effect on Mum. Despite this, Mum refused to go on any treatment and just put it down to life experience. She was a very strong character.
24. For me, it was awful to see Dad go downhill. Despite having two young girls at the time, I had to spend a lot of time going to help Mum with Dad. I remember Mum used to cry a lot seeing Dad turn into someone he was not. It was so sad and frustrating watching my mother suffer that way. It was awful that my girls lost their grandfather so early, and that he didn't get to see them grow up.
25. On the evening before GRO-B in 1999, I received a phone call to tell me that Dad was not well and that he was being admitted to hospital. Dad was initially taken to the psychological ward at GRO-B hospital, however as he was unconscious he was taken to the MAU in Gwent. Dad died on GRO-B with the cause of death being pneumonia. (See Exhibit WITN5399002)
26. Mum was devastated when Dad passed away. They had been married since Mum was 19 and had done everything together. Mum missed him so much, and just wanted to be with him. They were each other's world.
27. Mum did a lot for my girls after Dad's death, and they practically lived there at one point. I remember Mum saying once that if it wasn't for the girls, she wouldn't have coped.
28. Mum and Dad were financially ok with what they had, and luckily as Dad had retired before his health issues had started, the impact of being infected with HCV did not affect them financially. Mum and Dad didn't travel, so they didn't have to worry about not being able to get travel insurance due to Dad's condition.
29. I am not aware that Dad had problems with other medical professionals including dentists, treating him differently because of his HCV infection.
30. Mum and Dad kept Dad's HCV diagnosis to themselves and the rest of the family at arm's length, away from it all. There weren't any issues within the family due to Dad's infection, and there weren't any rifts between family or friends because of it. no one really knew who did not need to know. That is the way they were.

Section 6. Treatment/Care/Support

31. I'm not aware that Dad had a liver biopsy. However, I do know that he was told in the

late 1990s that he either had cirrhosis or liver cancer. I remember Dad being very worried or frightened because of this. I am not aware of how, if at all this was dealt with.

ANONYMOUS

32. Dad was not warned about alcohol consumption however, Dad was not a drinker. Due to the stress, Dad increased the amount he smoked to around 100 cigarettes a day, which Mum hated.
33. I don't think Dad received any treatment for his HCV following diagnosis, nor do I think Dad attempted to get treatment.
34. As far as I am aware neither Dad nor any family member was offered any psychological support or counselling following his diagnosis.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

35. In March 2011, Mum applied to the Skipton Fund on behalf of Dad. I don't know how she found out about the Fund.
36. In May 2011 the Fund wrote back to Mum saying that she needed further evidence of Dad receiving blood products, and a letter was consequently sent by Professor Peter Collins, written by Simon Davis who treated Dad at the gastroenterology department that he had record that Dad received a massive amount of cryoprecipitate and Factor VIII in 1983, and that he had also had record that Dad received a massive amount of blood products in the 1970s.
37. The application was approved for payment in June 2011.

Section 8. Other Issues

38. I have tried to provide this statement in as much detail as I can, however Mum and Dad shielded the full details from my brother and I so there are many things that I do not know or am unsure of. I have spoken to my brother but there is little he can add for that reason
39. I am giving this statement on behalf of my Mum, who was originally in contact with the Inquiry about providing a statement herself. Due to her health, Mum asked if I could speak for her, and unfortunately, she passed away before she could share her story.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed

GRO-B

Dated

23rd November 2021.