

Witness Name: JANE BARKER

Statement No: WITN5524001

Exhibits: 0

Dated: FEBRUARY 2021

## INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

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### FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF JANE BARKER

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I, JANE BARKER, will say as follows:-

#### Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Jane Barker. I was born on GRO-C 1973 and I live at GRO-C  
GRO-C Cheshire GRO-C
2. My aunt, Nora Worthington (born on GRO-C 1946), was infected with the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) from a transfusion of contaminated blood. She died as a result of metastatic anal carcinoma, through being infected with HIV/AIDS, on 28<sup>th</sup> August 1993, aged 47.
3. This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my aunt's medical records.

4. My cousin, Claire Dixon, has provided a Witness Statement to the Inquiry (Witness Number **WITN5517001**).

## **Section 2. How affected**

5. My aunt (Nora) was given a blood transfusion following a perforated duodenal ulcer at the Macclesfield District General Hospital (MDGH) in July 1982. She was not told that she had become infected with HIV through the blood transfusion until 1992. The hospital admitted liability and Nora accepted £43,500 as a settlement from the Hospital Trust prior to her death.
6. Nora developed a raft of serious health issues to include cervical abnormality, problems with her teeth, pneumonia, weight loss, anaemia and mental fatigue. Stigma was a real issue and there was a worry in terms of her infecting others.

## **Section 3. Other Infections**

7. I do not believe that Nora was infected with anything other than HIV.

## **Section 4. Consent**

8. I refer to Claire's Statement in relation to the issue of consent.

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

9. My mum and Claire's mum (Nora) were such close sisters - so naturally Claire and I were close cousins. We would spend a lot of our childhood together, always having fun and I look back at that time with sincere affection.
10. I remember, in July 1982, my mum being very concerned as Auntie Nora was rushed into hospital with a perforated ulcer having lost a lot of blood. Claire stayed with us while her mum was in hospital for a few days. I remember my mum praising Claire for responding so quickly and getting an ambulance to their home address; she was only 11 years old! All the family were relieved that Nora recovered well in the hospital after being given a blood transfusion.
11. Our large family circle of grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins was a close one. We loved getting together - particularly at our grandparents house. We were always excited to meet with our family members. It was a happy time. Auntie Nora stood out as being such a hardworking mother, but still made an enormous effort to visit her family and spend time with them; a caring and considerate aunt. Her family was her everything. I can still envisage her now, happily driving around with her children, Claire and Stephen, always on the go and full of energy.
12. During 1991 (I was aged 18 years old), my mum got an alarming phone call from Auntie Nora, saying she had had to give Claire and Stephen some bad news and could my mum 'please come over'. Mum frantically got ready and asked me to accompany her. On driving into Macclesfield, along GRO-C we passed Claire walking along with two of her friends and the image is etched in my mind. She appeared like a badly wounded soldier being carried off the battlefield, both her friends needing to assist her in keeping her upright as they walked along the street. Her face, I'll never forget, showed extreme shock. I knew that whatever

news she'd being given was not good. Mum parked up at Auntie Nora's and went in and I caught up with Claire. She informed me of the devastating news that her mum had been infected with HIV/AIDS. We sat at a local eatery in GRO-C huddled up together in total disbelief.

13. Things were very tough from this point. Auntie Nora lost her sparkle and her energy levels were low. My mum helped her sister Nora as much as she could, but felt so helpless at times and full of despair. Another very difficult aspect was that Nora didn't want the rest of the family to know of her condition. It was a hidden secret (because of the stigma attached to the disease) and this divided the family.
14. I went to visit Auntie Nora at the East Cheshire Hospice in 1993, to say goodbye - I was deeply saddened.
15. Claire and Stephen lost their mum at what should have been an exciting time in their lives; both in their early twenties and just starting out in their adult lives! The loss they both felt was immense.
16. In 1995 I got a job just off GRO-C in GRO-C and rather than travel home to GRO-C each evening, I would often stay over at Claire's. We laughed and we cried and we shared a lot of our emotions. It was apparent that the way in which Auntie Nora had lost her life (contracting HIV/AIDS) had had a profound affect on Claire and Stephen. It caused extreme emotional pain and complicated grief. I was witness to this and saw first-hand the aftermath that ensued.
17. My Auntie Nora was truly a beautiful person, who went out of her way to help others. How sad she couldn't continue to do this as her life was cut short by this horrific illness.

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

18. There was no offer of counselling.

**Section 7. Financial Assistance**

19. As stated, Nora received a lump sum settlement from the Hospital Trust.

**Anonymity, disclosure and redaction**

20. I do not wish to be anonymous and understand that this 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.....

22/02/21