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Witness Name: GRO-B

Statement No: WITN2341001

Dated: 18th February 2019

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF GRO-B

I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry rules 2006 dated 12th December 2018. I adopt the paragraph numbering in the Rule 9 request for ease of reference.

I, GRO-B will say as follows:-

1.Introduction

1. My name is GRO-B. My date of birth is GRO-B and my address is known to the Inquiry.
2. My wife GRO-B: W was diagnosed with Hepatitis C (HCV) in GRO-B as a result of being infected by contaminated blood.

2.How Infected

1. W became infected with hepatitis C (HCV) sometime between GRO-B and GRO-B as she received a number of blood transfusions within this time to treat her rheumatoid arthritis. It wasn't until GRO-B that W was tested for

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and diagnosed with hepatitis C (HCV) at **GRO-B** Hospital. I was very worried and concerned about her at the time, as it had been left undiagnosed for so long. I have been with my wife for many years and I have grown up within the marriage. She has always managed her Rheumatoid Arthritis, (RA), so when I found out that she had been diagnosed with hepatitis C (HCV) it was a shock to me as **W** had already been through enough. I don't remember being given any information about the risk of infection to me, but the doctors may have told my wife, who in turn forgot to tell me. **W** asked the doctors to test me and my son for hepatitis C (HCV) after she had been diagnosed, and we were both clear, but I think if **W** hadn't asked then the hospital would not have tested me.

2. I don't think there was any information that I should have been given by **GRO-B** Hospital, I was blissfully unaware in a way, as I didn't think about the risks as **W** hadn't known for so long. I wasn't there when **W** had most of her tests as she was self-sufficient, so I can't really say if they were communicated accurately to her. I do think that **W** and I should have been given some information about the risk of infection when she had her blood transfusions.

3.Other infections

1. I am not aware that **W** suffered from any other infections as a result of being given infected blood products

4.Consent

1. I don't think that **W** was tested on without her consent or knowledge or for the purposes of research.

5.Impact

1. When **W** was having her hepatitis C (HCV) treatment for a year during **GRO-B** and **GRO-** it was quite a shock, as even though we have been married

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for a long time, it was a tough situation to be in. It was a bad year, as [W] was so ill. Since being diagnosed with hepatitis C (HCV), [W] has changed, and she is not the same as she used to be. I thought she would be the same as it was not the first operation she had, but she has continued to decline and since she has been diagnosed with hepatitis C induced Mild Cognitive Disorder it has been worse, as she used to be independent. [W] was diagnosed with the disorder following a brain MRI scan in [GRO-B] after being referred by her GP who thought she might have some form of dementia. Looking back, [W] had always had some difficulty with her memory, and now that we know about her Cognitive Disorder it explains why. Life is a strain as [W]'s illness has caused great difficulty, and her illness always seems to be beating her, I just want her to see justice.

2. I gave up work to look after my wife, as we just didn't know how much time she had left. I've had to take over the household tasks, such as shopping, as [W] can't physically do it but also, she can no longer handle money, and I wouldn't be happy leaving her to get on with it. There is an extra burden on me as in a marriage you work out between you who does what, and now I do everything [W] used to do.
3. [W] finds it difficult to go to sleep some nights, and that is a constant worry for me. All my fears are now materialising, as [W] is suffering with her memory and is no longer the same person. We still have good friends who have understood our situation well, and I have never suffered stigma caused by her illness as I am quite private, so I wouldn't tell anyone she was ill unless I trusted that person. There hasn't been an impact on my family, and my brother is very supportive.
4. I've never suffered any educational effects because of [W]'s illness. I originally went from full time employment to part time in [GRO-B] but I retired once I knew [W] had her hepatitis C Cognitive Disorder. I did lose £10,000 in my [GRO-B] pension, but as long as I am sensible, we can survive, as its more about having quality time with my wife. Even though I am retired, the

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impact is more considerable these last few years as [W]'s condition has worsened. She has been ill for the last [GRO-B] years and she has always bounced back from it, but this has just been a real shock. We did consider moving at one point, but now we just couldn't afford it.

6.Treatment/Care Support

1. I'm not aware of any treatment [W] has had difficulty accessing. I have never been offered counselling, but I do think it should be made available to me as I have also suffered.

7.Financial Assistance

1. My wife received £20,000 from the Skipton Fund in 2010 for her hepatitis C (HCV) diagnosis and also received other payments in 2016 and 2017 from them. She received around £12,000 from [GRO-B] in 2018, and now gets around £1,000 a month.
2. I am not aware of my wife ever directly applying to any other Trusts or Funds, and I have never applied on her behalf. I am not aware of any other financial assistance available to me or [W] or any preconditions. I think that everyone should be entitled to receive an equal amount, and if they don't have a pension then they should receive more.

8.Other Issues

1. I have never taken part in any litigation regarding infected blood products.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed....

GRO-B

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Dated.....

18/02/19

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