Witness Name: Patricia Ann Hankin
Statement No.: WITN6207001
Exhibits: **Nil**
Dated: 01 June 2022

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

WRITTEN STATEMENT OF PATRICIA ANN HANKIN

I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 16 May 2022.

I, Patricia Ann Hankin, will say as follows: -

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Patricia ("Pat") Ann Hankin. My date of birth is GRO-C 1948 and my address is GRO-C

2. I married my husband, John, on GRO-C 1972. We have two children, Richard aged 48 and Sarah aged 47. We have four grandchildren in total.

3. Prior to my retirement aged 62, I worked as a payroll clerk and latterly was Pensions Manager at Southport & Formby District General Hospital.

4. I intend to speak about my infection with hepatitis C ("HCV"). In particular, the nature of my illness, how the illness affected me, the

treatment received and the impact it had on me, my family and our lives together.

Section 2. How Infected

5. My son, Richard, was born at Christiana Hartley Maternity Hospital (now closed) in Southport on GRO-C 1974. This was a long and incredibly difficult labour, lasting for over 24 hours.

6. I eventually had a caesarean section and gave birth to Richard weighing GRO-C. After giving birth, both Richard and I were fine and I made a full recovery, leading a normal life.

7. I gave birth to Sarah on GRO-C 1975 at Christiana Hartley Maternity Hospital, around 15 months after Richard. This was a quick childbirth and there were no problems. Then, on the 09 May 1975, GRO-C days after giving birth to Sarah, I had to have a dilation and curettage procedure ("D&C").

8. During the D&C procedure I haemorrhaged. I received 5 units of blood administered over the following 2 days. After this, I felt fine and I had no apparent health problems.

9. After Sarah, John wanted another baby but I decided against it. The two pregnancies had not gone smoothly and I thought it would be best not to have another child. This was lucky because I could have unknowingly transmitted HCV to the baby.

10. I had been a regular blood donor, since around age 18. I gave blood twice a year on average. After giving birth to Sarah, I asked at the hospital if I could donate blood after a transfusion. I was told that I should wait 6 months before giving blood again. Once the 6 months was up, I returned to give blood and I was accepted with no questions asked. I thereafter gave blood roughly twice a year between 1976 and 1991. Over this period, my health had been fine.

11. Then, in about January 1991, I received a letter from the Blood Transfusion Service (BTS) informing me that I had HCV and I could not donate blood anymore. It was as simple and blunt as that.

12. I was horrified to receive this letter. I didn't know what hepatitis was, let alone HCV, at the time. The letter from the BTS advised me to speak to my GP about the diagnosis.

13. I duly went to see my GP, Dr Gardner, at Parkgate Surgery in GRO-C Dr Gardner had never heard of HCV, he just knew about hepatitis A and B. After this I wasn't overly concerned about the infection and still knew very little about it. Nobody explained anything to me, I had no guidance or advice.

14. I would sometimes hear snippets about HCV on the news and in the papers, but in general I was completely ignorant of the significance of my diagnosis. I went to see Dr Gardner again, some 3-4 years later, in around 1994 or 1995, and he seemed to know more about it by then.

15. Dr Gardner referred me to Dr Graham Butcher, the liver consultant at Southport and Formby General Hospital. I first saw Dr Butcher around 1995 and I had no symptoms of HCV infection. Before this appointment, no one had ever explained to me what HCV is and how it affects the liver. I did want to know more about it but because I knew very little, I wasn't at all worried about what it meant for me. I had no symptoms, it really wasn't affecting me.

16. Dr Butcher took blood tests that confirmed I was HCV positive. He explained HCV to me and how it damages the liver. I recall that there wasn't any treatment available at that time. Instead, I had regular ultrasounds on my liver and blood tests every 6 months and I saw Dr Butcher for a check-up once a year.

17. Just before I retired, towards the end of 2010, I had an annual check-up of my bloods. These results were a bit up and down and my GP advised me to see Dr Butcher to discuss this.

18. Dr Butcher said that there was treatment available for HCV now. He knew that I was retiring soon so he probably thought it would be a good time for me to start the treatment.

19. He referred me to the Royal Liverpool Hospital where I was seen by the nurse specialist, Helen Caldwell. I first saw Helen Caldwell in March 2011 and she was excellent in caring for me throughout my treatment.

20. Helen Caldwell did a number of tests on me at this time and then told me about the treatment that was available. The treatment sounded horrendous. I was told I had to self-inject the medication twice a day, take tablets too and that there was no guarantee that it would work to clear the infection.

21. Helen Caldwell also mentioned that this would likely cause me to experience mental problems and even suggested that I may need to see a psychiatrist. After hearing this I knew that I didn't want to undergo the course of treatment. I left the appointment and said that I would think about it.

22. When I returned either 6 or 12 months later, I can't remember precisely, I informed Helen Caldwell that I didn't want to receive that treatment. I was then sent back to the care of Dr Butcher at Southport.

23. When I next saw Dr Butcher, he asked why I had turned the treatment down. I explained that it was our concern of the side-effects that were involved. Bear in mind I had no symptoms of anything and so it was a matter of why would I put myself through all of that. I still didn't really have an understanding of HCV.

24. I saw Dr Butcher once more in 2015. He informed me that there was a new treatment available and he thought I should go for it. I was then

referred back to the Royal Liverpool Hospital and saw Helen Caldwell once again.

25. Helen Caldwell said that the best thing I ever did was to turn down the treatment that she had previously offered me. She explained that it was only 30% effective and caused awful side-effects for those who took it. At the same appointment I was told that I have cirrhosis of the liver caused by my HCV infection. My reaction was about the same as being told I had HCV. I knew it was a liver disease but that was about it. I suppose I just blocked things out.

26. I began a course of treatment on 08 October 2015. This involved taking tablets once daily over a 12 week period. I cannot remember the name of the medication although it caused me to suffer with insomnia. I would often wake up at 2am and not sleep until the next evening. This led me to feel tired during the day. I recall that my body and muscles felt stiff, which I believed meant that the medication was working.

27. I completed the 12 week course of treatment and confirmatory tests showed that the HCV was cleared. I was told that I still had cirrhosis, although I was not advised as to how it may develop. I continued to be monitored by the hospital.

28. Dr Butcher retired in 2018 and I saw the new consultant at Southport hospital in 2019 and all I recall was that I was basically in and out.

29. At around this period I had another appointment when I had a liver ultrasound and blood tests. These showed that my cirrhosis was the same; it had not improved or worsened. I wasn't checked through 2020 due to the pandemic and I next saw a different consultant in mid 2021. When I first saw this consultant, whose name I also cannot recall, he didn't know that I had a blood transfusion that led to my HCV infection and he didn't know that I had cirrhosis. He obviously had not read my notes and I had to explain it all to him.

30. I have no appointments in my diary to see him or the liver department in the future.

Section 3. Other Infections

31. I have no other infections as a result of receiving an infected blood transfusion.

Section 4. Consent

32. I believe that I have consented to all the treatment I have received.

33. I was told that I would need a blood transfusion after the D&C procedure. At no point was I told that there was a risk of the blood being infected. All I knew was that I needed it and I had no choice.

34. I didn't know that the BTS tested blood specifically for HCV. I just assumed that they tested for all bloodborne viruses, which is what led to my HCV diagnosis. If the BTS hadn't tested my blood I don't know if I would ever have been diagnosed with HCV.

Section 5. Impact

35. I have always felt fortunate, despite being unlucky to have had HCV in the first place and to be left with cirrhosis, because HCV hasn't hugely impacted my health. I have never experienced symptoms of HCV or cirrhosis. Apart from the obvious damage to my liver, I have gone through life happily with my husband and it hasn't affected me, although it is always in the back of my mind that things could deteriorate.

36. My ankles swell up a lot and I struggle to walk very far now. I can't say whether this is related to HCV and it could be a result of old age. I have

also started to forget things but again this could be age-related. It is difficult to say how much HCV specifically has impacted my health.

37. I was always very open and honest about my HCV infection. I told friends and family and did not feel that there was any adverse reaction to this.

38. I was never given any advice about managing my HCV infection, which meant that I was never made aware of how HCV could be transmitted. Moreover, I got the impression from my GP and other clinicians, that they knew very little about HCV at that time. It was not until I first saw Dr Butcher that I was properly consulted.

39. The greatest impact on me was the lack of information I received about HCV at the time of my diagnosis. I remember my husband and I used to watch Peak Practice regularly. One night there was a programme dealing with HCV and John was ready with a pen and paper as they always gave a helpline number out at the end. However, on this episode there was nothing. This was the same in the papers and the news more generally. I feel that this is such a big scandal that has not received the attention it deserves, even with the Inquiry going on.

40. I managed to get a small life insurance policy with one firm. I was open about my HCV status and they were fine and accepted this. However, I later applied for a new policy with the same firm and I was rejected.

41. I phoned the insurance firm to ask them why I had been turned down and they said it was because of John. GRO-C GRO-C GRO-C. I therefore believe that they may have rejected my application because of my HCV status.

42. Thankfully I have had no problems in getting travel insurance. On one occasion I was turned down for a credit card and I often wonder whether it had anything to do with my having HCV.

43. I was a blood donor for 15 years whilst unwittingly having HCV. My blood was most likely given to others. This makes me feel a bit guilty and upset but I just didn't know.

Section 6. Treatment/Care/Support

44. I have not had any difficulties in obtaining treatment, care or support in respect of my HCV infection.

45. Helen Caldwell mentioned that I might need to see a psychiatrist if I consented to the first course of treatment offered to me. However, this just put me off the treatment straight away. As I recall it, this wasn't an offer to provide psychological support. Rather, it was more a suggestion and general advice owing to the psychological side-effects associated with that course of treatment. I was never offered counselling.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

46. I first heard of the Skipton Fund through John's niece, who is a family planning nurse in Liverpool. John's niece had a patient who told her that she had HCV and she received a payment. She then informed me and asked if I was aware. I didn't have a clue about it and had heard nothing about the possibility of financial assistance.

47. I must've gone to see Dr Butcher after this, who I remember helped me in completing the forms. Dr Butcher supported my application and provided evidence of my infection through a blood transfusion.

48. After applying to the Skipton Fund I waited for a few months and was then accepted. I received a stage 1 payment of £20,000 and later, after my diagnosis with cirrhosis in 2015, a stage 2 payment of £50,000. From about that point I began to receive regular quarterly payments that have increased over time. As of April 2022, I receive £7392 per quarter. I also

receive a cold weather allowance in December of around £550 but that varies slightly each year.

49. I got the impression that I had to make an effort to apply for financial assistance, when I think that they should have just accepted their wrongdoing and paid out accordingly. I was 27 years old when I received infected blood and I am now 74 years old. I have only been receiving quarterly payments since 2015. I feel that the payments should have been back-dated because I hadn't been told about the establishment of the Skipton Fund or how to apply.

Section 8. Other Issues

50. I received infected blood in 1975. The Inquiry started in 2018. Why has it taken so long for there to be an Inquiry into this?

51. I also question why I was never told about payments from the Skipton Fund and the fact that I found out incidentally via John's niece. When I did receive the money, it wasn't backdated taking into account how long I lived with this or the fact that I was not informed that it was available.

52. I would like to know why no one has taken responsibility for what has happened so far, why no one has apologised to the victims of the infected blood scandal, and in any case, I want to know why the blood was never tested before it was given to patients in the first place.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed GRO-C

Dated 1st June 2022