

Witness Name: Naheed Ibrahim

Statement No: WITN6424001

Exhibits: 0

Dated: September 2021

## INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

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### FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF NAHEED IBRAHIM

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I, Naheed Ibrahim, will say as follows:-

#### **Section 1. Introduction**

1. My name is Naheed Ibrahim. I was born on GRO-C 1970 and I live at GRO-C  
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2. My mother, Nazira Begum (born on GRO-C 1948), was infected with the Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) through a contaminated blood transfusion. She died on 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2020, aged 72.
3. This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my mother's medical records.

## **Section 2. How Affected**

4. My mother (Mum) had a blood transfusion whilst undergoing a hysterectomy at the Singleton Hospital in Swansea, South Wales in the mid to late 1980s. She was transfused with 7 units of blood during that operation. I am the eldest child of four, two girls and two boys and I believe I was around the age of 17 when Mum had the contaminated transfusion.
5. Mum wasn't told that she had been infected with HCV for many years later (in the early 2000s) and by then she had become unwell. She subsequently needed a liver transplant and had to wait a substantial period of time before she had one. Approximately three years after the liver transplant Mum developed drug-induced Parkinson's Disease leading to her death last year.

## **Section 3. Other Infections**

6. I do not believe that my mother was infected with anything other than HCV.

## **Section 4. Consent**

7. My mother was not pre-warned about the risk of infection through a blood transfusion prior to the hysterectomy. She didn't expect to have a blood transfusion when she had the hysterectomy. She was quite vocal about telling other people what had happened to her when she was recovering from the operation afterwards. I remember her saying 'they had to give me 7 units of blood'.

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

8. Mum suffered with depression throughout her life but, being infected with HCV led to a succession of events that irrevocably destroyed her mental and emotional wellbeing and ultimately cost her her life. Mum was never the same

person after the surgery. She became very unwell and she wasn't told that she had been infected with HCV for something in the region of 15 years.

9. My parents had a thriving grocery business in South Wales. Mum became unwell within a couple of years of the hysterectomy and she wasn't able to continue working. She always seemed to be ill. She was bloated and complained of stomach pains. She always had problems with what she ate. My youngest sibling (my youngest brother) is a good 7 years younger than me. We lost a parent in Mum and it was horrendous. None of us had an education. Mum was bedridden through a heavy monthly blood loss before the hysterectomy. After the hysterectomy she became a different person. Mum would not even speak to us in the morning until she had had a cup of tea and at least two cigarettes. Because of her unpredictable mood swings, we didn't ever know what we were going to get with her. The worst of it by far was the strained relationship between our parents.

10. Mum was often yellow. She had chronic liver damage and she developed encephalopathy from the toxins. She was always confused, and her behavior was so erratic. We didn't know why she was so confused. When Mum was eventually diagnosed with HCV, no-one spoke to us about how she had become infected. We are an Asian family. GRO-C

GRO-C no-one spoke to my father about the infection. He was an uneducated man and he didn't know how to cope. There was no advice and/or education available to my parents except for being told to use protection during intimacy. Their relationship went to pot altogether and my father 'threw the towel in'. Thereafter my mother became bitter and narcissistic. She was very hard to deal with and it was particularly hard on my youngest brother who was still living at home. Mum's care therefore mostly fell to him.

11. Mum had a full 6 month course of Interferon as an HCV clearing treatment in the early to mid-2000s. It was a really nasty treatment and she was so poorly. It was horrible. She had her injection on a Monday and was poorly for the rest

of the week. It was not fair for her to have to endure all of that over something as preventable as the contaminated blood she had been transfused with. We all thought that HCV was something like diabetes that you 'just got it' through genetics or bad luck. I found out that she had been infected with it when I attended an event organised by The Hepatitis Trust. I knew someone there who told me HCV was a contractable disease and asked me where Mum had got it from. It all started to unravel from that point, and I was advised to contact and make enquiries on Mum's behalf through the Skipton Fund.

12. After the Interferon treatment Mum was in very poor shape. In addition to her poor mental health, she had cirrhosis of the liver and had lots of fluid retention issues. Mum needed a liver transplant and we had to fight tooth and nail for it. We were initially told that Mum was not entitled to one on the NHS as she was, by then, over 60 years old. That was a huge blow to us, particularly as Mum had been infected with HCV whilst under the care of the NHS. I remember that we looked into taking Mum to Germany for a transplant, but it was going to cost in or around £130,000 to £140,000.

13. After a fight by us, Mum was placed on the NHS waiting list for a liver transplant. Notwithstanding the fact that we had been told that Mum had been given the 'all clear' for HCV her encephalopathy persisted. Around 6 to 8 months before the transplant Mum was rushed into A&E. Her confusion was so intense that she couldn't recognise us and she didn't know who we were.

14. There were three occasions where Mum was called to come in for a transplant that did not proceed because the donor liver was defective. We lived in Manchester and had to rush Mum to St James Hospital in Leeds every time the transplant was going ahead and then aborted. So much time was lost just waiting for the transplant and it was unbelievably stressful for all of us. Mum was called in a fourth time and the transplant went ahead that time. After 13 hours of surgery she was on life support before the monitoring alarms went off and she had to be rushed back in for a further two-hour surgery.

15. Mum developed Parkinson's Disease around three years after the transplant.

We were told that it was probably drug induced through the medications that Mum needed to take for life because of the transplant. Having Parkinson's Disease opened another can of worms for Mum. She had fought the war against HCV, and she had fought for a transplant. When she was told that she had Parkinson's she lost the will to live and she took it out on us, her children. It is expected in Asian families for the children to look after their parents. It was out of the question for us to seek help or look at Nursing Homes. We took Mum to all her hospital appointments and did everything for her. GRO-C

GRO-C nothing we did was good enough for her.

16. Mum being diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease worsened the impact on our family tenfold. It was horrendous. She called the ambulance service (often ending up in A&E) 20-25 times in the space of just 14 weeks. She would call us at all hours of the day, crying and saying she was going to take an overdose and kill herself. About a year before her death she called me on my way home from work to tell me that if I didn't come over/be there with her within the next 5 minutes she would commit suicide. I had her on Bluetooth/loudspeaker (I couldn't pull over as I was on the motorway) trying to talk her down and persuading her to wait for me to pick up my daughter and get home to her. She agreed to wait for me but by the time I had got back to Rochdale she wasn't picking up. I then took a call from the Police and my brother telling me that the ambulance was on its way as Mum had apparently taken a whole bottle of her Parkinson's medication in combination with some Paramax tablets. It later transpired that she had in fact taken some of the Paramax and had flushed the rest of her medication down the toilet.

17. Mum meddled in my first (arranged) marriage and that marriage broke down after four years, leaving me with two young boys to care for. My second husband was ill for 14 years with portal vein thrombosis before his death 9 years ago. We siblings had to deal with so much emotional trauma in our own lives and Mum was so needy. We all suffered mentally.

18. Mum's mind had gone towards the end and we endured some extreme lows. From the eldest (me) to the youngest of us, we siblings were worn out trying to cope. We had our own life problems and children. Mum thought her physical health to be worse than it was and asked us to put her in a nursing home, but she wasn't able to settle there (or with any of us subsequently). Mum complained that the nursing staff weren't look after her and said that we were 'bad kids' for putting her there. It literally destroyed us, and we are still living with the pain of the trauma of it all now. We have videos and pictures of Mum in the nursing home just crying and destroying us for leaving her there.

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 Towards the end of Mum's life Mum lived with me, and my sister and I were her primary carers. Mum's ending was horrendous. She stopped eating for 6-8 weeks before she died, and we had to fight for IV feeding for her. My sister and I sat by her bed and were there when she drew her last breath.

20. It didn't end there. We are exhausted and shell shocked even now. As a result of the stress, I resigned from my job last Christmas. Our entire family has been deeply adversely affected by infected blood and its impact on us has passed down the generations to our own children.

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

21. Mum had HCV clearing treatment. No-one was offered care and support.

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

22. Mum received a lump sum payment from one of the dedicated trusts, I presume to be the Skipton Fund.

## **Section 7. Other Matters**

23. Mum was given the 'all clear' after the HCV clearing treatment. We later questioned whether that indeed was the case and asked to see Mum's medical records, to be informed that they had gone 'missing'.

## **Anonymity**

24. I do not seek anonymity and I understand that this Statement will be disclosed for publication to the Inquiry.

## **Statement of Truth**

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

Signed...NAHEED IBRAHIM.....

Dated...29-10-2021.....