Witness Name: GRO-B
Statement No: WITN0442001
Exhibits: None
Dated: 10 April 2019

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 15 October 2018.

I, GRO-B will say as follows: -

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is name is GRO-B My date of birth is GRO-B 1958 and my address is GRO-B, GRO-B I am a retired school teacher and I am no longer able to work for reasons I will explain later, I live alone. I have three children and one grandchild. I intend to speak about my infection of Hepatitis C from a blood transfusion I received in 1989. In particular, the nature of my illness, how the illness affected me, the treatment I received and the impact it has had on my children and I.

2. I was born in GRO-B Africa as my father used to be a teacher there, we later moved back to Scotland. After studying in GRO-B I moved to London where I eventually got a job with GRO-B I met my future

husband, who was a total cockney and we were married in GRO-B and went on to have three children.

3. I had my eldest child, a son in 1986, a daughter in 1989 and another daughter in 1992. It was after the birth of my second child in 1989 that I experienced some complications during birth, which led to my having a blood transfusion.

4. My father died in 2001 and my mother died in GRO-B 2018.

Section 2. How Infected

5. I gave birth to my second child on GRO-B 1989 at University College Hospital ("**UCH**") London, near Tottenham Court Road. At the time all the big posters about HIV and AIDS were everywhere warning people to be careful. Once I'd given birth to my daughter I had to have a manual removal of the placenta because it hadn't come out.

6. I remember giving birth to my daughter at about five to one in the morning and after having her I later went to the toilet at about ten o clock. When I went I thought I was giving birth again, I was haemorrhaging. What I now believe is that when the placenta was manually removed a small part was left inside me and this is what triggered the haemorrhage.

7. I remember saying to one of the nurses that I'd made such a mess in the toilets and asking for a mop. Instead, I was cleaned up and put back to bed and a drip was put in my arm, which administered plasma to me. I had this drip for five days. No one said anything to me about any potential risks. I'm not sure how many units I had but there was a mention of eight. If required I am willing for all my medical notes to be seen, there's nothing to be hidden.

8. The medical staff at UCH could not have been nicer through all this. I was not allowed to get out of bed, I was prescribed complete bed rest and they

would bring me extra food. I really don't think they knew what was happening and I want to say that. If they knew then they were very good actors but I don't think they knew that I was being contaminated by the drip, I certainly didn't.

9. My daughter had been born a little bit early and was slightly jaundiced as a result but they bought the incubator next to my bed so I could see her. I was in hospital for a week. I was put on iron tablets for 12 months after giving birth but no one ever mentioned anything about Hepatitis C.

10. I left and went home to our house in GRO-B After giving birth I was incontinent so I couldn't really go anywhere because of that. I had to adapt my life around my not being able to go out so it's hard to know when the symptoms of Hepatitis C started setting in.

11. My son was three years old at the time, it was hard work having a new born baby and a toddler. He often went to playgroups and I had a friend who used to help me out, she'd come round and she knew how tired I was, she'd had her children at very similar times to me but she would often take my son too and from playgroup for me. I remember my son would go out for the afternoon and I was lucky my daughter was a good sleeper. I would just sleep while he was out at playgroup.

12. I had started a Open University course while I was pregnant with my second child, I wanted to keep my brain ticking over. After she was born studying was very different. When she slept, I slept. My son was three and he would be running round the house and I would just sit on the sofa, I just didn't have the energy. I got him to help me round the house and used cleaning and housework as a distraction for him.

13. Within six months of giving birth to my daughter the exhaustion had started to set in. I didn't think anything of it, I didn't even know about Hepatitis C until a few years ago.

14. I became very tired and my temperament changed. I became increasingly short tempered and irritable when in the past I'd been quite a laissez-faire person. I definitely didn't recognise these changes, that said I didn't know what I was looking for. My husband said I changed, I became tired and very emotionally low and physically sore. None of these changes happened overnight it was just a gradual development.

15. I didn't like going out as much as I had, I couldn't be bothered to go out for a meal, there was a lot of exhaustion and it wasn't long before I started to feel mentally different. I started to get more anxious about the future and the world but I thought this was because I had children to worry about now.

16. My sister in law came round for the christening after my daughter was born and she told me to try a gin and tonic but I was breast-feeding. I took a sip of the gin and I felt like I had been poisoned. It was horrific. I felt my whole body react. I had never touched spirits before then and I haven't since. I don't know if this reaction was because of the transfusion or not but I can still remember the feeling now, I have the odd drink these days but only ever drink wine.

17. Suddenly living in London didn't appeal to me. I left London when my son was 5 and my daughter was 2 in 1991 and moved to the GRO-B I was expecting my third child, although I didn't know it at the time. My second daughter was born on GRO-B 1992 the doctor GRO-B in Scotland had told me that I couldn't have my baby GRO-B due to the complications I'd had with the previous birth. I decided to go back to UCH to the same hospital I'd had my other two children in and she was born there. The birth was normal and there were no complications.

18. As far as I am aware, no tests were done on me when I gave birth, I'd been infected for nearly four years at this point although I didn't know it. It

makes me sad to think about all the health workers who were put at risk because they didn't wear gloves. None of us knew.

19. Initially I'd moved up to Scotland with the children by myself. I could have stayed with family but I'm quite an independent person. We started off by living in a caravan, which was fine, but we did eventually move into a house.

20. My husband moved up a year later but originally stayed in GRO-B He was working as a GRO-B and would work twelve-hour shifts and have one day off a week, usually a Tuesday. Before I moved I would get him to take the children out on his day off and I would just sleep. We waited for him to move in case I didn't like it and the children couldn't settle. My son had loved his playgroup in London and we kept everything temporary in case it didn't work out in Scotland.

21. My husband moved up and got a job at a local hotel behind the bar, he was a great cook and he eventually moved into the kitchen. Then he got a job with GRO-B he worked for them for the rest of his life.

22. My marriage was failing because of me, I had no energy and I wasn't bothered about the physical side of it. My libido was gone and I was only in my early thirties. The spark in the marriage had gone too but we just assumed that this was because I was looking after three children, I was always tired because of that. I was a stay at home mum until my youngest went to school then I got back into teaching.

23. I never sought any help about how I was feeling, it never even crossed my mind to talk to someone, I just got on with life. My priorities had changed and my life revolved around my children.

24. When I look back I now realised I went from someone who hadn't been very nervous to a very worried and anxious person. I thought it was because I was a people pleaser but the nerves didn't stop and the pain began. Initially it started with pain in my knees and then I developed depression and it was just awful. You didn't speak about depression in those days of course, it was just something that happened and you dealt with it. I used to ask my children to rub my knees because they were so painful.

25. My husband said I'd lost interest in sex, I was just too tired. He found solace elsewhere which happens anyway I think, with or without Hepatitis C. I never felt the need to go to the doctors I just continued to get on with life. My children were all born within six years of each other so I just managed how I was around them.

26. The first instance of me physically taking myself to the Doctors was in 2001 when my eldest child was fifteen. I was working as a teacher and I definitely began to feel quite overwhelmed with all the anxiety. I was fine in the classroom and loved the kids but the constant tiredness and anxiety made me feel really overwhelmed. I told myself it was because I had three kids.

27. I remember feeling so tired I would need to go to bed before my children. My son needed to revise for his exams and would want to go over questions in the evening and I would just sit there with him. Sometimes I would have to say to them that I couldn't help them in the evening and would go to bed at about eight o'clock. It was ridiculous; I was going to bed before my kids.

28. I developed blood shot eyes on a couple of occasions. The first time I ignored it but the second time I went to the doctor about it and I remember he asked me "how are you feeling within yourself?" I just burst into tears. They put me on Fluoxetine, which is an anti depressant which was awful to

start with but once I started taking it in the morning instead of the evening it began to help.

29. I felt like I'd failed because I had depression. I had everything to live for: a good job, good family and great kids. It was almost like I withdrew into myself over a period of years. I was working and I loved my job but I would have been quite happy just sitting at home. I just didn't have an interest.

30. I ensured my kids were very sociable. I got them out and about I drove them anywhere they wanted to go, my husband never would so I did it but there were times, when I look back now, when although I was physically there I was absent as a mother. I just let my children go and do their own thing. This makes me feel terrible now, especially with the youngest because I was the most absent for her. The Hepatitis caused this and I can never get those years back.

31. I remember more for the other two but I don't remember a lot of my youngest child's childhood. Looking back she recently said to me "you stopped being fun, where did our fun mum go?" That statement from my daughter just kind of summed it up for me and she didn't say that to me that long ago, probably around Christmas 2017.

32. I think my two other children had to take over the mum role from me for her and this is very difficult to deal with because it makes me feel so bad. Its only in the past eighteen months – two years that I've been able to broach the subject of my absence in her childhood with her. I can see that it has had an effect on her, she was very close to her father and struggled more than the other two when he died. Fortunately she was close to one of her GRO-B friends mother and father and, on reflection they helped her. She GRO-B from the age of 10.

33. I persuaded her to go to the GP because she is suffering from depression. It has taken her a bit of time to acknowledge this but I told her she needs

to go to someone and tell them what her childhood was like. She is very sad about the situation.

34. On 4 July 2005, I woke up and my fingers were so swollen there was no space between my them, my feet were also in agony due to the swelling. I had been down to the beach with the children the previous day and I was in so much pain I thought I had trodden on a jellyfish because I had been bare foot in the water. I didn't bother to do anything about it because I thought the swelling would go down.

35. After two weeks I was still really cramped up so I went to the doctors and was diagnosed with Rheumatoid Arthritis. I used to be an athletics coach and train in endurance long distance running myself so it was a bit of a blow when I found out I could no longer do these things.

36. In between all this there was an underlying sadness. Definitely my brain wasn't working the way it should have been. Sometimes my children would tell me they were worried I had Alzheimer's because I was always repeating myself. I even put my car keys in the fridge.

37. The years went by, my blood levels were tested and I was on lots of different medications. Sometimes my white blood cell count would be ok, then it would improve then it would rapidly decline for no apparent reason.

38. In 2014 my regular doctor, GRO-B decided to do a full blood spectrum test. I did not know she was going to do the test but I did completely trust her. Obviously she had some kind of inkling something was wrong.

39. She called me in and told me I had Hepatitis C. I didn't know what it was so ever the joker I said at least it's not cancer. I didn't ask her how I had contracted it but she told me we needed to find out how it had happened. I've got no tattoos, I had my ears pierced when I was twelve and I have never used needles so through the process of elimination Dr GRO-B told

me the only thing she could put her finger on was the haemorrhage and transfusion I'd had in 1989. She knew I was not an intravenous drug user, nor had I been around anyone who could have sexually transmitted it to me so the transfusion was the only answer.

40. By this stage I was finding it difficult to work. I had been teaching at a school for several years and the Head was quite difficult. The School and the local council didn't have things in place for people with arthritis. GRO-B GRO-B They made my working life quite unbearable.

41. They didn't want me to go for the monthly blood tests, which had to be done in the morning, they wanted me to do it after work. There was one particular day that I had my blood tests in the morning, the Head actually phoned the director of education and said that I had failed to show up at work. The Head was awful, she played mind games.

42. Arthritis is a progressive thing, when I was first diagnosed it wasn't that bad but I have good days and bad days. The school just didn't recognise that. They made life very difficult for me; I was terrified of going to work. When I found out I had Hepatitis C I remember thinking that if they ever found out I would be absolutely finished.

43. In some ways having the Hepatitis label, not just for the physical but also the mental symptoms really helped me. I had an explanation and validation for the way I had been feeling.

44. I have changed from 1989 onward. I was a different person to who I am now. I wasn't as confident as I had been, and I didn't have the concentration to do things like sit down and read. I don't know how I worked or GRO-B but somehow I just got on with the demands of everyday life.

45. After the Hepatitis C diagnosis I was sent over to the Glasgow Royal Infirmary ("**GRI**") for treatment. This happened very quickly.

Section 3. Other Infections

46. I have not had any other infections from being given contaminated blood.

47. I do not know how connected my Rheumatoid Arthritis is to the Hepatitis. It is an Immune issue so it may well have been triggered by the infection.

48. When I had my full blood spectrum test in 2014 I think I might have been tested for HIV then, I'm not sure.

49. I seem to remember being asked a question regarding HIV when I was pregnant with my middle child.

Section 4. Consent

50. I don't remember giving my consent for the plasma drip, because of my haemorrhage and how much I bled out it just happened. I think it was a more a case of they had to give me the plasma rather than it being optional.

Section 5. Impact

51. I didn't want to tell my children because there is such a huge stigma concerning Hepatitis C. It is associated with drug addicts and prostitutes. My final years with GRO-B GRO-B I used to sit with prostitutes and drug addicts on a one to one basis. They were sad cases a lot of them with mental health problems but you had to treat them carefully and be careful around them.

52. I was wary of telling my children but then I realised I'd had the youngest one after being infected and she was training to be a nurse. Suddenly I was very worried. I remembered when I'd had the drip and the haemorrhage had occurred there was a time when I had still been in hospital and breast feeding my middle child and I'd had another haemorrhage and some of my blood had gone on her. I also thought about my son and desperately tried to remember if he'd ever had open wounds or we'd shared any utensils. All the information I knew about HIV came rushing back to me and really scared me.

53. I spoke to Dr GRO-B about my fears and she told me she didn't think I had anything to worry about but recommended that I tell my children. Those conversations were the hardest thing.

54. I told my middle child first. She panicked completely because she is a very black and white person. She did end up going to her doctors and being tested but thankfully nothing was wrong. She thought I was hiding things and believed I'd gone on the seedier side of life so we didn't speak for about two and a half years. She didn't accept it was a blood transfusion. She thought I must have done something wrong because she was fine and I was ill and she just couldn't understand it. She would not speak to me and I just hoped and prayed that eventually she would come round. I only ever contacted her at Christmas and birthdays.

55. She became a mother eight months ago. When she met her now husband she wouldn't even introduce me to him but she did introduce him to her father. They became engaged and she eventually let me meet him but only with his parents present. She was still very standoffish and would only shake my hand, she wouldn't hug me.

56. Then she became a mum and things have changed. She's got a friend who is a nurse and I know she's spoken about me to her and she's begun to realise she was wrong. She's spoken to her dad and he assured her that I never did anything 'seedy'. I think she's now accepted I was infected

via the blood transfusion. She wanted to see pictures of me with the drip in my arm as proof that I had had the transfusion in 1989, there weren't any pictures.

57. When I told my son he took it in his stride. I don't know if it's a man thing but he said oh it's nothing and everything was fine with him.

58. My youngest daughter was training to be a nurse when I told her and she told me she was always tested for lots of weird things including Hepatitis C but she said she would get checked again.

59. I told all my children individually in 2014. My husband was still alive at this point but he died in 2016 of prostate cancer.

60. I never told people unless I had to. I did inadvertently tell my mum who was a nurse about a year before she died in 2017. It just came out by accident, we were talking about my sisters drinking and liver cancer and I said I felt lucky to have had Hepatitis C and not anything worse. She told me I was very dirty and didn't want me to touch her. She reacted like my eldest daughter. I know she never told anyone before she died.

61. My sister never knew, she was a very highly regarded woman who'd given birth to five kids, however she was an alcoholic who would drink anything and everything. She hid it well. She died of liver cancer.

62. It's awful having the stigma. I know if I said anything to the people where I live it would be difficult and would perhaps impact on my children and that would be unacceptable. I don't worry for myself but my children. It's easier to protect them when they're small.

63. I tell my daughter to enjoy her time with her little one now because it's only going to get worse. Perhaps I'm biased but GRO-B you know if you want your children to get on in life, they need to go and study GRO-B

GRO-B so you have to get them ready to leave home at about 17/18 years old. It's like that Buddhist saying – 'if you love someone enough you set them free' My husband used to say I was hard on the kids but it was my way of preparing them to fly the nest.

64. How I was an GRO-B teacher throughout all this I don't know. I think I knew I just had to get through it and in some ways being told what I had was a weight off my shoulders. It explained so much.

65. One thing I do want to say is that it would have been good to have a bit of counselling after being told because I was suddenly thrust into this new situation with little warning. My GP was very good but they can only give you ten minutes of their time. I always saw the same nurse and doctor at GRI throughout my treatment but they had lots of other patients and I didn't feel like I had anyone I could talk to. I felt like a drug addict when I was injecting myself with the treatment.

66. I remember being so careful if I ever cut myself and even now, when I've been told I am clear of the virus I am terrified when I'm around my granddaughter, I won't even kiss her.

67. My daughter has taken this to the nth degree she won't let anyone kiss her daughter. She's told the other grandparents and everyone in the family that they're not allowed to kiss her. I wonder if that's the impact of my situation on her? I think she still has the thought of Hepatitis C in her head and her over-protection of her daughter is how she manages this.

68. My youngest daughter is very different, she's so laid back she's almost horizontal. My children all have such different personalities and appearances. The only thing they have in common is they've all inherited their dad's blue eyes.

69. From 1989 right up to the present day there has been a deterioration of my mental health. I dealt with the physical symptoms by getting fit, I used to

push myself but then the Rheumatoid Arthritis came, as I said earlier, I don't know if this is a side effect of Hepatitis C or not.

70. When I told my husband he walked out. He was scared I might have infected him but I hadn't. I told him after I told my children. He used it as an excuse to leave because we weren't getting on that well. I told him "I have been diagnosed with Hepatitis C" and he just looked at me and walked after that. I think I got as far as "Hepatitis C" and that was it. He took it badly and moved on to another woman and we never really spoke again. We got divorced after that but we both stayed GRO-B

71. He passed away a couple of years later around 2016. After he died I found out that he'd also assumed that I'd done things I shouldn't have done to get Hepatitis. Even though he was aware of the problems I had had during the birth of my second child and the fact that I had received several units of plasma didn't register with him.

72. My generation is not well educated on how you can contract it. There's always the assumption it's through sharing needles or prostitution.

73. There was a period, after I'd finished the treatment that I became extremely depressed. I had issues at work to the point where if I went to work and saw the head teacher's car in the car park I would vomit in the ditch from anxiety because she was such a difficult woman.

74. I went from someone who had hitch hiked to London when I was 21 years old to vomiting from anxiety because one woman could affect me that badly. I ended up leaving that job when I was 51 years old, and I retired. I didn't have the heart to keep it up anymore.

75. My youngest was only about 20 at the time all this was going on, she had been bought up with me suffering from depression and anxiety and then

the Hepatitis C treatment happened. I had arthritis and I had to give everything I had enjoyed, such as long distance running, up.

76. I started drinking a bottle of wine on a Friday night, and then it increased to drinking a bottle on a Friday and Saturday night. Then it increased to two bottles. This went on for about four years, my father had died, my marriage had broken, I had Hepatitis C, I was depressed, I didn't have a job and my children had left home. I felt completely alone and it was horrific.

77. I thought about getting back into work and possibly going into supply teaching but the Head of Education was very friendly with the awful head teacher who'd made me so anxious and I realised that if I ever went back to teaching in the area I would have to tell them I'd had Hepatitis. Then I realised that if I ever went back to work to do anything even if it was road sweeping I'd had to tell them and that was devastating.

78. I was binge drinking. It wasn't a daily occurrence, sometimes I would go weeks or months without having a drink but then I would open a bottle and it would escalate. My kids saw it happen. I went to the doctors about it, they gave me counselling and I still have the option of speaking to the community psychiatric nurse if I want to.

79. Luckily the drinking never affected my liver. How I don't know. Thinking about it, I could be dead, I could have caused some really significant damage to myself.

80. None of my children are infected and that is a real bonus, I don't have to live with that guilt. Watching my daughter with her daughter makes life worth living, she is such an incredible mum.

81. After my diagnosis I received some money from the Skipton Fund, I wanted to do something with it because suddenly life was worth living again.

82. I went to GRO-B after taking a course in voluntary teaching abroad. I was based in GRO-B and I worked for an English gentleman who started up an organisation to provide education for the poor. I stayed in GRO-B but we had to cycle to where we were teaching, GRO-B GRO-B

83. My son is a GRO-B teacher in Edinburgh. When I came back from GRO-B he went and did the same thing I had but he wanted to get paid to teach so he went to GRO-B for a year. Then with the same company he went to work just outside GRO-B He paid for me to come out to GRO-B to visit him and we went to China and saw part of the Great Wall which had always been on my bucket list. We also saw the Terracotta warriors which was amazing, we went to GRO-B and finally back to GRO-B

84. These days I still sometimes have to make an effort to engage. I have to pull and force myself to do things. I am going back to GRO-B later this year.

85. My sleep is still affected from all this. I am up at 5am every morning.

Section 6. Treatment/Care/Support

86. After my diagnosis I was sent to the liver unit at GRI in July 2014. I had imaging scans and fibroid scans taken and I had some more blood tests. I was told that the results of those indicated that my liver was fine. They did scans of my whole body and all sorts of checks.

87. When I was first diagnosed I was quite dismissive because I didn't know anything about the virus. I was under the care of Dr Forest at GRI and the second time we met he sat me down and told me how serious it was because I wasn't taking it seriously. He told me a lot of things were going to happen to me physically and mentally and I thought this was good of

him as he had a lot of patients and saw a lot of people. He made time for me, he told me I was important to them.

88. Then they called me back and told me about the treatment I was going to start. They gave me a little blue book, which told me about some of the side effects I could expect, that was the only information I got. I don't feel like this information prepared me for what I was about to go through with the treatment. I don't feel like I was totally prepared for the impact it was going to have on me.

89. I'd thought Methotrexate was a bad drug to take but the Hepatitis treatment was vicious. I injected Interferon into my stomach and took Ribavirin as well as another drug for six months. They were dirty drugs. I used to try and put a positive spin on it telling myself at least I got a trip to Glasgow every four weeks. My children were GRO-B so I got to see them.

90. The way I felt was awful, my sleeping was bad and my depression got even worse. I didn't put how I felt down to the drugs initially. At times I was so low I wanted to jump off the causeway. I was in pain, I wasn't able to eat properly – I didn't even have the energy to eat. But I lost weight because of that, so that wasn't so bad.

91. I kept being told I had to eat healthy but It was so hard to muster the energy. On some days I didn't have the energy to turn the water tap on. That's how bad it was.

92. In between coming to Glasgow, I also had to keep having blood tests at my local doctors and I was also on Hydroxychloroquine Sulfate.

93. I also had indigestion and IBS, I think it was the on-going side effects of the treatment. I had skin irritation, I was ridiculously itchy, it felt like I had ants under my skin, it was horrific.

94. The pain I felt was difficult to explain, it was constant. It felt like I constantly had sinusitis or something, I was consistently mentally cloudy. I would liken my mental state to "baby brain" but it was so much worse. I would put something down and forget about it straight away.

95. There was one particular time, which was definitely a 'brain fog' moment. I was working 44 miles away from home GRO-B and I remember being on one place as I was driving home and the next minute I was almost home. I had no memory of the journey whatsoever and it was really scary.

96. These moments had happened before the treatment and then got worse as I went on the treatment. It was very frightening and got progressively worse. I worried because I was looking after my kids and driving nearly a 90 mile round trip to and from work. I was worried that I would light a peat fire and forget to put the guard up at home.

97. I had been in pain before the treatment but I'd always put it down to my arthritis.

98. I started treatment in July 2014 and I was on it for six months. I finished the course and came back to GRI after six months in 2015 to be tested and was told my viral load was undetectable. I've never had any follow up tests since. I have read that you're supposed to have another test six and then twelve months after finishing the treatment. I have read that the virus can hide in your system necessitating this later test.

99. I imagine, because I have to have blood tests every four weeks because of my arthritis that they've been checking anyway. I hope they have, they would be pretty stupid not to.

100. My youngest daughter who is a nurse feels as though there's been a bit of deterioration with me recently. She brought it up to me and told me I need to get my meds checked. At Christmas she told me that there was something different about me.

101. I did have to go to my doctor just after Christmas, I was very ill. My mother had just died and I do think stress does nothing to help me. I try to avoid it as much as possible.

102. Before the treatment my knees used to ache day and night, since having the treatment I still have the arthritis but it's a different pain, its changed somehow.

103. The treatment wasn't very nice to go through and the depression hasn't gone away sadly and I don't know why. It's almost like a sense of loss. I am on medication for my depression.

104. I think my depression was bought on by the Hepatitis C as before I was quite an upbeat person, I was never a very serious person compared to my siblings and I had always been spontaneous. I used to enjoy going out and meeting people and I didn't understand depression before I was diagnosed.

105. Depression didn't even cross my mind when I was younger, I never panicked about anything and would frame things as a pass or a fail. I couldn't understand why people worried so much about things that didn't matter to me like exam results.

106. I went to London on a whim and a prayer when I was 20/21 years old. My friend and I decided in a pub in Glasgow to hitch a ride to London, which we did from a lorry driver over night in 1979. You wouldn't do something like that these days.

107. I have been depressed since 1989 and it might have started as post-natal but that doesn't last forever. I have suffered from depression since I had the transfusion.

108. Perhaps because I had the Rheumatoid Arthritis I began to look at diets and the virus treatment made me even more aware of that. I have to admit though during the treatment I probably didn't take as much care because I didn't have the energy.

109. These days its difficult to know how I am, I still have the Rheumatoid Arthritis and my feet, back and hands are bad. I still have flare ups. I am on two different medications for the arthritis and I have other things for the pain. I have codeine from my doctor in case I need it.

110. I have to take an antibiotic called Nitrofurantoin every day and this helps me with urine infections, which definitely got worse after the treatment. After I gave birth to my second child I suffered from some sort of complication, which meant that I wouldn't know when I was wetting myself. I would be sitting down and feel the pain and the only thing I could do was put plastic and towels underneath me because I wouldn't be able to feel myself going.

111. These urine infections after the Hepatitis C treatment are the same, it's like a deep ache but its not cystitis. I've had to have my bladder looked at because of it. If I don't take this tablet everyday the weakness in my bladder will just hit me out of nowhere, I will have to take it for the rest of my life so there's obviously a weakness there.

112. Counselling was never offered to me when I was diagnosed or being treated and I strongly believe that had I had some, it would have helped. I think my children would have benefitted from this as well.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

113. When Dr GRO-B diagnosed me in July 2014 she'd already set the wheels in motion, she ensured that I was seen very quickly at GRI. After my first visit to GRI I went back to see Dr GRO-B and she told me I was eligible for compensation. My first reaction was that I didn't want to take money from the NHS, they had always been fantastic to me and when I had haemorrhaged they had really looked after me. I thought the compensation came directly from the NHS and I didn't want it.

114. Dr GRO-B explained to me what the compensation actually entailed and showed me all the details. I filled in the application forms and Dr GRO-B helped me.

115. I couldn't believe it when I got the money. I received a lump sum of £20,000 at some point after my diagnosis. Part of this went towards my first GRO-B trip and the other part I used to buy a Croft of land for my children. It is split between them and it has sheep on it which are used for wool and lamb. My son runs that process.

116. My case has now been transferred to EIBSS and I receive a monthly payment from them. I used to get £1500 and then I was sent a form about a year ago to apply for income top ups and I now get £1862. I also get the winter fuel allowance.

117. Financially I am doing ok but it if wasn't for the Hepatitis C I would still be working and money can't buy that difference. My children's lives would have been different if not for the virus, my marriage would have been better and I could still be earning, but that was taken away from me.

118. I would rather have my health than this money. I don't know whether my life expectancy has gone. Obviously this is something you can never predict but it's something I think about often.

119. I often think about the things I could have done, I might have been able to take my career further. Perhaps I would have been more able to cope with the things life threw at me. I would have been able to better cope with my marriage and I wouldn't have been so distance with my children.

120. They have achieved in spite of me not because of me. I do feel like the quality of my life and my nearest and dearest's have been affected because of this.

Section 8. Other Issues

121. I had to disclose that I'd had Hepatitis C when I applied for insurance for my travels. I think I went with GRO-B in the end and I think for a month in GRO-B I had to pay £200. I also had to take into account my arthritis and my age. I don't know if I had to pay extra because of the virus I think there were a lot of factors to take into consideration. I needed the insurance though in case anything had happened.

122. I had Hepatitis C from 1989 to 2014 and for most of that time I didn't even know I had it but the paranoia is still totally with me, I worry when I cut myself and I'm still very conscious about taking precautions especially around my granddaughter. I will always live in fear.

123. I donated blood once when I first moved to London in the early 1980s, well before my transfusion. Thankfully that was the only time. Imagine if I had given blood when I was infected. The consequences would have been awful.

124. The fact this Inquiry has become public has been a great help to people like myself as it helps me talk to my children about the situation. They are the victims more than me as they had to deal with an absent mother.

125. From this Inquiry I would like honesty. Someone, somewhere knew and it should not have taken this long to get to this point. There's got to be clarity and someone has go to stand up and admit the truth. My view is that it was all about economics. It was financial.

126. Whatever happens with the Inquiry, something like this can never be allowed to happen again.

127. I'm one of the lucky ones, I'm still alive but so many others have died, how many more women are out there who also received blood after they gave birth? There must be some who don't even know they're infected?

128. Information about the scandal always seem to focus on people who had and have haemophilia. There seems to be a lack of focus on women like myself who were infected through childbirth. If there was an emphasis on people like me it might lead to more women coming forward.

129. I feel fortunate that mine was caught and I think there might be so many women out there who just don't know they're infected. That's why this Inquiry is so important and the reason I became involved is it might help just one person and then it would be worth it.

130. I would like to end by saying that even though I have been cleared of the virus I still feel dirty. I feel sad and an empty lost feeling, which is extremely hard to describe. I have done nothing wrong and to this day I and my family have to live with the hugely impactive consequences.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed. **GRO-B**

Dated 10th April 2019.