Witness name: William Ferguson
Statement number: WITN0587001
Exhibits number WITN0587002-005
Date: 11th February 2019

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF WILLIAM FERGUSON

I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 5th November 2018.

I, William Ferguson, will say as follows: -

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is William Ferguson. My date of birth is GRO-C 1952. I live at GRO-C Glasgow, GRO-C I live by myself, I have a girlfriend of one year. I am retired. I intend to speak about my infection with hepatitis C. In particular, the nature of my illness, how the illness affected me, the treatment I received and the impact it has had on my life.

Section 2. How Infected

2. I was infected with Hepatitis C through a blood transfusion. I cannot remember when but in the 1980s, I had a blood transfusion in a London hospital. This hospital is where the helipads would land and it was near Mile End Station at Bethnal Green area. I had been helping out my friend Gerry McGowan, when there was an accident and I ended up with a chisel in my

wrist, which went straight into an artery. I was admitted to hospital and ended up requiring a blood transfusion due to the amount of blood I lost. I have been informed that there is no history of me being admitted to a London hospital. There are a few entries missing from my medical records though.

3. I found out I was infected with Hepatitis C in 2017. In January 2017, I was concerned about a lump in my ankle. I went to Stobhill Hospital after midnight and saw Dr Gallagher. He noticed that the bump was a yellowish colour. I remember he looked up my medical history on his system and something flagged up on his screen. He then told me this was something to do with my liver. He told me to go to my GP first thing Monday morning. I remember this very well because my right ankle and bone had not healed when I had hit it many weeks before which is what had brought me to the hospital in the first place. I went my GP who took some blood from me. In March/April 2017 they requested further blood tests. After this, my GP told me I had hepatitis C. I did not know what this was. I think the doctor assumed I had heard of it. I went home and looked it up online and got a bit of a shock.

4. My GP gave me some information about treatment. He said he didn't want to give me Interferon as it could make me very unwell. He did tell me to tell my partner and all ex-partners that I had hepatitis C. My GP eventually told me that he thought I'd got it from the NHS, perhaps from dental work I had. I did feel that my doctor gave me as much information as possible. However I do feel like I should have been told about it and it should have been found earlier. I have noted that in 2015, there are lab results in my GP records that indicate that my LFT levels were abnormal. No one ever told me about these tests. I exhibit these as **WITN0587002.**

5. My GP did explain how it affected people because he knew I was depressed and have had numerous complications relating to viral infections, which he has said Hepatitis C carries.

6. I was then referred to the Brownlee Centre and met with Dr Patton where we discussed possible routes of infection. I exhibit a letter from Dr Patton to my GP that refers to this as **WITN0587003.** I also met with Dr Raymond Fox in 2018 who investigated matters further. He established that the reasons I had proposed to Dr Patton in 2017, could not be accurate and that I had not donated blood since 1991 and there were no records of my transfusion. He was of the belief however, that I had received contaminated blood from the NHS. I exhibit a letter he sent to me in May 2018 setting this out under **WITN0587004** and I further exhibit an e-mail referred to in this letter between Fiona Hassell at NHS National Services Scotland and Raymond Fox in 2018 under **WITN0587005**.

Section 3. Other Infections

7. I was not giving any other information about any other infections I could get. I also suffer from insomnia, eye infections, blocked ears and tinnitus which I believe is linked to my hepatitis C. I also suffer from high levels of acid in my gut. I also have suffered from mental health issues. I believe is all linked to my Hep C and Prof Daniel Greenberg to me that there was a definite link with mental health issues.

Section 4. Consent

8. I do not know differently tested on or received treatment without my consent I do not think so.

Section 5. Impact

9. Having hepatitis C has ruined my life. It is and has been like an alien to my body in that it attacks different parts of the body slowly.

10. I'm at a loss to think what kind of life I could have had as I have lost relationships and got divorced. All of my relationships have broken down due to my depression. I have spoken a Professor and there is a link between

Hep C and mental health issues. I spoke to him in September or October 2018.

11. I do fear that I could get other illness, as it can't get any worse.

12. Having hepatitis C has had a major effect on my life. If it were not for my GP, I wouldn't be here. He helped greatly in my coping.

13. I have no relationship with my children or my grandchildren. I have not seen my grandchildren for two years. My relationships with all of them have broken down due to my depression. I have also had suicidal thoughts. My depression and suicidal thoughts all happened before my diagnosis of hepatitis C. There are no mental issues whatsoever in my family history.

14. I did have a great job and then I got depressed. I had to have visits from my mental health workers. It was difficult to tell all of my ex-girlfriend's all my friends about my infection. Two ex-girlfriends won't speak to me now. As far as I am aware, my infection has not spread to them.

15. I feel that if I didn't have Hep C, I would not be in this position. I'd be in a similar position to my brother. It's hard to know I could have been a different person. I am still worried about any side-effects later on in life.

16. My family all have good jobs and are successful and don't want to be associated with their dad because I have hepatitis C. They don't want me to risk affecting their children, even though they know I would never touch drugs, they think my mind isn't right.

17. The first time I went for treatment, I saw addicts also there and I didn't feel any different from them. I had to give up three jobs due to my depression. I was a Project Director, a Sales Manager and Sales Director but after some point thanks to my depression I would not be able to get out of bed due to the fatigue and the depression I would also suffer. Therefore I couldn't hold

a job down. In these jobs I would be making at least £1,500 a week. Thanks to these jobs I was able to give money to my kids for their weddings and deposits for their houses, then I lost all my jobs and I wasn't able to provide them with financial support.

18. I was pretty dumbfounded that they couldn't find my records of treatment for my blood transfusion. In terms of physical effects I currently take antidepressants and sleeping pills, which I have had for over twenty years. I get easily fatigued and struggle to get out of my bed due to my depression. I lost 6 kg when I was diagnosed due to the fear I had about my diagnosis. I also get styes in my eyes every year. I have not had any side-effects from any treatment. However, I do not know if I will suffer from any side effects later on my life. I now have prominent veins all over my body, this was not the case until my Hepatitis C treatment. I also suffer from insomnia.

19. I have been diagnosed with prostate cancer in June 2019. My consultant Dr James at Stobhill Hospital has advised me that they are unable to establish if I have had this for years or if it is newly formed. In August 2019 I had a biopsy conducted at Stobhill and that same night I was admitted to Glasgow Royal Infirmary with an infection due to my compromised immune system, where I remained for three or four days. Since then, I have been monitored by the hospital through outpatient appointments at Stobhill. I have been due to undergo an MRI scan in recent times, but due to the ongoing situation with covid-19, this has been cancelled and I am now waiting to hear what will happen for my care next.

Section 6. Treatment/Care/Support

20. I do not believe I have been treated any differently or not got any treatment due to my diagnosis of Hep C. I feel the staff at the Gartnavel Hospital were really kind and looked after me very well, as has my doctor.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

21. It was a nurse at my doctor's practice who told me there was a compensation scheme available and I could apply. These forms were easy to fill in.

22. I applied to SIBSS scheme in Edinburgh.

23. My initial application was rejected. They rejected it due to a lack of information about how I got infected. There was a form to be given to my GP who said he wouldn't be able to fill it in.

24. I explained this to Dr Fox at Gartnavel who took some information from me and told me to appeal it. Dr Fox then wrote a letter that supported my claim. The appeal was successful and I received £50,000, which I gave them all to my family due to not giving them anything lately.

25. I then got a letter from a professor in October 2018 stating that I would get £1,500 a month, this letter came with forms asking if I needed the money or not and asked more medical questions.

26. I don't know how long I'm going to live so I'm not sure how they worked out what compensation I needed. I do feel frustrated I can't buy things for my family. My friends and family own their own homes here and abroad.

Section 8. Other Issues

27. I feel the damage is done, so it is up to the Inquiry to find out the relevant things. Hopefully they can figure out and put right what happened.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed GRO-C

Dated May 13, 2020