

# ANONYMOUS

Witness Name: **GRO-B**

Statement No: WITN 1200001

Exhibits: WITN1200002

Dated: 27<sup>th</sup> January 2019

## INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF **GRO-B**

I, **GRO-B** will say as follows:-

### Section 1 Introduction

1. My name is **GRO-B** and I live at **GRO-B** with my partner and our daughter and son, who are 6 and 5. I am a full time carer for my son, who is a haemophiliac. My husband supports us financially.
2. I make this statement as the daughter of **GRO-B:F** (deceased) who was infected with HIV and Hepatitis C as a result of receiving contaminated blood products and died on **GRO-B** 1992 .
3. This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my father's medical records.

### Section 2 How Affected

4. My father had severe Haemophilia A and was initially treated at The Oxford Haemophilic Centre in Oxford and then mainly St Thomas and Guys Hospital London where he was treated with Factor 8 products made by Octapharma, BPL, Travenol/Hyland/Hemofil, Factorate Kryobulin and Cutter. I refer to Exhibit WITN1200002.

## ANONYMOUS

5. According to the UKNHDO National Haemophilic Centre ("NHC") records, my father tested positive for HIV on 7<sup>th</sup> February 1985 and on the "Patient Hep C data" page that he was "Jaundiced" on the 20<sup>th</sup> November 1974. I have been told by my paternal grandmother that he was never informed by any doctor that he was Hepatitis C positive. I only found out from the NHC records which we recently received.
6. I do not know if my father was given adequate or any advice regarding his infections as he never discussed his condition with me as I was only 11 years old when he died, although it seems unlikely as he wasn't told he had Hepatitis C.
7. I am unaware of the way in which my father was informed he had been infected with HIV. To my knowledge my father was never informed that he had Hepatitis C.

### **Section 3 Other Infections**

8. I believe my father may have been infected with vCJD as a result of being given contaminated blood products.

### **Section 4 Consent**

9. I am unable to say if my father gave his consent to be treated or tested without being given full or adequate information. I also cannot say whether my father was treated and or tested for the purposes of research although this seems likely as there is a reference "Dr Craskes research work" in the NHC records.

### **Section 5 Impact**

10. The physical effects of HIV and Hepatitis C on my father were that he was constantly in pain and as a result could not play with my sister and I. My father

## ANONYMOUS

had a metal rod in his leg as a result of the bleeds into his joints, which drastically reduced his mobility and increased the pain he was enduring. I remember my father regularly visiting St. Thomas' Hospital to be treated for his Haemophilia. A further complication which resulted from the HIV infection was that my father developed Pneumonia.

11. The effect of my father's HIV infection on the family was catastrophic. My father's diagnosis of HIV played a huge part in my parents' divorce. He had been unable to work so the burden of being the bread winner fell on my mother, who told me that then finding out he had this life-threatening illness, put an intolerable strain on their relationship. My mother used to say that the divorce only happened as a result of my father being infected with HIV.
12. Following my parents' divorce in 1988, my father and grandmother took care of my sister and I. My mother didn't want to uproot my sister and I from my father so when she left we stayed with our father, although, I understand she thought that she would look after us when my father passed away. However when our father died in 1992 in my sister and I chose to stay with our grandmother.
13. Whilst our father's infection and death had considerable physical and emotional impact on my sister and I it had a life changing impact on our grandmother, she lost her son and had to become a mother, father and grandmother all at the same time with all the responsibilities and stress these roles involve.
14. Before our father died and after our mother left, our grandmother looked after us when dad was in St. Thomas' Hospital. In my father's will, he expressed the wish that he would like us to live with our grandmother when he passed away, so our grandmother moved from her flat in to my father's house to live with us. My grandmother recently told me she cried every night when my father was very ill towards the end of his life and when he passed away.

15. My parents and grandmother never told anyone about the HIV infection, so there was never any stigma associated with us as a family as a result of my fathers the diagnosis.
16. I believe my father's diagnosis and death effected me mentally, I suffer from depression, anxiety and Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD). I first began experiencing the effects of OCD when my parents divorced. If I had a bad thought about something, I would obsess about it, and that's all I would be able to think about. I gave weight to these thoughts, they really burdened me. When my dad passed away, I started washing my hands excessively and they bled as a result, I spent hours in the bath just washing myself. I have a fear of contaminating others, for example if I don't wash things a certain way, then the people who use them will become unwell and ultimately die as a result of being contaminated by me . I would rather throw items away if I believed they are contaminated. In 2017 I underwent a twelve-month course of therapy and I can say this has greatly alleviated my symptoms.
17. I have had many different forms of therapy over the years, I am currently on anti-depressants and have been for most of my adult life. My depression is not continuous; however I can relapse at any time. The last time I had a relapse was when I had my first child. I am currently taking Citalopram to treat my depression.
18. I do not believe my father being infected with HIV affected my education. This is because my father left money in a trust for my sister, and i so we were educated at 

GRO-B
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 which is a private secondary school.

#### **Section 6 Treatment/Care/Support**

19. My sister and I were given bereavement counselling when my father passed away. This service was offered by St. Thomas' Hospital. The sessions were fortnightly. Our councillor, Liz arranged a weekend away with her for my sister and I and I remember she would play games with us which would make us talk about our feelings about the loss of our father.

20. I cannot comment as to whether my father was offered any counselling or psychological support as a result of being infected with HIV but I am sure he didn't receive any for Hepatitis C because he didn't know he had it.

### **Section 7 Financial Assistance**

21. My father received £80,000 from the MacFarlane Trust, as he was the primary carer for my sister and I and used the money to buy a house so that my sister and I would not struggle to find a place to live when he passed away.

22. Over the years my grandmother has received small payments from the MacFarlane Trust. I do not know the amounts or dates, on which these payments were made, however my grandmother should be able to provide this information in her witness statement.

23. Due to the recent discovery that my father was also infected with Hepatitis C as a result of being given infected blood products, I was advised by the staff at the Haemophilia Society that I could be entitled to a Hepatitis C payment from the Skipton Fund. I applied to them and received £20,000 which I split equally between my grandmother, sister and myself.

24. The process of applying for the Hepatitis C payment was difficult because we had to find a doctor to complete the forms for us and as my father died 26 years ago, most doctors did not want to take that responsibility. However, a doctor at St. Thomas' Hospital eventually agreed to complete for us.

### **Section 8 Other Issues**

25. Over the years the people infected with HIV, Hepatitis B and C as a result of being given contaminated blood products and their families have been forgotten and ignored and it is an absolute scandal that people have been dying for three decades and no one has been held to account. The government has on repeated occasions refused to hold an Inquiry and until

manslaughter and people need to be held accountable for it.

**Anonymity, disclosure and redaction**

26. I wish to be anonymous.

**Statement of Truth**

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

Signed..

GRO-B

Dated.....

27.1.19