

ANONYMOUS

Witness Name: GRO-B

Statement No: WITN2895001

Exhibits: WITN2895002- 5

Dated: February 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 of GRO-B I was born on GRO-B I am married to GRO-B: H and we have two children GRO-B who was born in GRO-B and GRO-B who was born in GRO-B

2. I prepare this statement as an affected person in relation to my husband who contracted Hepatitis C as a result of receiving contaminated Factor VIII.

3. **This statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my husband's full medical records.**

Section 2. How Affected

4. My husband has mild Haemophilia A with a clotting factor of 9% and he received Factor VIII from 1978. **Exhibit WITN2895002** is an extract from the National Haemophilia Database which records when and where my husband

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was treated with blood products. However, this document fails to record the fact that my husband was given Factor VIII in 1984 at St Thomas's and Guy's Hospital.

5. My husband's consultant was Dr Savidge and his treating hospitals were St Thomas's and Guy's and King's College.
6. I believe that my husband was infected with Hepatitis C on 27.10.1986 when he was given Factor VIII during a hip operation. **Exhibit WITN2895003** is an extract from my husband's medical records confirming that he was given Factor VIII. This is also evidenced in **Exhibit WITN2895002**.
7. My husband was given absolutely no information in relation to the risks of receiving Factor VIII.
8. My husband was told that he had been infected with Hepatitis C in or around the summer of 1993. He attended a routine appointment with Dr Savidge who told him that he had been infected with Hepatitis C. He advised my husband that there was nothing to worry about and actually said "*half the country is infected*". He totally played down my husband's diagnosis. He gave my husband no information to allow him to manage or understand his infection. No advice was given in relation to the risks of transmission.
9. **Exhibit WITN2895004** is a letter dated 29.01.1992 from Dr B J Hunt, Consultant in Haematology to Dr **GRO-B** General Practitioner which states "*Just to let you know that we have been recently screening all our Haemophilia patients for Hepatitis C. This patient has antibodies to Hepatitis C and occasionally has abnormal liver function tests. This would suggest that he may have mild chronic Hepatitis C and we will be watching his liver function tests in the future. We may be able to offer him some treatment if his liver function deteriorates in the next few months*".

Section 3. Other Infections

10. It was not until 2013 that my husband received a letter, in connection with a colonoscopy, which confirmed that he had not been exposed to vCJD.

Section 4. Consent

11. **Exhibit WITN2895005** consists of 3 extracts from my husband's medical records which evidence the fact that he was tested for Hepatitis B (05.12.1991), Hepatitis C (05.12.1991) and HIV (06.01.1987 and 27.10.1986) without his knowledge and therefore without his consent.

12. My husband's medical records also confirm that he was tested for HIV on 22.07.1987, 03.12.1987, 04.08.1988 and 17.03.1989. All of these tests were carried out without his consent and therefore without his knowledge.

Section 5. Impact

13. Sometimes I wonder how I have got through this and how I am still here. There were times when I found it almost impossible to cope but somehow I pulled through. My mother was extremely helpful with caring for our children but I did not want to relinquish my role too easily.

14. Over the years, I have had to take on a number of roles both inside and outside the house, whilst also caring for my beloved husband. I neglected myself in so many ways and I found it very difficult to juggle everything.

15. I used to work part time in GRO-B until 1991 when I had to leave to care for my husband on a full time basis and our second home became the hospital. I was the only driver and I would take my husband to all of his appointments and treatments.

16. I was my husband's best friend, counsellor and carer and we confided in each other. I sat up with him, night after night, when he struggled on the treatment

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for Hepatitis C and suffered from extreme insomnia and anxiety. It was really hard seeing someone you love endure so much pain and heartache.

17. My husband still has panic attacks on the way to the hospital which is a 2.5 hour round trip. He needs me on an almost 24/7 basis and although I am exhausted I would do it all again for him.

18. I received help from the Macmillan Cancer Trust when my husband was diagnosed with bowel cancer but I never received any support from the Haemophilia Society or any other Trust in relation to my husband's Hepatitis C.

Section 6. Treatment/Care/Support

19. As far as I can recall, my husband has not suffered any obstacles in relation to accessing medical or dental care.

20. I was not offered any counselling, psychological or other support.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

21. In 2005, my husband received the Stage 1 Payment of £20,000 from the Skipton Fund.

22. I believe that we found out about the Trust through The Haemophilia Society bulletin or via the internet.

23. In 2011, my husband received the Stage 2 payment of £50,000 although this was only after a long battle with the Skipton Fund. A radiologist had stated that the fibroscan results were "*indicative of cirrhosis*" but this was not accepted by the Skipton Fund because the radiologist had failed to confirm that it was definitely cirrhosis. They also argued that because the fibroscan was 6 years old that it could not be used as evidence. My husband,

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therefore, had to request an ultrasound scan. We were disappointed by the Trust and felt that they were very difficult and "*played on words*".

24. We also applied for grants for a washing machine, fridge freezer, sofa and a reclining armchair in approximately 2012. The application procedure was a nightmare because we had to jump through so many administrative and financial hoops. By the time we provided quotes to the trust and the vouchers arrived, the prices had gone up in the shops which meant that we had to restart the process again from scratch. There was also a limited choice of provider; we received mainly Argos vouchers.

25. Overall, I would say that the Trust was not fit for purpose.

Section 8. Other Issues

26. My husband has been on Facebook and looked at the Tainted Blood support group. He finds this helpful as the people on there are in very similar circumstances to him and they have a shared history.

Conclusion

27. My husband and I want the truth to come out. We both want accountability and for people to own up to their serious wrongdoing.

Anonymity, disclosure and redaction

28. I wish to retain my anonymity and I do not want to give oral evidence to the Inquiry.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed...

GRO-B

Dated...

21/2/2019