

Witness Name: Richard John March

Statement No: WITN2970001

Exhibits:0

Dated: March 2019

## INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

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### FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF RICHARD JOHN MARCH

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I, Richard John March, will say as follows:-

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

1. My name is Richard John March, DOB [GRO-C]1946 and I live at [GRO-C]  
Warwickshire, [GRO-C] We have three children.
2. My son, Andrew Michael March, DOB [GRO-C]1973, was infected with HIV, Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C as a result of treatment with contaminated blood products.
3. This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my son's medical records. If and in so far as I have been provided with limited records the relevant entries are set out in the medical chronology at the end of this statement.

#### **Section 2. How Affected**

4. I was one of four children in a one parent family. Life was hard for me growing up. When I was 17 I left home and I became a Christian. I met Gloria in or around 1968 and we married in 1969.
5. We had our first son, Nicholas, and then we had our second child, Andrew. When Andrew was a baby he would be covered in bruises and shortly after we found out that Andrew had severe haemophilia A.

6. We had to take Andrew to the hospital frequently and at all times of the day. I was also working at this time and it was a very difficult time for me as I had some health problems myself. This affected my joints and at times I could barely move; it was a very difficult time.
7. When Gloria became pregnant with our third child Elizabeth we did worry about the chance of our child having haemophilia – so worried that if it was a boy we discussed whether we would be able to go through with the pregnancy.
8. When home treatment became available for Andrew, the doctor let me practice on him and then I was able to treat Andrew at home. This gave us a lot of independence.
9. I remember Andrew becoming ill in or around 1978. Gloria and I were called to the hospital and much later we found out that he had been infected with Hepatitis B.
10. We were told to go to the hospital in June 1985 so they could run tests on Andrew. A few months later we were called back to the hospital and they told us that Andrew had been infected with a virus. I cannot recall whether HIV was specifically mentioned. The doctors seemed very vague.
11. We were told by the doctors to keep it a secret. We knew that it was something we shouldn't talk about – it was a dreaded thing because the disease had such connotations with an unclean lifestyle. We couldn't even talk to our family about it.

### **Section 3. Other Infections**

12. I believe that Andrew has been told that he may have been exposed to vCJD.

### **Section 4. Consent.**

13. My wife and I consented to Andrew being tested in June 1985 however I am unaware of any other tests that may have been carried out.

## **Section 5. Impact**

14. I worked in caring when we found out about Andrew's illness it made me very uncomfortable as I was worried about people finding out and that I would lose my job.
15. After Andrew was diagnosed with HIV I had to go to the school to speak to the headmaster – he said that Andrew could no longer go there as it meant they would have to take so many extra precautions with cleaning.
16. It was very difficult when Andrew was a teenager as we were all trying to cope with his diagnosis.
17. When Andrew comes to stay with us he injects himself here. He is very careful but you do sometimes worry about the risk of infection when he is injecting or shaving. It is horrible having to think that. I try not to let it impact our relationship but it is something that will always be there and I'm sure that, subconsciously, it has an effect.
18. I have found it very difficult to cope with all of this. I think if it wasn't for my faith I would have struggled a lot more.

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

19. Neither I nor my family were ever offered any counselling.

## **Section 7. Financial Assistance**

20. We were given some money which we kept for Andrew on trust.

## **Section 8. Other Issues**

21. There are no other issues I would like to raise to the Inquiry.

## **Anonymity, disclosure and redaction**

22. I do not wish to apply for anonymity.
23. I do not want to provide oral evidence to the Inquiry.

**Statement of Truth**

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

Signed...

GRO-C

Dated...

29.03.19