

ANONYMOUS

Witness Name: **GRO-B**

Statement No: WITN3367001

Exhibits: 0

Dated: June 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** I was born on the **GRO-B** and I live at **GRO-B**
2. I am married to my wife and together we have a child aged **GRO-B** I've got **GRO-B** **GRO-B** with my previous partner and my wife has a **GRO-B** year old from her first marriage.
3. I am currently employed and I work as an **GRO-B**
4. This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my full 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 Infected

5. In the mid-1980s, I had an accident playing football and injured my liver. I was taken to **GRO-B** and I had to have a blood transfusion because of an internal bleed.

ANONYMOUS

6. I had lots of drains put in as my liver bled a lot internally forming a big **GRO-B**. After a drain was put in, they transferred me to **GRO-B** **GRO-B** on a Friday night. The next morning, I was operated on first thing in the morning. I then spent two weeks at **GRO-B** before going home. I was in hospital for about **GRO-B** months in total.
7. I was readmitted to **GRO-B** a few weeks after I came home as they had to put another drain in. I am not sure how long I was in there for the second time.
8. I cannot remember which hospital I had the blood transfusion, but I believe it was **GRO-B**. I spent the whole of that Christmas in hospital.
9. I was told that I needed the blood transfusion as it would speed up the recovery process as my white blood cell count was low. As a result of the above blood transfusion, I was infected with Hepatitis C (Hep C).
10. I was not provided with any information or advice beforehand about the risk of being exposed to infections. I was quite worried when I was told about the blood transfusion because it was all in the news that people were being infected with HIV from contaminated blood products. I didn't really want to have one, and I was told that it wasn't necessary, but it was highly recommended. I was told that the blood transfusion was safe at the time.
11. Approximately 3 years ago I attended **GRO-** for a routine blood test. I was called back by my GP and had a face to face meeting with her and she told me that I had Hep C. It was a bit of a shock when the doctor told me.
12. When the doctor told me that I had Hep C, she asked me about my lifestyle. Before I had the accident I used intravenous drugs. I always used new needles. Since the accident, I have not used intravenous drugs. I recall being tested for HIV before I had the blood transfusion and test came back negative.
13. I believe at the time the doctor provided me with adequate information. She told me that there was a possibility that I could have been infected when I had

ANONYMOUS

the blood transfusion, which I believe I was. I was told about the treatment that was available and took the doctor's advice in relation to the treatment.

14. I believe that I should have been provided with information earlier. I understand that my GP may not have known that I had the blood transfusion until after the Hep C came to light. However, the NHS would have known and they should have told me earlier that I was at risk and needed a test.

15. When I was told that I had Hep C, my GP also told me about the risks of others being infected as a result of the infection. The GP was looking at all possibilities of how I could have contracted Hep C and therefore had my wife and children tested. The tests came back negative on all of them.

Section 3. Other Infections

16. As far as I am aware, I do not have any other infections.

Section 4. Consent

17. I am pretty sure I was tested without my knowledge and consent. Since my accident, I have spent the last years attending the hospital as I had a lump on my and a . These became evident when I complained of stomach pains at the time. They thought the lump on my pancreas was cancer but it disappeared by itself. I also had narrowing of the arteries and I had a stent put in. I had a bypass where they put a as I had a problem getting blood to my calves; that was a major operation. I had a lot of blood tests with the above conditions. I therefore believe that I was tested for Hep C without my consent during one of these tests.

18. I believe I was treated and tested without being given adequate or full information, because I only found out that I had Hep C about years ago. As stated above, I believe I had been tested for Hep C and the doctors failed to tell me.

ANONYMOUS

19. I believe I was tested for the purposes of research because I was told that if the treatment was successful on me, then it could be used on others too. I had to attend the hospital for a further 2 years after I had the treatment so that I was monitored, which was part of the deal.

Section 5. Impact

20. I wasn't sure at first how I contracted the Hep C. It was suggested to me that it could have been through unprotected sex, by intravenous injections or by a blood transfusion. However, as stated above, I believe I was infected through the blood transfusion that I had. It seemed to me that the doctors were trying to find other reasons as to how I might have contracted the infection rather than admitting that I was infected through the contaminated blood transfusion. There has always been a black spot at the back of my mind that I might have also been infected with HIV since I had the blood transfusion as the HIV infection was a big thing back then and it was all over the media.

21. After I had the bypass, I had compartment syndrome where pressure built up in calves so they had to release the pressure. They had to do an emergency operation to slash my calves to release the pressure. It took a long time for the legs to heal up. I had 4 big slashes on my leg and one took about 2/3 years to heal. I took regular blood tests then as I caught other infections during the 2 years period. This was the time when the GP told me I had Hep C.

22. I do not believe I had further medical complications or conditions as a result of the infection.

23. As stated above, I was offered treatment by my GP, approximately 6 months after I was diagnosed. I was given Interferon and Ribavirin. The course was for approximately 24 weeks. I didn't face any difficulties or obstacles in getting the treatment. It was offered to me and I took it.

24. I do not know if there were treatments that I consider ought to have been made available to me at that time.

ANONYMOUS

25. During the course of the treatment, I was quite run down. I had to carry on working at the time as I was self-employed and had a mortgage. It was very stressful and physically very tiring. I would get quite irritable quickly which my family and work colleagues suffered. I gained a little weight as a result of the treatment. I completed the 24 week course of treatment and it cleared the Hep C.
26. I do not believe the infected status had impacted upon my treatment, medical and dental care for any other conditions.
27. I believe the infection impacted on my private, family and social life. As previously stated I was irritable at time. I believe because of the symptoms that I suffered it caused problems with my wife. In relation to my social life, I was unable to drink throughout the course of the treatment. I was really restrictive in the sense that I couldn't go out and have a glass of wine. I didn't have a lot of energy as I was always tired and found it difficult to do general household things and spend time with the children. What upset me at that time was that my **GRO-B** had to be tested because of me as well as my wife and my stepson. It was a bit disturbing as they all thought it was my fault they had to be tested.
28. The stigma that was associated with the infection did affect me. When people found out that I had the infection, my attitude towards them was 'if you can't accept it then don't, this is the way I am'. It was unpleasant and a lot of the people did not understand how I had contracted the infection and whether it was contagious or not. I have lost friends as result and they stay away from me because of it.
29. I believe the infection did affect my work to a certain extent. I didn't have the energy that I had before. I did find every day tiring and I was finding it difficult to put my all into work. I had to work that little bit harder. My sleep was affected as a result and I found it difficult to concentrate, but I had to push myself because I had to have an income and I couldn't afford not to work. However, there were times that I had to take time off from work to attend

ANONYMOUS

hospital appointment, which I was not paid for and therefore affected me financially.

30. My wife wasn't keen in getting close to me until I cleared the infection and at the time it affected my marital relationship with her.

Section 6. Treatment/care/support

31. I do not remember whether counselling or psychological support was ever offered to me. If it was offered to me, it would have possibly helped.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

32. I did not receive any financial assistance.

33. I tried to contact the EIBSS but they refused my application stating that it was more than likely that I had caught the infection from intravenous drug use. When I filled out the application, I was true and honest with them and that was the response that I received from them. I appealed the decision but it was refused.

Anonymity, disclosure and redaction

34. I wish to remain anonymous.

35. I do not wish 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 27-6-2019