

# ANONYMOUS

Witness Name: GRO-B

Statement No.: WITN0769001

Exhibits: Nil

Dated: 12/03/2019

## INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

WRITTEN STATEMENT OF GRO-B

I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 7 December 2018.

I, GRO-B will say as follows: -

### Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is GRO-B. My date of birth is GRO-B 1974, and my address is known to the Inquiry.
2. I intend to speak about my mother's infection with Hepatitis C following a blood transfusion. In particular, the nature of her illness, how the illness affected her, the treatment received and the impact it had on her and our lives together.

### Section 2. How Affected

3. I was born on GRO-B 1974 at GRO-B in London. My mother had difficulties during the birth and required a blood transfusion. She had lost a lot of blood. I do not know specifically how much blood she was given to replace what she had lost. The transfusions, to the best of my knowledge, occurred on the day I was born.

## ANONYMOUS

4. Following the transfusion, my Mother became infected with Hepatitis C, type 1.
5. My Mother didn't find out for many years that she was infected with Hepatitis C. From my memory she had always been low in energy and lethargic when my sister and I were growing up. However, from 2006 things started to go medically wrong with her. Her health deteriorated generally that year, and she was given antibiotics. The doctors didn't realise at that point that she had Hepatitis.
6. The antibiotics didn't help her and she kept going to her GP. Her GP didn't believe that there was anything wrong with her. But she continued to have stomach issues, Colitis, and was always yellow and very low on energy.
7. During frequent visits to her GP, my Mother was referred to a specialist. In 2012 she was referred to a Doctor at the GRO-B: M in Scotland. The Doctor did a blood test and a few weeks later the results came back that my Mother had Hepatitis C. I don't know the details about what information my Mother was given, or how she was informed about the infection.
8. I don't recall ever being given any information personally about the risks of people close to my Mother becoming infected. My sister and I lived with her for many years before she found out she had the infection, and we never got it.

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

9. I don't believe that my Mother was infected with anything else, aside from Hepatitis C.

**Section 4. Consent**

10. I believe that my Mother's consent was gained before the tests were carried out on her to check for Hepatitis C. They also obtained her consent before treating her.

**Section 5. Impact**

11. My mother was always very low on energy which meant she was not there 100% as a mother for my sister and I. My sister and I always thought that she was making it up that she wasn't feeling well. We thought she was using that as an excuse to avoid doing the usual things that mothers do. But her constant complaints about her health made for a difficult relationship between her and us kids.
12. My Mother and Father separated when I was 6 months old. This meant that my Mother raised my sister and I alone. Even then, she was often unable to do all of her chores because of her lethargy and tiredness. I feel like she could have done a lot better in life if she hadn't been infected with Hepatitis C. She is an intelligent woman who can speak three languages.
13. Physically the Hepatitis took a toll on my Mother. She became anaemic, and lost a lot of weight. At times she looked as though she was going to die. She often struggled to keep certain foods down, was always going to the toilet to throw up and also had constant diarrhoea.
14. After she was diagnosed with Hepatitis C in 2012, my Mother started a treatment to try and clear the virus. I remember that she was on a drug called Interferon and another drug which I cannot remember.
15. The drugs seemed to magnify her symptoms. She lost a lot of weight when she was taking the treatment. She would have to go to the bathroom all the time and she said she was depressed. It was a big

## ANONYMOUS

setback when she went go for a blood test and found that the medication hadn't cleared the virus in 2014.

16. My Mother started her second course of treatment in March 2015 on a new drug called Harvoni. She started the course at GRO-B and it lasted 3 months; she waited a further 3 months for the all clear.
17. After completing the second course, my Mother was cured of the Hepatitis. This was in 2015.
18. Despite being cleared of Hepatitis C, she still has residual issues from the Hepatitis and medication. Her stomach and liver were affected. She has Colitis and Anaemia.
19. I believe my Mother did have some difficulty obtaining treatment. They weren't just going to give the medication to anyone because it was so expensive.
20. My Mother didn't know she had Hepatitis C until 2012. Once she was diagnosed I'm sure she would have disclosed the infection when receiving any medical or dental treatment. She is a responsible woman. I don't know whether she was treated in any particular way because of the infection.
21. In terms of the effect of the infection on her private and social life, she became very isolated from her friends. She told a couple of her friends and felt that they weren't very understanding and she said it didn't go down very well. It was almost as if she was on her own.
22. My Mother didn't tell her family GRO-B However, after she had been cleared of the virus she told her family that she had had the infection. They had wondered all those years whether there was actually anything wrong with her. So I think Mum wanted to show them that there had been something wrong.

## ANONYMOUS

23. In terms of the impact on me, I felt that growing up she didn't have the right energy to help me with my studies or my future. I resented that growing up but I know now that it was because of her infection. I feel that without the infection my mum could have done more to better her life academically and for her work. That would have made a better life for me and my sister, to provide and put food on the table. That's what this is about for me. We each only have one life, and you want to live it as full as possible. My Mother was never given that chance. My sister and I were never given that chance.
24. The family hasn't been stigmatised really. People don't really want to talk about their illnesses, we all just want to brush it under the carpet. That meant there was no one there to have any empathy for my Mother, including myself. I feel sorry about that because I too never thought there was anything wrong with her before her diagnosis.

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

25. My Mother, to my knowledge, has never been offered counselling or support. I have not been offered any.

### **Section 7. Financial Assistance**

26. I do not wish to comment on the financial aspect of my Mother's infection.

### **Section 8. Other Issues**

27. I'm just here to tell my story, and I understand that other families have had it worse. However, what I would like to know is who is going to be held accountable for what happened. I hope they go to prison for this.

## ANONYMOUS

28. My mother was never able to tell my sister what was wrong with her because my sister died in 2011 before my Mother was diagnosed. If my sister could have known, then she could have understood what was wrong with our Mother and why she never had the energy for us. And for my Mother to understand why we were cruel to her. It would have been good to know the diagnosis beforehand, rather than keeping everything 'hush hush'. Then my sister would have known before she died why mum was the way she was. That's one of the things that really gets me.

### Statement of Truth

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

Signed

GRO-B

Dated

14/03/2019