Witness Name: Beverly Joanne Finnigan
Statement No: W4209001
Exhibits: W4209002
Dated: 5-11-2020

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

WRITTEN STATEMENT OF BEVERLY JOANNE FINNIGAN

I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 16 July 2020.

I, Beverly Joanne Finnigan, will say as follows: -

Section 1: Introduction

1. My name is Beverly Joanne Finnigan. I was born at home in GRO-C London and my date of birth is GRO-C 1957. I reside in GRO-C Devon, and my full address is known to the Inquiry. I married my husband Terry Finnigan in 1996 having been together for around 6 years prior to that and I have one daughter. I am currently working as a Skilled Non-registered Nurse with the NHS within the community. My role includes both palliative care and the short-term care of patients to aid in their recovery after discharge from hospital.

2. I intend to speak about my infection with Hepatitis C ("HCV") after having received a blood transfusion during an operation I had undergone for an ectopic pregnancy in 1981. In particular, the nature of how I learnt about my infection, how the illness has affected myself and my family, the treatments I have received, and the impact it has had on my life.

3. My husband Terry Finnigan (see **WITN4666001)** is also a witness to the Infected Blood Inquiry. He intends to discuss his infection with HCV which we believe was contracted in a manner totally unrelated to myself.

4. I can confirm that I have chosen not to have legal representation and that the Inquiry Investigator has explained the anonymity process to me. I am not seeking anonymity as I wish for my story to be known in full.

5. The Inquiry Investigator has explained to me the 'Right to Reply' procedure, and I understand that if I am critical of a medical professional or organisation, they will have the right to reply to that criticism.

6. I wish to acknowledge that naturally as time passes, memories can fade. I have been able to provide approximate timeframes for matters based on life events. However, these timeframes should be accepted as 'near to' rather than precise dates.

7. I have constructed this statement without access to my medical records. I have not applied to my GP for records that may be held at the surgery. I had previously tried to obtain my medical records from Watford Hospital. However, I was told by medical personnel that my records had been destroyed.

8. I have not been involved in any litigation either individually or within a group.

Section 2: How Infected

9. Before 1981, I had undergone a number of operations to remove numerous cysts which had developed in the fallopian tubes which are found in my female reproductive tract. During these operations, I believe that my fallopian tubes had been adversely affected which meant that I was more susceptible to developing further medical conditions such as an ectopic pregnancy.

10. Sometime in 1981, out of the blue I had started to develop an immense amount of pain around my womb area, and I had begun to lose blood quite heavily. Initially, I decided to wait a while to determine whether this pain would subside on its own accord. However, it did not and if anything became worse. I did not know what to do in this situation so in a panic, I decided to get in contact with my GP - who's name I can't

recall only that the surgery was in Harrow - for advice and to seek medical assistance. The receptionist had answered my call, and had asked for my symptoms. She also asked what I believed was the cause of my pain. I told her that I thought I was pregnant as I knew my body, but she did not believe me.

11. I knew her as she used to babysit for me but I couldn't get past her. Eventually and I'm not sure if it was later that day or the following day, I managed to see the doctor. I was still bleeding profusely and he referred me straight away to Watford General. My first husband who was present then took me to the A&E. I never returned to that Practice.

12. I persisted due to the pain and intensity of the blood loss, as I was worried about the decline in my health and, if I was pregnant that there may be some harm to my unborn baby. Upon admittance, I was asked what my symptoms were, and I was examined by one of the doctors on shift. I then underwent an ultrasound around my womb area.

13. After a very short period of time, it was discovered that I was in fact five months pregnant. However, there was a problem, as it was confirmed as an ectopic pregnancy. Due to my condition being potentially life threatening, it was decided that I needed to undergo surgery to remove the pregnancy before it became too large.

14. Whilst I do not recall the exact procedure I had undergone during the surgery itself as I was under anaesthetic, I do remember waking up surrounded by my father and two old school friends. I was connected to a number of tubes and a saline drip. I was told by the doctor who had carried out my surgery that they had done their best, but due to the nature of the pregnancy they were unable to save my baby during the operation. My family had said that I was extremely lucky to be alive. Due to the complex nature of my surgery, they had been told to expect the worst and they did not expect me to make it at one stage.

15. The next day, I was told by one of the doctors that due to the amount of blood I had lost both before and during my surgery, that they had to provide treatment in the form of a blood transfusion. I clearly remember this conversation and it is this blood transfusion that I believe was the cause of my HCV infection.

16. I was not provided with any information or advice before I received my blood transfusion, about the potential risk of being exposed to infection. Nor as far as I aware were any of my family. I believe it was a last-minute decision made by the doctors to

administer a blood transfusion at the time, and based on what they believed would benefit me the most within the circumstances.

17. For a period of around ten years after my surgery in 1981 until around 1991, myself GRO-C would donate blood twice a year at a mobile blood donation unit which was located in the main hall of South Devon College, Paignton, Devon. In addition, my husband Terry would donate blood regularly at the same location.

18. Around September 1991, I received a letter from the National Blood Transfusion Service. This informed me that one of my blood donations had been tested during routine screening, and had been found to have tested positive for the presence of HCV. The letter further explained that I could no longer donate blood as they were not able to use contaminated blood, and that I should get in contact with my doctor to discuss my positive HCV test result. I did not retain the letter.

19. I was distraught. My mind was a whirl as to how I could have contracted such an infection. I don't understand why such potentially life changing information was sent out in the post. It should be delivered face to face to enable support and reassurance to be provided.

20. Just before I had received my letter from the National Blood Transfusion Service, my husband Terry also received the same letter which contained the same information. It was outlined that he had also tested positive for the presence of HCV. Context surrounding Terry's HCV infection is outlined further in his witness statement (**WITN4666001**).

21. At the end of September 1991, I got in touch with my General Practitioner Doctor Stefano Cannizzaro at Walnut Lodge Surgery, Torquay, Devon, to set up a face to face consultation. This practice is now alternatively called Chelston Hall Surgery, Torquay, Devon. Dr Cannizzaro made me aware that the HCV positive test results carried out by the Blood Services was indeed true. It was at this point that I was diagnosed with HCV.

22. Again, it is difficult to describe the feeling of trepidation when the certainty of the infection is with you. How will you cope? What do you tell everyone? Can I be cured or is it a death sentence? I was lucky in that I had my husband for mutual support with

us both being in the same boat but what happens to others? There was not a lot offered following the diagnosis.

23. With a confirmed diagnosis, Dr Cannizzaro had referred me to Dr George at Torbay Hospital, Torquay, Devon, to undergo a liver function test. When my results returned, I was told that my liver had not suffered any damage as a result of my infection, and was in fact normal. I was delighted.

24. I do not believe that I was given adequate information to help me understand and manage my infection when I was diagnosed with HCV. When I asked Dr GRO-D what effect HCV could have on my body in the future, he simply said that it would have an effect on the functionality of my liver. I had then asked for his opinion on what he believed was the cause of my infection, but he seemed taken back, and did not know how to respond. It was as if he just seemed really confused by my question and I got no answer from him to help put my mind at ease

25. I was not provided with any information on how to manage my infection, or precautions to take or the risks associated with other persons being infected as a result of my HCV. I was not told that HCV could be transmitted via contact with my blood, or through sexual contact with my husband. There were no leaflets, information to take away or details of where support may be found.

26. I do not believe that information surrounding my HCV diagnosis should have been provided at an earlier point of time. I was made aware of my diagnosis as soon as my test results were made apparent by the National Blood Transfusion Service in 1991.

27. I do not have tattoos, I have never had any medical treatment outside of the United Kingdom, and I have never taken intravenous drugs. I am happily married to my husband. Growing up, I had seen the effects drugs had on my father and this was enough to dissuade me from using drugs or having drugs in my life.

28. Whilst there are other areas of concern with regards to the cause of my HCV infection, they are extremely minimal. For instance, I do have my ears pierced, but this was conducted in a clinical setting with sterilised equipment. Additionally, over the years, I had undergone a number of operations, but, I did not receive a blood transfusion as treatment during any of these procedures.

Section 3: Other Infections

29. I do not believe that I have received any infection or infections other than HCV as a result of being given infected blood.

30. I have not been tested for the presence of HIV, instead, I was simply told by Dr Cannizzaro that I did not have HIV.

Section 4: Consent

31. I do not believe that I have been tested without consent in the past, as I have always known when blood has been taken. However, I do believe that I have been tested where full adequate information surrounding the purpose of my blood having been taken was not provided. For instance, when I was diagnosed with HCV in 1991 by Dr Cannizzaro, I was simply told that with regards to other infections, I did not have HIV. I do not recall having been made aware that a blood test to determine the presence of HIV had taken place. By the same token, I was unaware that my blood would be tested specifically for HCV when I donated in 1991

32. In hindsight, I do believe that I could have been experimented on or had research conducted on my blood without my prior knowledge. The Government has been trying to hide the Contaminated Blood Scandal from plain sight for a very long time, so you can never be fully knowledgeable of what is going on in the background. This is such a worry that needs to be given its time in the limelight.

Section 5: Impact

Mental/Physical Impact

33. Since the point at which I was diagnosed with HCV in September 1991, until I was cleared in 2018, I had this constant feeling of being 'dirty.' No matter how I tried I couldn't shake it. I was always conscious of my infection and it would affect my everyday life. I was frightened of carrying out even the smallest of tasks which we would take for granted now, for fear of passing on my HCV to others. I was scared of kissing my own grandchildren. If I was preparing food for my family or friends, there would always be a massive panic if I had suffered a cut and I had bled anywhere. This

was due to the trepidation of whether I had tainted the food or not. I was always 'walking on eggshells' around others and it was not a pleasant way to live. Every morning I would wake, I would think about whether this could be my last day alive.

34. I have always tortured myself thinking about the fact that I had donated blood for the National Blood Transfusion Service for a period of around ten years, before it was discovered that I had tested positive for the presence of HCV. I could have easily passed on my infection to a great number of individuals during that time. You just never know what effect my blood could have had on those individuals lives. This is a guilt that I will carry with me for the rest of my life and what makes it worse is that there was no need for it to happen.

35. In the 1980's our Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher kept pushing for the citizens of Great Britain to continue giving blood where possible. I just did what they said. I wanted to do a good deed and make a big difference to other people's lives where they may find themselves in need of my blood. I was proud of what I was doing – contrast that with what I know now and how it makes me feel.

36. I had not experienced any symptoms of my HCV between the point at which I believed I was infected in 1981 up until I cleared the virus in 2018. Having seen some of the stories of those who suffered I realise how lucky I was. Other than the mental anguish caused by the feeling of the need to contain the infection and the possibility it could end up being fatal, I was asymptomatic, certainly in respect of physical suffering.

37. Since my daughter was born in 1975, I have unfortunately lost four children, one of which was stillborn, and I suffered a miscarriage for three of my children. I do not know whether this is in any way a consequence of my HCV, or as a result of external factors but I do sometimes wonder what the outcome would have been if I had never been infected.

Treatment

38. After I was diagnosed around September 1991, I was referred to Dr George at Torbay Hospital to discuss treatment for my HCV. I did this at the same time as my husband Terry, given his HCV infected status. I cannot recall too much information surrounding what was discussed at this appointment, as it was such a long time ago. However, Dr

George had decided to refer us to Sheila Needs ("Sheila") the Liver Nurse at Torbay Hospital, to receive further specialist care and treatment for our HCV.

39. At an appointment with Sheila in 1991, I was told that I would need to undergo a liver biopsy and a liver function test to determine the effect my HCV had on my liver. Between 1992 and 1999, I underwent several liver biopsies and liver function tests where both the test and biopsy results had returned as normal. I was monitored every six months after the point at which I was referred to Sheila, and then, every twelve months ahead this.

40. Around 1999 or 2000, which was approximately eight years after I was diagnosed with HCV in 1991, Sheila had told me that I was finally able to start treatment for my HCV as funding had become available through the National Health Service ("NHS"). Luckily, I was also told that I would be able to start this treatment with my husband Terry at the same time.

41. We discussed with Sheila the available treatments on the market at the time. Weighing up the advantages and disadvantages of each option, we had decided on a course of Interferon and Ribavirin. My treatment was initially scheduled for a term of around one year, whereby I would take one tablet daily of Ribavirin, and twice weekly injections of Interferon. This would be administered anywhere on my body.

42. During my first course of treatment with Interferon and Ribavirin, I did not really experience any of the typical side effects which were outlined to me by Sheila before I had started the treatment. For instance, I did not encounter any loss of hair, sleep interruption or rashes on my body.

43. However, in retrospect I believe that I just did not fully recognise the impact my treatment had on my body. I had previously explained my symptoms away as having stemmed from everyday life stresses. Looking back, I realise that my treatment had caused me to experience extreme tiredness and fatigue to the point that I would often come home from work and simply crash out. I was irritable and experienced mood swings which had a knock-on effect on my family. Additionally, I did develop osteoarthritis in my wrist joints and my elbows as well as my shoulders and toes. This may have been a long-term effect of the HCV on my body and then exacerbated by the treatment although I could never be sure.

44. At the end of the course of my treatment which was around the end of 2000 or 2001, I had a blood test to determine whether my HCV had been cleared. When I then attended an appointment with Sheila to discuss my blood test result, much to my dismay, I was told that Interferon and Ribavirin had not worked and I remained infected. I was completely heartbroken as I had such a difficult time throughout this period and it was all for nothing.

45. I was not told the reason behind why my first treatment had not been successful. I was just told that I should try to forget this period, and get on with my life. Alternative treatments were not discussed at this time.

46. From this point onwards, myself and my husband would regularly visit Sheila so that our health could be monitored. I had undergone a number of blood tests and as mentioned three liver biopsies, of which, two of those biopsies were invasive and one was a scan. I can still recall the pain from the biopsies where they used the needle and which are something I would not like to experience again. During this period, I also underwent a number of invasive treatments for other medical conditions such as the development of cysts in my ovaries.

47. I do not believe that my general health had deteriorated after my first course of treatment for my HCV. However, if it had, I had not noticed. Around that time, my life was extremely busy, so any change in my health would not have been the focus and easily over shadowed.

48. In 2018, approximately seventeen years after I had finished my first course of treatment for my HCV in 2000 or 2001, I had received a letter from the Liver Department at Torbay Hospital, which stated that I needed to book an appointment to see Sheila. From what I can recall, I was not told the reason why this was necessary.

49. A short while later at the face to face consultation with Sheila, much to my amazement she had told me that funding had become available under the NHS, so that I could start a second course of treatment for my HCV as soon as possible. Up until that time I had simply been monitored and no other treatment had been offered at any stage nor had I pushed for access to any.

50. Around the same time in 2018, Terry was also told that he could start his second course of treatment. I can remember Sheila having said something along the lines of

"it does not make sense for you to have been cleared your HCV, and for Terry to have not started treatment to clear his infection considering you are living in the same household. I will therefore try to secure treatment so that you can start treatment around the same time." A year later in 2019, Terry commenced his second treatment. I can't recall the name of the drug but Terry will. Reasoning behind this is discussed further in his witness statement (see **WITN4666001**)

51. My second course of treatment was originally issued for a term of three months, where I would take two tablets daily same as Terry. After around two weeks, I experienced quite strong side effects from my treatment. I constantly felt tired and fatigued, to the point that it effected my everyday life.

52. As a result, I went to visit Sheila at Torbay Hospital, it was another nurse and I told her about my symptoms. After carrying out a number of tests, she had told me that my treatment dosage was too strong, which meant that it had an effect on my blood pressure causing it to become abnormal. I was also iron deficient. She stated that she would reduce my dose from that point forward. I would take two tablets daily, of which, this represented around three quarters of my original full dosage.

53. I can remember becoming extremely worried that as I was taking a reduced dosage of my medication, that my treatment might not work as effectively to clear my HCV. I could not bear the thought of going through a second course of medication only for it to end up like my first treatment and not be fruitful. To take my mind off the worry, myself and my husband had decided to take a holiday and went to Switzerland for a week.

54. After around three months, I had returned to visit Sheila at Torbay Hospital. Here, I provided a blood sample to determine whether I had cleared my HCV. Luckily, my test results returned as having undetectable levels of HCV in my blood. Finally, I was cleared. I could not believe it. Happy was not even the word to describe my feelings. The feeling of having cleared the infection boosts your morale and your overall outlook on life. The feeling that the life sentence which used to hang over your head had been lifted is one of great euphoria. I felt like a new woman.

55. Since the point at which I was cleared in 2018, I have undertaken annual testing for the presence of HCV. My results to date continue to show that I am still in remission.

56. It could be suggested that I had faced an obstacle in accessing this treatment. I had waited around eight years between my diagnosis in 1991 and commencing my first treatment with Interferon and Ribavirin around 1999 or 2000, and seventeen years between having finished my treatment in 2001 and commencing my second – successful - treatment in 2018. I was led to believe that the reason behind why there was a long period of time between commencing both my treatments for my HCV, was due to a lack of funding available under the NHS. Sheila had told me that the policy abided by when awarding funding, was that treatment would only really be offered in cases where the patient's health was deemed critical.

57. I do believe that treatment should have been made available to me before the point at which it was. Certainly, the seventeen years since my last treatment seems impossible to justify. I know there may have been limited options available but surely there was something that could have been offered during this period by the NHS. After all, it was not my fault that I became infected. I do feel that as I didn't complain or display any symptoms that maybe I was placed "on the back burner"

Impact

58. Following my diagnosis in 1991, I do not believe that my HCV infection has had an impact on any of the other treatment I have received or operations I have been involved in. In relation to the dental care setting; at the time, I had told my dentist, who's name I don't remember at GRO-D Devon, of my HCV status. At first, he was completely understanding and was thankful for me having been open and honest with him. I had also placed my HCV status on my dental records form to make it completely clear for any future treatments.

59. However, from that point, I have had instances where I had felt like my dentist did not wish to treat me, or that they were in fact extremely nervous to provide me with dental treatment. I can recall one time where I was undergoing an operation for a tooth extraction under general aesthetic, when they had become so nervous and flustered that they had taken out the wrong tooth. I believe the reason was that they were in such a rush to provide me with treatment as quickly as possible so as to minimise the risk of infection to themselves through contact with my blood. I have also experienced extremely long waiting times within the dental surgery awaiting treatment and I am often the last patient. However, I had just assumed that this was a part of the practice.

60. I have always kept my HCV status under wraps from the majority of people, including my friends and extended family. I guess I have not wished to tell them through fear of how they would react. It is news that once you tell someone about it, then you would assume that they would automatically step back away from you, or at least become a little reserved. Whilst I do not believe my friends would definitely have done that, dep down it was a constant worry that they may have reacted in that way and how I would have coped with the rejection. I was not prepared to chance it. There are a lot of ignorant people out there that presume HCV is only associated with persons such as prostitutes or drug users.

61. I cannot say that my HCV diagnosis has had much of an effect on either my family or my friends, as like I have previously stated, I had only told my closest family members. My mother was always concerned about my health as a result of my infection. I did not want her to worry, so I would always keep any news to myself but obviously this would be something that would play on any parent's mind

62. Throughout the period of when I was diagnosed and during both my courses of treatment, no one would mention my HCV. I do not know whether this was due to a want not to upset me, or whether they had felt that if they did not mention my infection, then they could act as if it did not exist.

63. My daughter is such a free spirit who has a strong and independent character. If she had become personally troubled by my HCV and the effect it could have had on either my health or our family life, I do not believe that she would have told me either way. Ever since she was a little girl, she has always kept a lot of things to herself so that myself or Terry would not be able to see that something is bothering her. She would always accompany me to the hospital when I would have either a consultation or treatment to attend. I remember that if anyone had asked her how she was feeling about her mum's infection, then in response, she would say that mum is dealing with it there is no need to worry. She is quite deep and would never reveal her feeling to someone she did not know. I do often wonder just what the impact on her really was.

64. GRO-C

65. Whilst I do not believe that my infected status has had an impact on the standard of my medical care I have received, I do believe that the stigma attached to HCV may

have impacted on how I was perceived as a patient. When I was first diagnosed in 1991, I had asked Doctor Cannizzaro how he believed that I had contracted HCV. He stated that it may have been caused through sexual contact. I do not know whether this was simply the medical profession not having full knowledge surrounding the modes of transmission, ignorance of the real causes of HCV, or a stigmatisation of the association between HCV and drug users.

66. Following my diagnosis, when I had received treatment either for my HCV or for other medical conditions, I was always conscious that some of the nurses would give me awful looks as if I was 'dirty' or 'not quite clean,' it's hard to explain but I always thought that they had known about my infection. It was such a horrible experience to have to go through when I was only in this setting to seek medical assistance. What made it more upsetting was knowing that I had contracted the HCV in the very same setting.

67. As I was affected quite a lot by how I had been treated, I had decided to explain how I was feeling to one of the district nurses at Torbay Hospital. When she replied to my news, she did not come across as though she was entirely surprised. She told me that she had come across this attitude in the past and did not know how nurses could be so heartless and treat people in that manner. I never made any sort of formal complaint.

68. Ever since my early years, I have always wished to become either a trained nurse or a midwife. I had an interview with an agency at Torquay Council Town Hall in 1991, just after my first treatment, and told them about my career aspirations. It was at this point that I was told that I should realise that due to my infection I would be limited in what options would be available to me for a career, and therefore, it was unlikely that I would be able to realise my career ambitions. This news has forever upset me, and of all the complications and traumas associated with my HCV, is the one that has caused me the most heartache – having to sacrifice the career that I had been passionate about since my childhood.

69. My HCV also had an effect on the work I was alternatively able to obtain, and therefore, my ability to earn a living for myself. Around 1999 or 2000 when I started my treatment with Interferon and Ribavirin, I had to take six months off from work due to the variety of side effects I had experienced. This was mainly persistent tiredness and fatigue, which had meant I was unable to carry out my job role effectively. Luckily, this period of time I had off from work was covered by my employer.

Section 6: Treatment/Care/Support

70. As previously stated I do believe I had faced difficulties or obstacles in obtaining treatment for my HCV, due to the length of time I had to wait until I was able to commence both my first and second course of treatment.

71. I do not believe that I faced any difficulties in obtaining adequate care and support for my HCV as Sheila Needs at Torbay Hospital provided me with such great care. I cannot fault the way in wish she took care of me and how she had pushed for my treatment when funding had become available.

72. I have never been offered counselling or psychological support either at the point at which I was diagnosed, nor during treatment or at any stage whilst I was infected with HCV.

Section 7: Financial Assistance

73. In April 2006, Sheila Needs at Torbay Hospital had first made me aware that I could apply for financial assistance from the Skipton Fund ("Skipton") regarding my HCV. She suggested that I should carry out some research surrounding whether I would wish to apply to Skipton, and if I should, then I would need a medical professional who was in charge of my care to assist in filling out the application form. Once I had made the decision that I would proceed, I simply executed the sections of my application I was able to, and then handed this to Sheila. It was at this point that I was told that Dr George would provide written evidence in support of my application. (See **Exhibit WITN4209002)**

74. On 29 April 2006, my application form was submitted by Dr George at Torbay Hospital on my behalf.

75. I later received a letter from Skipton, which had stated that my application for financial assistance had been refused. I have been told this letter was dated 09 June 2006. The reason behind why my claim had been refused, was that I was unable to provide written evidence which supported the fact that I had undergone a blood transfusion at the point I alluded to, that is my ectopic pregnancy operation in 1981.

76. I was also told that when filling out my application form, the tick box which would have indicated that I believed that I had received HCV as a result of a contaminated blood transfusion had actually been scored out. This was possibly done by Dr George. In addition, my application was refused based on the fact that Dr George had noted that my HCV could have possibly been caused through sexual contact with my partner, Terry who was noted as having been a drug user. Both of these facts had undermined the point I was trying to make surrounding the occasion when I believed I had been Infected, namely the contaminated blood transfusion I had received in 1981.

77. I believe that the only difficulty or obstacle I had experienced during the whole application process for financial assistance, was that I was unable to make an appeal based on the initial refusal of my application in June 2006. When I made inquiries into the procedure as to how I could launch an appeal, I was told I would have to produce further supporting evidence to exemplify the cause of my HCV infection. However, I was unable to do this, as following an enquiry, I was led to believe that my medical records had been destroyed at Watford Hospital, Watford, Hertfordshire, where the blood transfusion in question had taken place.

78. Initially I was upset that I had not been granted access to financial assistance for my HCV. It would obviously have improved my circumstances. However, this did not last too long as I have never been motivated by cash. I suppose all I could think about was that at least I was living, breathing, and being monitored by the hospital, whilst others were in a much more critical position and some were dying from this infection.

Section 8: Other Issues

79. When I was made aware that persons with HCV were not included within the vulnerable persons category under the coronavirus ("Covid-19") shielding programme, I was particularly shocked. If I had not been in the position I am in at the moment where my HCV has cleared, I would have been extremely worried. HCV is an infection which effects the liver therefore, they should be deemed particularly vulnerable if they should contract Covid-19. I have always been told that I would need to work throughout the pandemic we currently find ourselves in which is worrying. There are plenty of people in the United Kingdom who still have HCV and therefore may need to shield.

80. Since I was diagnosed with HCV in 1991, which is the point at which I developed a belief that I had contracted HCV through infected blood, I have been angry. Angry at

the thought of how the Contaminated Blood Scandal could have been allowed to happen, and how the NHS and the Government just sat back and acted as if nothing was happening. Where was the duty of care to those infected? They worked together on this and each has been as bad as the other in failing to address their responsibility. You cannot expressly point your fingers at any one individual or organisation but surely more could have been done. I don't think it has dented my overall faith in the NHS but I certainly pay a lot more attention to and question if needed, what any medical professional tells me now.

81. If a similar thing to the Contaminated Blood Scandal would occur now in 2020, I do not believe I would be surprised. You cannot trust anyone these days, even if they are in a position of power. Look at the scandal surrounding what is happening with the presence of Covid-19 in the care homes within the United Kingdom. This could have been easily avoided if the right precautions were taken at the right time. Nothing has changed and I do not think it ever will. There will always be mistakes made and there will always be someone to blame for that mistake.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed GRO-C

Dated 5 - 11- 2020

Table of Exhibits:

Date	Notes/ Description	Exhibit number
29.04.2006	Skipton Application form	**WITN4209002**