Witness Name: Vivien Elizabeth Hatfield
Statement No: **WITN4377001**
Exhibits: **WITN4377002-004**
Dated:

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

WRITTEN STATEMENT OF VIVIEN ELIZABETH HATFIELD

I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 17 June 2020.

I, Vivien Elizabeth Hatfield, will say as follows: -

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Vivien Elizabeth Hatfield (maiden name Drew). My date of birth is GRO-C 1951 and my address is GRO-C GRO-C. I live with my husband and our two cats.

2. I worked for the BBC as a production assistant for 19 years before taking voluntary redundancy in 1996. I moved to GRO-C with my partner in 1997 and we got married in 2005, after 15 years together.

3. I intend to speak about my infection with the Hepatitis C virus (HCV), which I believe I contracted as a result of being given a blood transfusion after a road traffic accident in 1977.

4. In particular, I intend to discuss the nature of my illness, how the illness affected me, the treatment that I received and the impact it had on my life.

5. I confirm that I have chosen not to be legally represented and that I am happy for the Inquiry team to assist me with my statement.

Section 2. How Infected

6. The road traffic accident occurred on New Year's Day 1977, when I was 26 years old. My partner was driving the car and I was not wearing a seatbelt – the accident was before it was required by law. The roads were very icy and we slid into a lamppost coming into a roundabout.

7. I do not know how long we waited for the ambulance to arrive, but I lost a lot of blood. I recall waking up the in ambulance and a paramedic asking me for my name.

8. I was taken to the North Middlesex Hospital and given a blood transfusion. I had over 100 stiches near my eyes, across my forehead and up one side of my face, as well as on my hands and up my arms.

9. I remember having observations every 10 minutes because I kept wanting to fall asleep. I was kept in hospital for a few nights before being sent home.

10. A friend came into the hospital to visit me. She went to the person in the next bed by mistake and thought I looked fine, but when she saw me she was horrified. I looked like the person on the seat belt advertisement.

11. I had a wonderful GP at the time. I do not remember his name, but the surgery was on Muswell Road – it is not there anymore. I was left with keloid scars after the accident. They did not bother me, but my GP was friends with the top cosmetic surgeon at Hammersmith Hospital. After 4-5 months I was sent to see him.

12. His registrar carried out the surgery. I remember he removed a piece of glass during the procedure and asked me if I wanted to keep it as souvenir.

13. For nearly a year afterwards I would wake up with scratches all over because of glass trying to work its way out. I even had a piece of glass near my eye that was still there years later and when it came to the surface I would scratch my fingers.

14. After recovering from the accident, I went back to work as soon as possible. It was hard as some people could not face talking to me because of the scarring.

15. I went travelling to Asia in November 1977 and came back the following April. I carried on life as normal.

16. My partner who had been driving at the time of the accident, died from a heart attack after 13 years together.

17. It was not until 2005 that I started having problems at work. I was a PA to a director of a firm of accountants and I sent the wrong set of accounts to a client.

18. After that particular error, I started to monitor myself and recognised that I was making mistakes that I should not have been and that were completely out of character. It became clear that I had a lack of coordination and I was not functioning properly. Through this self-analysis, I also identified that I had become depressed.

19. I went to see Dr **Jetha and he took blood tests. Upon receiving the results, he sent me for further blood tests at the West Suffolk Hospital.** It came back that I was HCV positive and Dr Jetha informed me of the diagnosis. I was told that it was a South African strain – a rare genotype.

20. I was referred to the Christopher Centre in Sudbury to see a specialist nurse. She asked if I had any tattoos or piercings. To confirm, I do not have any tattoos and I had my ears pierced as a child.

21. I explained to the nurse that I spent 6 months in Thailand in 1977. I spent most of the time in the countryside and later travelled onto Malaysia. My partner and I stayed in clean hotels. She asked questions relating my travelling, but determined it to be unrelated to my HCV diagnosis.

22. It was then established that I could have received infected blood after my road traffic accident.

23. I cannot recall being given any specific advice regarding alcohol and diet, but I was warned of all the risks of contamination.

24. I can confirm that I have not used intravenous drugs.

Section 3. Other Infections

25. I have not contracted any infection other than HCV as a result of being given contaminated blood.

26. I am not aware if I have been tested for HIV.

Section 4. Consent

27. I am not aware of being treated or tested without consent.

Section 5. Impact

28. I married my partner in 2005 and three weeks later I had a stroke, caused by a brainstem cavernoma. This happened in the July of that year and meant that I had to delay the HCV treatment.

29. I was initially taken to the West Suffolk Hospital, but transferred to Addenbrookes Hospital the next day where I had a brain operation. I spent between 2-3 weeks at Addenbrookes before being transferred back to West Suffolk for recovery. I was discharged in October 2005.

30. The consultant at Addenbrookes informed me that the brainstem cavernoma was probably there from birth and could have caused a stroke at any time. It was therefore unrelated to the HCV.

31. After the stroke I could not swallow, I could hardly walk and I had partial paralysis – this affected my balance and stability. One side of my voice box was also paralysed. At one point the consultant suggested injecting Botox into the voice box, but later decided against the procedure as it could potentially take my voice away completely.

32. I had a tube through my nose for months and the hospital also suggested attaching a food bag. I decided against having this fitted because I enjoyed eating out. The care from the hospital had been good up until this point, but as soon as I decided not to go ahead with the food bag they told me there was nothing else they could do and it was as if they washed their hands of me.

33. I received a letter 18 months later asking if I wanted any speech therapy – this should have happened straight after the stroke. At this point my husband and I felt very felt down by the hospital.

34. It is possible that the HCV has affected my recovery from the stroke. Since the stroke I suffer with ataxia. I had to stop driving 18 months ago because of this and its effect on my vision.

35. I never had a day's sickness until I was diagnosed with HCV, but I have had a catalogue of medical conditions since:

36. Approximately 3-4 years ago, I was diagnosed with chronic pancreatitis.

37. I was informed that I had type 2 diabetes a couple of years ago, which led to a meeting with a specialist nurse about diet. My husband is concerned about my weight loss, but I cannot eat too many carbohydrates because of the diabetes. I am on two medications and have a blood sample taken every year.

38. I was diagnosed with breast cancer in April 2019 and had three weeks of intense radiotherapy at Addenbrookes. I have not asked if it is attributable to the HCV.

39. My position at work was held open for 6 months after the stroke. I could not return, because I then had to start the course of treatment to clear the HCV. They were very good about this and visited me in hospital.

40. I started a 12-month course of Interferon and Ribavirin in April 2006 to clear the virus. I self-injected the Interferon into my stomach.

41. I was never informed of any of the after effects of the treatment.

42. Whilst on the treatment I felt unwell, had no energy and was very fatigued. I was still recovering from the stroke during this time.

43. I had my first liver biopsy shortly after my diagnosis. It was very invasive and horrible. I experienced referred pain in my shoulder during the procedure and I was kept in hospital for a day or two afterwards.

44. Liver biopsies were taken regularly – initially every three months, then every 6, then annually and then every 3 years.

45. My liver was damaged because of the virus, but its condition kept improving at every biopsy.

46. After finishing the treatment, I had a fibro scan and I was told that I was clear of the virus. I no longer have any check-ups in regard to HCV. It is now gone from my mind and one less medical condition to worry about.

47. I count myself very lucky to have survived, as I was given a 40-60% chance of survival when diagnosed.

48. I am now HCV free but I cannot donate blood or register as an organ donor.

49. Up until my diagnosis with HCV I had been proud about giving blood, especially as I have a rare blood type. I donated blood about twice a year from the age of 18, but in the mid 80s they refused my blood donation on the basis that I had anaemia. This would have been at a donation clinic on Regent's Street, London.

50. They sent me home with a letter for my GP. I did not read the contents of the letter as it was not addressed to myself. The doctor disputed its contents, but he did not say anything else was wrong. He was very dismissive and did not send me for any further blood tests.

51. I was very upset about my donation being refused and I tried once more. It was refused again.

52. My immediate thought when I was diagnosed with HCV was what if I had passed it onto someone else by donating blood. I felt extremely guilty over this and it remains a worry.

53. My husband states that because of my medical history it is difficult to separate the effects of HCV from everything else, but it has certainly had a huge impact on our lives. Whilst it is hard to distinguish what is a direct result of the HCV, it is all part and parcel.

54. Since my HCV diagnosis it has made going on holiday very difficult and we have not been away for a number of years.

55. My husband and I have coped with the infection and still have a roof over our heads, but our lives have still been impacted. We have to plan everything ahead and normal daily activities take a considerable amount of time. We live in a three-storey house which is not practical for my health conditions and it makes life less enjoyable.

56. GRO-C

57. I was on antidepressants for about 4-5 years after my HCV diagnosis and carried on with them after the stroke. At first, I was prescribed 40mg tablets, but I gradually reduced the dosage and came off them completely with Dr Jetha's approval.

58. I do not like taking tablets, but I now have to take approximately 14 a day.

59. I told the dentist about my infection, but I was never refused any treatment or treated adversely.

60. I told everyone about the infection because it was on my conscious – I did not want to keep it away from anyone. I often have falls because of the stroke and I felt that it was best for people to know about the HCV in case I had an accident and injured myself.

61. I told my employers about the diagnosis. At first, I told the bosses and explained how the infection could only be passed on via blood to blood contact. They were fine about it. The rest of my colleagues were shocked but very understanding and no one treated me any differently.

62. I also told my Riding for the Disabled (RDA) group about the infection and the associated risks. (Shortly after the stroke, I was introduced to the support group 'Success After a Stroke' and they told me about the RDA as I love horses.

63. I never experienced any stigma from family or friends. My family are very resilient but they were concerned for me.

64. I even remind the nurses about HCV whenever I have blood taken.

65. HCV had no direct impact on my work, apart from the mistakes I made before the diagnosis. I attribute the errors to the brain fog brought on by HCV, as up until this point I was known as being very efficient.

66. I have never been refused any insurance because of my HCV diagnosis.

67. I was assessed for a Personal Independence Payment (PIP), when it replaced the Disability Living Allowance. My husband and I opted for a mobility car instead of monthly payments.

68. Recently I was reassessed and everything was taken away because I was not classed as 'disabled enough'. The sense of being recognised was taken away and I felt like we were treated as fraudsters. I was very upset over this and did get depressed.

69. I have since been told that I can reapply, but it is another stone that has been thrown at us.

70. Earlier this year, I received a letter from the government and my local surgery to say that I am at high risk of Covid 19 and that I should shield.

Section 6. Treatment/Care/Support

71. I was treated well in regard to the stroke and the operation, there were just a few extra precautions because of the HCV.

72. I was offered counselling and access to a self-help group, but I did not feel the need for it. I have always been very strong willed and a resilient person. The specialist nurse pushed me quite strongly to take the counselling and join the group, but left the ball in my court.

73. My GP at Hardwicke House Group Surgery, is very good and supportive.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

74. The specialist nurse at the Christopher Centre encouraged me to apply for compensation before I started treatment for the HCV. I felt reluctant because I had given blood without knowing I had was infected with HCV and I felt guilty. It made me feel awful about potentially infecting other people and I did not think that I deserved to be rewarded.

75. I told the nurse that I would ring North Middlesex Hospital to see if they had any records of my blood transfusion.

76. When I phoned the records office, I was told that the hospital was undergoing refurbishment (it was an old Victorian building) and they did not have any medical files. I informed the specialist nurse that no records could be obtained.

77. I have been shown three documents found by the Inquiry at my statement interview, one of which is a page from the Skipton application form. I have no memory of filling out the form, but it is in my handwriting – exhibit **WITN4377002.**

78. I presume it would have been Dr Jetha that pursued the application. I cannot sing his praises enough – he was brilliant.

79. I was refused financial compensation from the Skipton Fund because I had no medical records to prove that I had a blood transfusion after the road traffic accident. Please see exhibits **WITN4377003**; **WITN4377004**.

Section 8. Other Issues

80. My husband and I were initially reluctant to do anything in regard to the contaminated blood scandal, but we found out a lot about cover up in the last year and think that the personal experiences of those affected should be recognised.

81. I am not bothered about the compensation that I have been refused, but I want to speak out for other people that have been given infected blood.

82. What appals me the most about the contaminated blood scandal is the children and haemophiliacs who have suffered worse and have died as a result.

83. For purposes of tracing medical records, my address at the time of the road traffic accident was GRO-C GRO- and my NHS number is GRO-C.

84. I would like to exhibit the following documents, that I viewed during my witness statement interview. They are sourced from the Inquiry's document review of Skipton material.

Exhibit Number	Source	Description
WITN4377002	SKIP0000046 page 498	First page of Skipton Registration form
WITN4377003	SKIP0000046 page 500	Letter from Nicholas Fish, Skipton Scheme Administrator to Dr Jetha dated 6 February 2006, outlining errors with the application form and requests amendments.
WITN4377004	SKIP0000046 page 499	Letter from Nicholas Fish, Skipton Scheme Administrator to Mrs Hatfield dated 21 February 2006 stating that the application for an ex gratia payment could not progress any further without medical records confirming the blood transfusion.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed GRO-C

Dated 3rd October 2020