

Witness Name: Simon Parr  
Statement No.: WITN0908001  
Exhibits: **WITN0908002**  
Dated: 14<sup>th</sup> July 2019

## INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

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### WRITTEN STATEMENT OF SIMON RONALD PARR

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I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 25 March 2019.

I, Simon Ronald Parr, will say as follows: -

#### Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Simon Ronald Parr. My date of birth is GRO-C 1969 and my address is known to the Inquiry. I intend to speak about my late father, Ronald Parr, who was infected with HIV and Hepatitis B Virus ("HBV") following treatment for his haemophilia with Factor VIII and blood transfusions. My mum, Marjorie Joyce Parr (WITN0889), and sister, Sharon Parr-Veck (WITN3443), are also providing statements to the Inquiry.
2. I am married and I have one son from a previous marriage. I live in Telford with my wife and work at Linklockers as a Production Planner.
3. My dad was a good-hearted bloke. He was a musician and was interested in history, reading and culture. He dressed well and was into wearing Italian suits. Dad was also passionate about helping people with disabilities and, even after he was infected with HIV, he continued to help others for as long as he could. Dad died in 1990. His death had and continues to have a devastating impact on our family.

## **Section 2. How Affected**

4. My dad was born in Liverpool on GRO-C 1944. He had severe Haemophilia A. When he was young, he was a musician and played in a band with his brother. My dad played the classic guitar and Spanish guitar, while his brother sang. They were very good. Dad used to play at the Cavern in Liverpool and, in the 1960s, him and his friends toured around. That's how he met my mum.
5. I was born in 1969 and Sharon was born in 1971. We had a very good, liberal upbringing given our dad was a musician and our mum was a hippy. We were, and still are, a very close and loving family. I am similar to my dad in many ways. Like him, I am pragmatic about life and, although I am not reserved, I tend to keep things in. Growing up, my dad never smacked or hit me and he never had to as I respected him. I later took that on with my own son.
6. I do not remember much of my dad's haemophilia treatment as I was young at the time. However, from what I have been told by my mum, my dad initially took cryoprecipitate injections monthly and started on Factor VIII treatment in 1974 or 1975, when I was five or six years old.
7. In 1983, when I was 14 years old, my dad had a knee operation at New Cross Hospital, Wolverhampton. I do not recall much about this operation myself, but from what my mum has told me, I know the surgery went wrong and the skin burst from his knee all the way down to his ankle. Dad was in hospital for three months and permanently on Factor VIII. We think it was likely during this time that he contracted HIV and HBV.
8. Within a year of the knee operation, my mum and I went to pick up Factor VIII for dad from the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital, Shropshire. The consultant, Mr O'Shea, took my mum and I into his consultation room. He told my mum, very bluntly, that my dad had HIV. I did not process what was going on at the time and so I do not recall this incident myself. I was only a teenager and so I was just thinking about girls and music. I had a teenage social life. I did not realise that my dad had HIV and how seriously ill he was until many years later.
9. My mum does not recall whether they were ever told that my dad also had HBV, or whether she first learnt this when she saw it on his death certificate.

10. My mum has told me that she was given very little information about how to manage dad's infection and the risk of transmission. She was left to break the news to my dad herself. They decided to keep it between the two of them.

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

11. As far as I am aware, my dad was not infected with anything other than HIV and HBV.

### **Section 4. Consent**

12. As I was only a teenager at the time, I do not know whether my dad was treated or tested without his knowledge and consent or for research purposes.

### **Section 5. Impact**

13. My dad would never complain, but he had a lifetime of illnesses. Because of his haemophilia, he had always been poorly and was in and out of hospital. I remember once I saw him in the bathtub and he just looked like a big bruise. Despite how unwell he was, he just got on with things.

14. My dad lost his job at a factory after he had his knee operation in 1983. However, he kept himself busy. He took up photography and kept a stamp collection. He was also very passionate about advocating for the rights of disabled people and he helped out at Stirchley Disabled Centre in Telford. He was in a group called Club 62. We would go on holidays with disabled people who he met at the club.

15. My dad was also a union convenor and would meet with politicians such as the Minister of Health at the time and our local MP. I remember he had meetings with David Blunkett and laid into him. [GRO-C]

[GRO-C] my dad wasn't afraid to ask him what the government was doing for disabled people.

16. My dad had a very active life before he became unwell and he was always a good dresser. He was a socialite and was very popular. I would go to the pub with him on a Sunday and he would get his guitar out. Everybody knew him there and everybody

respected him. He even helped out a couple of my friends who had bad home lives by letting them live with us when they needed somewhere to stay.

17. Although my dad was diagnosed with HIV within a year of his knee operation, I don't recall him becoming very unwell with the infection until much later. At this point, I was not even aware that he had HIV. I do recall, however, that he started drinking. He wouldn't drink everyday but he would go out binge-drinking on the weekend. I think that was his release. It ground him down in the end.
18. Between 1987 and 1988, my dad had a kidney removed. We do not know whether this was related to his infections. Then, in 1989, my dad's eyes and skin were yellow as a result of jaundice. My mum cannot recall whether my dad was officially diagnosed with HBV at this point.
19. When I look back now, my dad also had a lot of financial pressure. He tried to keep the family together whilst trying to hold down his illness. He did it with humility and humour. Being from Liverpool, he had a good sense of humour.
20. Because of his haemophilia, my dad had a lifetime of us seeing him unwell. However, he didn't want us to see the HIV side of things and for a number of years, he did not tell Sharon and I about his infection. Then one evening, when Sharon and I were teenagers, he got Dutch courage and told us that he was HIV positive. It was a shock and it was very upsetting. However, I felt I had to get on with it and I didn't want to be upset in front of my Mum and sister. I wanted to be strong for them.
21. When my dad first told us about his infection, I blocked it out. I would work, find enough money to get a plane ticket and go away. I went to the Middle East when I was 17 years old and, later, I went to America. I got into breakdancing and went to New York and all sorts of places. I never really talked about any problems I had in my life as I didn't want to burden my parents. They already had enough to deal with.
22. I didn't drink or take drugs, but I went a different way. When I was 18 or 19 years old, I met a woman who was 16 years older than me, one thing led to another and I got her pregnant. The relationship didn't work out with her but my son, Nathan, was born in 1990, a few months before my dad passed away. Dad met Nathan and he couldn't get enough of him.

23. At first, I couldn't tell anybody about dad's infection. Sharon and I were only teenagers at the time but we had such a big secret to keep. It was a big taboo and was seen as a drug-taker or homosexual disease. If I had told anyone, people would have asked whether my dad was gay or a drug addict. At school, lots of kids accused other people of having it. I also remember they had a television advert about AIDS, where they portrayed it as an iceberg with parts falling off.
24. As the years went by, I was able to tell some of my close friends. Now, I feel I can talk about it to anyone who wants to know. There is still stigma but it's a different time, a different generation.
25. My dad didn't become so unwell that he had to give things up until the very end. His way of dealing with his HIV was by helping others and so he continued with this for as long as he could.
26. Dad told us that he would never let us see him get really sick. He said he would go away and disappear once it got to that point.
27. When my dad became really unwell, I was at my parent's house in Telford at the time. Dad was taken to hospital by ambulance where he fell into a coma. It was very difficult to see him in that state in the hospital.
28. Dad died on 21 December 1990. His death certificate states that the cause of death was Staphylococcal Septicaemia, AIDS, Haemophilia A and Chronic HBV. I produce a true copy of my dad's death certificate as **Exhibit WITN0908002**.
29. When my dad passed away, I had three weeks off work. They called me after two weeks and asked me when I was going to return. I was working in a factory at the time but I decided to go back to college, as I did not want to end up working in a factory all my life. I initially studied architecture but I couldn't get my brain around the maths side of it so when I returned to college in 1992, I studied travel and tourism.
30. At the time, I had to get on with life and provide for my son. However, Dad's death has changed me in many ways. I turn 50 this year and my dad was only 46 when he died. It is strange to think that I have now lived longer than my dad did, and it is hard not to think about all the things he missed out on. I did not meet my wife until 2003

and it is a shame that she never got to meet my dad, as they would have been very close.

31. It is also very sad that my dad missed out on many years of being a granddad. In many ways, my son is so similar to my dad. His characteristics, his nature, and the music he listens to are all the same as my dad and I. My son plays guitar, just like my dad. My son and I like gardening and my dad liked gardening. My son also looks so much like my dad, it's quite spooky. We talk about his granddad sometimes. Dad was so excited to meet him, and it is a shame they never had the chance to get to know one another.
32. My grandmother, my dad's mum, also suffered. She was always quite emotional and was brought up with the lies of the 1980s, when drug users and the homosexual community were blamed for HIV. She passed away about four years ago but she never got over dad's death.
33. I think my dad's death affected my mum more than anyone else. She has struggled financially and emotionally. It has been difficult having to watch my mum grow old without dad. After he died, she went on a couple of dates but no one ever measured up to my dad.

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

34. The care and treatment provided was a mixed bag. My dad received exceptional care from the local GPs. Dr Kit Wynes, a local GP, is a very respectable man and the work he did regarding dad's AIDS was helpful.
35. On the other end of the spectrum was Mr O'Shea who played my mum about. If anything happens now, a person is offered support but back then, nothing was offered. It was disappointing; people were treated like cattle.
36. No one in my family has ever been offered any counselling or psychological support in relation to what happened to my dad.

## **Section 7. Financial Assistance**

37. The lack of financial assistance rumbled on over the decades and my mum had to survive. We received some financial assistance but I cannot remember where from. The Macfarlane Trust sounds really familiar and I think we received between £4,000 and £6,000 after my dad's death. I was young at the time so I didn't really understand what the financial assistance was for. It was not enough to cover loss of earnings or emotional distress. It was only enough for us to go on holiday after my dad passed away. It was 'dirt money'.

## Section 8. Other Issues

38. I have never been involved in any previous inquiries or campaigns. I hope that, following this Inquiry, those who have covered up what happened will be held responsible. I know that people get ill and die, but it is the cover-up and financial aspect that bothers me. They got the products because they were cheap. The more I think about it, the more angry I become. I think that the NHS realised they were going to get sued and so they decided to minimise the cost of it.

39. It is not about the haemophilia. My dad's haemophilia was unpreventable and it was no one's fault. However, the infections he received were preventable and what bothers me is the way we were treated afterwards, due to the fear and ignorance around HIV.

40. If something like this happened in the private sector, those in charge would be held responsible. Why should it be any different in the public sector? I want it to be crystal clear that if there was a cover up, it won't be tolerated in a public or private sector world.

### **Statement of Truth**

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

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Dated 14 July 2019