

## 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 GRO-B 1946 and I live at GRO-B GRO-B with my wife GRO-B.
2. I have 3 children from my previous marriage, GRO-B born on GRO-B 1976, GRO-B born on GRO-B 1978 and GRO-B born on GRO-B 1979. My first wife GRO-B died on GRO-B 1981.
3. I have a further son GRO-B from my second marriage. We also had a daughter GRO-B who was born with GRO-B and who sadly died in GRO-B 2014.
4. I make this statement in respect of GRO-B and GRO-B who were both born with Haemophilia A and both were infected with the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and Hepatitis C (HCV) from receipt of contaminated blood products. I understand that both GRO-B and GRO-B have given statements to the Inquiry and that GRO-B partner GRO-B and my wife GRO-B have also made statements.

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5. This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to the boys' medical records.

### Section 2. How Affected

6. I married my first wife [GRO-B] in [GRO-B] [GRO-B] and [GRO-B] were both born in [GRO-B] Maternity Home whilst [GRO-B] was born at [GRO-B] [GRO-B].
7. We were not aware of Haemophilia within the family. This only came to light when [GRO-B] was very young. We had a few incidents with [GRO-B] when he had bleeds that did not seem to stop and a social worker had commented on the fact that [GRO-B] bruised easily.
8. On 30<sup>th</sup> December 1979 he fell off a Tonka truck and split his lip which would not stop bleeding. At the time we were staying with my in laws in [GRO-B] and we took him to [GRO-B]. Within a very short space of time he was being taken by ambulance to the [GRO-B]. We were told by medical staff that they did not know what was wrong with him just that they had to give him an urgent blood transfusion.
9. They tried to transfuse into his veins but they had collapsed and eventually they had to open up his skull and gave him blood directly into the skull. A couple of hours later they confirmed that he was a haemophiliac and we were advised to get [GRO-B] checked for this as well; he was four months old at the time. They did the checks immediately and [GRO-B] was also found to have Haemophilia A; they both had a clotting factor of less than 1%.
10. We were living in [GRO-B] at the time and the boys were looked after at [GRO-B] Hospital [GRO-B].
11. Within days of returning we had seen a paediatrician, [GRO-B]. He did not know anything about Haemophilia but he said he would find out and arranged appointments with [GRO-B] [GRO-B] at the [GRO-B]. We occasionally saw, along with [GRO-B] a haematology specialist who visited from [GRO-B].
12. Within a week of coming back from [GRO-B] we went to see [GRO-B] in [GRO-B] which was a 220 mile round trip. He explained Haemophilia to us and mentioned

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cryoprecipitate as treatment for bleeds which had to be administered in hospital or administered by our GP. We could also use Tranexamic acid which could help with topical bleeds.

13. We continued with twice yearly sessions at [GRO-B] usually with [GRO-B] until we moved away in May 1983.
14. We saw [GRO-B] with the boys quite often as he managed their treatment with directions from [GRO-B]. We found that if we dressed the boys in padded clothing this helped with the bruising and they got on with life.
15. I remember this as feeling a period of calm in my life; that was in April 1980. I think it had been a relief in a way that the boys had been diagnosed with Haemophilia after the issues with bruising and bleeding that [GRO-B] certainly had prior to diagnosis. However, my wife died 10 months later from [GRO-B]. I wonder whether their Haemophilia was a contributory factor. We had no help or support at that time. When my wife was very ill a consultant told me that she was going to die and he told me to tell her.
16. We first became aware of Factor VIII concentrate in 1982. [GRO-B] advised us that this treatment was a big advance in medicine and for the treatment of Haemophilia and that I could eventually be trained in administering it from home. We were not told of any risks associated with this treatment; it was all very positive.
17. Factor VIII concentrate was sent from [GRO-B] and I picked it up from [GRO-B] and I was taught how to administer it to the boys.
18. I am pretty sure that the Factor VIII concentrate was Armour.
19. We moved to [GRO-B] where I am living now in May 1983. This was a company move.
20. In November or December 1984 I received a letter from [GRO-B] of [GRO-B] [GRO-B] asking me to contact them. I made the telephone call and I was advised that there was some concern about infection and could I go in to see them. I cannot remember the specific date but it was not long after the telephone call and I was told that both the boys were HIV positive. I think I blanked out a little of what I was told but I would

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like to think we were given advice on further treatment, minimal risk of infecting us and how it is transmitted.

21. We were told that the boys were healthy but we knew that they had been infected through contaminated Factor VIII. We had not been advised of any risks with regard to the same; they had just been very positive indicating that we were able to give it at home and also as preventative treatment.
22. We always recorded batch numbers and I do recall them saying that [GRO-B] had had a lot fewer injections from the batch than [GRO-B]. The consultant was very conservative and indicated that it was best not to rush into anything as treatments for the virus will have side effects. She suggested that we wait and treatments will get better in time with fewer side effects.
23. At the time we were not really worried about the boys; they seemed healthy and [GRO-B] sister had done a PHD in Virology and had worked on HIV from an early date so I was able to discuss it with her.
24. I recall that it was in the early 90s that I went to see [GRO-B]. She told me that in addition to the HIV the boys were also infected with HCV. I cannot recall her saying anything about Hepatitis B but I do remember that we were all given injections for this. At the time there was no counselling given or offered. We were just told to take the boys to the GP for general care and [GRO-B] for everything else.

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

25. I remember that we did receive a letter from the hospital regarding the possibility of contraction of vCJD. I remember it being a very unsympathetic letter, very blunt and general. I do recall discussing it at the hospital but did not take it any further.



**Section 4. Consent.**

26. I cannot recall but I think we must have consented to the boys being tested. Of course if we had been asked then we would have consented to it. It has never entered my mind that the boys were used for research purposes.

**Section 5. Impact**

27. I married my second wife on [GRO-B] just two or three months prior to being told that the boys were HIV positive. We decided that we would not tell anyone and we did not tell the school.

28. We lived in a small community and were conscious at the time of the news breaking surrounding AIDS. We were aware from the press that there was a case in [GRO-B] where the school had found out about a child with AIDS and the difficulties that the family had faced. We did not wish this upon ourselves.

29. Our daughter [GRO-B] was born in 1985 and our son [GRO-B] was born in 1987. [GRO-B] was born with [GRO-B] and so at the time we had five young children so there was a lot going on; [GRO-B] needed a lot of care.

30. Life went on through the 80s. We were very busy; I was working full time and the boys' infections did not dominate our lives through this period. [GRO-B] had a part time job. [GRO-B] and [GRO-B] were by now receiving prophylactic Factor VIII treatment.

31. In 1993 we told the boys together about their infections. By this time there was a slightly more optimistic future with AIDS. They knew obviously about their Haemophilia and we thought they should know about their infections. They both appeared to take it calmly and I cannot recall any great trauma.

32. For all of us to a certain extent we shut it out without being conscious that we had.

33. Looking back [GRO-B] A level results were not good but he went to a preparatory year at [GRO-B] to get better A level results and got into [GRO-B] University to read civil

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engineering. He failed the first year and transferred to [GRO-B] and graduated three years later with an Honours degree in Civil Engineering.

34. In hindsight he was drinking heavily and not looking after himself. Whether he was in the mind-set then of limited life expectancy I do not know. He was pretty well read and may not have been expecting longevity. He was coming into contact with different consultants and he was not very talkative.
35. He had done a summer job with a civil engineering practice in [GRO-B] which after University then became a permanent job and he was living at home. After two years he was given notice and in hindsight we wonder whether he was suffering at this stage.
36. He had voids in his head and he would have to go back to the office at night to check things.
37. He did manage to get another job but this time it was in [GRO-B]. The firm seemed very supportive and he found a flat. One Saturday morning I got a call from [GRO-B] friend to say that he had been drinking a lot and had fallen and smashed his face; he had been admitted to hospital. I remember all I kept saying was that they had to give him Factor VIII.
38. In 2003 he was diagnosed with mild AIDS related dementia, epilepsy and manic depression.
39. In 2006 he was diagnosed with non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. At the time, I did not expect him to pull through but he responded well to the chemotherapy.
40. I recall at the time that we were a large family with a busy life but it was very depressing living with two sons with such problems and I remember driving away from [GRO-B] and pulling up at a service station and letting everything out with tears and sobbing. I wanted to be strong but it was so worrying.
41. I spent a lot of time going to [GRO-B] to sort [GRO-B] out and I remember feeling that I was neglecting everything else. I was always worried that I was focussing too much on [GRO-B] and [GRO-B] and not giving attention to my other three children.

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42. Also I wanted to appear strong. I remember that it was difficult at work as whilst my employers allowed me time off work I was conscious of my work colleagues saying "oh he's off to GRO-B again".
43. I was enjoying my job and I was rewarded well. I carried on to the early 2000s but then I was taking a lot of time off and I considered early retirement. The company did not want me to go and offered me an 80% contract. I did that and it was fine for a while but in terms of ranking and rating I went downwards. We had frank discussions about the fact that I used to be a top performer and now I wasn't and it was because I was not there.
44. I took early retirement in 2006; this should have been on a career high but it wasn't.
45. One of the main reasons that I had to go to GRO-B so much was because GRO-B was not getting out of the medical profession what he needed. He was bipolar and so I helped set up an appointment with a psychologist. Whilst I went with him to the first meeting he did not attend any others. He was drinking a lot.
46. I was concerned for his safety and one day we could not contact him. He had had an episode when he had stopped taking all his drugs; we rang the police. They asked us whether we wanted them to break the door down. We drove quickly to GRO-B to look after him and take him for treatment. GRO-B was unable to look after himself and so we helped him join a support group.
47. In 2014 GRO-B had bad depression again and was diagnosed with Bi-Polar Disorder. He dropped out of his work and all other social contacts. I had to write his resignation letter and manage his medical appointments. The situation is still on a knife edge.
48. I am very worried about him. He is 41/42 and has nothing to get out of bed for. He is not able to follow things through. I feel that he has a future now having cleared HCV and he is just letting his life go. I try to detach myself a little now as we have done so much for him.
49. I do not worry so much about GRO-B; he is very smart. Whilst not academically clever; he under achieved in his A levels and dropped out of University, he is looking after himself and he is more sociable. He got a job when he left University.

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50 [GRO-B] was convicted of drink driving and lost his licence and went off to Australia to surf. He still surfs regularly. He has generally sorted his whole life out, has a long-term partner, and it is only recently that he has required retroviral drugs.

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

51. I was not offered any counselling or support. I have not received any counselling.

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

52. I think I received £20,000 each for [GRO-B] and [GRO-B] in the HIV litigation. I cannot recall what I was told at the time but I think I did sign a waiver. From what I have heard I can only assume I did as I would not have received the payments if not. I remember that I put this in trust for them. I then gave the money to them to buy their houses with.

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

53. I believe now that as the boys were so young they should not have been given the Factor VIII concentrate that they were. I believe that they should have received heat treated concentrate at the time and should therefore never have been exposed to the viruses.

### **Anonymity, disclosure and redaction**

54. I wish to apply for anonymity. I understand that my statement will be published and disclosed as part of the Inquiry.

55. Whilst I am not happy to give evidence I will of course give evidence if I am called to do so.



**Statement of Truth**

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

Signed...

GRO-B

Dated.....

10<sup>th</sup> September 2019