

Witness Name: David Paterson

Statement No.: WITN2241001

Exhibits: WITN2241002

Dated: 27th May 2020

## **INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY**

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### **FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF DAVID PATERSON**

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I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 5<sup>th</sup> November, 2018.

I, David Paterson, will say as follows: -

#### **Section 1. Introduction**

1. My name is David Paterson. My date of birth is GRO-C 1967. I am currently on disability benefits as I am too ill to be in employment. I intend to speak about my infection of hepatitis C. In particular I will speak about my illness, how the illness has affected me, the treatment I received and the impact it has had on me and my wife.
2. In 1991 GRO-C near Edinburgh. I was randomly the victim of a stabbing attack. I was stabbed with a knife through my back and chest. It was a life threatening injury and I don't have that many memories of it as I was unconscious a lot of the time. I was taken to Law Hospital in Carluke and received emergency surgery. I do remember regaining consciousness on a hospital ward. I was hooked up to a bag of

blood and was receiving a blood transfusion. I was detained in hospital for a couple of weeks. I remember when my mother came to visit me she did say that over the course of the two weeks I had received 5 pints of blood because of my blood loss. My mother is called Jeanette Paterson and her address is GRO-C Glasgow.

3. I do remember the name of the surgeon that took care of me at Law Hospital. He was called Dr GRO-A He was a small man with grey hair.
4. I was given no information before my operation about the risk of being exposed to infection. My surgery was an emergency. As a result of having blood transfusions I received contaminated blood and contracted hepatitis C.
5. After my operation I spoke to Dr GRO-A on a number of occasions. He did not talk about my blood transfusions or the risk of infection. He did say to me "you will have problems later in life." I took that to mean that my injuries were so serious I was lucky to be alive but that my injuries would affect me in later life.
6. When I was discharged I was taken back to GRO-C hospital. I was there for just under a year recovering from my injuries. I was in a lot of pain around the abdominal area and felt generally unwell.
7. GRO-C 1994 and moved to GRO-C Glasgow. I was having a lot of periodic pain in my abdomen. I went to my local doctors surgery which was Meadow Park Street, Dennistoun. I cannot remember the name of the doctor I saw. I was also having trouble with my bowels. I know I was referred to the bowel department at Glasgow Royal Infirmary. They decided I had IBS (irritable bowel syndrome). I didn't believe I had IBS as I knew a few people who had the condition and their symptoms were different to mine.
8. I have always said that from having my operation in 1991 I have never felt

quite right. I did suffer with abdominal pain and had bouts of feeling generally unwell. On the whole however I was a fit and healthy man. I worked hard and did long hours as a lorry driver. I also liked to go to the gym and worked out at least three times a week.

9. In 2016 I went to see my local GP Dr Richards, GRO-C

GRO-C I was once again feeling lethargic and had abdominal pain. I told him of my symptoms. I remember he asked me lots of questions about my lifestyle. I did tell him about the surgery I had in 1991 and the blood transfusions I had received. He took my bloods for testing. After two weeks had elapsed he asked to see me again. He again took my bloods for testing.

10. On 24 February, 2016 I went back to see Dr Richards. He told me that my test results had shown that I had hepatitis C. I was absolutely shocked and devastated. I had heard about hepatitis C. I knew it was associated with intravenous drug users. I have never taken drugs in my life. Dr Richards and I talked about how I had got the hepatitis C. It was established that I must have got it from being given contaminated blood after my surgery in 1991.

11. Dr Richards didn't really give me much information about the infection. I wasn't given any information to help me understand or manage the infection. He did tell me that the infection could damage my liver. He referred me to a liver specialist Dr Fernandez at Crosshouse Hospital, Kilmarnock.

12. I was happy with the way I was treated by Dr Richards. For many years I had attended doctors and had hospital admissions for abdominal pain. No one really seemed to know what was wrong with me. All my symptoms were put down to IBS. Dr Richards finally got to the bottom of things for me.

13. From 1991 and 2016 I had numerous hospital admissions for abdominal pain and accidents. I always had my blood taken and therefore still to this day cannot understand why my hepatitis C infection wasn't picked up earlier. As it was, when I found out I had hepatitis C I already had cirrhosis of the liver.

14. I believe I was told there was a very small risk of passing on the infection through sexual intercourse. I was told it was predominantly through blood to blood contact that the infection could be passed to others.

GRO-C

GRO-C

15. The same day I was told by Dr Richards that I had hepatitis C I received a letter through the post. It was from the Department of Public health, NHS Lanarkshire headquarters, Kirklands, Fallside road, Bothwell. It said that my surgery had been conducted by someone who was infected with hepatitis C and that is maybe how I had contracted it. There was a telephone number on the letter and I rang it for more information. I was told that Dr. [GRO-A] the doctor who had performed my surgery in 1991 had hepatitis C when he performed my surgery. They said that I may have got hepatitis C from him. So in one day I had been told that I had been given contaminated blood after my surgery or possibly during my surgery from the surgeon. I was completely devastated. I have a copy of this letter and produce it in evidence. I refer to it as **WITN2241002**.

### **Section 3. Other infections**

16. I did not receive any other infection other than hepatitis C.

### **Section 4. Consent**

17. I do not believe I been treated or tested without my knowledge or consent or for the purpose of research.

### **Section 5. Impact**

18. I cannot begin to put into words how this horrific infection has impacted on my physical health. I am a very ill man now. Every morning as soon as I

wake up I have to immediately empty my bowels. I am always very loose with extreme diarrhoea. At the same time as I am emptying my bowels I am extremely nauseous. I have to vomit and it is always a fluorescent yellow colour. This whole process is extremely exhausting and it is every single day. I no longer enjoy food, I have no appetite. I have lost so much weight and continue to do so. I suffer with severe headaches and severe abdominal pain. I have no energy. Mentally my physical problems have caused me to have depression. I am confined to the house often lonely and bored.

19. I am having problems with my oesophagus and require surgery. The surgery will mean I will be totally incontinent. I feel too young to have this surgery but know it will be inevitable in the future.

20. I was referred to Dr Fernandez at Crosshouse Hospital, Kilmarnock. I had many blood tests and ultrasounds on my liver. I was offered a three-month treatment of Harvoni and copious tablets for three months. I took the treatment for 3 months. For 12 months whilst on the treatment and 9 months after the treatment finished I was monitored at Crosshouse Hospital. After 12 months I was given the all clear. The infection had cleared.

21. I did face difficulties and obstacles in obtaining the treatment I received. Dr Fernandez told me that the treatment was extremely expensive. I think he said it cost £30,000. He said there was a waiting list and I would have to be patient. I had to wait months and months before I got the treatment. In that time the hepatitis C was attacking my liver. I remember feeling extremely angry and frustrated.

22. I do not believe there were any other treatments available. I was led to believe that the treatment I received was the best and most recent treatment available.

23. Physically, I did not suffer any real side-effects from the treatment. I do remember that whilst I was on the treatment I did not feel as nauseous.

GRO-C

**GRO-C**

24. My infected status did not impact upon any medical or dental care for any other conditions.

25. My life has been totally destroyed by hepatitis C. Physically I can do very little for myself. My days are literally spent vomiting with severe diarrhoea. I rarely go out of the house. I have to always be in close proximity to a toilet. I still suffer with extreme abdominal pain throughout the day. Any normal tasks such as washing myself or even getting dressed are tiring and painful. I have no social life and find little pleasure in anything. I recently sold my car because it was too uncomfortable for me to drive. Having a car was my last bit of independence but I was no longer able to drive. I can no longer get out to see family or friends. I feel I have become a different person. I am very short tempered and very angry all the time. I am only 52 years of age but I am aware that there is little optimism for my future. I now have stage two cirrhosis of the liver.

26. I am aware of the stigma that surrounds hepatitis C. It is associated with AIDS and homosexuality. It is also associated with intravenous drug use. It is for this reason that I did not tell anyone I had had hepatitis C until I was given the all clear. I obviously told my wife

**GRO-C**

**GRO-C**

There is a stigma that surrounds the effects of the infection. Medical professionals would always question my alcohol consumption. My liver was severely scarred because of the hepatitis C but they often assumed I was an alcoholic. I do not and never have liked alcohol so to be constantly questioned about my alcohol consumption was very frustrating. Similarly, over the years I have been questioned regarding the taking of drugs. Medical professionals assumed I got hepatitis C from sharing needles whilst taking drugs. I have never taken drugs in my life.

27. In 2016 I was very ill because of the hepatitis C. I had to stop working, I just wasn't fit enough to work. At the time I was a long-distance lorry driver travelling the continent. I was earning £42,000 a year. It came as a huge shock to me not being able to work and having no income. I have not worked since then, I am just too ill.

## **Section 6. Treatment care support**

28. I did not receive any counselling or psychological support. The SIBS (Scottish Infected Blood Scheme) did say to look on their website and choose a counsellor from a list they provided. They said they would pay for the counselling. I did ring a few counsellors up but they couldn't say how much it would cost until I had been assessed. It all seemed too much like hard work. I have applied for counselling through the NHS but there is a huge waiting list. I really do believe that I would have benefited from counselling. I feel I have been left on my own with no support. It feels like I am on death row with no support.

29. It was Dr Richards from GRO-C Kilmarnock that informed me that there was financial assistance available for people who had been infected with contaminated blood.

## **Section 7. Financial Assistance**

30. In August 2017 I received two lump sum payments that came to £70,000. I also am in receipt of £2250 a month. This money comes from the Scottish government.

31. Dr Richards informed me that financial assistance was available through the Skipton fund. He gave me their details and I contacted them. They sent me a form to fill in and I did so. It was a long and arduous process. They wanted proof of my blood transfusion and medical opinions. It was ongoing for two years. In 2017 Lindsay Bruce, a solicitor from Thompsons solicitors, rang me to tell me to contact SIBS. I did so, they sent me out a blue form and Dr

Fernandez signed it to say I had been infected with hepatitis C following a blood transfusion. I was paid out in two weeks.

32. I do not believe there were any preconditions imposed on the making of an application for financial assistance.

### **Section 8. Other issues**

33. I was asked to do a television programme in relation to being infected with contaminated blood. This was in 2016. I was filmed at Thompsons Solicitors' office with Lindsay Bruce (solicitor present). It was a female barrister who asked me about my experience of being infected with hepatitis C. It was aired on the Scotland Today programme on the television.

34. I do not wish to remain anonymous in this Inquiry.



## Statement of Truth

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

Signed **GRO-C**  
David paterson (May 27, 2020 11:44 GMT+1)

Dated May 27, 2020