

ANONYMOUS

Witness Name: GRO-B

Statement No: WITN1120001

Exhibits: 0

Dated: June 2019

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 the GRO-B. My address is GRO-B.
2. I am married but currently separated from my husband, GRO-B: H, who is also providing a written statement (GRO-B) for the Inquiry.
3. I have two daughters; GRO-B who is GRO-B and currently studying at GRO-B. GRO-B and GRO-B who is GRO-B and about to start her GRO-B.
4. This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my husband's full medical records. If and in so far as I have been provided with limited records the relevant entries are set out in the medical chronology at the end of this statement.

Section 2. How infected

5. I wish to rely on H witness statement for parts of this section.

ANONYMOUS

6. I met [H] in or about [GRO-B]. I was friends with him for a while before we started a relationship. He was always very protective about the fact he had haemophilia, it was something that he kept largely to himself.
7. [H] has severe Haemophilia A, with 0% clotting factor. He was diagnosed when he was very young.
8. He was mainly under the care of [GRO-B] and [GRO-B] at [GRO-B]. He was always treated at [GRO-B] and from the [GRO-B] his care was transferred to [GRO-B].
9. He was initially treated with Cryoprecipitate (Cryo) from [GRO-B] and was treated with Cryo for approximately 10 years. He was then offered Factor VIII concentrate (FVIII) from [GRO-B] onwards.
10. As a result of being treated with FVIII concentrate, [H] was infected with Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and Hepatitis C (HCV).
11. [H] told me about the HIV in or about [GRO-B]. In relation to the HCV I recall in or about 1998 a consultant [GRO-B] sat [H] and I down and said that [H] had contracted NonA NonB (NANB) Hepatitis. We didn't really understand what it meant. [H] should have had a one to one consultation with a doctor and should have been told of the potential complications of the infection. It wasn't till the early [GRO-B] that he was told about the HCV in a little more detail.
12. Nobody ever spoke to me about any risks of infection that could be passed to me through [H]. The only discussion they ever had with me was when we planned to have children. Before this the only information I ever received was from [H].
13. They never tested me for HCV and never informed me that I should be tested at any point in time.

Section 3. Other Infections

14. I wish to rely on [H] witness statement for this section.

Section 4. Consent

15. I wish to rely on [H] witness statement for this section.

Section 5. Impact of the Infection

16. I wish to rely on [H] witness statement for part of this section.

17. I remember when I first met [H] that I told a friend that [H] had haemophilia and when he found out he got mad at me. I didn't understand why at the time. That's how he was, he didn't want to discuss his haemophilia or anything related to it to anyone. He didn't want to tell anyone because people were able to link the infection to those who had received infected blood.

18. When I first found out that [H] had HIV I was shell shocked. It's something that happens to 'other' people. It's not something you expect to actually have to go through yourself. I was [GRO-8] years old at the time when I met [H] I had never had sex before and thought if we did have sex the infection could kill us both. I was very depressed at the time and didn't know if I should stay in the relationship. I felt guilty at the thought of leaving a dying man.

19. I remember [H] would get bad bouts of oral thrush as a result of the HIV infection.

20. When [H] started his treatment for HCV I was pregnant and just had my second baby. I was very depressed at the time. I think I told [H] at one point I didn't love him anymore. I didn't know who he was anymore because the treatment was so bad and affected him so much, he was like a different man.

ANONYMOUS

21. I'm very close with my family so it was very difficult not tell them about [H] infections. I remember an occasion when my mum asked me outright if he had HIV as she knew [H] was a haemophiliac and the news was covering the contaminated blood scandal. I couldn't tell her and now I feel guilty and remorseful as a result. I could empathise from my mother's point of view as to how I would feel as a mother if my children kept something like this from me.
22. Because I had to hold back such a big part of my life it has always been very difficult for me to create bonds with female friends. The friends I do have now are very close and I have recently briefly told them about [H] infections. I found it difficult to cope keeping it all to ourselves, initially.
23. We would drink to feel numb and wind down. We weren't alcoholics. We wouldn't drink in the morning or be drunk. The drink would never affect our work. It was and still is our way of coping.
24. When I had our children, we had no option but to go back to full-time work as we had to make sure that the mortgage was always covered. We couldn't get life insurance so I couldn't take the risk of being out of work in case something happened to my husband. We didn't have stability or any support so there was no alternative, but to work.
25. We still approach the infection as if we are living in the 1980s. I think in society everything seems to have flipped on its head and some people don't take it seriously anymore. However we still feel dirty and guilty, we are massively affected by it. The way the media portrayed it in the past was scandalous and it still affects us to this day.
26. I find it very difficult to articulate how it has made me feel. I have never really sat down and spoke to anyone about it.
27. The stigma of it all affected me in the same way it did [H] It was constantly in the media and the newspapers. We were both scared we would be abused. We were living in fear and constantly terrified. There was a fear of being ostracised and possibly having to move to a new location where nobody knew us.

28. Being young it seemed like there was no future with [H] as I thought he was going to die, we had to live in the moment.

29. We wanted children and we were given the chance to have IUI (sperm washing). I had to take time out of my annual leave to attend appointments with [H] in London when we were trying for a baby. I did try and tell my line manager that I was trying to have children but she wasn't very sympathetic. There was a period of time that I was able to work from home, but in [GRO-B] was required back in the office. I provided them with reasons as to why I was required to work from home and although it was approved, it created stigma. My line manager was very intrusive and I was treated quite badly as a result. I ended up telling my line manager the situation I was in as I felt I was being bullied. I am now back in the office and have a different line manager.

30. We recently told our eldest daughter and she has been brilliant and very supportive. I didn't tell other family members of [H] infections until we separated. They have been very supportive, and it doesn't make a difference to them and we all still have a good relationship. I have also now told my partner.

31. I feel like a complete failure because I couldn't cope with it all. It took such a toll on us individually and our marriage. Our communication levels broke down and we found it very difficult to communicate to each other.

Section 6. Treatment/care/support

32. I have never been offered any type of psychological or counselling support. There was never any help given to me. I believe it would have helped had I been offered such help.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

33. I wish to rely on [H] witness statement for parts of this section.

34. [H] was automatically under Macfarlane Trust as he was given an ex-gratia payment of £23,000. I therefore believe that was how the Skipton Fund got in touch with him.

35. We were never told about grants that we were entitled to, which really upset us. [H] should have been told that such financial assistance was available. It was only later that we found out about the grants which we could have applied for. When we did have knowledge about the grants, we did apply but every time we needed anything it was like we had to beg and fill out extensive forms and provide several quotes. Help was not easy to come by at all.

Section 8. Other Issues

36. We were offered a trial of IUI and had approximately 9 attempts. It was very risky. We should have been offered more monitoring. We had no help or counselling we were just part of a trial. When another couple who were also involved in the trial treatment were successful they refused to offer us anymore IUI treatment. We did approach the Macfarlane Trust to assist us with funding for a further treatment but we were told that we 'would open the floodgates for it, if we were given the funding'. This was quite upsetting.

37. As we had no financial assistance from the Macfarlane Trust, we went ahead and had our children naturally as we couldn't afford the IUI/sperm washing. This was obviously a huge risk to take although it was an educated one and we were under the doctors supervision. Looking back it is disgusting that I was never offered any help or advice in relation HCV as I could have easily been infected.

38. It is terrible that [H] was infected with contaminated blood which was given to him by medical professionals who were supposed to care for him. You would expect that the doctors would go above and beyond to support and help us after such a catastrophic mistake on their behalf. But the fact that all avenues to help in conceiving a child in a safe way for us were refused exhibits the lack of care and sympathy that was on offer to us. It was awful.

ANONYMOUS

39. My daughter **GRO-B** was born around **GRO-B** weeks premature and was in a special baby care unit for approximately 2 weeks. She actually died twice in this period but luckily was resuscitated. I don't know if this was all brought about by the stress of what I had been going through with what had happened to

H

40. The experience with sperm washing and having **GRO-B** caused me to shut down mentally. I believed I wouldn't be able to have children. We weren't able to adopt because **H** had HIV and therefore wasn't eligible which was another slap in the face. I can pinpoint this as being the point where my marriage started to break down. At this point I felt broken and everything changed.

41. I don't think the department of health understands what closure will do for those who have been infected and affected as a result of the contaminated blood scandal. People deserve an apology and it needs to be understood just how badly people were treated.

Anonymity, disclosure and redaction

42. I wish to remain anonymous.

43. I do not wish to give oral evidence to the Inquiry.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed

GRO-B

Dated

7/6/19.