

Witness Name: GRO-B

Statement No: WITN1247001

Exhibits: 0

Dated: December 2018

**INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY**

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**FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF MR GRO-B**

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I, GRO-B will say as follows:-

**Section 1. Introduction**

1. My name is GRO-B of GRO-B GRO-B Sheffield GRO-B I was born on GRO-B 1979. I am single and I live with my mother.
2. **This statement has been prepared without access to any of my medical records.** I have been advised that my medical records have been lost but I am conducting further enquiries regarding this.

**Section 2. How Infected**

3. I have severe Haemophilia A. My mother found out that I was a Haemophiliac when I was aged approximately GRO-B and from this time I regularly received Factor VIII.
4. I was infected with both HIV and Hepatitis C as a result of receiving Factor VIII.
5. I was infected with HIV when I was aged GRO-B I do not know exactly when I was infected with Hepatitis C.

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6. As a child, I attended The Royal Norfolk and Norwich Hospital in Norwich. I am unsure which consultant looked after me at the time. When we moved house, I attended the Sheffield Children's Hospital and was under the care of Dr Lilyman.
7. My mother was given no information about the risks of receiving Factor VIII and there were no opportunities for asking questions or having a discussion with the medical professionals.
8. When I was aged [GRO-B] my mother received a letter from one of the consultants advising that an appointment had been made for us to come to the hospital. We duly attended the appointment and a consultant told my mother that I had contracted HIV. My mother was briefly told to be careful if I cut myself, to clean up any blood spillages with bleach and to ensure that no-one came into contact with my blood. My mother was told that I would not live beyond the age of [GRO-B]. My mother left the appointment in complete shock.
9. My mother cannot recall when she was told that I had Hepatitis C. She does recall that she was told that I could develop liver cancer and was given some information about the risks of transmission to include clearing up blood and practising safe sex.

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

10. My mother was advised that I may have been exposed to vCJD. However, she recalls that Dr Lilyman told her that he would not know for sure until I had died.

### **Section 4. Consent.**

11. My mother did not know that I was being tested for any of the viruses and therefore the tests were carried out without her knowledge and by default, without her consent.

### **Section 5. Impact**

12. I grew up living with HIV and Hepatitis C. It has been a nightmare trying to form relationships or starting a family and as such I do not have any children.
13. When I did tell people about my infections I found that it only led to problems so I stopped telling anyone. One of my ex-girlfriend's fathers threatened me because I had not been

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honest with her about my viruses. I suffered so much stigma from people who were supposed to be my friends that in the end I just stopped telling people.

14. To my greatest surprise I managed to have a 5 year relationship with a girl who knew about my infections. I always thought that if I ever found someone who accepted me that I would stay with them for the rest of my life. However, even more surprising I found that I did not want to be with her anymore and I felt happier alone. I do think that this was as a direct result of my infections and my past. It is quite sad really as I cannot see myself ever having a family.

15. My mother and father split up when I was aged GRO-B partly as a result of their own issues and partly because my GRO-B GRO-B  
GRO-B  
GRO-B It was so hard for my mother as she had to hold the fort together and attend the hospital with me as well as trying to create some sort of normality for my siblings.

16. I missed a lot of school. My mother decided to be upfront with my headmaster at the junior school and told him about my viruses. I was aged 8 and suffered terribly as a result of this information being disseminated throughout the school. I was bullied and children would shout "he's got AIDS" and I was subjected to other horrible things. My mother thinks that the headmaster also sent a letter to all of the parents, but she does not have proof that this was the case.

17. As a result of this I had to leave my junior school and my mother took the decision not to inform my next school about my viruses. I managed really well here because no-one knew.

18. I left this school aged 13 to attend senior school. My attendance record at senior school was poor because I was either too poorly to attend as a result of my infections or because I knew that I was going to die really soon so did not want to waste my time attending school.

19. I have never managed to hold a job down due to my poor health. Financially, I do struggle. My mother could not get a job because she would have to rush to school to fetch me when something had happened and she had to accompany me to copious amounts of hospital appointments. I was a burden on my mother and this impacted on our family; we have had a rough ride.

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20. I don't really speak about my infections with anyone and I don't discuss my history much with my mother or my siblings. It is brushed under the carpet
21. I have never taken any medication for my mental health and if counselling was offered today I am not sure I would take it as I try to work through things on my own.
22. My mother has suffered stigma as a result of my infections. One instance comes to mind which was when she tried to get me into a junior school. She telephoned the school and explained about my infections. The school told my mother that they were full and could not offer me a space. My GRO-B then telephoned the school on the same day, seeking a place for "a son of my age" and she was immediately offered a place. My mother then contacted the school and advised that she knew that the school was not full and explained how she knew. The school were unimpressed with her modus operandi but offered her a meeting and they eventually agreed to take me on the proviso that my mother would collect me immediately if there were any problems with me at the school and that she would attend all school trips which I went on.
23. The stigma attached to my viruses has had a huge impact on our lives. When we first found out and told people in Norfolk where we lived at the time, they dropped us as friends almost overnight. Our so called friends went around telling everyone that I had AIDS. This taught us a lesson and when we moved to Sheffield we tried to keep it as quiet as possible. Nobody really knows; only my close family and a few friends. We did not want a repeat of what we endured in Norfolk.
24. I commenced Interferon and Ribavirin treatment for Hepatitis in or around 2008 at The Royal Hallamshire Hospital. The first time I had the treatment it did not work very well. I started smashing things up in the house and went totally crazy. The medical professionals decided that I could no longer continue with the treatment and they immediately took me off it.
25. It was not until about 7 years later that the medical professionals revisited the Hepatitis C and once again I commenced a course of Interferon and Ribavirin. This time I managed to complete the course and I cleared the Hepatitis C in or around 2015. However, as a result of this treatment I came out in rashes, lost a lot of weight, was permanently exhausted and

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struggled mentally. It is fair to say that the treatment destroyed me both mentally and physically.

26. The HIV medication has also had its considerable downsides. I always had an inkling that this medication was not particularly good for my body and that is why I did not really engage with any HIV treatments until I was aged 25. The tablets I have to take mean that I am very thin and feel permanently exhausted.

27. Physically I also suffer from osteoarthritis which causes me mobility problems and a degree of constant pain.

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

28. As far as I can recall I have not had any difficulties accessing medical or dental treatment.

29. The NHS did offer me psychological support when I was around 18. I took them up on this offer of counselling but it did not really work.

30. If my mother had been offered proper psychological and financial support at the pertinent times then I believe that it would have eased matters.

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

31. In approximately 1988, I received the Stage 1 lump sum payment off £20,000 from The Skipton Fund. My consultant, at the time, advised my mother to spend it all on me because I was not going to live for much longer. My mother therefore took the whole family to GRO-B in 1990.

32. I now receive a Special Category Measures (SCM) payment of £349 per month.

33. I also received grants from The Macfarlane Trust for washing machines and the like and I now receive £1,500 twice per month from EIBSS.

34. The application process for both trusts was particularly difficult with a number of hoops that had to be jumped through. We had to disclose numerous bank statements with supporting evidence in order to obtain financial support.

**Section 8. Other Issues**

35. I did attend events organised by The Tainted Blood Campaign Group and The Macfarlane Trust. This stopped about 10 years ago when the funding was pulled. I found such events extremely beneficial as I got to meet other infected people and we were able to share similar stories which I found both comforting and cathartic.

36. I have not been involved in any previous litigation.

**Conclusion**

37. The victims of the contaminated blood scandal have had it really hard. I want the truth and I want to know exactly what happened.

**Anonymity, disclosure and redaction**

38. I wish to remain anonymous.

39. 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..... 20.12.18 .....