

Witness Name: Northern Ireland Blood
Transfusion Service
Statement No.: WITN2681048
Exhibits: WITN2681049-WITN2681056
Dated: 13 July 2023

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

WRITTEN STATEMENT OF KARIN JACKSON ON BEHALF OF THE NORTHERN IRELAND BLOOD TRANSFUSION SERVICE

I provide this statement on behalf of the Northern Ireland Blood Transfusion Service in response to the request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 27 April 2023.

I, Karin Jackson, will say as follows: -

Section 1: Introduction

1. I am Karin Jackson. I have been CEO of the NIBTS since October 2016. My professional address is the Northern Ireland Blood Transfusion Service Headquarters, Lisburn Road, Belfast, BT9 7TS.
2. My date of birth is known to the Inquiry.

Section 2: Response to Criticism by Inquiry Witness W0748

Response to Criticisms in Paras 8-14 of statement

3. I make this statement in response to criticism made by Witness W0748, as laid down in the Rule 13 Notification sent to the Northern Ireland Blood Transfusion Service (NIBTS) on 22 March 2023.
4. The NIBTS has previously responded to a Rule 9 request in relation to this witness and has provided a statement and evidence to which we will refer in this response.

5. In addition, records relating to the witness were uploaded to the Inquiry via Egress as part of a S21 response to the Inquiry on 18th October 2019. The file relating to Witness W0748 is PTH file 1/99, for ease of reference we have provided this as WITN2681049.
6. In paragraph 8, Witness W0748 states he was visited by a doctor from the Northern Ireland Blood Transfusion Service. NIBTS holds a letter from Dr SD Nelson, Consultant Haematologist in Craigavon Area Hospital, dated 11th June 1987 [WITN2681050], which addresses this matter. In it Dr Nelson states “I called with him [Witness W0748] and said that one of the blood donors whose blood he got had developed a mild attack of hepatitis some weeks after the donation and that we wanted to check on GRO-B blood”. This clearly demonstrates it was Dr Nelson from Craigavon Area Hospital who in fact called with Witness W0748. Please note this letter has previously been uploaded to Egress on 28th March 2018 with reference 19870701HIV. This exhibit also includes the response to this letter from Dr Morris McClelland, NIBTS.
7. Also in paragraph 8 Witness W0748 states “I know the blood was contaminated because I was informed about it by a doctor from the Northern Ireland Blood Transfusion Service”. In Dr Nelson’s letter to NIBTS, he refers to the donation Witness W0748 received as being donation reference G293740. Tests results already provided to the Inquiry in the S21 response referred to above, show sample G293740 was tested on 10th July 1986 for Hepatitis B and HTLV3 and both tests were found to be negative. These test results for sample G293740 have also been included as WITN2681051 and WITN2681052.
8. In addition, in a response letter from Dr Morris McClelland, NIBTS, to Dr Nelson, dated 21st July 1987, [WITN2681050], it can be ascertained that Dr Nelson provided blood samples from Witness W0748 to NIBTS for testing. Dr McClelland is able to confirm that testing was carried out by both the NIBTS and the Virus Reference Lab in Glasgow, and all tests were negative. This letter was previously uploaded to the Inquiry along with the letter mentioned above – the same reference 19870701HIV applies. It should be noted, as testing for Hepatitis C did not commence until September 1991, this sample would not have been tested for Hepatitis C.
9. In paragraph 13 Witness W0748 refers to writing to NIBTS regarding his condition and his concerns – this letter can be found in the PTH file provided at WITN2681049. The response to Witness W0748’s second letter from Dr Bharucha, Deputy Medical Director, NIBTS, [WITN2681053], did state “Any further enquiries with reference to

your medical condition should be made to me by your GP or Medical Consultant in charge of your current treatment.” The NIBTS understands that this may have seemed abrupt or dismissive. However, it is NIBTS’s belief that Dr Bharucha was correctly advising Witness W0748 that medical discussions regarding his condition should include his GP and / or Medical Consultant. This would be considered to be good practice rather than liaising directly with a patient by letter and thereby excluding the medical professionals directly involved with the patient. All of this correspondence is available to view in the PTH file previously uploaded to the Inquiry regarding Witness W0748. For ease of reference the full PTH file which contains all of these letters [WITN2681049] has been included.

10. With regard to paragraph 14 where Witness W0748 states he called NIBTS and was told “they had never sent any doctors and that no one would have come to my door”. This does appear to be correct and is supported by Dr Nelson’s letter referred to previously where he stated that he had visited Witness W0748 [WITN2681050].
11. In paragraph 15 Witness W0748 refers to a letter from his GP, Dr [GRO-B] on 23 April 1999 [WITN2681054] where Dr [GRO-B] “states that he had checked my hepatitis C status that day”. The original copy of that letter is in the PTH file referred to above [WITN2681049]. Furthermore, on 5th May 1999 NIBTS received a fax from Dr [GRO-B] [WITN2681055], with the test results he referred to in the letter. While the text is a little difficult to read, the test results for HBsAg (Australia Antigen), Hepatitis C Virus Antibody and Hepatitis A Virus Antibody are all reported as being Negative. Another test result for “Hepatitis B Virus Core Antibody” has “On Request” recorded next to it – NIBTS cannot be sure if this means that particular test was not carried out, however beneath the test results it is stated “No significant antigen or antibody detected.” All of the documents referred to in this paragraph can be found in PTH file 1/99, [WITN2681049].
12. In paragraph 14 Witness W0748 states his GP did not get a response to the letter he wrote to NIBTS on 23rd April 1999. Dr Bharucha did respond to the letter and fax on 7th May 1999 [WITN2681056]. In her letter she states “Thank you for sending the results of Hepatitis virology. I have no reason to believe that his symptoms of tiredness result from post transfusion hepatitis and I would be grateful if you can convey that to him.”

Section 3: Other Issues

13. It appears that NIBTS has copies of documents that Witness W0748 may not have or was not aware they existed. The NIBTS have provided the full PTH file in relation to Witness W0748 previously as part of a S21 response and also as WITN2681049 to this statement. However, we would also be willing to provide a copy of this file to Witness W0748 should he require it.
14. We do not hold any further evidence that we consider may be relevant to the Inquiry's investigation of the matters set out in its Terms of Reference.

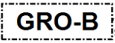
Statement of Truth

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

Signed 

Dated 13 July 2023

Table of exhibits:

Date	Notes/ Description	Exhibit number
	PTH file 1/99	WITN2681049
11.06.1987, 01.07.1987	Letters between Dr SD Nelson, Consultant Haematologist, Craigavon Area Hospital and Dr M McClelland NIBTS	WITN2681050
10.07.1986	Test results – G293740 Hep B	WITN2681051
10.07.1986	Test results – G293740 HTLV	WITN2681052
07.04.1999	Letter from Dr Bharucha NIBTS to Witness W0748	WITN2681053
23.04.1999	Letter from Dr  , General Practitioner to Witness W0748	WITN2681054

05.05.1999	Fax from Dr GRO-B General Practitioner to NIBTS	WITN2681055
07.05.1999	Letter from Dr Bharucha, NIBTS to Dr GRO-B General Practitioner	WITN2681056