

Witness Name: Gordon Hamilton  
Statement No.: WITN1893001  
Exhibits: WITN1893002- WITN1893005  
Dated: 9 September 2021

## **INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY**

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### **FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF GORDON HAMILTON**

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

1. My name is Gordon Ingram Ian Hamilton and my address is known to the Inquiry.  
My date of birth is: GRO-C 1948.
2. I live with my wife Hazel and we are both retired.

#### **Section 2. How infected**

3. I was born with mild Haemophilia A which with a factor VIII level of 8%.
4. In the 1980s I received factor VIII concentrate at the Royal Liverpool Hospital on several occasions. I do not remember any of the doctors or nurses involved with my treatment. I did not have regular treatment, but was treated if I had a bleed. This occurred predominantly in my 30s, when I worked as a self employed plastering contractor and sometimes had injuries at work. I was also a keen football player and played for local teams most weekends, which resulted in several sports-related injuries over the years for which I received treatment. I was also treated for dental extractions.

5. There is a note in my hospital records from 6 October 1988 which notes as follows  
**WITN1893002:**

This patient has had factor VIII concentrate even though he is HIV negative. He only has problems with trauma, has a very good bleeding history of bleeding with dental extraction, surgery, etc...He has not had clinical hepatitis although his liver function tests are chronically abnormal and has not previously had stigmata of exposure to hepatitis B virus. I am therefore arranging for him to have a further HIV test and hepatitis B serology with a view to vaccination.

6. This note confirms that by October 1988, my liver function was consistently abnormal and I did not have hepatitis B. I therefore can only assume that I was infected with hepatitis C (HCV) at this point, as there was not a test available to confirm this.
7. I continued to receive factor VIII treatment after this, for occasional bleeds.
8. No information was given to me at any time about the risks of being infected by factor 8 treatment.
9. I feel I should have absolutely been informed of the risk of being infected by factor treatment. How can I make an informed decision about my medical treatment when I have not been told about relevant risks? I feel it was a violation of my rights not to inform me. It is highly unlikely that I would have consented to such treatment if the full risks had been known to me. As a husband, father and sole wage earner, such a risk posed too great an impact on both myself and my family.
10. I was informed that I had been infected with HCV by a Professor C. H. Toh, Consultant Haematologist and head of Haematology at Liverpool Royal Hospital in 1994. It is difficult to remember all the issues that were raised on the day of my diagnosis, but definitely it was not made clear to me that I had a life-threatening condition. This information only came to my attention from news reports on radio, television and newspapers, which was very disturbing at the time. I was, quite literally, learning more about my illness from the media than I was being told by my medical team.

11. There is a note in my hospital records from Dr Charles Hay, Director of the Haemophilia Centre at Royal Liverpool Hospital on 11 April 1994 which notes as follows **WITN1893003**:

I note from his last visit that he is positive for hepatitis C, and that he has persistently abnormal liver function tests. On examination there are no stigmata of chronic liver disease. From his description it would sound as if he is a moderate/heavy social drinker. We discussed hepatitis C today.

12. The note continues to say that we discussed the possibility of treatment with interferon, which would have some side effects and would have a 50% chance of clearing the virus. I recall this conversation, and Dr Hay did tell me of some side effects but did not explain these fully or how bad they were likely to be.
13. I believe that if my doctors were aware that I likely had hepatitis as early as at least 1988 I should have been tested and informed earlier than I was.
14. I do not recall any conversation being had with Dr Toh or Dr Hay about the risks of infecting others.

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

15. I do not believe I have any other infections aside from HCV. I have tested negative for HIV and Hepatitis B.

### **Section 4. Consent**

16. I was not able to give informed consent, as I did not know the full information about the treatment being given to me, nor the risks associated with the treatment.

### **Section 5. Impact**

17. The mental effect of my diagnosis was huge. It has never left my mind. I find it difficult to discuss my emotions at this time, as I did back at the time when I was

diagnosed. I have learned to keep my emotions to myself. Any response to this question will be understated. I feel it is fair to say that I suffered with extreme anxiety, depression, and stress. Overwhelming fear was my initial emotion – fear of becoming ill and not being able to work or enjoy my life to any reasonable degree. Fear of leaving my wife a widower and my children without a father, fear of what the virus would do to me physically, fear of how I would work and support my family. I worried constantly. Anger was also a huge part of my emotions at that time – I felt anger that my life had potentially been cut short. I had a sense of almost disbelief combined with the realisation that I had a life-threatening virus, and I struggled to accept the diagnosis. I felt that my whole world, my plans for the future, and all hopes and dreams for myself and my family had been stolen from me in a single moment of receiving the devastating news. It was a truly traumatic time.

18. I am unsure whether any physical symptoms I experienced were due to the treatment or the HCV itself. I can say for certain that I had no symptoms at the time of diagnosis.
19. The first treatment I received was in November 1994 and was to be a six month course of injecting myself with a drug called Interferon Alpha.
20. The side effects of this drug were horrendous and still haunt me to do this day, more than 20 years on. The only way I could get through it was to inject myself in bed early evening and try to sleep through the worst early effects. I was given a list of possible side effects which I still have, and I can clearly identify with 23 of them. After 5 months of torture I was told it was not working and treatment would be stopped, a great blow after what I had gone through.
21. I was then given a course of pegylated interferon and ribavirin treatment in 2009 which was to last for 12 months. This treatment was not quite as intensive as the first, because it was in tablet form and involved no needles. I was told that I had a 40% chance of clearing the virus this time. Unfortunately, the side effects were

still there but not as bad as the first time. However, they were still pretty awful. The treatment was initially successful in clearing the virus but it returned after 6 months.

22. There were significant challenges to me getting my third and final treatment because you had to reach stage 2 of HCV to be granted it. Having HCV for 25 years was not classed as bad enough. I do think that my last treatment could have been started earlier and wish it had been, as I would not have lived with the virus for 5 further years.
23. I started this final treatment, which was a course of Harvoni and Ribavirin, in October 2015 and it lasted for three months.
24. Initially after this treatment I was found to have cleared the virus. However, six months after the treatment I tested positive for HCV again. Eventually, 12 months after treatment in October 2016 I was tested again and found to be undetectable and it was determined that the previous result was a false positive **WITN1893004**.
25. This had a huge impact on me emotionally. My first reaction was one of complete and utter devastation. I remember constantly thinking "how can this happen, surely this cant be happening?". I had the ordeal of explaining this to my family, when I was struggling to comprehend the information myself. It felt a terrible and cruel blow, when I had only recently been able to finally live my life without the constant fear of mortality. It was completely devastating and a cruel and difficult time for me.
26. I feel that there is still a stigma against HCV. was treated like a leper at my private dental office and had to leave. All my other medical treatment was arranged by the Haematology department.
27. Having HCV and the treatment has had a huge impact on me over the years for myself and my family. My wife was very worried that she would get infected, social friends were worried that they could catch it from me, so yes, our social life was

difficult and took many years for people to realise there was no threat to them. I felt stigmatised, ashamed and embarrassed.

28. I have been self employed since the age of 18 as a plasterer and building contractor which is manual hard work. I never had the strength to work while on the collective nearly 2 years of treatment, plus the countless appointments I have needed over the years.
29. The financial costs are impossible to calculate. I was unable to work for most of the time that I was on treatment. This was due to the horrific side-effects of the treatment. I was very sick, unable to function, exhausted physically and unable to manage my manual work in the building trade. I was unable to manage even the smallest of daily living tasks. I could not eat or drink, was not sleeping, and had no energy whatsoever. I was self-employed and had no income, which had a terrible impact on me financially. This was collectively around 2 years. Another factor financially was the countless trips to Liverpool Royal hospital – this is approximately a 50 mile round trip with the cost of travel, Mersey tunnel toll fees and parking. Even the fact that I was unable to get life insurance resulted in a degree of financial insecurity.

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

30. I have not faced any difficulties in obtaining treatment aside from my private dental work.
31. Counselling has not been made available to me.

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

32. I found out about the Skipton Fund from the Haematology Unit. I applied for a Stage 1 payment in about 2004 and received the lump sum payment of £20,000.

33. On being diagnosed with Stage 2 HCV I received a lump sum of £50,000 and a monthly payment of £1229 in 2015.
34. I think it is very sad it has taken so many years to get some financial help.

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

35. In 2004 I received a communication about the risk of vCJD, which contained an explanation of the risk, who was looking into it and a patient reply form I could fill in to find out more about the blood products I received and if they were implicated **WITN1893005**.
36. I filled in the patient reply form asking to have a meeting in person to discuss this. I don't recall if I ever had this appointment
37. I think a similar form should be sent to people who have been put at risk of contracting HCV.
38. I hope that the time scale of the Inquiry does not go on for years and we get justice both legally and financially.

### **Statement of Truth**

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

Signature:

**GRO-C**

Dated .....9 September 2021.....