Witness Name: Wesley Redfearn
Statement No.: WITN6049001
Exhibits: **Nil**
Dated: 30 September 2021

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

WRITTEN STATEMENT OF WESLEY REDFEARN

I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 24 September 2021.

I, Wesley Redfearn, will say as follows: -

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is name is Wesley Redfearn. My date of birth is GRO-C 1952 and my address is GRO-C Sheffield GRO-C

2. I worked as a toolmaker in a factory until my retirement in 2007. I have since worked part-time as a Country and Western singer until the Covid-19 outbreak. I live with my wife of 45 years. We have three grown-up children, who have all moved out, and two grandchildren.

3. I intend to speak about my infection with hepatitis C ("HCV"). In particular, the nature of my illness, how the illness affected me, the treatment received and the impact it had on me, my family and our lives together.

4. I would like to point out that my memory on dates and periods of time is not clear. I have not had the benefit of any documents or notes, other than some related to the Skipton Fund.

Section 2. How Infected

5. I was diagnosed with severe haemophilia A when I was six months old. I had an injection in my bottom and it bruised. The GP said that this wasn't right and suggested that I get tested for haemophilia. Subsequently, I had blood tests for haemophilia at Sheffield Children's Hospital near Western Park. This resulted in a diagnosis of severe haemophilia A.

6. GRO-C none of my other siblings have the condition. I am the third of four children and none of my three brothers tested positive for haemophilia. I have three children, GRO-C GRO-C

7. As a young child I didn't take much notice of my haemophilia. It didn't stop me from running around, playing with my brothers and climbing up trees.

8. I would often get what felt like 'sprained' ankles, that were actually bleeds in the joints, as well as bleeds in my elbows and knees. I also bruised often and very easily. If I had a bleed as a child I was told to rest in bed and take painkillers.

9. Until I was aged 14, this was the only treatment I received for a bleed. It was painful but I just became used to it. I remember having 4 teeth out aged 13 to make way for my wisdom teeth. I did not receive any clotting factor and I received stitches in my mouth. A plastic guard was inserted and I was kept in hospital for 10 days before they removed the stitches.

10. On another occasion, when I was aged 12, I was giving my brother a piggy back when I fell and banged my left eye. I had a bleed and this crushed my optic nerve. I was kept in Sheffield Children's Hospital for a fortnight, during which I lost all eyesight in both eyes. I regained the sight in my right eye but I was permanently blinded in my left eye as a result of this accident and the consequent bleed.

11. In 1972, aged 20, I fractured my left femur after slipping on the wet floor in the bathroom. I was treated at Sheffield Royal Infirmary (SRI) which has since closed. I remember a big glass bottle of clear or very pale yellow liquid being attached to me as a drip and administered intravenously. There were also a lot of other identical bottles lined up. I asked one of the medics why there were so many bottles next to me, to which he replied 'in case one is infected'. This didn't mean much to me at the time.

12. This was the first time I had ever received clotting factor. I remained in hospital for 13 weeks on traction.

13. After this episode, I didn't receive clotting factor again for another 10 years. In the meantime, if I had a bleed or a swelling I was told to rest in bed. This was especially the case if the bleed was below the waist, i.e. in a load-carrying joint such as my hips, knees or ankles.

14. During this time, I was under the care of Professor Blackburn at SRI. He told me that I would be discharged and should only return if I had any problems. When he retired, I was transferred to the Royal Hallamshire Hospital (RHH) in Sheffield, which was newly built. They were moving all the departments from the SRI to the RHH around this time. The land on which SRI stood is a Morrisons Supermarket now.

15. In 1982 I had a stomach bleed so went to RHH. Upon arrival I was told by the haemophilia centre that they didn't have me on their records. They had to ask Professor Blackburn, who by then was old and retired, following which they were able to locate my records. They then said they

would start afresh and register me as a new patient with their haemophilia centre. I had obviously gone off their 'radar'.

16. I was first administered factor VIII after this stomach bleed. I remember a big syringe that was used to inject it. It was then established that I had an inhibitor to factor VIII and my body was rejecting it. Consequently, it wasn't working as fast as it should do.

17. After receiving factor VIII at the RHH I was told that if I had a bleed again I should phone them and 'bring a bag'. This meant that I was staying in overnight at hospital. I was never given factor VIII for home treatment.

18. After receiving factor VIII for the stomach bleed in 1982 I returned to the Royal Hallamshire Hospital a fortnight later. My eyes were yellow and my skin jaundiced. I couldn't keep any food down and I felt rough.

19. I was tested at the haemophilia centre and told that I had HCV. The Inquiry investigator has asked me if I have heard of non-A non-B hepatitis, which rings a bell and I am sure I have heard the medics use that term. I have heard countless medical terms over the years so some of the jargon has been lost on me.

20. After being diagnosed with HCV I was put in an isolation room. I was told to keep away from my children and to keep separate cutlery. At the time it was a new disease and they didn't seem to know a lot about it.

21. The doctors at the haemophilia centre asked me when I last received factor VIII, to which I said it was a fortnight ago. They then said that 'that's about right' and it was attributed to a contaminated batch of factor VIII. They weren't in any way secretive about how I came to be infected.

22. I was also tested for HIV at this time. I remember it was called 'the gay plague' and all haemophiliacs and gays were being lumped together and 'labelled'. Thankfully I tested negative for HIV.

23. I didn't receive any treatment for HCV until around 2005, when I was part of a new alpha-interferon treatment being trialled in the UK and the US. A cohort of haemophiliacs with HCV, registered at the RHH haemophilia centre were separated into a placebo group and a group who actually received interferon.

24. I later learnt I was part of the placebo group. They found the trial interferon to be quite effective so I was given the option of beginning a 12 month course.

25. I accepted this invitation and began a 12 month course of interferon around 2006. This consisted of 3 injections of interferon per week. I suffered with flu-like symptoms and general aches and pains. I was warned that I could lose my hair but this was happening anyway.

26. After taking the first injection of the week I had terrible shakes in my hands. This was milder after the second injection, and after the third injection there were no side-effects at all.

27. I was tested regularly at RHH during this course of treatment. My liver enzymes, which for a normal person should be around 8, were found to be around 270. At the end of the 12 month course my liver function scores had improved dramatically but the HCV was still detectable.

28. Between 2006 and 2015 I had three liver biopsies. On each occasion I had to stay overnight in hospital before and was given a prophylactic dose of factor VIII. The biopsies were performed with a loaded syringe. It took a quick hit in my side but that was it as far as any pain or discomfort was concerned. The liver biopsies and subsequent ultrasounds showed that I have scarring of the liver and fatty liver tissues.

29. In approximately 2015 I was offered a trial of a new medication by the HCV Research UK group. I cannot recall the name of the medication.

However, the trial consisted of a tablet taken once daily and it was under the care and guidance of the liver diseases department at the RHH.

30. I was told that the trial drug had previously proven to have been effective in patients that were dual-infected with HIV and HCV. I started a 12 month course and within a month I had cleared the HCV infection.

31. I continued to have blood tests throughout the 12 month course, and up to a year after completing the treatment. All these results showed that the HCV was and is undetectable. My liver now seems fine and doesn't appear to affect me, although I am aware that it will never be fully right.

Section 3. Other Infections

32. I was told at some stage that my blood tests indicated that I had hepatitis B at some point. I was completely unaware of this, and they said that I could have been infected and simply felt under the weather without realising it was caused by hepatitis B. I believe that this infection was also caused by contaminated blood products

Section 4. Consent

33. I believe that I consented to all treatments and testing that I received.

Section 5. Impact

34. My HCV infection caused me to suffer from persistent fatigue. I would often feel really rough and tired. I struggle to digest fats and I cannot eat fried food. I maintain a low-fat diet and I completely stopped drinking alcohol many years ago.

35. Being told to keep away from my family was difficult. I felt that I was contagious, though I learnt to live with it. I often experienced good days

and bad days, which became more and more volatile. I was forced to have a rest and then I would feel ok for a few days afterwards.

36. My employer was very understanding of my condition. I told them about my HCV infection and when I was on treatment. The factory had their own nurse and even a doctor who visited once a week. My colleagues were also aware of it and this didn't bother me at all.

37. I have never been fearful of any stigma associated with HCV. Nobody has ever said anything to me or treated me any differently. All my family and friends have known and they have been understanding. I became the designated driver whenever we went out as I couldn't drink.

38. Refraining from alcohol has certainly affected my social life. I used to play darts regularly and I felt like the odd one out drinking orange juice. The others used to laugh at jokes but I couldn't see why they were so funny. When performing at a Country and Western concert I have often been bought drinks but I had to refuse, using the excuse that I was driving. I was only not saying the real reason why, because it was just easier not going through a drawn out explanation with passing acquaintances.

39. After my diagnosis I told my wife that the hospital had recommended I use condoms from then on. I had been tested for HIV but had not received the results and they were concerned that I would transmit it to my wife. She wasn't too happy about this but thankfully I tested negative for HIV. Otherwise **GRO-C** we have got on with life together.

40. Soon after my diagnosis I was advised not to try and travel to the US because I was deemed 'high risk', having received blood products. I thought that this was ironic considering that the infected blood products came from the US in the first place. The other thing that I thought was strange was that if that was the case how come the World AIDS

Conference was held in San Francisco? That would mean that no infected person from abroad could go!

41. I rarely travelled abroad in case I needed treatment when I was there. I remember the haemophilia centre giving me a booklet that showed holiday destinations that were near to a haemophilia centre. It was like a haemophiliac's travel guide. When I go away, which is travelling within the UK, I take my medication with me as a precaution.

42. My left knee deteriorated over time as a result of regular bleeds throughout my life. I needed a new knee some time ago but I was constantly told that I wasn't old enough. I was finally offered a new knee in 2019 and I was operated on soon afterwards. I was kept in hospital longer than most people owing to my haemophilia to ensure I didn't have an adverse reaction or bleeds. Since the operation, my knee has been much better.

Section 6. Treatment/Care/Support

43. I have never encountered any difficulties or obstacles in receiving treatment in consequence of my HCV infection. I have been treated by Charles Clifford Dental Hospital since I was a boy and have never had any issues. They wear the usual masks and gloves when treating me but this is nothing out of the ordinary.

44. I have never been offered counselling or psychological support with respect to my HCV infection and I was never made aware that it was available.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

45. I received a letter from the Department of Health towards the end of 2003/ start of 2004, informing me that there would be a fund/scheme set up to administer payments for those affected by infected blood.

46. The Skipton Fund said that I was eligible and my application was endorsed and supported by my specialist at Royal Hallamshire Hospital. I had no problems with the application and I received my first stage payment of £20,000 in October 2004.

47. When accepting the first stage payment I signed a waiver declaring that I would not bring proceedings against the Department of Health or the NHS in any future litigation. I signed this legal waiver as I saw no other option; I thought it was £20,000 or nothing.

48. I started receiving monthly payments from the Skipton Fund in 2016, which amounted to £4,608 per quarter. This recently rose, in April 2020, to £7,119 per quarter.

49. In July 2021 I was notified by the English Infected Blood Support Scheme that I would receive an additional £30,000 and this arrived in my bank account shortly afterwards. I didn't realise why, I just thought it was a bonus, probably owing to the Inquiry. The Inquiry investigator has informed that this was a 'levelling-up' payment to achieve parity with those in Scotland who had previously received stage 1 payments of £50,000.

Section 8. Other Issues

50. Earlier in this statement I mentioned that my body rejected factor VII. I should clear this up by stating what I currently take. Every 2 weeks I take Hemlibra as a prophylaxis and NovoSeven which is a recombinant coagulation factor 7 A, which I only take when I have a bleed.

51. It has taken over 40 years for all of this to come out and be investigated properly. Why has it taken so long to have a public inquiry into why so many people have received contaminated blood and have died in that time?

52. Somebody knew, very high up, what was going on and nothing was done about it. Those within government would have been notified but they didn't act. There have been quick public Inquiries into Grenfell and the Manchester bombing and rightly so but the over 4500 deaths caused by the contaminated blood dwarfs what happened in those two incidents many times over. Why has this taken so long?

Statement of Truth

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

Signed GRO-C

Dated 30. 9. 21