

ANONYMOUS

Witness Name: GRO-B

Statement No: WITN2686001

Exhibits: 0

Dated: April 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 GRO-B
GRO-B
GRO-B
2. I make this statement as the wife of GRO-B: H who
was infected with HIV, Hepatitis B, C, and E as a result of receiving
contaminated blood products.
3. This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of full
access to my husband's medical records.
4. My husband has already provided a Witness Statement to the Inquiry
GRO-B

Section 2. How Affected

ANONYMOUS

5. [H] suffers from Haemophilia A classed as mild. He was diagnosed in or about 1973 and has been treated at the Royal Victoria Infirmary (RVI) Haemophiliac Centre, Newcastle upon Tyne since birth. I understand from [H] that he received Factor VIII on numerous occasions at the RVI from about 1980 until the present time. I refer to [GRO-B] my husbands statement which is a copy of the information received from the National Haemophilia Database("NHD")
6. I met [H] in or about 1990/1991 when I was 15 as he used to visit my [GRO-B] and we have been together ever since. I was aware he was a Haemophiliac but not that he was HIV and Hepatitis C positive.
7. In or about January 1999 I fell pregnant with our first child and told [H] just before he went on a short skiing holiday with friends. At the time he seemed distracted but I thought nothing of it. On his return from skiing I went to my GP who confirmed I was pregnant. I called [H] and told him the good news. He seemed upset but I didn't understand why so I went to his house that night and comforted him, hoping he would tell me what was upsetting him but he didn't.
8. A few days later [H] was so ill he had to be admitted to the RVI. I tried to call him at the RVI but was told he was too ill to talk to or see me. Eventually I decided I would visit him regardless of how ill he was. I met his nurse Maureen Ferens on the way to the ward and went with her to see [H]. This is when he told me that he was HIV positive. I was shocked, angry upset and worried and I let loose all these emotions on [H]
9. I immediately went with Maureen to her office to be tested for HIV. I then went back to see [H] while I awaited the results of the test and to talk to him as I had many questions and concerns. After a little while Maureen came back and told us the test was negative. To say this was a relief is an understatement.
10. Whilst I was given some helpful advice about [H] condition, I was not given any advice on preventing or reducing the risk of being infected, safe

ANONYMOUS

sex, or avoiding blood contact. I am of the view the information given was woefully inadequate.

11. In or about February 2000 I opened a letter from the Haemophilia Centre addressed to [H] and I read it and was shocked and angry to see that it said [H] was Hepatitis A, B, and C positive. I ran upstairs to confront [H] as to why he hadn't told me. He was shocked as he didn't know; I showed him the letter to prove it. I calmed down and we agreed he would find out at his next appointment with Doctor Hamilton at the RVI.

12. I understand from [H] that Doctor Hamilton told him that [H] parents had been told back in 1990 and "don't worry about it you cleared it all naturally" [H] asked his parents and they are sure they were never told.

13. I consider [H] parents should have been told as soon as he was known to be infected and they should have been given sufficient information to enable them to help [H] manage the infection. They should have also been given advice about the risks of others being infected.

Section 3. Other Infections

14. I am aware that [H] has received Letters from the NHS in 2004 and 2009 saying that he is at risk from vCJD

Section 4. Consent

15. I believe that [H] has been tested without his or his parent's knowledge, consent or adequate information being provided as they were all unaware that he was being tested for HIV Hepatitis B, C, and E.

Section 5. Impact of the Infection

16. I refer to paragraphs 23 to 44 of [H] statement and agree with and adopt the same.

17. Between 2000 and 2008 [H] suffered from depression. When you have been with someone for such a long a time you can tell when they are down. it would usually last a day or a couple of days. He would sit in the room with the curtains drawn or didn't speak much which was strange as he's a talker. When this happened I would take our son out and come back later.
18. I remember that one of the tablets he was taking used to make him angry and he lost his temper a few times, he never hit me but he did hit the fridge. I made him go to the hospital and he was told that other people were experiencing this side effect from the treatment.
19. When [H] becomes ill with flu or a similar illness it really knocks the life out of him, however he won't take any medicine as he is distrustful of them, which is understandable after what he has been through. [H] suffers from renal colic which he has to deal with.
20. I have noticed when we are in bed he is worried about hurting me or passing his infection on to me which can affect things. He still feels guilty about the way I found out he was HIV positive. I understand why he didn't tell me at the time and I can see how much it has affected him.
21. [H] tries to stay fit and live a normal life. I think he wants to prove to everyone that he can be strong and be normal.
22. Whilst it was not difficult to tell my parents that [H] was HIV positive, I haven't told my sister or my friends as [H] is worried about the stigma and possible reactions. My parents felt no different towards him and felt sorry that HIV had been inflicted on him through no fault of his. Even though my parents and I coped well with the news there is no guarantee others will do the same. It's hard trying to keep a secret and it feels like I am constantly walking on eggshells. [H] feels guilty and says I have the weight of the world on my shoulders and no one to talk to about it.

Section 6. Treatment/care/support

23. No counselling or psychological support has ever been made available to me in consequence of what happened.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

24. I refer to paragraphs 49 to 55 of H statement which set out the financial issues the contents with which I adopt.

Section 8. Other Issues

25. This scandal should not have happened .I want the people responsible to be held accountable and brought to justice. I believe many things have been hidden from us and I want the truth to come out.

Anonymity, disclosure and redaction

26. I wish to be anonymous and do not wish to give oral evidence

Statement of Truth

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

Signed..

H

ANONYMOUS

Dated 29th April 2019.