

ANONYMOUS

Witness Name: **GRO-B**

Statement No: WITN2755001

Exhibits: WITN2755002- WITN2755004

Dated: July 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** I live at **GRO-B**
GRO-B
2. I was born on **GRO-B** I am divorced. I have two sons. I am registered disabled and have not worked since **GRO-B**
3. This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my full medical records.

Section 2. How infected

4. I received five major blood transfusions between **GRO-B** and **GRO-B**
5. I received all of my treatment at **GRO-B** Hospital in **GRO-B**
GRO-B My consultants were **GRO-B** and **GRO-B**

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6. I was never told beforehand that I was having a blood transfusion.
7. The first time I found out I had been given blood was when I woke up in the hospital after my first son was born by caesarean section in GRO-B. I was only GRO-B at the time. When I awoke I was still receiving the blood transfusion. I was very unwell; I didn't even have the strength to lift my son. The staff were very unhelpful at the time; they treated me badly because I was an unwed mother. I was so unhappy and lonely. All of these issues made it a struggle for me to bond with my son. I was in hospital for a long time.
8. I remember my mother was furious that I had been given blood. She signed for my caesarean section but she never gave her consent for me to receive a blood transfusion.
9. I gave birth to my second son in GRO-B by caesarean section and again I was given a blood transfusion. I was not given any information about the risks of receiving a blood transfusion before or after it was given to me.
10. I assume in both instances I was given a blood transfusion in order to save mine and my sons' lives as I required caesarean sections but I was never told of any risks from the transfusions before or after.
11. In GRO-B I underwent a hysterectomy and I was given a blood transfusion. The surgery left me with one ovary and one fallopian tube to prevent me from entering early menopause. Unfortunately the fallopian tube later became infected and I had to have another operation to remove it shortly after. The second operation also required a blood transfusion.
12. The final blood transfusion I received was in GRO-B when I required surgery for a GRO-B.
13. I was infected with Hepatitis C as a result of receiving contaminated blood products.

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14. I am not sure when exactly I was infected with Hepatitis C. It could have been during any of the blood transfusions I received at GRO-B Hospital between GRO-B and GRO-B.
15. I was told I had Hepatitis C in August of GRO-B which meant I went at least 15 years without being diagnosed. I have attached to this statement marked WITN2755002 a document from the Stockport Health Authority which shows the blood pack numbers for the transfusion I was given in 1984. I do not have documentation relating to the other transfusions.
16. At the time of diagnosis I was battling breast cancer and had been listed for a lumpectomy which was due to take place in GRO-B. I had gone to the hospital for a routine mammogram only to be told that I had contracted Hepatitis C.
17. I believe the manner in which I was told I had Hepatitis C lacked empathy and care. The nurse told me very bluntly that I had Hepatitis C. I had no idea what she was talking about and I told her she must be mistaken. She told me to go home and wait until my radiotherapy treatment was complete and that she would get me on a list to receive treatment for my Hepatitis C. She told me I was entitled to some compensation. I told her she couldn't just tell me this and then send me home. I was informed that this was the usual procedure. I refused to leave until I saw a doctor. When I did see a doctor he was very nice and supportive but just told me the same thing. That I had to get my cancer treated first before getting treatment for Hepatitis C.
18. When I was informed that I had contracted Hepatitis C I was not given sufficient information about the condition. I was given a leaflet that had some information about Hepatitis C and sent on my way. My son had to research everything for me in order to provide me with information about the condition.
19. I think when you're giving someone such devastating news it should be handled in a sensitive manner. They should give people intense counselling before they even consider offering treatment. When they told me it was like "that's it now, come back in GRO-B". I was told I had Hepatitis C in GRO-B.

which meant I had to deal with the stress of this for 4 months before I was seen again. They didn't even tell me about any helplines I could call. I had to deal with this all on my own.

20. I was told by a liver specialist at a later date that because I received 5 blood transfusions there's a possibility I was infected with Hepatitis C more than once. My doctors were under the impression at least two of the blood products I received came from blood sourced in the USA.
21. Medical professionals have told me I may have had Hepatitis C for 30 odd years before I was diagnosed. I was left untreated for all that time.
22. I was treated unsuccessfully for Hepatitis C in [GRO-B] and [GRO-B] I was treated with Pegulated Interferon and Ribavirin in [GRO-B] The treatment lasted 6 months. In [GRO-B] I was treated with a different type of Interferon. This treatment lasted 24 weeks. Neither of these treatments worked.
23. In [GRO-B] I was treated a third time for Hepatitis C, this time with sofosbuvir and Ribavirin. The treatment was for 24 weeks. This time the treatment was successful.
24. I have now cleared the infection but the many years of illness and treatments have taken their toll. I have been left with cirrhosis of the liver, a leaking heart valve, thyroid problems and chronic tiredness.

Section 3. Other Infections

25. As far as I am aware I have not been infected with anything other than Hepatitis C through contaminated blood.
26. When I received my second course of treatment for Hepatitis, I was given a blood transfusion and told that although the blood had been screened for most infections it had not been screened for 'Mad Cow Disease'.

Section 4. Consent

27. I did not know about my blood transfusions until I had already had them.
28. I was never told I was to be tested for Hepatitis C and I only found out when undergoing treatment for cancer. I am unaware if it is normal procedure to test for Hepatitis C in this circumstance.
29. I am aware that I have been tested for other possible infections connected with contaminated blood such as Hepatitis B and HIV.
30. I have been part of a research study called Gilead which is a 5 year study of people who have cleared the Hepatitis C virus but subsequently have cirrhosis of the liver.

Section 5. Impact of the Infection

31. As a child I was never sickly. Other than having cellulitis of the knee after a fall, I was fit and healthy.
32. Before I became pregnant with my second son, I remember a period of being constantly tired, experiencing weight loss, feeling depressed and being unable to think or multi task. This made life as a young mother very difficult.
33. In GRO-B when my sons got older I went back to college and after I successfully completed college, I went on to university to study GRO-B and GRO-B as I already had a diploma in GRO-B
34. Part way into my course I started to find things very difficult. I was constantly very tired, I lost weight, I was unable to concentrate and I had problems remembering. My friends remarked on how tired I always was. At first I thought it was because I was studying but eventually, in GRO-B as I was really struggling I went to see my GP.

35. I told my GP I was fed up and tired due to the symptoms that I was suffering from. She asked if I had ever experienced these symptoms before and I told her that I had had similar symptoms before my second son was born. When I told her I felt I couldn't think or multi task my GP didn't suggest that I may have Hepatitis C, probably because I did not partake in activities associated with Hepatitis C such as drug abuse.
36. I was unable to cope as I could not remember my lectures and I ended up giving up my university course.
37. I was diagnosed with breast cancer in GRO-B and it was during one of my visits to the hospital for a mammogram that I found out that I had Hepatitis C.
38. My whole life changed when I was diagnosed with Hepatitis C, I didn't like who I was anymore. I hated the thought of my blood and the infection that it carried. I started carrying plasters everywhere I went and I even kept some under my pillow, I was obsessed about it and I worried about bleeding. I felt dirty because of my infection and unfortunately, the belief that I was dirty was very often reinforced by the way the people treated me.
39. I began my first treatment for Hepatitis on the GRO-B I believe it was a combination therapy of Interferon and Ribavirin. I had only finished my radiotherapy for cancer on GRO-B so I wasn't in the best shape physically. The treatment for Hepatitis C lasted six months.
40. Once I finished my first treatment I had to wait to see if it was successful. I knew it hadn't worked before I was tested because I still felt pain I attributed to Hepatitis C. Although the liver doesn't have nerves there are nerve endings around it that can cause pain which I was still experiencing. However my consultant told me the treatment had been successful and the virus was gone. I went back for the results 6 months later where it was discovered I still had Hepatitis C.
41. I began my 2nd treatment for Hepatitis C in GRO-B I was treated with a different type of Interferon. The doctors were confident I could successfully

beat the infection. The treatment had a dreadful impact on my health. I lost 7 and a half stone and I lost my hair. I had completed 40 weeks of the treatment and only had 4 weeks left. I was neutropenic and became so unwell I had to ask my son to take me to the hospital because I thought I was dying. He took me to the hospital where they were forced to take me off the treatment. I really wanted to finish the treatment but they told me the 4 weeks wouldn't make much difference in regards to it being successful or not.

42. My consultant was very upset about what had happened and we were both crying. He asked me how I felt and I told him I knew the treatment hadn't worked because I still felt the pain. Tests revealed the treatment hadn't worked and my liver had gotten worse by this point. I was told by the consultant that if my liver got worse he would do his utmost to get me a liver transplant.
43. After the second course of treatment failed I wasn't offered any more. I felt like they sent me home to die. My health was failing and I had a multitude of issues. I had thyroid problems, a leaking heart valve, my back had become worse and I had a degenerative disk problem. I just didn't want to be alive; my grandson and granddaughter were the only thing that kept me going. I was told at the time there was nothing I could do as there was no other treatment. I told the consultant that I felt like they were just leaving me helpless and that none of this was my fault. He said to me, GRO-B we can see you every week but there is nothing that we can do for you". I have attached to this statement marked WITN2755003 a letter from North Manchester General Hospital dated 27th June 2013 which confirms that I had two failed treatments for Hepatitis C in 2007 and 2008.
44. I felt that Hepatitis C had destroyed my life and all my plans. I felt abandoned.
45. In GRO-B I was offered treatment again for Hepatitis C. I was very reluctant because the toll that this treatment takes on you is very difficult both mentally and physically. I went ahead and was treated with Sofosbuvir and Ribavirin. Fortunately this time it was successful and I managed to clear the infection. I no longer have any treatment for Hepatitis C.

46. Although I have now cleared the infection, a lot of damage has already been done. The years I was left untreated in conjunction with the 8 years between the beginning of the first treatment and the end of the last treatment left me with cirrhosis of the liver. My body has been ravaged by the illness and the treatments I have received. I have had to deal with the mental and physical effects of Hepatitis for so long. Instead of GRO-B feel like I am 94.
47. I was diagnosed with cancer shortly before I was told I had Hepatitis C. I feel that I never had a chance to deal with the fact that I had cancer because the Hepatitis C infection and subsequent treatment just floored me. I have attached to this statement marked WITN2755004 a letter from North Manchester General Hospital dated 28 January 2019 which confirms that I have cirrhosis of the liver (stage 6).
48. I underwent two lumpectomies, and had radiotherapy treatment for breast cancer after which I was cancer free. Unfortunately the cancer returned and I underwent a mastectomy on the left side in GRO-B I am also having a further mastectomy on the right side on the 15th of July 2019.
49. I believe having Hepatitis C has made it harder for me to recover from my other illnesses. My GP and my consultant have both said to me that I have poor healing flesh due to Hepatitis C.
50. I have had to deal with constant illness and pain for most of my adult life. The quality of my life has been affected and I can no longer do things that I enjoyed doing previously.
51. I suffer from brain fog and regular headaches. I don't sleep well at all, I sleep 4 hours a day and only manage any sleep at all because of the sleeping tablets I have been prescribed. I'm tired all the time and I feel like my brain just won't shut down. I try to have reflexology at least once a month because that really helps. I try to do the best I can. I keep saying to my best friend that in another life I must have been a really wicked person to be going through all the things I've gone through.

52. I don't read anymore as I find it too difficult to retain information. Once it took me a whole week to read two chapters of a book. I have to watch programs with subtitles and watch films or television programmes on my computer so that I can stop it when I need to due to difficulty focusing. I no longer go to the cinema. I have difficulty recalling what I have done during the day as my memory has been so badly affected. I used to have a fantastic memory; I would remember everyone's birthday. Now my memory is nothing like it used to be. This has knocked my confidence and the way I perceive myself.
53. I always have to take someone with me to appointments because I have developed issues with my memory.
54. In order to do the Hepatitis C treatment I was advised to go on anti-depressants. I'd never had any medication before other than antibiotics. Without the anti-depressants I don't believe I would have been able to finish the treatment, I'm not sure I would even be alive any more. I was also given sleeping tablets which I still take to this day. I refer to the second page of exhibit WITN2755003 which refers the psychological impact on me of being infected with Hepatitis C.
55. I've suffered from depression and mood swings as a result of my infection and the treatment I had to endure to get rid of Hepatitis C. I have to walk with a stick and feel much older than I am. I was living the best years of my life before this all happened. I loved studying and I didn't realise how capable I was. It was all going so well and had 4 months to go before getting my degree. Then this came and destroyed my life.
56. There was a lot of support and people who were able to help me when I had cancer. There was 24 hour care and numbers I could call at any time of the day or night. But there was no one to help me with Hepatitis C.
57. I wanted to join a support group but I was too scared to join any in my local area for fear of being recognised. I even contemplated travelling to Scotland for a group meeting because I was too scared to go to one in my home town in case people saw me.

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58. I tried to find groups where people were going through the same thing as me but there were none. I think people who were infected through contaminated blood were too ashamed to come out in public because of the nature of the infection. I remember someone suggesting to me that I start my own group but I wasn't ready to do something like that at the time.
59. It seemed to me that there was a lot of help for people who got Hepatitis C through drug use. I went to a group meeting as there was no alternative to go to. The attendants were given full meals, money for travel and access to treatments such as acupuncture. There was little to no support for those who had received infections through contaminated blood. I just wanted to be able to talk to people who were dealing with the same issue that I was but there was nothing made available to me.
60. I went to a support group called Body Positive. I was the only member there who had received Hepatitis C through contaminated blood products. Everyone else in the group was either a drug user or addict. I didn't really feel like I belonged in the group.
61. I was very frustrated that the treatment I had for Hepatitis C did not work. I really wanted it to work and believed if I did everything right I would clear my infection. I wouldn't even eat trifle because it had alcohol. Other members of the support group who had been infected through drug use cleared their infections, even though many didn't seem to take it as seriously as I did. I was resentful about this, it felt very unfair. I would get angry at the time and people would take it personally which was not my intention.
62. Whilst undergoing my cancer treatment I didn't tell anyone about my Hepatitis C infection. I did not feel able to. Having Hepatitis C made me feel dirty.
63. For a long time, I didn't tell anyone other than my sons and my mother about my infection. I didn't even tell my best friend of GRO-B odd years, I kept it all to myself.

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64. My doctors told me that my infection was not my fault and I had nothing to be ashamed of, but they also told me not to tell people and that I should keep it to myself. This made me view the infection as something to be ashamed of.
65. I was told I had nothing to be ashamed of and that none of this was my fault but when I went for hospital appointments I had to sit under a sign that said "infectious disease unit" which is humiliating. I complained to the hospital and told them this was wrong and that it made me feel awful. Even the letters they sent me would say 'Infectious Disease Unit'. It wasn't my fault and I'm not dirty but they made me feel like I was. The sign was finally removed after 7 years of me complaining, it now says 'Annex 4'. It shows I was never a priority and that they had no sensitivity and gave no thought into how people could be made to feel. They could so easily have changed that sign a long time ago.
66. There were people coming from jail to have treatment at the same time as I was having treatment. It was a complete culture shock for me. I try not to be judgmental but it was very hard for me not to be. I had to work on myself in order to deal with this.
67. There's an awful amount of stigma attached to Hepatitis C and people who have been infected don't openly come forward about it. I was offered the opportunity to go on a television documentary about it at one point but I was too afraid to let people know that I had Hepatitis C.
68. I found that when I told people I had been infected with Hepatitis C I would receive ignorant treatment or responses, even from medical professionals. This hardened my belief that I should keep everything to myself.
69. I was offered the opportunity to receive holistic therapy at the Neil Cliff Cancer Unit. They knew I had Hepatitis C but it was confidential information. I found myself unable to cope with the group meetings, I was only comfortable in one on one meetings. In the group meetings, people would ask what chemotherapy I was on which I didn't feel comfortable answering. I would say I was on interferon because I had read that they gave it to kidney cancer

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patients and I hoped this would protect me from having to tell people of my infection with Hepatitis C. I felt like I didn't fit in the group.

70. Another time I faced social stigma due to having Hepatitis C was an incident involving a driver for the Neil Cliff Cancer Unit. He had been driving me to appointments and he had a habit of talking about people who were getting treatment. One day he said to me *"you're never going to guess what, someone has that Hepatitis C here"*. I asked him how he knew and he told me he had been outside an office where medical professionals were talking about it. It seemed very unprofessional that something like this was allowed to happen. He went on to say that he didn't know who it is was but that he would find out. He thought everyone would have to be tested because of it. He assumed I was having cancer treatment and didn't think I would be the person in question. He said that the person with the infection must be a 'junkie'. I was very upset by his comments. I told him whoever he was talking about was obviously sick and needed help. I also informed him that you can't catch Hepatitis from sitting in a car!
71. I cried when I got home that day. I would much rather have had cancer again than have Hepatitis C. People are more understanding of cancer.
72. After that I refused to have a driver and would either drive myself or have my sons drive me. The medical staff shouldn't have been speaking about confidential matters where anyone could hear. And the driver should not have been discussing confidential matters with patients either.
73. After my second Hepatitis C treatment failed I decided to get my eyebrows tattooed as I had lost my hair and eyebrows as a result of the horrendous treatments I had endured. Before having the procedure the beautician gave me a questionnaire which I filled in. The questionnaire asked if I had HIV but there were no questions in relation to Hepatitis C. It did not occur to me that I would be required to give any information to the beautician about my Hepatitis C infection.

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74. Over the course of the next few months I became quite friendly with the beautician who had tattooed my eyebrows. I felt that I could trust her and, several months later, I confided in her that I had been exposed to the Hepatitis C virus after being given infected blood during transfusions. She went absolutely crazy. I told her it wasn't asked on the questionnaire and if there was a possibility of infecting her I wouldn't have had it done. The hospital had told me I don't have to tell people and she was wearing gloves, so there was no issue. She said that I had never told her and that I put her and her family at risk and she threw me out of her shop.
75. She then left me a voicemail message full of abuse, accusing me of not putting down on the form that I had Hepatitis C and saying that I had put her and her family's lives at risk.
76. Following this incident I called my liver specialist nurse and liver consultant and they arranged for the beautician to come in and be tested for Hepatitis C, even though she wore gloves and had not at any point cut herself during the procedure. She refused to go.
77. The beautician's husband was also a practising tattoo artist. He called me and I explained the situation to him. He knew nothing about Hepatitis C and I told him that neither his wife nor their family was at risk and that I hadn't lied. The beautician had found the questionnaire I completed and it confirmed that I had not been asked any questions about Hepatitis C and that I had told the truth. Her husband apologised to me however the beautician herself never did.
78. I was devastated by the beautician's reaction. I was so low and upset that I found it difficult to get out of bed for weeks after. I just wanted to hide from everything and everyone. I already felt ashamed at having the virus and the beautician had reinforced that feeling. I just felt horrible and wished I could run away from the whole situation.
79. At my next Body Positive meeting I played the voicemail that the beautician had left me for the other members to hear. The others there said they had no

idea I faced any stigma and that they had thought my life was a walk in the park in comparison to theirs as I received money from the Skipton Fund and I wasn't a drug user.

80. The incident with the beautician made me more determined not to tell anyone about my infection due to the backlash I had received.
81. I felt like I had to live a lie. When people asked me if I was going to the hospital for my chemo I would say yes even though I was actually going for Hepatitis C treatment. I was losing a lot of weight and people probably thought I was dying from cancer.
82. The infection has had a huge impact on my family life and my family relationships.
83. After I found out that I had Hepatitis C, my sons were tested to see if they also had it. I was very worried at the thought that they may also have this infection. **GRO-B** at North Manchester Hospital told me that I had nothing to be ashamed of in relation to my infection and that my sons wouldn't either if they had also been infected by me. He said however that it could affect their insurance and their ability to obtain loans or mortgages if they were infected. Thankfully, neither of my sons were infected with Hepatitis C.
84. My sons dealt with the news of my infection in different ways. My older son was very caring before and we had a very good relationship. Unfortunately, when he learnt of my infection things changed. He hasn't been there for me as much since I was diagnosed and this has affected our relationship. I learnt through counselling that people deal with things in their own way. He didn't know how to voice how he felt and he withdrew.
85. My younger son had a baby at the time and I was very worried that he wouldn't let me hold my grandchild once he knew about my infection. My younger son was the first person I told about my infection and I begged him to still let me see my grandson. He was very supportive. He told me that I can have my grandchild as often as I want, and to just be sure to keep my toothbrush separate. My younger son has been my rock, supporting me

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through my treatments, giving me my infections every week during my first and second lots of treatment for Hepatitis C. He never stopped me from seeing his son.

86. Unfortunately I have never really been able to play with my grandchildren or do things other grandparents can do. I feel like my family has missed out on so much due to my infection. My granddaughter has said to me that she can't remember me running or skipping. Neither can I anymore. I find it difficult to walk, I can't climb, I can no longer cycle. I used to be able to do these things.
87. Sadly, my mother passed away before I had managed to clear my infection. She would have loved to have known I had managed to beat Hepatitis C. All she wanted was for me to be okay. She knew I was alone and my siblings had their partners and she was worried about me being on my own if she passed away.
88. I have had to go through a lot to get my doctors to agree to my upcoming mastectomy due to all the issues that Hepatitis C has caused my body. I had to change consultants and I now have a date to have it done. I need to have it because my current condition is affecting my back and posture. Also, I have had cancer twice and I do not want to risk it coming back a 3rd time.
89. I believe that most of my issues come as a result of infected blood especially the issues with my liver. If I hadn't been given infected blood I would be in much better shape than I am. Everything I do is affected by it. If I go anywhere with my family I have to make sure it is accessible for me. I can't stand for long and I get tired so easily that I am unable to go to places with my grandchildren.
90. I don't feel like myself anymore. Everything has changed as a result of my infection. I knew I would be okay with the cancer but when they told me I had Hepatitis C it was just so difficult. Nobody knows what its like until you're in this position.

91. I was working as a GRO-B at the time I was diagnosed with cancer. I would not have been able to practise for a few years due to the cancer but I had expected that I would eventually be able to return to work. Unfortunately, I was unable to return to work due to my Hepatitis C infection and the effects of the treatment I was on.
92. I had to give up my university studies in GRO-B I was studying GRO-B and wanted to become a GRO-B In my first year I did really well – I was getting all firsts. However as my memory started to become affected it became really difficult. I would revise all the time to try and get my grades back to the level they had been at previously but it was impossible.
93. I have thought of going back to finish my degree but the thought of trying to study again makes me feel ill. Mentally, I wouldn't be able to cope. Physically, it is difficult for me to even get out of bed because of my back issues. I take painkillers every day and sometimes require morphine when it is especially bad. I also have to deal with thyroid issue.
94. I have struggled financially due to my infection through contaminated blood. I have not worked since GRO-B
95. If I did not have Hepatitis C I would have been able to return to work after my cancer treatment. I also believe I have had a loss of earnings as a result of not being able to finish my degree. There was potential for better jobs and further qualifications that I was already working towards. Unfortunately as a result of my Hepatitis C infection I had to give up my dreams.
96. I have been divorced for a long time. I could have been married again if it wasn't for all of this, who knows how different my life would be if I had not been infected with Hepatitis C. The thought of telling someone and trusting them in relation to my infection is impossible. How do you explain something like this to someone? As a result I haven't been able to date.
97. I wish I could be an advocate and fight for everyone in a similar position to myself but I am just not in the position to do it. When I am down my youngest

son brings me back to earth. He tells me not to be upset and that I am lucky in a way as a lot of people who received contaminated blood didn't make it this far, but it still does not change how I feel about myself.

98. The damage is done. Even though I have cleared Hepatitis C I have been damaged permanently. I still feel the effects of Hepatitis C and the treatment I received from it.

Section 6. Treatment/care/support

99. I went to see the physiotherapist at the Neil Cliff cancer unit due to problems with my back. When I went in, I saw that she had gloves on. She said to me GRO-B *"I've phoned the Virology Department about you, I wanted to make sure that I was okay"*. I asked why she had gloves on because she was only looking at my back. I had to educate her that Hepatitis C was transmitted through blood to blood contact. I was very upset at the way I had been treated. It seemed no one knew about Hepatitis and I was having to educate them. I remember coming home and crying to my mum and saying to her that the physiotherapist had made me feel like a leper.
100. On another occasion, I went to North Manchester Hospital in order to have an injection in my back. I had completed my second course of treatment for Hepatitis after the first had not proven successful. I had lost 7 and half stones while being on the treatment and the doctors believed as a result I had a lot of wasted muscle. I was in a lot of pain. The nurse was looking at my notes and asked if I had any medical problems other than the issue with my back. I told her that I didn't. She kept pressing the issue and I asked why she would ask that when she had my notes in front of her. She said she had to ask. I was very upset and I told the Doctor I was seeing who was a pain specialist about this incident. He told me if anyone else tries to prompt me to find out about my Hepatitis C that I should take their

registration number and report them as they would be disciplined. They shouldn't have been treating me in a way that was so insensitive.

101. As I have stated previously, being made to sit under a sign saying "Infectious Diseases" at the hospital was humiliating and hurtful.
102. I have not had any difficulty getting dental care; my dentist was fine about my infection. On one of my visits to my dentist he was being assisted by his daughter. I had used some tissue and she took it from me to throw away. She held it in the air away from her as though afraid of getting infected. This was very uncomfortable for me.
103. There were lots of instances like these and unfortunately most of them came from health professionals.
104. I have never been offered any counselling in relation to being diagnosed with Hepatitis C. I had to find help myself through Hepatitis C UK. I received counselling some time after my first two treatments. I should have been offered help as soon as it was discovered I had received an infection through contaminated blood. Instead I had to find it myself.
105. The treatment for Hepatitis C is horrendous, it is like a form of chemotherapy, it attacks your whole body. It was a lot to deal with especially after suffering with cancer. It is awful that I was never given any support.
106. It would have been beneficial to have received support from medical professionals who were educated on Hepatitis C and not just those involved with people who had contracted it through drug use. People just didn't understand, it was very stigmatized and people with Hepatitis C were treated very badly. They told you it was nothing to be ashamed of but then made you feel like you had done something wrong.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

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107. I received a stage 1 payment of around £20,000 and a stage 2 payment of £50,000 from the Skipton fund.
108. I remember when I was applying for the stage 2 payment the wording made it seem like it was something positive to have developed cancer or cirrhosis as you would get a larger payment. I thought this was wrong and insensitive.
109. I feel like any money I have received is hush money, dirty money. At first I couldn't get my head around it all and as a result I didn't apply for quite a while.
110. I found the process of applying to Skipton straight forward. I was lucky to have my medical records but some people weren't and struggled as a result. I remember I received the stage 1 Skipton Fund payment within a week of applying for it.
111. I gave the stage 1 payment I received from Skipton to my sons. It felt like dirty money to me, and I did not want to use it for myself. In hindsight I should have kept the money I received. I was never told how terrible Hepatitis C was or what the effects would be. I had no idea at the time that I wouldn't be able to work or earn money again.
112. I receive monthly payments from what was formerly known as the Skipton Fund and is now known as the EIBSS. They recently informed me the monthly amount I receive is going to go up and I will receive some back pay. At the moment I receive less than £10000 a year annually from my benefits so I qualify for a £400 a month payment from the EIBSS.
113. At one point I had an elevated mattress fitted in my house. The Skipton Fund sent a leaflet stating I might be eligible and therefore I applied for it and they gave me money for a bed that would help my back. It does help but if I hadn't been infected with contaminated blood I wouldn't need things like this in the first place.

114. I get Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) and also Personal Independence Payments (PIP).
115. Due to all the issues I have including lymphoma in my arm all the money I receive is spent on trying to have a decent quality of life. I have to pay for menial tasks to be done that I cannot do myself such as washing my hair and cleaning my house I have to pay for someone to walk my dog, and I have to pay for puppy school for my dog. The money I receive is not really adequate.

Section 8. Other Issues

116. The people at fault know what they did. They knew where the blood was coming from. My doctor believes I received around 2 batches of blood that came from America which would have been how I was infected.
117. I was a blood donor between GRO-B and GRO-B. This worries me, the fact I could have potentially infected other people is a horrible thought. Donating blood was something I really felt good about at the time, I felt like I could be saving a life. Now I worry about the blood I donated. I hope if they did use my blood it was screened before use.
118. I feel that the people who are to blame, those who knew that innocent people were at risk of infection through contaminated blood have not had to answer for anything. They either have no idea what people have had to go through or they just don't care. It's not a short term issue. This is something that has affected me in a way I can't even quantify and will continue to affect me for the rest of my life.
119. The whole ordeal had been horrendous; the fact there is such a lack of education in matters like this is terrible. More people should be educated on the matter, especially those who work as medical professionals.

ANONYMOUS

120. There needs to be regular testing in situations like this to prevent people going untreated in positions similar to mine. I was sick for a long time before it was found that I had been infected with Hepatitis C. I believe that if I had been tested earlier I could have been treated earlier and I wouldn't be so damaged.
121. If someone finds out that you have, or have had, Hepatitis C you are classed as a drug user immediately. Even now there's not enough publicity about what happened to people infected with contaminated blood. We have been let down by those who were meant to care for us and then have to deal with the additional stigma associated with the infection as if it is our own fault that we have it.
122. People need to pay for what they have done, there are people who have died and will not get the results of this Inquiry and this should be taken into account.

Anonymity

123. I wish to remain anonymous.
124. I am willing 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

5 July 2019