

Witness Name: GRO-B

Statement No: WITN3251001

Exhibits: 0

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 and I was born on GRO-B. I live at GRO-B. I have been married to GRO-B since 1990 and we have two sons, GRO-B aged GRO-B and GRO-B aged GRO-B. I am the GRO-B of GRO-B.
2. I make this statement as an affected son of my late mother, Mrs GRO-B: M, who was born on GRO-B and who passed away on GRO-B.
3. My mother was infected with Hepatitis C as a result of receiving contaminated Factor IX concentrates.
4. My brother, GRO-B: B was also infected with Hepatitis C and has provided a witness statement to the Inquiry (WITN114900). He has exhibited some of my mother's medical records to which I refer in this statement. **This witness statement has therefore been prepared without the benefit of access to my late mother's full medical records.**

**Section 2. How Affected**

5. My brother tested positive for Haemophilia B at birth; as a result my mother was also tested. She was found to be a carrier of Haemophilia B with a baseline Factor IX level of 32%.
6. My mother received Factor IX on only 4 or 5 occasions for tooth extractions and hip operations from 1969. Her condition was not as serious as that of my brother, who required frequent treatment with Factor IX and was always in and out of hospital.
7. My mother was treated at the Churchill Hospital in Oxford and her main consultants were Dr Rizza and Dr Matthews. She also attended the John Radcliffe Hospital under Dr Gompertz.
8. As far as I am aware, my mother was not provided with any information or advice regarding the risk of infection from receiving Factor IX concentrates.
9. I believe that my mother was infected with Hepatitis C (Non-A Non-B Hepatitis [NANB] Hepatitis as it was then known) in 1969. I refer to my brother's **Exhibit WITN1149002** which is a letter dated 1<sup>st</sup> August 2000 from Dr Jane Collier to Dr Rashid Kazmi which states "*I reviewed this 67 year old lady who has probably been infected with Hepatitis C for around 31 years following a dental extraction in 1969*".
10. My mother tested positive for Hepatitis C on 14<sup>th</sup> November 1991 and I refer to my brother's **Exhibit WITN1149003** in this regard.
11. I am unsure as to how and when my mother was advised of her Hepatitis C infection and I would defer to my brother's witness statement in this regard. My mother shared the news of her Hepatitis C infection with me sometime in the late 1990s.
12. As far as I am aware, at no stage was my mother provided with sufficient information to allow her to either understand or manage her infection.

Furthermore, I don't think she was given any advice regarding the risk of transmission.

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

13. I don't know whether my mother was exposed to any other infections, such as vCJD.

### **Section 4. Consent**

14. My mother was tested, without her knowledge, for Hepatitis C on 14<sup>th</sup> November 1991. I therefore expect that she was also tested on other occasions, without her knowledge, for Hepatitis C.

15. Given the above, it is likely that my mother was tested, without her knowledge, for other infections, such as HIV.

16. I don't believe that my mother was treated without her knowledge and I don't know whether she was used for research without her knowledge.

### **Section 5. Impact**

17. My mother suffered from multiple medical problems during her life. These included osteoarthritis and having to undergo a number of hip replacement operations. She had to go through a procedure to get rid of a cancer in her liver that was detected in 2008. However, this returned and ultimately led to her death.

18. My mother was not offered any treatment for her Hepatitis C and therefore did not clear the virus which caused her to develop the cancer in her liver.

19. My mother was a wonderful and stoic character who never complained or made a fuss. She kept her problems to herself and possessed and displayed a fantastic attitude to life.

20. It is hard to comment about how the Hepatitis C affected my mother's mental state because she just got on with things.
21. When the cancer struck in 2008 I remember her telephoning me whilst I was on a business trip at the company headquarters in GRO-B She told me that she had the same thing that my dad had, which was liver cancer. She was very apologetic about it. I remember being out in the city having dinner at the time and I was understandably very worried about my mother.
22. The only reason my mother found out about her liver cancer was because she was in patient at Cheltenham General Hospital following a hip dislocation in 2008. Apparently a German doctor had told my mother that he had done a scan which had picked up the fact that she had cancer of the liver. My mother had asked the doctor if he could sort her out and he replied that he could not because she was too old. He told her that the tumour would probably kill her.
23. I remember telling my mother that I thought this German doctor was wrong. My mother still had private healthcare insurance so we made an appointment for her to see a consultant at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital at Edgbaston.
24. I went with her and we saw a consultant called Simon Bramhall. He confirmed that my mother's Hepatitis C had caused the liver cancer and he agreed to operate. I believe that the operation took place during June or July 2008; I recall that it was warm and sunny. He successfully removed the tumour. I believe that my mother had a follow up scan a few weeks later, which showed that the cancer had gone.
25. My mother was due to have another follow up scan in November 2012 at the Churchill Hospital in Oxford but this scan never took place; I believe that my mother was lost to follow up. My mother actually went to the hospital in that November with all of her paperwork but was told that for whatever reason she had not been booked in and was therefore turned away without a scan.

26. I am of the view that missing this scan was the most critical and influential thing that happened with my mother's care. She was only aged 79 and I strongly believe that if she had been scanned in the November, as planned, then she could have had another 15 or so years of life.
27. I have been trying to recall when my mother became ill and developed fluid on her legs; I think it could have been sometime in January 2013. She had only just moved to a new house in late October 2012, from Nottinghamshire back to **GRO-B** and she was fine during this time and through into Christmas. She only lived at her new residence for a very short period, just 4 months before she was admitted to Gloucester Royal Hospital, so never really got to enjoy her new home. Her GP had been bandaging her fluid filled legs but had not linked her sky high protein levels to the liver.
28. My mother's health deteriorated to such a degree that she was admitted to the Gloucester Royal Hospital in February 2013. Mentally she was lucid at this time but physically she was in an awful state; she could hardly walk.
29. I was spending a lot of time with my mother at this stage and as her health got progressively worse I tried to reach out to Simon Bramhall to find out the position and prognosis with regard to my mother. However, he completely blanked me and I could not get past his PA.
30. Eventually a sister on the ward sat me down and told me that the prognosis was really bad and that my mother was not going to live for much longer. I had this conversation with the sister about two weeks after my mother's admission to the ward. It was a real shock to hear this and it made me angry and upset that none of the doctors had bothered to tell me this, or indeed bothered to tell me anything. Communication was poor to non-existent.
31. I never told my mother about the conversation I had had with the ward sister but shortly after this conversation had taken place my mother said to me "*I know I am going to die*". Even faced with this thought, my mother fought on bravely and dealt with her terminal condition with such strength and grace.

32. In fact, looking back, I don't recall my mother ever being depressed about what had happened to her and despite now facing death she still maintained her positive "*glass half full attitude*".

33. I also don't recall that my mother suffered from exhaustion or extreme lethargy which would be your typical Hepatitis C symptoms. It was always her husband, my step-father, who would fall asleep on the sofa whereas my mother maintained a great level of energy and was up early in the morning and did not go to bed until about 10.30pm in the evenings. I believe that it was her determined and resilient character which carried her.

34. I think my mother was always more worried for my brother, than for herself. It must have been hard living with the reality that your son could predecease you. She was always talking about my brother's treatment and what could happen to him.

35. Having a mother and a brother so gravely affected by this tragedy has of course had its knock on effects on me. It has made me both upset and angry and I want answers for my family. I think that those responsible for this tragedy must be called to account and I want justice for all of the victims; the deceased, infected and affected.

#### **Section 6. Treatment/care/support**

36. I think my mother was treated reasonably well by both the medical and dental practitioners, despite the fact that she had Hepatitis C.

37. I do, however, recall that extra precautions were taken with her dental procedures following her infection.

38. Simon Bramhall completely shut me out; his levels of communication with both my mother and me were completely non-existent.

39. Neither my mother nor I were offered any counselling or psychological support.

**Section 7. Financial Assistance**

40. My mother received both the Stage 1 and 2 Payments from the Skipton Fund but she did not receive any monthly support, allowance or grants from them.

41. I dealt with the Skipton Fund following my mother's death. I was sorting my mother's affairs and I thought that I had better inform them of her passing. They gave me some further information and paid a contribution towards the funeral costs.

**Section 8. Other Issues**

42. I want the people responsible for the decision making behind the use of and importation of untreated blood and blood products to be named and shamed. They need to stand up in public to offer an honest account of why they made the decisions and took the actions they did.

43. I want all of those who are suffering today to be properly compensated to allow them to live the remainder of their lives without financial worries or pressures.

44. Successive UK Governments have dodged the issue of the contaminated blood scandal whereas other countries have confronted the issue head on. We vote our Government in and much more needs to be done to ensure that this type of situation never happens again. There needs to be both deep rooted and systemic change and I am doubtful that this will happen any time soon.

**Anonymity**

45. The only reason I seek anonymity is because my brother has already requested that he be anonymous. Therefore the requisite application was made on his behalf and a redacted statement was submitted to the Inquiry.

46. I do wish 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..

GRO-B

23 July 2019