

Witness Name: D Simmons

Statement No: WITN3897001

Exhibits: 0

Dated: December 2019

## INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

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### FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF DIANE SIMMONS

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I, Diane Simmons will say as follows:-

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

1. My name is Diane Simmons and I was born on **GRO-C** 1965. I live at **GRO-C**  
**GRO-C** London, **GRO-C**
2. I make this statement as an affected daughter of my late mum, Rita May Simmons, who was born on **GRO-C** 1938 and passed away, aged 60, on 20 September 1999, as a result of receiving Hepatitis C following a contaminated blood transfusion.
3. **This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my late mum's medical records. I used to have some of her medical records but unfortunately my brother lost them. I am in the process of applying again but I fear that, due to the passage of time, the records will no longer be available.**

## **Section 2. How Affected**

4. In or around the early to mid 1980s, my late mum was admitted to Mayday Hospital in Croydon for an operation on her kidney during which she received a blood transfusion due to her being anaemic.
5. I do not know if my late mum was given any information or advice regarding the possible risk of infection from receiving a blood transfusion.
6. From around about 1985 my late mum's health deteriorated and I believe that, eventually following a lengthy passage of time and as a last resort one, her GP suggested that they test her for Hepatitis C. Her blood was taken and I believe that my late mum was called into Kings College Hospital in London to see a consultant and it was then that she was told that she had Hepatitis C. My sister accompanied her to the appointment which took place in or around the early to mid 1990s. On hearing this devastating news, my sister immediately telephoned me and I vividly remember, as if it were yesterday, receiving that awful call whilst I was at work. My whole world fell apart that day.

## **Section 3. Other Infections**

7. I don't know if my late mum was infected with, or exposed to, any other infections.

## **Section 4. Consent**

8. I don't believe that my late mum was tested or treated without her knowledge or consent.

## **Section 5. Impact**

9. Prior to my late mum's Hepatitis C diagnosis we had no explanation for her constant exhaustion and lethargic state. The Hepatitis C had been working

hard behind the scenes making my poor late mum ill and irreversibly damaging her liver. She was very pale and often bedbound. It was distressing to watch my late mum deteriorating before my very eyes.

10. Shortly after her Hepatitis C diagnosis, she was started on Interferon treatment. She was already weak and poorly but the treatment gave her some horrific side effects. She was constantly nauseous and had flu like symptoms. She also lost a considerable amount of weight.
11. During her treatment she had to go to the hospital every week to be injected into the same area where she had had her kidney operation. I could see in her face how much pain these injections caused her and it was not a nice thing to witness. Sadly, despite some initial reports that the treatment was helping my late mum, she failed to “clear” the virus.
12. My late mum was really good at hiding how she felt and she tried to be so brave. She never once complained and was the sort of person who would not want to worry or upset me or others whom she cared about. However, I knew in my heart from the moment we received the Hepatitis C diagnosis that my late mum was not going to make it. I was driving everyone crazy as I was constantly taking photographs of my late mum but I just knew deep down that she was going to die.
13. I was aged only 34 when my late mum passed away. I was so close to her as she brought us all up by herself; I had three siblings although my oldest sister was also brought up by my nan. I was devastated but I knew that I had to stay strong for my siblings and take charge of the situation. I organised everything and looked after my siblings. Despite taking on this role, I was very much struggling on the inside and was totally heartbroken at the loss of my late mum.
14. I am still so angry about what happened to my late mum and how she was taken so young and so unfairly. I remember sitting through her inquest and feeling totally sick and thinking “*how can I fight the system when I don't have any funds with which to do so?*”.

15. When the Inquiry was announced it was like all of those feelings that I had pushed away came flooding back. All the pain, anger and frustration at the lack of justice of my wonderful late mum. I am still angry today about how the Government and the NHS failed my late mum. She went into hospital for an operation and came out with something far worse; a death sentence. The cover up and the lying by successive Governments makes me furious. Families like mine have been left to suffer in silence. We were given absolutely no support, either financial or practical, when my late mum passed away. My siblings and I were totally forgotten and I felt very alone trying to make sense of such a terrible and avoidable scandal. Words cannot express how sickened and disgusted I am with the UK Government.

16. I want the UK Government to take responsibility for what happened and to hold their hands up and be accountable for my late mum's death. You could give me a million pounds but it would not mean anything because it would not bring my late mum back.

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

17. Neither my late mum nor I received any counselling or psychological support.

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

18. I found out about the Skipton Fund (SF) via my own research and applied for and received both the Stage 1 and 2 Payments. The UK Government do not just give you money for no reason and the sizable sums of these payments left me in no doubt as to their culpability.

## **Section 8. Other Issues**

19. I never got to say goodbye to my late mum and I think that I could accept her death more if it had been caused by cancer or an unavoidable natural event or cause. However, she was cruelly taken by the UK Governments' wrongdoings.
20. Every time I think about my late mum the painful memories come flooding back to include the hospital visits, the dark days and the long trail leading up to her death. The hurt and pain is as bad today as it was then. The wounds don't heal. They say you learn to live with it but you don't and time is not a healer. The emotional pain is so bad that it hits my very core.
21. I have struggled enormously having to relive everything again for the purpose of writing this statement but I felt that it was both necessary and important. The normal pattern for me is that when I think about what happened to my late mum I cry very hard from my heart for a couple of hours and then I try to get on with the rest of my day. This is my pattern and how I attempt to deal with the grief. I have to let it come out, do its thing, and then try and start again.

## **Anonymity**

22. I do not want to apply for anonymity and I have a burning desire to give oral evidence to the Inquiry. I feel very strongly about my late mum's case and the fact that this tragedy should not have happened.

**Statement of Truth**

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

Signed

GRO-C

Date

13/12/19