

Witness Name: Dr Debasish Das  
Statement No.: WITN3438005  
Exhibits:  
Dated:

## **INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY**

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### **WRITTEN STATEMENT OF DR DEBASISH DAS**

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I provide this statement in response to the request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 21 August 2023.

I, Dr Debasish Das, will say as follows: -

#### **Section 1: Introduction**

I was born in Calcutta, India and graduated from the University of Calcutta with MB BS degree in 1997 and then did a post-graduate degree in General Medicine (MD) from the University of Calcutta. I came to the United Kingdom in 2002 and after passing the Professional and Linguistic Assessments Board (PLAB) examination, I registered with the GMC (Registration Number 6031890) and currently hold full registration with licence to practice. I further trained in the East-Midlands (South) region and Newcastle and hold CCT in General Internal Medicine, Gastroenterology and Hepatology. After completion of training in October 2010, I took up consultant post at the Kettering General Hospital NHS Foundation Trust and remained in post till 31<sup>st</sup> October 2022. From 1<sup>st</sup> November 2022, I took up the clinical academic post of Associate Professor in Clinical Hepatology at the Medical School, University of Leicester with clinical work based at Kettering General Hospital as an honorary consultant Hepatologist.

#### **Section 2: Responses to criticism by Witness W3270**

Having read the criticism made by a witness with Inquiry reference number W3270 in relation to comments made by a "Dr Das" at a meeting in the Northamptonshire area, in June 2018, regarding testing patients for blood borne viruses, I would like to clarify as follows:

Having investigated my diary schedule and checking my Royal College of Physicians CPD diary records, I cannot find any records to establish that I did attend an evening meeting in relation to viral hepatitis in the Northamptonshire area in June 2018. However, I would state that, I would not have necessarily included meetings/events in my diary if they were not held in the working hours or included them in my Royal College of Physicians CPD diary if the event/meeting did not provide specific educational elements. With the passage of time, I do not specifically recall the event that the witness W3270 refers to. However, I am aware of evening meetings being organised from time to time by the Operational Delivery Network Team (Hepatitis C) based at University Hospitals of Leicester and supported by some pharma companies, that I had attended on occasions.

I can also see that the witness W3270 mentions that "Dr Das" had attended the meeting with "two specialist nurses" and I can confirm that we did have two Hepatitis C specialist nurses, Michelle Skelton and Catherine Crawshaw working with me at Kettering Hospital and they used to attend some of the evening meetings too.

In my role as the Hepatology lead for the Kettering General Hospital NHS Foundation Trust and in my involvement with the Leicester HCV Operational Delivery Network, I have come across various HCV peer workers, some I know by name due to closer working relations over a period of time but some I have met only transiently at some of the meetings. Having read

the witness statement, I cannot recognise a specific person who fits the description of the job profile of the witness W3270.

I would like to state that I have never been aware of any list of patients who had been tested for blood borne viruses without their consent, as has been alleged by the witness W3270. I would not have been in a position to discuss the existence of such a list at any meetings at any time. I am unable to fathom what list the witness W3270 recollects but certainly I have never heard of the existence of such a list as described by the witness W3270.

The only list of HCV patients, that I can remember having been provided to me and the Hepatology Specialist nurses at Kettering Hospital was a list provided by Public Health England, as part of the "Patient re-engagement exercise for those who have been diagnosed with hepatitis C – Information for Operational Delivery Networks". The original documents relating to the above process was published in September 2018 and the list of the patients were provided to us in early 2019 and after approval by the Information Governance Lead of our trust, we started sending out letters to the individual patients using the format already provided by Public Health England. This list would not have been with us in June 2018, and I would not have been in a position to mention about such a list at any place at the time.

I would also state that I was not aware of at the time (June 2018), nor become aware subsequently, of any practice at Kettering General Hospital NHS foundation Trust to test patients for blood borne viruses without their consent, to protect the surgical teams or otherwise.

While I cannot confirm or refute having attended an evening meeting in June 2018 as mentioned by witness W3270, I certainly had no knowledge of the list of patients as described in the witness statement and would not have been in a position to discuss the existence of such a list at any meeting in June 2018.

I am also concerned that witness W3270 did not bring such a significant allegation to the notice of anyone else at the time, nor did her supervisor brought up the issue with me or my Trust's senior managers if they had genuinely believed that such unethical practice had been discussed at the meeting as this has only now been mentioned in the witness statement.

After we were provided with the list of patients by Public Health England (PHE) as mentioned above, I may have discussed about the progress with the contacting of the patients as advised by PHE, in some of the Operational Delivery Network meetings but this is very different to the cohort of patients compared to those referred to in the witness statement of witness W3270.

### **Section 3: Other Issues**

If the inquiry would like to have sight of the information I received from PHE in relation to the list of patients to be contacted, I would be content to provide this information.

### **Statement of Truth**

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

Signed GRO-C\_\_\_\_\_

Dated 15<sup>th</sup> September 2023\_\_\_\_\_