

ANONYMOUS

Witness Name: GRO-B

Statement No: WITN2897001

Exhibits: 0

Dated: May 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 of GRO-B
My date of birth is GRO-B I live with my 9 year old son and I
work in a school. My mother, GRO-B and my father, GRO-B have both
provided witness statements to the Inquiry.
2. I make this statement as an affected daughter in relation to my father,
GRO-B who was infected with Hepatitis C following his
treatment with contaminated Factor VIII concentrate.
3. This statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my
father's full medical records; my father's witness statement contains a
number of exhibited medical records.

Section 2. How Affected

4. My father has mild Haemophilia A with a clotting factor of 9%.

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5. He received Factor VIII from 1978.
6. My father's consultant was Dr Savidge and his treating hospitals were St Thomas' and Guy's and Kings' College.
7. I believe that my father was infected with Hepatitis C on 27th October 1986 when he was given Factor VIII during a hip operation.
8. My father was given absolutely no information in relation to the risks of receiving Factor VIII.
9. My father was told that he had been infected with Hepatitis C in or around the summer of 1993 during a routine appointment with Dr Savidge. My father was told that there was nothing to worry about and he actually said "*half the country is infected*". Dr Savidge did not give my father sufficient information to allow him to understand or manage his infection. He was given no information regarding the risks of transmission.

Section 3. Other Infections

10. It was not until 2013 that my father received a letter, in connection with a colonoscopy, which confirmed that he had not been exposed to vCJD.

Section 4. Consent

11. My father was tested for Hepatitis B (5th December 1991), Hepatitis C (5th December 1991) and HIV (27th October 1986 and 6th January 1987) without his knowledge and therefore without his consent.

Section 5. Impact

12. I do not have those lovely happy childhood memories which most children have. My father was too poorly to take me to the park or carry me on his shoulders. I feel that I was robbed of a healthy father and now my son has

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been robbed of a healthy grandfather. I do however remember lots of hospital visits for my father when I was growing up.

13. My father's infection had a massively negative impact on my mother; both mentally and physically. I remember my mother doing literally everything; working, housework, cooking, cleaning and DIY.
14. I also had to stay with my grandmother some of the time to give my mother a break; however my grandmother also had a lot on her plate because her husband suffered with a number of health problems.
15. I am really proud of my mother and I know she did the best job she could given the very difficult circumstances she found herself in. She worked tirelessly to keep our family unit together and a roof over our heads. My mother has been an absolute rock for the whole family. If it was not for her, I do not know how my father or I would have coped.
16. My father suffered from depression and anxiety as a result of his infection with Hepatitis C.
17. My father commenced the Interferon monotherapy treatment in GRO-B. However, he had to stop this treatment after only 12 weeks because he vomited within 30 minutes of his first injection and the side effects were horrific. My father's depression worsened on this treatment and he had severe anxiety attacks. He had constant diarrhoea, severe fatigue and terrible insomnia. The treatment was unsuccessful.
18. My father underwent a second bout of treatment in GRO-B which consisted of Interferon and Ribavirin. However, he had to come off this treatment at only 15 weeks due to experiencing the same severe side effects which he suffered during the GRO-B treatment. This treatment was also unsuccessful and my father had to wait another 4 years for a further attempt to clear his Hepatitis C.
19. My father commenced the Pegylated Interferon and Ribavirin treatment in around 2000. However, he had to be taken off this treatment after only 8

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weeks due to him experiencing very severe side effects. My father told me that this treatment had the most severe side effects he had experienced to date.

20. My father was very depressed and felt completely stuck. He basically thought that he would have to live with Hepatitis C for the rest of his life. My poor father lived in limbo for the next GRO-B years until he commenced the Harvoni and Ribavirin treatment in November GRO-B. During the course of this treatment, my mother had to take my father's blood pressure every day and they had to go the Haemophilia Centre every two weeks to monitor my father's bloods and progress. My father suffered from extreme headaches whilst on this treatment but he managed to withstand the full course of this treatment and was finally declared cleared of the virus, upon conclusion of this treatment, in February 2016.

21. Despite having cleared the virus, my father has to live with the damage which has already been caused. He has a cirrhotic liver, thrombocytopenia, hepatosplenomegaly and splenic haemanangioma. He also suffers with depression and anxiety as a result of his infection and the various Hepatitis C treatments that he has had to endure.

22. It has been only relatively recently that I have been able to discuss my father's infection. Previously, it has been too painful and there is still a stigma attached to Hepatitis C due to how most people believe that it is transmitted.

23. Due to my father's infection I was brought up on benefits and I used to be clothed in charity shop wear. We missed out on so many opportunities as children, we never had a foreign holiday and we never had the luxuries that other children took for granted. As a result of this, some children were very cruel to me. As my father's health deteriorated my mother had to give up work to care for him.

24. My parents had to rely on financial credit which is not a great position to be in. The interest rates were exorbitant and my parents were forced into more and

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more debt. It was a terrible slippery cycle which my poor parents had to deal with whilst my father was also effectively fighting to stay alive.

25. My father had to go through numerous work capability assessments which are both terrible and disgusting. This has caused him panic attacks and he now suffers from agoraphobia.

26. Another financial implication of my father's infection was that my parents were unable to purchase their council house. My parents do not have any financial security and are unable to leave me any inheritance.

27. I had to drop out of university as a result of everything that happened to my father, which left me with £9,000 of debt.

28. I also had to give up work when I had my son because I could not afford professional childcare on my wages and my mother was unable to assist with childcare due to my father's failing health. A lot of my friends were able to rely on their parents to do the bulk of the childcare thus enabling my friends to remain in employment. I therefore had to claim benefits in order to keep a roof over my mine and my son's heads.

29. It took me 4 years to get back into employment and I am so proud of this fact. I aimed for a job in a school because I knew that this would fit in with the long school holidays and the school runs. It was a really hard slog for 4 years and the school trusted me because I did not have the relevant qualifications or experience. However, I am so proud that I achieved it and am now able to both work and care for my son.

30. What happened to my father has made me very bitter and I do not trust the Government or the NHS. What happened was terrible and has ruined not only my mother and father's lives but also mine and my son's lives. The contaminated blood scandal led me to refuse to have my son immunised because I no longer trust or have any faith in the NHS.

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31. When I felt mentally down, I sought help from my GP but they just wanted to put me on antidepressants instead of dealing with the root cause.

32. I do feel a lot more positive now that I work at the school. It has given me a new found focus.

Section 6. Treatment/Care/Support

33. As far as my father and I are aware, he has not suffered any obstacles in relation to accessing medical or dental care.

34. I have never been offered counselling. I feel like I have had to deal with everything alone. As a family, we tried to hold it together and talk to each other. However, outside of the family nobody really understands.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

35. It took 19 years before my father received any payment from the Government and it took 25 years for him to obtain a monthly payment.

36. My father received the Stage 1 Payment of £20,000 from the Skipton Fund in 2005.

37. My father thinks that he found out about the Trust through the Haemophilia Society bulletin or via the internet.

38. My father received the Stage 2 Payment of £50,000 from the Skipton Fund in 2011.

39. My father also applied for grants for a washing machine, fridge freezer, sofa and reclining armchair in approximately 2012. My father told me that the application procedure was a nightmare because he had to jump through so many financial and administrative hoops.

40. Overall my father is of the view that the Trust was not fit for purpose.

Section 8. Other Issues

42. My father has been imprisoned and isolated due to his infection. It has taken over both my father's and our family's entire lives.

43. I want justice and closure for my father, our family and all the other victims of this horrific tragedy.

Anonymity, disclosure and redaction

44. I wish to apply to retain my anonymity.

45. I would be prepared 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..... 3-3-22

Originally Submitted
in 2019.

Signature was illegible so
re-Signed.