

ANONYMOUS

Witness Name **GRO-B**

Statement No: WITN3966001

Exhibits: 0

Dated: January 2020

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 the **GRO-B**
GRO-B I live at **GRO-B** with my
husband **GRO-B: H**
2. I make this statement in relation to my husband, **H** who was infected
with Hepatitis C (Hep C) genotype 1b as a result of receiving contaminated
blood products.
3. **H** has also produced a witness statement for the Inquiry,
GRO-B
4. This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to
H full medical records.

Section 2. How Affected

5. [H] suffers from mild Haemophilia A with a blood clotting level of 21%. I believe he was diagnosed in [GRO-B] before he was due to have an operation on his [GRO-B].
6. [H] informed me that his UK National Haemophilia Database (UKNHD) records state that he only received Factor VIII (FVIII) concentrate once, in [GRO-B] at [GRO-B] when he had his tooth extracted. A copy of his UKNHD record is exhibited in his statement at [GRO-B].
7. I do not recall any information given to [H] in relation to the possible risk of infection with FVIII concentrate. I believe he would have told me if he was given any information.
8. In or about 1980 [H] was very poorly and he had to take time of work as a result. I believe he was told by the doctors that he had jaundice.
9. In or about 1990 I believe [H] was informed that he had Hep C. I cannot recall how he was told, whether it was by letter or phone. The only information that we received in relation to the infection was that there was a risk of transmission if we were to have children. We were told that there was a 90% chance that our children would contract Hep C. [H] and I therefore decided against having children. We were also told not to have sexual intercourse without a condom.
10. I believe the doctors should have told [H] about his infection earlier. I believe they had some knowledge of the infection in 1980 when he was very poorly and was told that he had jaundice.
11. Please refer to [H] statement for further information in relation to this section.

Section 3. Other Infections

12. There is a risk that [H] could have been in contact with vCJD. I am not aware if he had any other infections as a result of the FVIII treatment.

Section 4. Consent

13. I wish to rely on [H] statement in relation to this section.

14. I was tested multiple times for Hep C and I always tested negative for it.

Section 5. Impact of the Infection

15. When I found out that [H] was infected with Hep C I was really shocked. We were not given much information about the infection. I had lost my mother at the age of [GRO-B] my father at the age of [GRO-B] and I could not deal with losing my husband too. I remember say to [H] that 'I won't lose you too'.

16. As stated above we were told that there was a high risk of transmitting the infection to our children and as a result [H] and I decided not to have any children. This was, and still is, extremely difficult for both of us.

17. I recall that [H] could not deal with the infection, mentally. He was prescribed [GRO-B] to help him to deal with the anxiety that he was suffering from, which he still currently takes. I recall [H] complaining about aches in his legs and as a result he struggled to walk. He also suffered from tiredness and I believe the above was as a result of Hep C.

18. I wish to rely on [H] statement in relation to the treatment he had for the Hep C. I believe he had two courses of treatment and he is now cleared the Hep C.

19. When [H] was on the treatment, he had an incredibly short temper, and I had to be careful with what I said to him at the time. He felt useless and was in trance-like state. The infection ruined both our lives in every aspect.

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20. Whilst [H] was on the treatment I recall I had to call an ambulance for him because he was struggling with the treatment so much. The treatment was awful and had a major effect on his life.
21. In terms of the mental effects of the treatment, [H] symptoms were awful. His personality completely changed and it would weigh heavily on both of us. He was no longer his usual self. We had no help from anyone i.e from family members or friends because we hadn't told anyone about the infection. We didn't receive any help from any medical professionals. Eventually the doctors ceased [H] treatment because of the symptoms that he was suffering.
22. As stated above we didn't tell anybody of [H] infected status because of the stigma that surrounded it. Even to this day no one knows about it. We didn't know how people would react if they had found out and therefore kept it to ourselves. It would have been nice to have discussed the issues that we were having, even if we could have spoken to a medical professional, but [H] did not want anyone to know, so I respected his wishes. We just had to get on with it and both of us tried to live a normal life.
23. In relation to the incident when I had to call an ambulance (as stated above), [H] sister happened to be in the area. I believe she asked what was happening and we just told her he had health issues in relation to his haemophilia. She recently passed away and we never told her about the infection. Going to social events was not always possible because most of the time [H] was poorly and we used his haemophilia as an excuse.
24. I also suffered mentally as a result of [H] infection. Everything that happened from the time he was told about the infection, the advice that the doctors provided to not have children and all the symptoms [H] suffered (as a result of Hep C and the treatment) meant that I suffered from depression. I went to my doctors about it and I was prescribed anti-depressants. I still currently take them.

25. [H] was a [GRO-B] This was his full-time job before he worked for [GRO-B] He wasn't able to continue his employment with [GRO-B] and therefore went part-time. He eventually retired on ill-health because he was too tired and had no energy.

26. I was working at the time, and just carried on through all the ups and downs that we had.

Section 6. Treatment/care/support

27. We received no care and support as a result of what happened. No counselling or psychological support was ever made available. I believe that it would have helped had it been offered to both of us. I believe that such support would have helped us to understand the infection and manage the infection better.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

28. I wish to rely on [H] statement in relation to this section.

29. I did not receive any money from any of the Trusts and Funds that were set up.

Section 8. Financial Assistance

30. It is such a relief for the Inquiry to start an investigation as to what happened. To know that they are trying to get to the bottom of it will give me and [H] some closure. It finally feels like someone is trying to help us. It's finally being brought out into the open.

Anonymity, disclosure and redaction

31. I wish to remain anonymous.

32. I do not want to give oral evidence to the Inquiry.

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Statement of Truth

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

Signed.....

GRO-B

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Dated 3rd. 2nd 2020