

Witness Name: PAUL DORNAN

Statement No: WITN4709001

Exhibits: 0

Dated: November 2020

## INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

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### FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF PAUL DORNAN

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I, PAUL DORNAN, will say as follows:-

#### Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Paul Dornan. I was born on GRO-C 1966 and I live at GRO-C GRO-C Belfast, Northern Ireland.
2. I was infected with the Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) through contaminated blood products.
3. This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my medical records.

## Section 2. How infected

4. I have Haemophilia A. I am the youngest of 6 children, 3 boys and 3 girls. Our mother did not know she was a GRO-C GRO-C  
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5. We were treated at the Belfast Haemophilia Centre initially at the Royal Victoria Hospital (RVH) and then (when it was relocated) at the Belfast City Hospital (City Hospital). I was under the care of Dr Elizabeth Mayne (Nee Butler) initially and then by Dr Orla McNulty and Dr Gary Benson.
6. I was treated with Cryoprecipitate at first and then Factor VIII (FVIII) concentrate. My eldest brother died GRO-C ten years ago. He rarely needed treated and did not have HCV. GRO-C I were infected with HCV through contaminated FVIII treatment back in the 1970s and 1980s.
7. We were not informed of the risk of exposure to infection before being given the FVIII treatment. Our parents trusted our doctors. It was not until some time around the late 1980s that a letter arrived informing us of the possibility of being infected with HIV through contaminated blood products. We were informed that we would be tested. We weren't invited to the Centre for a one to one consultation. We were pretty much left until our bloods were taken routinely at our six monthly appointments. We were later assured that our FVIII concentrate was heat treated and safe.
8. After that, the news of the HCV infection came along and another letter arrived in 1998/1999. I do not remember a face to face conversation informing me of the positive test. As far as I am concerned, I wasn't sat down and told anything. I

remember with clarity a later conversation I had with Dr Mayne about HCV treatment. She said the (Interferon) treatment would add at least 15 years to my life. On two occasions she threatened to remove my FVIII treatment: once for being overweight; and the second time; because I questioned her about Interferon. We didn't see eye to eye after that.

9. I have full confidence in our new consultant Dr Gary Benson and I wish I had had him back in the day.

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

10. I think we were told collectively as a group (of around 30 people) that we had been exposed to the risk of vCJD at the Haemophilia Centre at City Hospital in the early 2000s. My brother has recently told me that he too remembers such a meeting (albeit a different meeting/group as we do not remember the other being present). It was the only time I was ever told anything face to face.

### **Section 4. Consent**

11. Whilst being informed by letter that tests for infection would be carried out, they were not specific about when the tests were carried out. We had bloods taken at our 6 monthly appointments to check for inhibitor problems. We had probably been tested for infection before they sent the letter(s). In my eyes they already knew the result(s).

### **Section 5. Impact of the Infection**

12. Haemophiliacs were stigmatised in the mid to late 1980s because of the media. It made headline news that five haemophiliacs were infected with HIV and were AIDS carriers. The media made a mountain out of it and people believed you could become infected through touching someone. A lot of my friends said to

- you 'You've been on the news. You could have AIDS'. I had to tell them 'We don't'. I was married and my wife gave birth to our first child (a daughter) in 1989. She had to be tested for HIV just through being married to me.
13. I carried a card with me saying I had 'Haemophilia A'. We had army patrolling the streets of Belfast then and I showed it to a soldier at a checkpoint. The soldier looked at the card and said he didn't know what it meant. Another soldier flippantly said 'Oh that means if you give him a good kicking, he will be in hospital for weeks' and then added 'He'll have AIDS. They're carriers'.
14. Over time the mere mention of having haemophilia became stigmatised because of its association with HCV as well as HIV. As soon as you told a prospective employer they didn't want to know you. Insurance companies didn't want to know you so the chances of trying to buy a house were slim to 0. I have been living in the same home for 30 years that I couldn't buy as I couldn't find full time employment.
15. When I started to take the Interferon treatment, it gave me severe headaches and depression. I nearly gave up when I was taking it. I had to inject myself with it three times a week and it exhausted me. I was really depressed and one night I was so fed up I just squirted the product down the sink. I was told by Dr Orla McNulty to take a break for a month. I was so hard to live with at that time that my wife wanted to divorce me. I went back on Interferon for six months and it was then dormant. My brother had three or four attempts with Interferon before he cleared it.
16. Before having Interferon I felt okay. Ever since having the treatment I have suffered with depression. I have awful headaches on an almost daily basis that I have to take paracetamol for. Taking paracetamol for 20 years or so is not good for a haemophiliac. I constantly worry that the HCV will become active again.

That affects me greatly and contributes to my feelings of depression if I think about it.

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

17. I am lucky in that I have a good supportive family. I have five children (with 21 years between our first born and the youngest). My wife has been brilliant.

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

18. I received the £20,000 Stage 1 ex gratia payment through the Skipton Fund in the early 2000s. It feels now like it was hush money. I received a mere £4,000 per annum before Northern Ireland was brought into line with the rest of the UK. I used to work as a taxi driver for a private company but I am no longer able to do that.

#### **Anonymity, disclosure and redaction**

19. I am not seeking anonymity and understand that this Statement will be published and disclosed as part of the Inquiry.

#### **Statement of Truth**

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

Signed. GRO-C .....

Dated... 26.11.2020 .....