Witness Name: Amanda King
Statement No.: **WITN4758001**
Exhibits: **WITN4758002 - 006**
Dated: 13|9|21

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

WRITTEN STATEMENT OF AMANDA JANE KING

I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 30 March 2021.

I, Amanda Jane King, will say as follows: -

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Amanda Jane King. My date of birth is **GRO-C** 1959, and my address is known to the Inquiry. I am separated from my husband and I have two sons. I work in community care and have been a community care nurse for the past 15 years. I am currently working in palliative care, and I live alone with my three dogs.

2. I intend to speak about my Hepatitis C Infection (HCV). In particular, the nature of my illness, how the illness affected me, the treatment I have received, and the impact it has had on my life.

3. I can confirm that I am not legally represented and that the provisions in relation to anonymity have been explained to me and I am happy for my story to be in the public domain.

Section 2. How Infected

4. I gave birth to my first child, Jamie, on GRO-C 1986 GRO-C GRO-C with an epidural. I was about 26 years old at the time. I fell pregnant again a few months after this, but GRO-D GRO-D GRO-D have a termination.

5. I had the termination at Queens Medical Hospital in Nottingham. We were living in GRO-C Derbyshire, at the time. After the termination, with my consent, they decided to do a DNC and fit in a coil as they considered it a good form of contraception. I had the coil fitted in on 25 September in Nottingham Hospital. I was in the hospital for a further two days before I was discharged because I had a catheter in, and that takes a bit of time.

6. The coil did not work for me. I was in a horrendous amount of pain, and I was having difficulty leaving the house due to the frequency and extent of the blood loss I was suffering. I put up with it for a few months until one night in November that year, I haemorrhaged badly in the bathroom. It was serious and Nigel had to call the ambulance. He gave Jamie to my mother in law to look after. I don't remember much after that because I was so out of it. Nigel told me that the ambulance was flashing their blue emergency lights to transport me to the hospital, and on arrival, I was given a blood transfusion. Nigel said that I had blood in one arm and saline in the other.

7. They later took me to the theatre for a DNC. I put two and two together and realised that I must have been pregnant again and the baby was in the coil, which is why I was in so much pain and haemorrhaging so severely. I am sure my transfusion was prior to the D&C operation and

due to the amount of blood I lost before and immediately after my admission to hospital. I know that I also had an anti-D injection which I am certain was after the operation. **See Exhibit WITN4758002.** They had given me anti-D when I had my first son and when I had an earlier termination. I did query this and why I needed it but never got a proper answer. I did not push the matter and just assumed as mentioned that there was a foetus trapped in the coil.

8. Nobody ever explained anything that was happening to me. I was drifting in and out, more or less unconscious, so I don't recall seeing the blood bag myself. I was never informed regarding any risk that receiving blood may have attached to it. I remember Nigel coming in to try and make a joke of it, but it was a horrible time, and I was more worried about leaving my baby son behind.

9. I had never been in the hospital before other than for Jamie's birth, so I was really scared, and at times, I thought that I would die, but the staff were really nice. Nigel never said anything to me about whether his consent had been sought either but he definitely said that I had received a blood transfusion. It sticks in my mind as it's something I associate with only serious operations.

10. The bleeding had been very heavy on the day I was finally admitted. I had been bleeding non-stop in the week's beforehand, and I was still bleeding the day after. We even had to get rid of our carpets because the blood I lost had soaked through to the landing floor. I am aware that in a rejection letter from the Skipton fund, which I will discuss in more detail later, it talks about only a 50ml loss of blood during my operation. It is my belief that this is a reference to the loss I suffered during the operation and not the total amount of blood loss I experienced. See **Exhibit WITN4758003,** five pages clinical and operational notes and **Exhibit WITN4758004,** Evaluation notes of two pages.

11. I have a tiny tattoo on my shoulder, which I had done at a professional tattoo shop around 1988. I had gone with friends, and we all got one done at the same time, so I picked one you can hardly see.

12. I have never been medically treated abroad, I have never been promiscuous, and I have been serious in my relationships. I have only had one blood transfusion, which is this one when I was admitted to Queens University Hospital, Nottingham for the DNC. I did not have a blood transfusion when I had my first DNC at the same hospital.

13. I was first diagnosed with Hepatitis C in 1995/6 after receiving a letter from the Blood Transfusion Service that one of my donations had tested positive for the virus. I was told to go to my doctors, but they said that there was nothing to worry about, and that these things do go dormant. Because of how I was treated when I was diagnosed – which I will go into later, I refused to go to the doctors for another ten years. I suffered from a lot of side effects until 2016, when things got so bad that I was pushed to have to visit the GP.

Section 3. Other Infections

14. I have not received any infection or infections other than HCV due to being given infected blood. I have had no other major illnesses where I think that the HCV being in my system could have been contributory.

Section 4. Consent

15. When you are a blood donor, they give you a form that states that you are being tested for HCV and HIV, so I was aware that my blood would be tested for these as a donor.

16. I was not aware that my blood was being tested for HIV or HCV when I went to see the GP in 2016.

Section 5. Impact

17. I used to give blood whenever I got the chance readily. I remember that I made my first donation around 1983 after I got married. If there was a donation centre locally or nearby, I would pop in to give blood. I think I must have given blood around 3 or 4 times in total.

18. In 1995 or 1996 - I remember because my second son Thomas would have been around 4 or 5 years old, I received a letter from the blood transfusion service which stated that they had detected HCV in the blood I had donated on the last occasion. The letter also said that they had destroyed the donation and advised me to visit my local doctor. I was terrified. My immediate thoughts were for my sons and what would happen to them as I thought it would be fatal.

19. I went to my GP, Dr Tidswell, from Herbert Avenue Surgery in Poole. Dr Tidswell admitted that he did not know much about HCV, but he would try to find out some information on my behalf. He also confirmed my infection with HCV and instructed the receptionist to give me a blood test form. They had placed a yellow and black hazard sticker on it. She told me it was because of possible contamination and this was in the public area with others within earshot. Then when I got to the blood place, I had to stand outside the room and tell them about it.

20. I was absolutely distraught, and it was a horrible experience at my local surgery. They had looked at me in a funny manner, and I was so embarrassed. I was given a slip and told I had to go to Poole Hospital for a blood test but that I had to phone ahead to book an appointment because everything would need to be sterilised and they would need to decontaminate the room after me. The whole experience was horrible and I was made to feel dirty. I ended up phoning in to get the results of the blood test rather than go back to the surgery and suffer the same the humiliation again.

21. Apart from the once when I had to go and see Dr Fullerton, I did not return to the hospital or the doctors for ten years. I was given an ultrasound at the hospital, and I received a follow-up letter from the liver nurse. After the ultrasound, I think it was on the visit to Dr Fullerton that she said I had nothing to worry about, that these things do go dormant but I felt my condition was made light of. I did not really understand the contents of the letter so I did as much research as I could, but back then there was no access to Google or things like that.

22. I kept away from people after this. At the time, I worked in a play school, but I gave up that job because I did not want to risk infecting the children.

23. I used to do a lot of walking in the 2000s, it was one of my hobbies but I began to struggle with fatigue, nausea and feeling rundown. I started sleeping a lot, and I still sleep a lot. My friends and family joke now that I could sleep for a world record. I have pain in my joints in my knees, and my shoulder that I still have now. It's always been there up to this point, but I just try to carry on. I get a lot of bleeding under my skin. It would only take a slight knock or nudge, and it's visible to the eye. I have a sort of brain fog that started in the last few years. I forget a lot of things. I also have concentration problems, and I even struggle with driving. Recently, it has gotten ridiculous to the extent I will be in mid-conversation and forget what I am talking about. It's very embarrassing, especially when I am speaking to work colleagues.

24. My mother used to nag me about going to the doctors. However, I didn't really want to go back to the surgery after that experience when I was diagnosed. If I needed medication, I would go to the GP, but I would never mention how ill I felt.

25. My brother is a dentist and used to take care of me if I had any issues with my teeth, but after a while, he said he could not do it anymore. He said all the enamel on my teeth had come off, they had worn down and become rotten, which was a result of later HCV treatment. I was in agony

with my teeth, but I could not make myself go to the dentist. I was scared of what would happen and again it was because of what occurred at my diagnosis. Now I am conscious about dribbling down the side of my mouth which happens sometimes and is a side effect of the treatment and what has happened to my teeth. I never want to smile, and I am very self-conscious about smiling.

26. I pretended not to be ill and tried to put a brave face on it, but I was always ill. I don't know if I thought the HCV had gone away because the doctors told me not to worry, that these things sort of lay dormant.

27. In early 2016, things got so bad I eventually went to see the GP at Herbert Avenue, Dr Reidy whom I have always liked and had blood tests done. They did not tell me the results of the blood test. Instead, they told me that they would be referring me to a specialist and booked me in to see a consultant at Bournemouth Hospital.

28. At the hospital, I had several more tests done. I was given an MRI and an endoscopy, among others. I was injected with blue dye and told that it would feel like I wanted to wet myself.

29. After the tests, I was informed that there was scarring on my liver and I had cirrhosis. It was a small team, but I was assigned a specialist liver nurse.

30. I was offered a course of treatment, but they said that they do not advise it for everyone, and many people do not stay on it for the full course of treatment. No actual side effects were mentioned.

31. I agreed to try the treatment, and I had to have further tests to see if it would be suitable and if I would be strong enough to handle the course of medication.

32. The treatment consisted of two different drugs. There were two tablets, one was red, and the other was white. The drugs were Harvoni and Ribavirin. I think I was told at one stage that the cost was £30,000 per patient. I had to take the drugs twice a day for three months.

33. I was very nauseous on the drugs, I could not even keep water down, and I had to drink a certain amount each day. My skin was luminous, it was very thin, and it was itchy. If I scratched it would draw blood. One of my dogs nicked my arm and the blood started tracking under my skin. I got a leg ulcer, just from knocking into the hoover, which ended up getting infected and started smelling. I developed gangrene halfway through the course of treatment and luckily it was successfully treated but it is a horrible thing to experience. I had virtually no immunity because of the drugs. My sister in law said the treatment was like I had chemotherapy.

34. I had incontinence from both ends and really bad gastric problems which still affect me to this day. These problems all started with the treatment and were not something I had experienced before.

35. Initially at work and even whilst just out shopping, I have to keep a bag in my car with spare trousers and clothes otherwise I would have to run home in the middle of the day.

36. When I first started the tablets, I tried to work, but I only lasted just over a week. I had to tell the head of the palliative team at work so I could get time off during the treatment as I could not cope. I felt terribly fatigued and could not even manage to walk up three flights of stairs at work, but I stayed on the treatment because I wanted to be cured.

37. At the end of the treatment, they told me that it had been successful, and I was cured. I still have to have an ultrasound and an endoscopy once a year because of the condition of my liver. I was elated that it was

finally over. It felt as if a huge weight was lifted from my shoulders and I could get on with my life.

38. I do not go to see medical professionals often because of my earlier experience, so I have had no problems with them. When I have been desperate, for example, when I had to have some of my teeth taken out, I have gone to my brother, the dentist, who would treat me at the end of surgery's day so he can sterilise afterwards.

39. I have never been warned or told to take any precautions. The nurses I saw in 2016 may have assumed that I was already aware of these. All I know is that from the day I was diagnosed in 1995 or 1996, I did not want to get close to anyone again. I stopped hugging people so now I am not much of a hugger. People think I am cold towards them but it is the result of my infection, I am conditioned now to avoiding close contact. It is the same for my personal life as I have had no boyfriends since then as I could not risk the intimate side of things. I was frightened all the time of passing on the virus to someone else. Now, it's just my dogs and me.

40. No one has ever suggested that I should get my children tested. I have nightmares about this, as I did not really tell them about being ill, even though they are adults now. It would be any mother's worst nightmare to think they had infected their child with a potentially fatal disease. I know Thomas knows, but I am not sure if Jamie fully understands it all. I tried to keep the worst from them as they had their own lives to lead.

41. Not being able to tell people about my HCV diagnosis has had an impact on me. I think it is why I feel safer doing palliative work because I can empathise with the patients as they are usually near death. I myself constantly feel like I do not have a long time left. It feels like I have been in an accident or I have had a death sentence.

42. In palliative care, we have got patients that have HCV, and we do wear gowns and take protective measures, which makes you feel really dirty.

Only the higher-ups are aware that I have HCV, but no one on my professional level knows. I think that if my colleagues knew, they may stay away from me. I have seen the kind of reaction people have to those infected with HCV and similar illnesses.

43. The occupational health doctor was lovely when I had to have time off during my treatment. The doctor did not treat me like a leper. I work for the NHS Dorset University Trust, DHUFT, which has been fairly supportive.

44. I ended up leaving community care work because I felt like I could not be touchy-feely with patients and that is an integral part of that job. I don't think it has altered my career direction though because I love working in palliative care, and I would probably have ended up here anyway, but it has held me back. There have been plenty of chances to move up or further my career, but I am reluctant to take on the training and additional responsibilities a new job would require because I still feel tired all the time. I also do not want to take on any extra responsibilities because I don't believe my concentration and memory are clear enough.

45. My tiredness is something I have to put up with now. I manage to work all week, but my weekends are ruined because I am pushing myself. On Saturdays, I sleep till about 5pm. I need this time to recuperate but it's at the cost of my social and private life.

46. Since having treatment, the fatigue makes it hard to do house chores. I used to be able to mow the lawn, clean the house and do the bathroom. Now I sit on the chair on my laptop all day for work, go home and go to bed. I feel tired and run down constantly and everything else suffers for that.

47. I think it has also impacted my relationship with my family and friends. My aunt would say from time to time, you've still got that thing, haven't you? You're still big. My mum could never make sense of me having

HCV. She passed away not long ago, but she used to be horrible about it. If we went for a day out with her friends, she would point out that I have HCV, even though I didn't want other people to know. If I was feeling rough, she would comment that I was not making enough of an effort. She told random people about it, from receptionists to her friends, and I'd be like; mum, don't tell anyone, I want it kept quiet. She was forever pushing me and even used to put ads in the paper to find me a man.

48. I kept it from my sons for a long time. I got so thin when I was on the treatment because I could not eat, and I tried to keep away from family during that time. That's when they finally got to know. I had to tell Tomas that the HCV was the cause. It did not cause any problems between us, he was just worried for me. In a way it was a relief but at the same time I was apprehensive about how they would take the news it is not a bombshell that anyone wants to drop on those closest to them.

49. We were quite poor, but it had nothing to do with my HCV. I managed to be there for the boys, especially for things like schools. I used to take them on little adventures, we would go and get lost in forests, things like that. I hope that they didn't feel impacted by my being ill.

50. I never told Nigel, my ex-husband. I have not spoken to him for many years, so I don't know if he knows. I don't want him to be contacted. HCV did not have any effect on our relationship, he just met someone more glamorous. He associated HCV with AIDS. He used to say, GRO-D GRO-D GRO-D

51. I was fine before I found out, but I don't have a social life now. I had just been through separating from my ex-husband at the time I found out, and decided to move and make a fresh start. Then I find out I have HCV, so I can't. From then on, I kept to myself. I only saw two people, my close friends, Fiona and Michelle. I kept the rest of my friendship circle

at arms-length. Having HCV has affected my self-confidence, and I am extremely shy. I am not good at looking people in the eye, and I tend to hold my hand over my mouth. Over the years I have slowly become more withdrawn within myself.

52. The doctors told me to avoid alcohol, but I like to have a glass every now and then; however, I am not an excessive drinker. Alcohol has a big impact. I have a low tolerance probably because I don't have it often. After one glass of wine, I can feel the effects.

53. If I had more energy, I could be on band 5 now, and I could be doing more bank work. I am working to pay my bills, and I have no debts, but I have nothing to spare. I desperately need a new carpet, but I have not been able to get one. My family and close friends all agree that I live like someone who is on benefits but it depresses me to dwell on what could have been.

54. When my grandchildren were younger and came around for visits, I used to make sure everything was really clean and I would be extra careful. I had a process I would follow as a precaution. Now that they've grown up a bit, it's easy not to be so close to them as they're not so quick to show physical affection now.

55. When it comes to HCV, I am very private and closed up. Whenever friends and extended family finally find out about my diagnosis, they say that it feels like everything makes sense to them now. I used to be a swimmer, but now I cannot do that because of my bowel issues. I can't go holidaying in a caravan or anywhere really, due to having incontinence issues. My daughter in law and my son lived with me for about 2 and a half years, and my daughter in law, when she found out, said everything now makes much more sense to her.

56. When I was first diagnosed, I thought it was a death sentence. I had two tiny children that I worried I would not be there to take care of. That used

to tear me apart – the thought of possibly not seeing my children grow up and live their lives. I told my friend Michelle that she should take care of the children if I passed.

57. I was also going through domestic issues at the time, coupled with the HCV diagnosis it sent me into depression. I have been on antidepressants since 1995/1996, relatively soon after my diagnosis. I have tried a few different medications, but I have mainly been on Prozac and Fluoxetine for a while too. I am still on them but only 10ml, so not big doses.

58. I think there is a stigma attached to having cirrhosis. During the treatment, my skin was going through phases where it would turn yellow, which continued even after treatment.

59. I had to have my gallbladder taken out a few years ago; I think this was before 2018. The nurse came in with sheets of questions and said, it's because you've had HCV. I felt like I was a little bit segregated. Then the doctor came in and said that he did not feel confident about taking out my gallbladder. I am sure the HCV and cirrhosis played a part in how the staff behaved. This happened at Poole hospital but I don't recall any names.

60. I had been at the hospital since 7am. One doctor told me to sit and wait, and then all the other patients were seen before me. Then a different doctor came and said he would not be able to do a keyhole surgery on my gallbladder without a proper ultrasound because of my liver. I ended up not having surgery, and I had to get the bus back home in my slippers around 11am. It was horrible being told to go home, although I felt better than he had looked at it properly. However, I also felt like he might have chosen the easy way out, so he did not have to operate on me. I can say now due to an ultrasound earlier this year that the gallstones are still there but they have not caused me any problems of late.

Section 6. Treatment/Care/Support

61. I have never been offered counselling or psychological support. I don't like talking about it. Even after this interview, it will take me the next couple of days to forget about it. I took a short break during the interview process, and it hit me like a wave, and I felt horrible all over again.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

62. I first heard about the Skipton Fund from my friend Michelle. Nobody had ever mentioned it to me before. Still, I did not think much about it until the liver nurse, Hazel at Bournemouth Hospital said it was worth applying for support from the Skipton Fund. She got the consultant to sign off on it, and I applied on 6 April 2016.

63. The application form said that any medical notes I could find would be helpful, so my mum paid £50 to try and obtain my medical notes. I wrote to Nottingham University hospital They said that they had no records of documents going back to the 1980s, but they found a few bits and pieces, which they sent me and I sent off along with the application.

64. I am aware the Fund rejected my application on 11 July 2016. Hazel advised me to appeal, and I wrote a supporting statement which I sent in with my appeal on 22 November 2016. See **Exhibit WITN4758005**.

65. My appeal was rejected in March 2017. The refusal letter from the Skipton Fund states that because I was discharged home with a haemoglobin level of Hb 8.3 that it is inconsistent with me having had a blood transfusion. It also mentions my total blood loss was 50ml but surely that was just during the operation as I have explained? What about all the documented blood loss I experienced at home and in the hospital in the days leading up to the procedure? They said it suggests that I was treated with iron tablets. However, I was taking iron tablets because I had been bleeding for weeks prior to the operation and had

been prescribed them to help with this. The decision just seemed black and white and no time taken to consider all the surrounding factors. The letter from the Skipton Fund is exhibited as **WITN4758006.**

66. I was disappointed when my application was rejected. I know I had a transfusion but how do you prove it? I tried my best to do so. Still, I thought at least it would stop people nagging at me to phone them for support. I hadn't even heard of the Fund before. My friend's brother was awarded full financial support even though his papers were missing. They had just used his scar as evidence. It makes me wonder how they decide the different outcomes – it doesn't seem fair.

Section 8. Other Issues

67. It has dented my perception of the trustworthiness of government after finding out that the blood had been coming from prisons in America. Who was responsible and why did it go on for so long. I have been mistreated by the NHS on occasions as mentioned but they did cure me of the Hepatitis and I don't believe anyone set out to deliberately infect me. Yet, it was also their systems and controls that let me down and led to my infection.

68. I believe that it has ruined my life. It is a devastating disease to experience. Even when I used to go away on holiday with friends, at times it would suddenly just come over me like a dark cloud. It is always there, in the background, lingering. It is a horrible feeling, and I feel frightened by it.

69. I thought it was all over but I have been told by my brother, the dentist that I should let people who treat me know about my infection. I was told by Hazel that I do not have to declare it now I am cured. Who is right? It is confusing and I am left feeling that it still has a hold over me.

70. In order to assist the Infected Blood Inquiry, I now produce as exhibits copies of documents related to my medical history and my application to the Skipton Fund, these items being: -

- **EXHIBIT WITN4758002**: Copy of the Anti D card dated 5 November 1986 shows that I was given Anti D.
- **EXHIBIT WITN4758003**: Three pages of clinical notes dated 3 - 5th November 1986 that refer to heavy bleeding when I was admitted.
- **EXHIBIT WITN4758004**: Nurse Care Evaluation Note dated 3 November 1986, which refers to bleeding on and off since PG TOP and insertion of a coil, as well as pain and heavy bleeding in the weeks before and after.
- **EXHIBIT WITN4758005**: Handwritten letter dated 22 November 2016, which I sent in support of my Skipton Appeal
- **EXHIBIT WITN4758006**: Letter from Nicholas Fish dated 20 March 2017 which outlines the result from the appeals panel.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed GRO-C

Dated 13/09/2021