

Witness Name: GRO-B

Statement No: WITN7570001

Exhibits:0

Dated: December 2022

**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 I was born on GRO-B I live at GRO-B  
GRO-B
2. GRO-B
3. I make this statement in relation to my mother, GRO-B: M, who was born on GRO-B and is currently aged GRO-B. She was infected with Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) via a contaminated blood transfusion during complications during GRO-B at the GRO-B  
GRO-B.
4. This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my mother's medical records. My GRO-B has applied for her GRO-B  
GRO-B

5. My mother and my GRO-B also intend to provide witness statements to the Inquiry.

**Section 2. How Affected**

6. My mother was infected with HCV following a contaminated blood transfusion received due to complications GRO-B  
GRO-B
7. GRO-B
8. I am unaware as to whether any information or advice was provided to my mother in relation to the risks of being exposed to infection from blood transfusions.
9. In or around GRO-B my mother was informed by her GP GRO-B that she had contracted Hepatitis C. I don't know whether she was given adequate information to understand and manage the infection.

**Section 3. Other Infections**

10. I don't know whether my mother received any other infections, apart from HCV, from the contaminated blood transfusion.

**Section 4. Consent**

11. I do not know whether my mother was treated or tested without her knowledge or consent. Similarly, I do not know whether my mother was used for the purposes of research without her consent. GRO-B  
GRO-B

**Section 5. Impact of the Infection**

12. The HCV damaged my mother's liver which resulted in Cirrhosis for which she required extensive medical treatment.
13. She also developed and now has Non-Hodgkins Lymphoma.
14. She has gall stone issues and wears a Percutaneous Cholecystostomy.
15. My mother suffers with Atrial Fibrillation.
16. My mother suffered with extreme fatigue, nausea and irritability.
17. All my mother's treatment for HCV [GRO-B] and I am aware that she underwent Harvoni treatment about 7 years ago.
18. My mother suffers with constant anxiety, stress and worry because of her HCV infection which has required constant medical attention.
19. We struggled with stigma growing up as a family as people thought that our family would infect them. We only told family members; we have a very close Italian family, but people talk and it got out which meant that people were afraid to interact with our family for fear of infection.
20. On top of her HCV, my mother also had to care for my disabled father, who had Emphysema. He needed 24/7 care from her. He passed away in [GRO-B]
21. Currently my mother requires a carer 24/7 and my brother [GRO-B] is fulfilling that role.
22. In terms of the impact on me, I definitely understood she was ill as she was always tired, exhausted and short with us. She had a lot to do anyway but I remember it being very very difficult growing up as our father was also sick. In the end, my mother ended up caring for my father on top of everything else. As kids, I think we all felt the negative impact of ill health on our household. Having

said that, my mother was a hardworking person who always tried to do the right thing but was constantly and frustratingly tired and exhausted. It did have an enormous impact on all of us, for sure, the times where she had zero energy for days, didn't look good and became very agitated and aggrieved with us over nothing. The impact was huge, and it trickled down to us kids. When parents are not healthy it undoubtedly has a negative knock-on effect on the entire household. We dealt with it, I guess. Later on, when her liver deteriorated the struggles only magnified and it really had a toll on all of us, not least our mother. It all seemed so unfair in that my mother was infected through absolutely no fault of her own yet had to then live a life of resultant hardships.

23. I was not aware of the significance of what my mother had until in or around the 1980s. People must have said things and I heard whispers about my mother's illness. Prior to this time, I knew that she was poorly, but I didn't fully understand or appreciate the severity of the virus. As I grew older, I gained a lot more knowledge of HCV which is the reason why I would not disclose my mother's infection to others. There was, and still is, stigma around HCV linking it to drug addicts/needle users.

24. My mother was

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Prior

to caring for our mother, he had not been functioning particularly well. He is a good person, but has emotional difficulties; he doesn't have that many friends or a life like a "*normal healthy*" person has. However, looking after our mother seems to have been his calling in life. He is now entirely dedicated to caring for our mother. It is like he rose to the occasion; he now has a purpose, and he really does take care of her, and it is wonderful to see. I also take care of her, but I am not really the nurturing type; I will provide the assets to make it better;

GRO-B

has that sensitive side, and I am more what one would describe as "a

*typical male* [GRO-B] is so proud of what he does, and we are all equally as proud of him.

25. The HCV affected my mother's ability to parent and her parenting style which was tough for all of us. We are a family of [GRO-B] and we didn't have much to begin with growing up, so it was difficult. In terms of her parenting style, she did not have the energy to discipline us or really guide us in life. When both parents are sick it must be even harder to discipline, lead and show your children the way in life. I surmise that it would be the same situation if one had weak parents; you are not being brought up in an environment where your parents' guide, discipline and take care of you. We did struggle a lot as children, and I think my schooling also suffered as a result of the HCV. I was a bit lazy; my parents weren't on it to keep me disciplined as their illnesses meant that they did not have the energy.

26. I was the second born and my mother was caring for the younger ones which meant that I was kind of left on my own to sort things out. I don't want to sit here and give you a sob story, but the truth is that it was so tough. I fully appreciate that it takes a lot of energy to manage and bring up children and I am not saying in any way that I was neglected; rather it was more to do with my mother's capacity to mother and my father's capacity to father; both being severely affected by their respective illnesses. My mother was stretched to beyond full capacity as a result of the HCV and my father's illness. She had the spirit but not the energy or the physical strength to bring us up; I mean she did bring us up in the best way she could, but we were kind of left to fend for ourselves. We grew up in a poor [GRO-B] our father was unable to work, and our mother tried very hard, but you can easily visualise that we were pretty much poor. As a result of this, I went to work when I was aged 12 or 13, I was [GRO-B] at this age to help my parents out. I was working with my [GRO-B] and I also worked as a [GRO-B] [GRO-B] I would make whatever I made and give half of the money to my mother. I bought my own clothes too. Our parents were not able to buy us good quality clothes, or clothes in plentiful supplies and this was

always hard at school. This has a bad effect on kids as kids view the world from unsophisticated views.

27. I was very proud to work at a young age; my parents didn't ask for money I forced it upon them as I thought it was a good idea; mother did not want the money (despite desperately needing it) and my father was almost humiliated that I was working but I was proud. However, there is no getting away from the fact that it took away from my education because in those formative years I was out working which meant that I was not indoors studying. It was tough for all of my siblings as our family did not have many resources or much money, so we were all working from a very young age. It was definitely tough, and it was not like today where you have safety nets in the [GRO-B]. Back then, there were no safety nets, you either sank or swam. To sum it up, everyone is dealt a different card and how you play your card is how you live your life. I believe that my siblings and I have turned out into hard working individuals and I am proud of us.

28. We are a close-knit family, and we are trying to enrich our mother's life and help her every step of the way; as families should. It is not something we have to work at it is a natural in our family and simply a matter of prioritising our mother. Today, [GRO-B] could not take her and [GRO-B] to the dermatology appointment, so I stepped in. There is always someone to pick up the slack. I would describe our family as *"unfortunate in some ways and fortunate in other ways"*.

29. Right now, I am sitting in the car waiting for our mother and [GRO-B] to finish at the appointment. We all pull together because we love her, each other, and what she did for us despite her infection is truly incredible. This is how we are repaying her; we have come together to ensure that she has the very best life for the life that she has left to live. We went to see [GRO-B] recently which our mother found absolutely fabulous. We always plan things for her to try to improve the quality of her life because in the past her quality of life was poor.

30. Even today and despite the fact that the Harvoni did clear my mother's HCV infection, she has been left with lethargy and exhaustion to the point that she still falls asleep at the drop of a hat.

31. I also want to touch upon the fact that I have never been tested for HCV. I don't know if I have it and I don't really want to even think about this prospect. I telephoned my doctor about a month ago and she reassured me that I should be fine. However, growing up I ate from the same dishes, used the same spoons etc as my mother and I am thinking like worse case scenario. This is not how I typically think as I am a very positive person but I hope to God that I am not infected.

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

32. We did not know that there was any treatment for HCV until a few years ago.

My mother was treated with Harvoni about 7 years ago.

GRO-B

GRO-B

33. Neither my mother nor I have ever been offered any counseling or psychological support in consequence of her HCV infection.

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

34. Neither my mother nor I have received any financial assistance from any of the Trusts or Funds set up to distribute payments.

35. GRO-B and did not know that financial assistance was available. The obstacles we faced in this regard were lack of knowledge and correspondence from the NHS/Trusts/Funds regarding my mother's infection and the fact that financial assistance was available.

**Section 8. Other Issues**

36. I want my mother to be compensated for the difficult years she has had to endure as a result of the HCV.

**Anonymity**

37. I wish to be anonymous.

**Statement of Truth**

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

Signed GRO-B

Dated 12-19-2022