Witness Name: Rebecca Birch
Statement No.: WITN1832001
Exhibits: WITN1832002 – WITN1832016
Dated: 10 · 09 · 2022

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF REBECCA BIRCH

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Rebecca Birch, I was born on GRO-C 1993 and my address is known to the Inquiry. I am currently unemployed due to the trauma of losing my dad which has left me having panic attacks and ending up on medication. I live with my partner and son, GRO-C I am extremely close to my mum, Christine Birch, who was with my dad since she was 15 and my dad was 17.

2. I intend to speak about my dad, Paul Birch, and his experience contracting hepatitis C via a blood transfusion, the treatment he received, and the impact it has had on his life and our family's life, as well as the negligent actions from the NHS.

3. My dad and I were very close. He used to work for the British Embassy as an engineer when I was first born and he would travel all over the world. When I was five years old he came home from a six-month trip away and I didn't recognise him. He quit his job soon after that so that he could spend more time with the family, he started working for himself doing joinery. My dad loved fishing and working on his bikes. He knew everyone and everyone loved him, he was a proper friendly man.

Section 2. How Affected

4. My dad was involved in a motorbike accident on 5 July 1975. It was a really bad accident and he was transported to the Blackpool Victoria Hospital. He had shrapnel trapped inside of him and had to have his spleen removed. He was given a blood transfusion which was contaminated with hepatitis B and hepatitis C. He was given two units of plasma (batch number L916/3) and at least four units of blood (EB9574, EB9381, DE4198, EB8545). I have exhibited a document from his medical records which includes these batch numbers [**WITN1832002**]. After his incident, my dad went back to his usual life with no disabilities or concerns.

5. Consent could not be provided for the blood transfusions because it was an emergency situation, life or death. He was very likely unconscious when taken to the hospital. I do not believe that the risks were explained to him, either before or after the transfusion.

6. I would like to preface this section by stating that my dad did not inform me that he had hepatitis C until I was pregnant with my son, around one year after his diagnosis. He was a stubborn, strongheaded man and I believe he wanted to protect me from the truth for as long as possible. My knowledge of the period until 2012 is therefore quite limited.

7. After the accident in 1975, my dad spent most of his life relatively healthy with no signs of hepatitis. In 2009 he started to feel really ill and complained of severe

tummy aches. He didn't feel right and was very lethargic. The doctors at the Blackpool Victoria Hospital ('the Hospital') couldn't tell him what was wrong. He went for loads of tests and scans over the years. I don't know how it took so long to diagnose him. It was my dad's nurse, Mike Rolland, who told my dad he had hepatitis C in October 2011. In 2012 my dad told my gran (his mum) about his infection and she confirmed that she had never noticed other symptoms over the years.

8. Looking back at my dad's medical records [**WITN1832003**], I can see he was tested for hepatitis B in June 1980 and the test came back positive. In a letter from 9 February 1981 a doctor refers to my dad still having minimally elevated AST and that he would be tested again to see if his carrier status persisted [**WITN1832004**]. I cannot find the test results which follow this up however records from the 2000s indicated he self-cleared the virus. A test became available for hepatitis C in 1991, I believe my father should have been tested back then especially as it was known he had had hepatitis B and he continued to have elevated ASTs a year after diagnosis.

9. When my dad found out about his diagnosis he was angry and upset, although he still didn't tell anyone until over six months after his diagnosis. His frustration was made worse when the NHS first told him he would not be given any kind of treatment due to his age and the length of time he had had hepatitis. They said there was nothing they could do for him. I think he gave up, he told me he was a dying man, I said 'you can't say that to me, dad'. He would say he was a dead man walking. I was having my first child and his first grandbaby at this point; I couldn't believe what he was saying to me.

10. Thanks to Mike Rolland, the nurse who was involved in his care, the doctors did eventually try various treatments. I was about 6 months pregnant at this point. The medical staff at the Blackpool Victoria Hospital told him there was a 50/50 chance of it working. It would either cure him or he would go downhill, and he would end up in a hospital bed, dying. He received a number of different treatments over the years, according to his medical records the first treatment

was around September 2012, one whole year after diagnosis. My dad was never treated as a priority, it was like the medical staff enjoyed seeing how long he could wait to be seen in the hospital.

11. In terms of transmission, this was mentioned later down the line. He was told he couldn't share certain things like toothbrushes and razors. I remember him using something once, I can't remember what, and I went to pick it up, he panicked and took it straight out of my hands, saying 'no babe, I just used it'. Mike told us we would need to get our whole family tested. At this point my son had just been born, so this was several years later. I had myself GRO-C tested, GRO-C GRO-C which came back negative. GRO-C .

12. My dad never had any other medical staff help him apart from Mike Rolland, I don't even think he was seen by a hepatologist. Mike was the only person who cared about my dad and everyone else treated him like he was a burden.

13. When he first found out, the medical staff tried to blame the hepatitis B and hepatitis C infections on an ear piercing. There were a number of different occasions where this ear piercing came up in conversations with the doctors as well as within correspondence between the hospital and his GP. In a letter from the hospital, dated 26 June 1980, the doctor suggests that his hepatitis B infection was as a result of an ear piercing, and they don't even appear to try to investigate the possibility that it was via a contaminated blood transfusion [**WITN1832003**]. This is despite a previous letter from the hospital, dated 29 May 1980 and less than a month earlier, which links my dad being transfused four units of blood in 1975 and him being jaundiced; the doctor further requests that he is tested for Australia Antigen (now known as hepatitis B) [**WITN1832005**]. The doctors were aware that my dad had been infected with hepatitis B by blood transfusion in 1980 but my dad was not diagnosed with hepatitis C until 2012. I don't know if he was ever aware that he had been infected with hepatitis B and this had been the result of the blood transfusion.

14. It was Mike Rolland who explained to my dad that it was very likely he was infected through a blood transfusion. I have exhibited a letter from Mike to my

dad's GP, dated 15 March 2012, in which he discusses possible risk factors and refers to the 1975 blood transfusions as 'a significant risk for contracting hepatitis C'. Mike also states that he provided my dad with information about the Skipton Fund, which no one else had done before this point [**WITN1832006**].

15. My dad was told to stop drinking, which was a big thing because he loved to pop to the local with his mates. It was something sociable for him to do and it was good for work too because he could pick up the odd joinery job here or there. People were always asking him to do little jobs for them. He went a few times to the pub after he stopped drinking alcohol, and people would often ask why he was drinking orange juice. He would say that me and him were doing it together, trying to cut down on alcohol for our health. I don't think he wanted to tell them about his diagnosis and the stigma that came along with it.

Section 3. Other Infections

16. It is my understanding that my dad was infected with hepatitis B and hepatitis C from the blood transfusions in 1975. He tested positive for hepatitis B in 1980, according to his medical record but he self-cleared the hepatitis B. I am not aware of any other infections.

Section 4. Consent

17. It is my understanding that my dad was tested without his knowledge. His medical records from 1980 confirm he was infected with hepatitis B however my dad was not aware of this diagnosis. If he had known, he might have considered the potential risks of other viruses earlier which would have meant he might have been treated earlier and he may not have died.

18. In terms of consent for the 1980 test, I highly doubt that he provided it. Otherwise he would have followed it up and known about is hepatitis B diagnosis. They could have given him any excuse, such as it being a routine check since he'd

had to have his spleen removed, rather than tell him the blood was for a hepatitis B test.

19. I do not believe my dad was given adequate or full information. They should have realised those blood bags were infected sooner. They knew which were contaminated because my dad was tested for hepatitis B in 1980. They should have been contacting people and informing them. Instead the doctors made a decision not to trace the batches back and inform people. I hope they feel guilty for that choice.

20. I think my dad was being used for the purposes of research. My dad had to sign a consent form when he was undergoing treatment for hepatitis C, and he would say he felt like he was a guinea pig for the NHS. This was over multiple treatments, all of which failed to cure him. When he was off to the doctors, he'd say 'I'm off to be a pin cushion for the hospital'. Each time his results would come back showing that things didn't seem to be working.

Section 5. Impact

21. It is difficult to differentiate the physical impact of the hepatitis C on my dad from the side-effects of the treatments. My dad was never the same after the diagnosis. He was tired all the time; he was lucky to get out of bed one day a week during the last two years of his life. He had breathing problems, pneumonia, chest sepsis, cirrhosis, chronic liver disease, diabetes, and bowel problems. He was constantly in and out of hospital from 2012 onwards. In June 2012 the hospital wrote to my dad's GP outlining he had advanced liver disease **[WITN1832007]**. He got to the point where his body couldn't absorb nutrition so it would sit on his stomach. When he was diagnosed he weighed about 12 stone but by the end he was 18 stone because he couldn't get rid of the fluid. From 2015 onwards my dad couldn't do very basic things such as driving his car, getting out of his chair, walking, or standing. He used to say he felt like he was dying.

22. The mental effects were awful, again it's difficult to figure out what was caused by the hepatitis C and what was caused by the treatments. He had brain fog really badly. The mood swings were unreal, you could say one word and he would completely switch, becoming incredibly angry. He was depressed too, although he never went on medication. He was never offered counselling.

23. My dad started his first treatment around September 2012. Mike Rolland was the one to ensure he received treatment and without him my dad would have never been offered it. There were issues with funding but he basically got accepted if he agreed to be a guinea pig – the treatment was very experimental. He received tablets in the morning and the evening but I can't remember the name of them – it might have been called Interferon. He took a silly number of tablets, and it would knock him sideways so he couldn't get out of bed. It also led to major mood swings because of how aggressive the treatment was on him and his body. There were many other patients who had to quit the treatment before they had finished taking it.

24. The first round of treatment was not successful, as can be seen within this letter from the hospital to my dad, dated 27 July 2013, which states the test results show the hepatitis is detectable again [**WITN1832008**]. Mike always put my dad forward for treatments, as can be seen in a letter from 25 October 2014, in which he states '*I am aiming to offer him treatment of the new therapy which is due through NICE guidance in January time*' [**WITN1832009**].

25. My dad tried several treatments over the years, none of which worked. On 26 November 2015, a letter was sent from Mike to my dad's GP outlining that he was on triple therapy of Sofosbuvir 400mg orally one daily, Daclatasvir 60mg orally once daily and Ribavirin 600mg twice daily orally for 12 weeks [**WITN1832010**]. In a further letter dated 12 May 2016, Mike states that the hepatitis result came back as detectable and the treatment had not worked [**WITN1832011**]. I do remember there was a specific treatment that they refused to give him because of his age and how long he had been infected for, however I cannot remember the name.

26. I have exhibited three letters from my dad's medical records which outline the side-effects he suffered. In one letter dated 20 November 2012, Mike writes about my dad's breathlessness which keeps him from sleeping and he also refers to concern over his mental health [**WITN1832012**]. In a further letter from 21 December 2012, Mike refers to my dad feeling nauseous and discusses dad's disturbed sleep pattern due to recurrent sciatic-type pain [**WITN1832013**]. In a letter from Dr Shorrock, dated 8 February 2013, he refers to my dad not sleeping but that he was '*managing and is happy to carry on with treatment*' [**WITN1832014**].

27. My dad also struggled to get other types of medical care such as dentistry because of his hepatitis. I remember even yearly check-ups being difficult because of the dentist's fear of transmission. At one point he was so incredibly frustrated with one of his teeth he had issues with, it was one of those old-fashioned screw in teeth. I asked him why he didn't go to the dentist and he said he couldn't because the dentist refused to take him on.

28. Soon after 2012, my dad had to stop working because of how rubbish he felt, he was constantly tired and felt sick. The skills you need as a joiner were the exact skills he struggled with. He was breathless, had a lack of energy, a lack of strength and was in pain. He couldn't do any heavy lifting so he couldn't do the work. He went to the government to request support and they wouldn't even entertain the idea of an assessment. My dad tried to see if he was entitled to anything (including Jobseekers allowance, Income Support or Disability Living Allowance) but he was refused because my mum was still working and he had been 'self-employed'. I don't think he saw any point in appealing, he was deflated and giving up on life. My dad had worked for the British Embassy and tried to support his country and yet the government was unwilling to support him in his time of need. In around 2012 he had to reject a massive job because he couldn't physically do it due to how bad he felt.

29. From 2012 to 2016 my mum and I took care of dad between us whilst working. In 2015 I had to give up my job to become his full-time carer because my mum

had to continue working to support them financially. My dad was refused any financial support in terms of benefits *again*, even though he needed full time help.

30. It was 10pm at night in around 2015 or 2016 and I got a phone call from my mum, who was in tears. She had received a call from the hospital asking us to come in because his test results had come back. His platelets were close to 0 so he needed to receive a blood transfusion as soon as possible, or he could die. We rushed dad to the Blackpool Victoria Hospital. The 40-minute drive was incredibly stressful because of the urgent request from the hospital. When we arrived he was asked to sit in A&E and he continued to wait there for *four* hours before finally being put on a bed in a corridor for a further two hours. He wasn't provided any dignity by the medical staff. It wasn't until six hours after we arrived at the hospital that he was finally given the blood transfusion. We had received a phone call basically saying my dad would drop dead and it was another six hours before treatment, what is the excuse for that? I was so angry I had to leave the ward. There were many similar instances like this over the years. It was one of the reasons I had to quit my job to help support my parents.

31. My dad was diagnosed with non-Hodgkin lymphoma in June of 2016. I have exhibited a letter from the hospital to the GP, from 13 July 2016, which outlined that my dad had Stage IVA non bulky diffuse large B-cell lymphoma, and significant liver dysfunction secondary to hepatitis C and cirrhosis [**WITN1832015**]. He came home one day and said, 'I've got news, I've got cancer and I'm riddled with it'. I asked how this could have been missed when he was in and out of hospital so much. Once again the medical staff had showed how little they cared for him. After all the tests he'd been undergoing for years, how had they not picked up on this sooner, before it was too late? His whole body ended up shutting down.

32. On around 28 December 2016, we rang the local GP surgery because he was due to attend a routine appointment but he couldn't get out of the armchair. We asked the GP surgery if they could send someone out but they said no and that they would have to cancel the appointment. I went round to the GP surgery and

said they would absolutely be sending someone to see my dad. They again refused. I asked them to ring a certain doctor, which they did, and he informed me that a district nurse would come out. The nurse came around that day and said my dad had to go to hospital, but dad was adamant he was fine. She made him a deal that if she came back early in the morning and his vitals were still not great, he would have to go into the hospital. On 29 December she came back around and confirmed he would have to go into the hospital. He was there until 3 January 2017 when he passed away. Whilst in the hospital, my mum and I would sit in with him. My dad would make me leave at 5pm so I could go home for the little one and put him to bed but my mum would stay as long as she could.

33. Originally when dad was first admitted to hospital for the final time, he was placed on an elderly ward although he was only 59 years old. He was surrounded by men well over their seventies who were walking around in nothing but adult nappies. You couldn't even move around his bed because there was so little space. The hospital staff were happily going to let my dad die there with no privacy or dignity! It was only after I started kicking off and complaining that they finally moved my dad to his own private room. This was despite that we had been told my dads body and his organs were shutting down. I do not understand why it took me having words with the staff for them to show him some respect and allow him to die in a private room. They had claimed they were going to try to get him into the hospice but this never happened. I don't think they even attempted to get him moved.

34. On the night my dad died, my mum called me in pieces after I had left for the evening, this was around 10.30pm. She said dad was gone, so I rushed to the hospital thinking I had seen my dad for the last time and not had a chance to say goodbye properly. Thankfully my dad came round by himself. The doctors would not resuscitate him because he was down as DNR, they explained that reviving him would be worse for him.

35. My dad's death certificate states he died of chest sepsis, community acquired pneumonia, decompensated chronic liver disease, chronic hepatitis C and diffuse large B-cell lymphoma.

36. When dad died, his funeral was so full to the brim of people that the vicar didn't know what to do. All his friends and family came. There wasn't enough room inside the church so people had to stand outside. He was a very loved man and very well known. Some of his friends had come from places as far as France, Australia and New Zealand.

37. My dad's diagnosis and death has impacted our whole family. I'm not the same anymore. I don't socialise like I used to. It's definitely affected my mental health; I've had several breakdowns. I think if my dad had died of natural causes, I might have been able to accept the situation. But the way I see it, my dad was murdered. I get so angry because my dad was my best friend and I've lost him. I'm stressed and anxious, it's completely destroyed me as a person. My dad would hate that I am not the same person I was, he would have given me a shake and told me to get on with it. I miss him so much.

38. In 2015 I gave up my role as a care-coordinator to support my dad. It was a really good job but I gave it up because I knew I needed to be there for him and for mum – she needed to continue working to financially support them. When I went back to work after my dad died, I went back as a care assistant rather than a coordinator. I'm unable to get back to the position I was in before. I used to be so strong and I could handle all the stresses being a coordinator threw at you. Now I'm too anxious to handle that. Even working in a care home is too much of a struggle. I witnessed a resident pass away from sepsis and jaundice like my dad, and it triggered me and has left me having panic attacks every morning. I now have depression and anxiety. I can no longer work in the area I have dedicated my life too, my old boss told me that I needed to quit the field because it was obviously too painful for me to continue. I am looking for a new job at the moment which is incredibly stressful.

39. I had my own hopes and dreams before my dad died. As a result of becoming my dad's carer for two years I've lost out on an income and career progression. Dad would have helped me out with finances too if he'd been here. We discussed future business plans, to secure my son's future, and do some sort of garage work but all of that is gone. The thought of getting married one day is painful, I don't think I can see myself walking down the aisle without him.

40. It's affected my little boy too. He's only nine years old and my dad was everything to him. My dad only had one grandchild and he was his absolute world. My son cries at night, he has night terrors and says he misses his grandad and wants to be with him again.

41. My little boy GRO-C GRO-C. My mum and my partner don't drive, only myself and my dad did. Dad used to help with childcare all the time, including picking him up from nursery or school when I had work. Now I don't have the luxury of support. It's affected my own income as a result because it's incredibly difficulty to get jobs in health and social care with child friendly hours.

42. My mum can't deal with dad's death either. It breaks her heart, which is why I'm doing this witness statement. I worry about her a lot. Not only because she's lost her husband but she's also lost a secondary income. They would have retired together and had two incomes for many more years if my dad had not been infected with hepatitis C. She is supported by the England Infected Blood Support Scheme which I will discuss in detail below. My mum worked for the NHS for over 40 years but they made her redundant so she has no income now

43. My dad's infection and death has completely torn our family apart, I don't even talk to dad's side of the family anymore because I don't understand how they're not as angry as me. The NHS infected my dad, and I want answers, but it seems to me that my dad's side of the family have let it go and I just can't understand that. I've lost my dad and now I've lost my family, whom I was very close to, especially my grandma and cousins.

44. My dad's death affected his close friends too. Due to stigma my dad didn't tell a lot of people, it took over half a year before he even told me. My dad never told his closest friends. He was so scared to say anything because of fear of what they would think and say. I know things are different now, but when a lot of his family and friends were growing up, this disease had a lot of stigma and those kinds of thoughts don't completely go away.

45. Sadly, I do think we were wrong to hide his illness from people. His friends knew he was unwell but they didn't realise how bad it was until after he died. A lot of friends asked why they hadn't known, but it was dad's choice, his fear that 40 years of friendship might go down the drain. I know now we could have told them and they would have helped. They said as much after the funeral, they wish they had been there to support dad and the rest of us.

46. In terms of stigma from the medical community, there was a period where they tried to blame his hepatitis B and hepatitis C infection on an ear piercing he had when he was about 10 years old. I feel really angry that they were trying to lay the blame elsewhere. Four units of blood and two bags of plasma were the real culprit, not a silly ear piercing that people get all the time without an infection.

Section 6. Treatment/Care/Support

47. I have outlined most of the difficulties my dad faced in receiving treatment, care and support above. The treatment from the staff at the hospital has been consistently awful. The only person who has ever helped my dad was Mike Rolland. He was truly a saint and I don't know how my dad would have coped without his support.

48. Some of the treatment by the health care staff was shocking. My dad underwent chemotherapy for his cancer and because he was so ill he had to stay in the hospital for three days. In the morning my dad would ask the nurses if they could unhook him at a certain time so he had enough time to shower after the chemo and give me his clothes to take home and wash when I came to visit. The hospital

is a 40-minute drive away, so it's a bit of a trek to get there. I rang my dad half an hour before coming to see him and he said he was nearly done and would see me soon. I arrived and he hadn't moved since the start of the chemo, he told me the machine had been bleeping for over three hours because it was empty and he had called the nurses multiple times who had ignored it. I was shocked, it takes two minutes to take the needle out his arm and unattach the machine but they were unable to do so for so long. My dad had not had time to shower before I arrived (he was suffering with the sweats during treatment) and to give me his old clothes so I could make sure they were clean for him. I had to kick off with the staff to get someone to remove it so he could go for a shower. Just simple things like that would have helped make the treatment more bearable.

49. As a result of the hepatitis and the treatment, my dad struggled with his weight and weighed about 18 stone. Yet at the time of his death he was 11 stone. As a result he had great difficulty looking after himself and he refused to let mum help. I work in health and social care so I know a lot about personal care, although my standards are a lot higher than basic because I know how important it is. I was visiting dad in the hospital and I could tell that the nurses hadn't gone through even the basic processes of care such as cleaning and applying cream to stop soreness. My dad's genitals were incredibly swollen and red. I knew he'd been abandoned for multiple days because they take a while to get that severe. At home we had to help him a lot, for example we bought him a commode, but in the hospital there was no support at all. I told the nurses this had to be dealt with, and not one of them had an answer as to why it hadn't been done, they all looked guilty. This is another reason why he should have been taken into a hospice, he would have been treated with more care there, something more dignified. I'm not a registered nurse and I have higher standards of care than them. It is absolutely medical negligence in my eyes!

50. As I have outlined above, my dad was certainly depressed towards the end of his life. Yet he was never offered counselling, neither were myself, my son or my mum despite the massive impact it has had on our lives. It should have been made available to us the moment he was diagnosed, and especially his last few

years of life. As I have said, we all have suffered, and continue to suffer with our mental health as a result of this ordeal. I am considering applying to the England Infected Blood Support Scheme ('EIBSS'). for support towards counselling.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

51. My dad was told about the Skipton Fund in 2012 by Mike. I'm not sure when he applied as this was before he told me of his diagnosis, however he must have applied pretty soon after he found out about the Skipton Fund. My dad received the first payment of £20,000 and then the additional stage two payment of £50,000.

52. In terms of difficulties, I believe my dad's first application for stage one was accepted, however when he applied for the stage two he was told to wait because it wasn't 'bad enough'. He received the regular monthly payments until he died. My mum is now provided monthly payments from EIBSS.

53. A few years ago I said to my mum, who I know is struggling financially after her redundancy, that we should move in together. That way we have only one set of council tax and bills. I worry about her mental health a lot; I just want her to be safe and happy. If we moved in together, we would all be under same roof and we could support each other. She told me she couldn't because EIBSS changed their support scheme to means tested so her financial support would completely stop.

54. I don't agree with the support being means tested. I know they state it's not compensation, that the payments are *ex gratia* but it should be compensation. If you're in a car crash, they don't base it on your income, do they?

55. In terms of my own observations, I believe the whole financial support system needs an overhaul. They should legally be required to pay a set amount which is not means tested. They should provide a lump sum with regular monthly payments. I don't expect to receive anything because they financially support my

mum but it has affected me financially. I lost two years of income before universal credit was taken off me and I was forced back into work – this happened days after my dad passed away.

Section 8. Other Issues

56. All I want are answers. I want to know who was responsible and I want them held accountable with criminal prosecutions. They need to apologise, but instead for years we have had deceit and lies and cover up. So many people's lives have been changed forever, not just for those infected but also those affected around them. I hope that the Inquiry will be able to achieve these outcomes.

57. I think something should have been done sooner and people should have been told sooner. If my dad had been tested earlier, he might still be alive.

58. When I requested my dad's medical records in 2017, they were provided to me with a number of pages missing and words/sentences completely redacted in black marker. I want to know what is missing from my dad records and why they were removed. Mike told us that he had the full records of the blood given to him in 1975 so why are they suddenly now missing?

59. My legal representatives requested dad's medical records on 16 February 2022 from the Blackpool Victoria Hospital and it became apparent that only documents relating to treatment post-2003 were included. My dad has only ever been treated at the Blackpool Victoria Hospital – for the original motorbike accident in 1975, his diagnosis of hepatitis C and his treatment of hepatitis C. There are references within the records to his earlier treatment at the very same Hospital (relating to his accident in 1975 and the hepatitis B test results from 1980). Within the separately requested GP records from PCSE, my legal representatives found copies of correspondence from the Hospital to the GP which were not found within the material provided from the Hospital. Within the records I requested from 2017, there is material which does not appear in the Hospitals SAR response to my legal representatives in 2022. This includes **WITN1832002** which

is the *only* record from 1975 which states my dad had received blood transfusions. I am concerned that medical records which were easily locatable five years ago are no longer able to be found.

60. My legal representative followed up with the Hospital on 23 March 2022 by calling to ask why documents from the 1970s to the 1990s (which were available via GP records and had been available from the hospital five years ago) had not been included in their SAR response. The Hospital explained that the material had been transferred over to microfilm some years ago and since then, both the physical documents and the microfilm had been destroyed. This was again clarified via email to the Hospital, and I have provided the response at **WITN1832016**, wherein they explain that the microfilm reel they are looking for is unable to be located, rather than having been destroyed:

'*Microfilm reels after this date have been destroyed however for the reel that we need there is no destruction log which means that it should be still in circulation however we cannot locate this reel anywhere. So I don't know if it still exists or if someone hasn't filled out the destruction log however all I can do is apologise and keep looking for you and keep you in the loop where possible.*'

61. Since the infected blood tragedy, there doesn't appear to have been a change in the NHS. For example, I recently went to my local GP about GRO-C and they tried to fob me off without an appointment. I explained that I wasn't going away, that the NHS had killed my father so I knew I had to be the one to speak up when I noticed something wrong GRO-C. The receptionist I was talking to said that the NHS definitely did not kill my dad and as a result I complained to her manager. The manager herself was sympathetic and understood where I was coming from. I cannot believe the complete lack of awareness by staff within the NHS of the infected blood scandal. I think it also shows the NHS failing again for another of my family members. GRO-C GRO-C, which I have repeatedly had to go to the GP about. Most recently I have had an incident with the local pharmacy whereby I requested the pharmacy staff didn't

park in front of my house as I have GRO-C and need easy access to the front door. I have now been banned for putting forward this complaint despite that I need to access the local pharmacy for my own GRO-C medication. I have continuously had to face unnecessary struggles with the NHS – my dad was infected in 1975 and in 2022, it doesn't seem to me that much has changed.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed ... GRO-C ....

Dated 10.09.2022