

# ANONYMOUS

Witness Name

GRO-B

Statement No.: WITN2292001

Exhibits: Nil

Dated: 25<sup>th</sup> August 2022

## INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF

GRO-B

I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 10<sup>th</sup> August 2022.

I, **GRO-B** will say as follows: -

### Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is **GRO-B** My date of birth is **GRO-B** 973, and my address is known to the Inquiry. I am married to my partner **GRO-B** and we have two children together. I currently work full-time as an **GRO-B** **GRO-B** and have been in this role for 25 years. I intend to speak about my brother **GRO-B: B**, who was born on the **GRO-B** 1975 and passed away on **GRO-B** 1992. **B** was infected with HIV through Factor VIII treatment for his Haemophilia A. I will speak in particular about the nature of his illness, how the illness affected him, and the impact it had on his and our lives together as a family.

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2. I wish to remain anonymous for this statement.

### Section 2: How Affected

3. [B] was an active, outgoing and sociable boy before he became unwell. He had always really enjoyed going to school and socialising with his friends. He loved going out on his bike, he was also a keen swimmer and part of a swimming club. [B] had big plans for the future, he told me that he wanted to be a paramedic. [B] always used to bounce off his twin brother, they were so mischievous and always playing jokes on each other and their teachers as they were identical twins. There was only a year and a half between myself and [B] and we were very close growing up, we all were very close as a family.
4. [B] had severe haemophilia A, and this meant he required regular treatment with Factor VIII to treat bleeds. When he was younger [B] would typically go into hospital for treatment, but he was latterly moved onto home treatment with Factor VIII and would attend [GRO-B] for more serious bleeds. [B] was primarily treated at [GRO-B] in Glasgow. I do not know exactly when [B] received the blood products that led to his infections with HIV and hepatitis C, but through discussions with my parents I understand that he was infected as a consequence of his Factor VIII treatment and was diagnosed with HIV around 1985.
5. As far as I am aware, neither of my parents were informed about the potential risk of infection from treatment with Factor VIII. There would also have been no choice in not giving the boys the available Factor VIII as they would have required it urgently as treatment to help stop bleeds, etc.
6. [B] was diagnosed with HIV around 1985 at [GRO-B], I cannot say exactly when. I have been told by my parents that my mother was informed in a corridor by a Dr [GRO-B] that [B] had contracted HIV. As far as I know, neither of my parents were aware that [B] were being tested for

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HIV. I do not know if there was any follow-up appointment arranged with either my parents or my brothers to discuss this diagnosis any further.

7. From what I've been told by my parents, the information given to my mum that day was very limited. I do not believe the information she received that day was adequate for her to understand and manage the infection with B
8. I do not know if the information could have been provided earlier than it was, but I feel that my parents should have been informed about the infection risk posed by B treatment and that he was being tested for HIV.
9. I think that my mum should not have been told on her own and without my dad when she was told about B being infected. She was then left to deal with this diagnosis with very little information and I imagine that she would have been very distressed and in shock.
10. B was also infected with hepatitis C as a result of his treatment with Factor VIII. I do not know when B was diagnosed with hepatitis C. I am not aware of who provided B or my parents with this diagnosis or where he received it. I am also not aware of what information was provided to them about the infection at the diagnosis appointment.

## **Section 3: Other Infections**

11. As far as I am aware, B did not contract any other infections other HIV as a result of his treatment with Factor VIII.

## **Section 4: Consent**

12. To the best of my knowledge, neither B nor my parents were informed that he was going to be tested for HIV.

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13. Both [B] and his twin brother had haemophilia A and were infected with HIV. However, I have been told by my parents that [B] and his brother received different treatment for their HIV. [B] passed away in 1992 and his twin brother survived.

### Section 5: Impact

14. Looking back, [B] really started to withdraw into himself as he started to get ill. He wasn't able to go out and do the things he wanted to anymore and I think that was quite isolating for him, he became much shyer as a person. I am sure that [B] felt a lot of frustration and anger regarding his infections particularly as it could have been avoided and happened through no fault of his own or my parents. [B] tried to get on with his life as best he could, but his health was such a big factor. For example, my parents have said that [B] didn't go through puberty because of his health and that meant he looked a lot different to other boys his age, particularly his identical twin brother; his growth and development was definitely impacted. I remember that when he was taking driving lessons, he looked so tiny behind the wheel.
15. [B] was constantly sick and ill and in a lot of pain due to the virus and/or the medications to treat the infections. He became very thin and frail and started to look very unwell.
16. [B] would have had a severely impacted immune system as a result of his infections, so he regularly contracted illnesses or infections that required treatment.
17. As [B] infections developed, he wasn't able to keep up with the things his friends or his brother could do anymore. He lost his confidence and couldn't live like a normal teenager. He spent a lot more time inside the house, with my mum nursing him. He did his best to catch up with the

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schoolwork he had missed due to him having to be absent from school due to illness or hospital appointments.

18. I do not know what treatment [B] received for AIDS but I have been told by my parents that it was a drug called AZT. I have been told by my parents that the medication [B] was on made him very ill and that he hated the taste of it. I'm sure that the side effects of the treatment he received which made him feel quite ill at times would have impacted on his mental health as well and confidence.
19. [B] became very withdrawn from any kind of social activity because of his infections and his health. We were at secondary school at the same time and there was the stigma attached to people who had HIV or AIDS. I remember there being rumours circulating and people at school used to ask me about my brothers as there was talk in the media at the time about AIDS and haemophiliacs being infected. Although at the time I had my suspicions that the boys might be infected, I hadn't been told by my parents and would stick up for them and defend any of the rumours being said about them. It must have been awful for [B] if he'd heard any of these rumours and not being able to do what he wanted with his life and being so ill. He was living without knowing what was going to happen to him, whether he would live or die and that must have been utterly terrifying for a young teenage boy.
20. I remember that long before my parents told me about his infections, I knew that something wasn't quite right. The atmosphere in the house had changed, it had become very tense, my parents were extremely stressed, and I began to feel very distant from everyone as my parent's didn't have any time for me, so I felt like an outsider. The tombstone adverts were on TV at the time, and it was very scary and stressful as I had my suspicions about what was happening but didn't know for sure.

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21. I had lots of fears and worries about my brother but couldn't talk to anyone about it. My parents were trying to act normal for my brother's benefit, but it really wasn't normal at all. My dad tried to throw himself into work, but he would often come home just as strained and stressed as he was when he left. My mum was caring for **B** my brother and younger sister essentially full-time so I know that must have been really hard on her as a mother as well. I think that I fell into the background, I put a bit of a front on and carried on, frightened to upset anyone or ask for help with anything. This obviously affected my relationship with my family and with **B**
22. I can only imagine how the stigma surrounding HIV must have impacted my brother, particularly with the hype in the media and the tombstone adverts on billboards and on TV. I remember when my brother required to stay in hospital a one point medical staff on the ward at **GRO-B** would come into his room in full gowns and protective equipment. Even the TV remote had a plastic covering on it. I remember not understanding why he was being treated like that, like a leper, and can only imagine how that must have made him feel.
23. I was at the same secondary school as my brothers when **B** was beginning to get ill with HIV and I remember wanting to get away from school due to the rumours circulating at the time and I left as soon as I could. As a family we moved house quite a lot, I think it was three times in five years at one point. Part of the reason for those moves was the fear of anyone asking about my brothers or what happened to them, especially after my brother passed away in 1992. My brother's having HIV/AIDS were something we have always all kept as a secret as best we could. There has always been the fear that that you might confide in the wrong person, worried about what their reaction might be due to the stigma or that somebody would find out.
24. **B** missed a lot of school because of his infections and did his best to keep up with his schoolwork. He was very good academically and I'm sure that he would have gone to university or gone onto to become a paramedic like he'd said he wanted to if he'd had the chance and survived.

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25. Everything that was going on with my brothers had an impact on me as well. I no longer enjoyed being at school and I definitely made a few bad choices, playing truant from school and falling in with the wrong crowd. I left school as soon as I was able to and it took me a long time to settle and find my way in life. I suppose, looking back, I was trying to get away from it all.

### **Section 6: Treatment, Care and Support**

26. I cannot say whether [ B ] faced any difficulties in obtaining treatment, care or support as a result of his infections.

27. My parents have told me that [ B ] was offered some sort of counselling at [ GRO-B ] before he became unwell, but I don't know if he really benefitted from it. I think he was maybe too young to take it seriously at that time. I don't believe that he was ever offered any support directly as result of his infection.

28. One counselling session was arranged for me at [ GRO-B ]. I assume by my parents, nothing has been offered to me since then. I did not know at the time that I was given counselling that my brothers were infected, and I remember thinking that it was all a bit weird and a waste of time and didn't understand why I was there. Looking back, I think it was a tick box exercise arranged by the hospital as there was no benefit in it for me.

### **Section 7: Financial Assistance**

29. I do not know a great deal about the financial assistance that [ B ] may have received as a result of his infection. I think that my parents received money from one of the funds around the late 1980s or early 1990s which they used towards buying a family a caravan in [ GRO-B ] as they wanted to make my brothers remaining years as good as they possibly could. I do not know what fund this money came from or how much they received.

30. I do however think it's important that compensation payments be extended to parents. When [ B ] died my mum especially took that very hard as she felt

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responsible for injecting him with the infected blood products. She turned to drink as a coping mechanism and died at the age of 63. My mum's grief led her to give up, but she should still be here; and I definitely think she should have had some sort of compensation for the loss of her son, the horrendous way in which he died and for how much all of our lives were impacted. The people responsible for this tragedy and disaster will be retired now, however, they should still know the devastation, tragedy, loss and never-ending grief they have caused and be held accountable for what happened, and to ensure something like this never happens again.

### **Section 8: Other issues**

31. I have nothing else to bring to the Inquiry's attention.



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## Statement of Truth

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

Signed

GRO-B

Dated

Sep 30, 2022