

# ANONYMOUS

Witness Name:

GRO-B

Statement No: WITN4009001

Exhibits: 0

Dated: March 2020

## 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** and I was born on the **GRO-B** I live at **GRO-B** with my youngest son, who is 21. I have two sons. **GRO-B**

**GRO-B**

2. I make this statement in relation to my late father, **GRO-B: F** who was born on the **GRO-B** and passed away on **GRO-B** after being infected with Hepatitis B (HBV) and Hepatitis C (HCV) as a result of being treated with contaminated blood products.

3. This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my late father's full medical records.

### Section 2. How Affected

4. My father suffered from severe Haemophilia A. I believe he was diagnosed at a young age. One of his brothers died when he was a child, and another had mild haemophilia. His diagnosis was prompted by his brother having haemophilia and they knew it ran in the family.

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5. My father was treated with Factor VIII (FVIII). As far as I know, he was infected over the years with HBV and HCV. I believe that my father may also have been given FVIII from a blood donor who had vCJD. My father developed Parvovirus from the treatment that he received.
6. Initially, my father was treated at [GRO-B] and from [GRO-B] onwards he was treated at the [GRO-B]. From [GRO-B] my father's care was transferred to [GRO-B].
7. I remember coming home from primary school and him going to the Haemophilia unit to get treatment. I believe my father started his home treatment around 1980 and was treating himself for bleeds if not every day, every other day.
8. I believe my father was treated with recombinant FVIII when he was in [GRO-B] but was treated with FVIII prior to this alongside Cryoprecipitate.
9. I believe my father became aware of HBV when he was under the care of [GRO-B] in or about the mid 1980s. I remember he was ranting and raving about them having withheld information, and that he had been infected and not told.
10. In or about the late 1980s/early 1990s I believe my father was told that he tested positive for HCV. I believe he felt that he had put the whole family at risk and they told him that it wasn't 'in his best interest to know'. I believe that my mother was tested for HCV at the same time.
11. I do not believe my father was given adequate information on how to manage the infection. He should have been provided with as much information as soon possible. The information was withheld from him, and my mother was most at risk.
12. I do not know how the information was communicated to him as I was young at the time.
13. No information was provided to my father about the risks of passing on the infection. I believe he worked out the risk of transmission himself, with his own research. He lost all trust with the medical professionals. [GRO-B]

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

14. As stated above, I believe that my father was exposed and at risk of vCJD. I do not know when my father found out he was at risk of vCJD. However, there was a letter [GRO-B] from [GRO-B] to [GRO-B] stating that they believed he had been exposed to vCJD and was at risk for public health.

15. When my father died my brother [GRO-B] and I went to register his death. The register asked what vCJD was and when I asked why she wanted to know this, she said it was stated on the death certificate. She left us to make a call, and when she came back, she told us the GP was issuing another death certificate to be collected. There was no mention of 'vCJD' on the new death certificate.

16. My father also developed lung cancer, which was attributed to the HCV.

### **Section 4. Consent**

17. I believe my father was tested and treated without his knowledge. I feel the whole haemophilia community were experimented on. I do not believe he provided his consent to some of the tests and treatments and I believe that no adequate information was provided to him.

18. I do believe a lot of things were done on the quiet over the years.

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

19. I remember in the early/mid 1980s when all the adverts were on TV about the HIV infection and that there was a link with the infection and Haemophiliacs. We lived in a small town, and everyone knew that my father had Haemophilia. My parents were worried sick, and we suddenly moved into another area. My father became a completely different person. He was angry and would lash out at my mother, my brothers and myself. My brother [GRO-B] left home at [GRO-B] because things got bad and that meant my other brother and I took the brunt of the anger. I do know my father was extremely angry when he was told of the infections.

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20. Before we moved away from our home, we were a relatively happy family. After we moved, my father's outbursts just became a part of daily life. He tried to set the dog on my mother one time, and would try to hit us. It was so awful at home. He would hit us and tell us constantly that we were no good. He totally changed.
21. My father was never a drinker but when he did drink he used to get an awful streak in him and it could go on for a couple of days. He would go on mad rants. I became extremely withdrawn and quiet. At school I just kept my head down.
22. My father died of lung cancer, which as stated above was as a result of the HCV. The haemophilia nurse did document it in his notes. I believe he had something going on in his liver as well but it was the lung cancer which was the cause of his death.
23. I believe he found out he had lung cancer about a year or two before he died. He was told to get his affairs in order because time was closing in. He had become quite bitter towards the end. I persuaded him to go into hospital to have tests done for the fluid in his lungs. I think he was worried if he went into hospital he would never get out. He discharged himself and said he wanted to die in his own bed. The last couple of months of his life were awful. He was extremely distressed. I had to give up my job and both of my brothers had moved over to England. It fell on me to look after him. My brother came for the last 10 days of his life to give me a breather. In the end I called the district nurse to say they need to do something. You would never let your pets be in this pain and distress. She came to set up a syringe, and in a matter of minutes he closed his eyes and a couple of hours later he slipped away.
24. As stated above my father was bitter and looked anorexic. I do not know how he managed to keep on going for as long as he did. My brother and I could never recover from seeing our father like that.
25. I do not know whether my father received any treatment for HCV.

26. I always felt my mother made excuses for my father, and blamed everything on the HCV which made him go crazy. She used to describe them as brain storms.

27. My father constantly faced stigma with his dentists and GPs.

28. I am 50 years old now and I cannot remember life before tragedy in our family. I went through school withdrawn and anxious. The only time I have felt that it didn't have an impact on me was when I had my two little boys to chase around after, but since they have grown up, I have more time to think about everything that has happened. Since the Inquiry has started it has brought a lot of things back up for me. I have become a bit of an emotional wreck, and this is all down to what happened to my father.

29. In **GRO-B** my mother passed away at the age of **GRO-B**. After the funeral my father had words with my brother, **GRO-B**

**GRO-B**

**GRO-B**

30. Even at a young age I was aware of the stigma surrounding HCV. I think that's why we moved; I was being picked on at school and people were calling us the 'AIDS' family. When I found out my father was infected with HCV I kept it quite private initially, we didn't share it with anyone. Both my parents were campaigning for some time right up until my mother got sick and passed away. I never wanted to take friends home just in case my father was treating himself; you learn to avoid all of that. This was purely down to the stigma that was generally attached to the infections. I didn't want to deal with the questions.

31. My father realised how his behaviour was impacting our family life and he did calm down. Things did seem to get okay between my parents. He was becoming my father again, like how I remember before all this happened. After this, he was quite open to telling people what he was infected with. We were always told not to touch his razors, which is all the information we got from the doctors at the time.

32. My father didn't work because his Haemophilia. However, if he hadn't had the HCV, he might have managed to do some form of work, but he just became so unwell.

33. I became incredibly anxious in school and found it incredibly difficult to study for exams because I was constantly worrying about home life. As a result I didn't do very well in any of my school exams.

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

34. I believe my father was offered counselling but I do not believe he took it. I was not offered any form of psychological support. I do think it would have helped had I been offered some form of counselling.

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

35. I believe my father received a lump sum payment in the sum of £20,000 from the Skipton Fund in or about 2004. However I do not know the details of this as it took place prior to his death. To the best of my recollection I believe he signed a waiver of some sort, but I do not know the details of it.

36. In or about 2012 I was contacted by the Skipton Fund and received a payment of £25,000 which was to be shared between my two brothers and I.

37. Days before my father died we got a Solicitor to come and see my father to draft a will, and he said he was every bitter about not having received any compensation in relation to what happened to him. At the reading of the will the lawyer had found he had received two payments and we do not know why he lied about it.

#### **Section 8. Other Issues**

38. My father was a friend of GRO-B who was the GRO-B correspondent at the time. I know that she made a short film with my father about his plight, but it was never aired. Both my parents campaigned relentlessly over the matter of bad blood, and I find it hard to think of what life was like before all this happened to our family.

**Anonymity, disclosure and redaction**

39. I do wish to remain anonymous.

40. I do want to give oral evidence to the Inquiry.

**Statement of Truth**

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

Signed.....

GRO-B

Dated.....

21/12/22.....