Witness Name: Dawn Riddell
Statement No: WIT7201001
Exhibits: **Nil**
Dated: 24/10/2022

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

WRITTEN STATEMENT OF DAWN PATRICIA RIDDELL

I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 29 September 2022.

I, Dawn Riddell, will say as follows: -

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Dawn Riddell. My date of birth is GRO-C 1955 and full details of my address are known to the Inquiry. I was born in GRO-C and lived there until my family moved to GRO-C and then later Germany. When my youngest brother was born, we moved back to GRO-C I now live in GRO-C with my husband, Neil.

2. I intend to speak about my infection with Hepatitis C (HCV) which I self-cleared. In particular, the nature of my illness, how the illness affected me, the treatment received and the impact it had on my family and our lives together.

3. I am one of three children, I'm the middle child and have two brothers. I also have three daughters, nine grandchildren and two great grandchildren.

4. Currently I work as a Sales Assistant in Tesco but have had many previous roles. My father, two brothers and one of my daughters all served in the army.

5. I can also confirm that I have not chosen to have legal representation and that the Inquiry Investigator has explained the anonymity process to me. I am not seeking anonymity.

6. Further, I can also confirm that the Inquiry Investigator has explained to me the 'Right to Reply' procedure, and that if I am critical of a medical professional or organisation, they will have the right to reply to that criticism.

7. I wish to acknowledge that naturally as time passes, memories can fade. I have been able to provide approximate time frames to matters based on life events. However, these timeframes should be accepted as 'near to' rather than precise dates.

Section 2. How Infected

8. I was born with congenital dislocation of the hip (CDH). When I was younger, I was under the care of Bretby Hospital in Burton-on-Trent for my hip issues. I had an initial operation in Derby to remove my hip plate in 1983

9. Throughout my life, I was passed around different hospitals for my CDH and would have to go to different places. I was under the care of

King George V Hospital in London, King George VII Hospital in Windsor and the Derby Royal Infirmary.

10. At age 21 years, Mr Henry or Mr Lunt at the Derby Royal Infirmary informed me that I needed a hip replacement but told me that I was too young for one at the time. In 1983, when I was 27 I had my first hip replacement at the Royal London Hospital, Whitechapel, performed by Mr Freeman. I received a blood transfusion during this operation.

11. When I was younger, I always suffered from bad nosebleeds. I was advised by my doctor that it would be a good idea to give blood. I became a regular blood donor at the age of 18. When I moved to GRO-C in 1988, I continued as usual to give blood. The blood transfusion service came back to me and said they weren't prepared to take the blood. They said that recipients of the blood would suffer complications from the blood but they didn't elaborate on these comments any further.

12. I had my second left hip replacement at Christchurch Hospital in 1990 when I received a further blood transfusion during this operation.

13. By now the condition of my right hip had deteriorated significantly. I found that having returned from my break at work and I couldn't walk. I was taken into hospital and told that my right hip was broken. As a result, I was on crutches for 10 months. Later, I underwent the full replacement of my right hip at the Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital (RDE), under the care of Mr GRO-D I vividly remember having this operation as I recall Mr GRO-D coming in on his day off on a Saturday to monitor my progress after the operation.

14. Before my first right hip replacement at the RDE, I was asked whether I would be happy to donate the excess neck of the femur bone which would normally be discarded to the bone bank. It would be saved and

stored for other hip replacement surgeries. After agreeing to do this, the bone was tested for blood-borne diseases and it was found to have traces of the Hepatitis C virus. Consequently, I was informed that the bone would not be able to be donated because of this.

15. Looking back, I am unsure now whether the RDE said I had cleared the HCV or whether I still had the virus. I think I must have self cleared it at that point and they found traces of HCV. Therefore, I must have been infected in my first or second left hip replacements.

16. There was no suggestion of how long I had the virus and they didn't provide much further information. Nonetheless, I began to worry as I had heard many things about HCV and its effects. The doctors at the RDE told me if I ever felt unwell at any time I should go and see my GP. Basically I was told that I would either clear the infection myself or it would make me seriously ill. They failed to elaborate on what severely ill meant.

17. I wasn't provided with anything concrete or told what specific symptoms I could encounter. Something was said to me about how the HCV could affect my kidneys and liver so I was particularly worried about this. I had further blood tests but no further information such as genotype was provided to me.

18. Despite being a single parent bringing up children, I was never told about what precautions I should take to manage the infection. I hadn't been told whether or not I should notify my daughters or whether they should get tested. There was no advice about whether I needed to take any steps to protect myself and my family. I think in a way they were either down playing it or they didn't know too much about the virus itself.

19. There were no suggestions as to how I was infected but to my mind it was clear it was from one of the two previous left hip operations before

being under the care of the RDE. There is no other likely cause of infection apart from this. I don't have any tattoos. I have never taken part in in intravenous drug use and all my piercings were professionally done.

20. I found out about my infection during my third hip operation and had a further three operations at the RDE. Overall, between 1983 and 2004, I had six hip replacements.

Section 3. Other Infections

21. I have never been told of any infection other than HCV as a result of being given infected blood.

Section 4. Consent

22. I don't believe that I have been treated or tested without my knowledge, consent, without being given adequate or full information, or for the purposes of research.

Section 5. Impact

23. The impact of being told I had HCV was mainly fear as I didn't have any adverse effects or symptoms. I did worry about how the HCV could potentially affect me, particularly after being told it may affect my liver and kidneys.

24. Looking back, my first child was born six weeks prematurely and I am not sure whether this had anything to do with my HCV infection.

25. I was also diagnosed with lung cancer in October 2020. Six weeks after my diagnosis, I had surgery to treat my cancer and underwent this surgery in Southampton Hospital. I was also given immunotherapy treatment every month for a year. I am currently receiving treatment

following the Chemo and Radiotherapy I received for lung cancer diagnosed in 2021

26. I wondered whether this was because I had smoked over 20 years ago or whether the HCV infection could have contributed to the cancer. I have also developed thyroid problems and suffer from an underactive thyroid.

27. As I had presumably self-cleared the HCV, I was never offered any treatment. The advice I given was limited, as detailed previously. At that time I was unable to do any further research on the infection as I didn't have a computer or phone.

28. As the medical professionals didn't seem to worry about it, I didn't panic. I placed my trust in them and assumed they knew what they were doing. Personally, I tend to worry inwardly about things and won't normally spend time worrying about something until it happens. I had my children to bring up and I didn't want my daughters to see that I was worrying about something.

29. I don't think I initially revealed it to my daughters but if I did, it would have been later on, to the eldest one. I was always worried about what would happen to myself and the girls if I became unwell. There was no one around who could have supported me. I didn't want to pass on the worry to my daughters and panic them. I just hoped for the best and carried on with my life as it was.

30. Finding out about HCV didn't really alter my social lifestyle as I didn't drink much alcohol in any event. I also moved around a lot when I was younger so I didn't have the time to make long term friendships. My best friends are in Middlesbrough. My ex-partners all used to be abusive and prevented me from having friends. One of my ex-husbands GRO-C and as

a result, I became homeless and spent a lot of years on my own. I then moved down to GRO-C

31. I kept my HCV diagnosis very quiet from people and I would never speak about it with others. Partly I think this was as I didn't have anybody close enough to tell but also there was a lot of stigma associated with having HCV. I can't recall whether I even told my mother before she died.

32. When people talk about HIV or AIDS it can be such a taboo subject and I think I associated HCV with HIV, and assumed others would have the same views on it. How I had contracted HCV I know was not my fault but I didn't want to take the risk and reveal my status to another person.

33. After my mum died and I underwent my last hip replacement, Neil, my husband, and I moved out to Spain. Despite not having spoken to my father for ten years, whilst I was in Spain something persuaded me contact him. My relationship with my father had always been complicated. However I got in touch with him and he told me he was dying from lung cancer. I got on the next plane and I nursed him for the last two weeks of his life.

34. The HCV added a complication to an already complicated and difficult life. I never had any money and would work two jobs most of the time to support my children. Despite this, I don't feel I have faced any financial issues directly as a result of my infection with HCV.

35. In terms of ongoing treatment and monitoring, I have over the years had liver functions tests (LFTs) done as a part of the full blood testing programme. Additionally I have had thyroid tests and they have seemingly been normal.

36. In a way, I feel lucky to have gone through this and made it through to the other side. I wouldn't wish this on my worst enemy. I am very grateful for what I have now despite having to climb some mountains to be here. My belief is there's always someone worse off.

Section 6. Treatment/Care/Support

37. As I didn't reveal my infection to my dentist or anyone else, I cannot say that I faced difficulties or obstacles in obtaining treatment, care and support as a consequence of being infected with HCV.

38. Over the years I was never offered any counselling or psychological support in consequence of being infected. If I had been offered such support, I feel I would have taken advantage and I could have put my mind at rest a lot sooner.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

39. No one in the medical profession ever told me about the existence of any financial support schemes. I only found out recently because my daughter had seen something on the news or internet.

40. I contacted a lady at the RDE about trying to get my medical records and I am waiting to hear back from her. As a result, I am yet to apply for the English Infected Blood Support Scheme (EIBSS).

Section 8. Other Issues

41. My biggest concern is finding out why the blood wasn't screened. The only thing I can be grateful for is that I didn't contract full blown AIDS or

become seriously ill with my HCV infection. I feel for the people who got ill or died as a result of the infected blood.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed GRO-C

Dated 24. 10. 2022.