

ANONYMOUS

Witness Name: **GRO-B**
Statement No: WITN7220001
Dated: 3rd October 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 5th September 2022. I adopt the paragraph numbering in the Rule 9 request for ease of reference.

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

1. Introduction

1. My name is **GRO-B**. My date of birth is the **GRO-B**, and my address is known to the Inquiry. I am a retired widow and mother with one living daughter aged **GRO-B** years.
2. My son, **GRO-B: S**, died on the **GRO-B**. He died following a brain haemorrhage.

2. How affected

1. My son had severe haemophilia A and was infected with Hepatitis C ('HCV') and HIV through contaminated Factor 8 concentrates. He was [GRO-B] years of age when he died.

2. I believe my son was around 8 or 9 when he started taking Factor 8 concentrate for bleeds. Prior to this, he had been treated with cryoprecipitate. As we were a service family – my late husband worked in the [GRO-B] – we moved around quite regularly. As a child [S] therefore received haemophilia treatment at a number of hospitals, including [GRO-B] and [GRO-B]. Eventually, our family settled in [GRO-B] [GRO-B], and [S] received his haemophilia treatment at the [GRO-B] [GRO-B], in [GRO-B].

3. At the age of 11, [S] started at [GRO-B] in [GRO-B] [S] enjoyed his first few years at the school. He was able to join in with sports, such as swimming, and joined the school's scouts' group. If he suffered a bleed, he would be given Factor 8 concentrates.

4. From the age of 14 or so [S] became noticeably quieter and more reserved. As a mother, I was concerned that something was wrong; however, staff at [GRO-B] usually kept parents well-informed about what was going on with their children [S] finally told me what was wrong when he was 17 years old. He explained that he had been informed by staff around the age of 14 that he was HIV positive, having received infected blood products from America. He was told by staff not to tell anyone about his diagnosis, not even his parents. [S] told me that he did not want to die. As a mother, his words still haunt me to this day.

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5. [S] was in his early thirties when he told us that he had been co-infected with HCV. I am unaware as to the circumstances of how [S] was informed of this infection.

3. Other infections

1. [S] was co-infected with HIV and HCV.

4. Consent

1. I am unaware of whether [S] was treated or tested with his knowledge, consent or with adequate information. However, I know that as a boy [S] would have been too young to consent to a HIV test. As a boy he would also have been too young to fully understand his HIV diagnosis.
2. As parents, my late husband and I were never consulted about [S] HIV test. We were never informed by professionals about his diagnosis nor given information about what this diagnosis meant for him or the family.

5. Impact

1. As mentioned previously [S] became very reserved as a result of his HIV diagnosis. This reservedness continued throughout his life. He took great pains to keep his diagnoses hidden from the outside world and rarely talked about his condition with the family.
2. Due to the stigma of HIV/AIDS, [S] even hid the fact that he had haemophilia. He feared that if people knew he had this condition, they might put two and two together and figure out that he could have HIV. [S] fear was not surprising given that when he was 19 years old, he was fired by an

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employer after they discovered that he had haemophilia. [S] did not want to become a social outcast, and so essentially had to live two lives: [S] the haemophiliac; and [S] who was imitating a normal life.

3. Although [S] continued to use factor 8 concentrate throughout adulthood, he tried to avoid it as much as possible. Where he did have to inject himself, he made sure not to do this in front of other people.
4. To my knowledge [S] never disclosed his HIV or HCV status to his wife or children. I have since learnt that he would hide any medication for these infections in his car so that his wife would not find out that he was ill.
5. My family completely changed after learning of [S] diagnoses. Due to the social stigma surrounding HIV/AIDS at the time, we promised to keep his HIV status a secret, which we did until this statement was made. As a family we often made excuses for [S] and learned to put on a very good act, pretending that everything was normal.
6. I was always worried for [S] health; I was in a constant state of panic, wondering whether everything was going to be okay. I feared any time [S] called that he might have bad news to share. What made things worse was that the health service kept our family completely in the dark as to [S] health and offered us no support whatsoever. The pressure on me and the family was tremendous, and I would say that we all aged quickly as a result of the stress.
7. [S] health factored into every decision we made. My husband and I would not go on holiday unless we could be certain that our daughter was in the country just in case something happened to him.
8. My husband and I always kept a pot of money on the side in case of an emergency with [S]. We feared that in a worst-case scenario the NHS could fail and that we might not have enough money to pay for his treatment.

9. Without doubt my career was impacted by [S] infections. I consciously decided not to take any promotions at work until quite late in my career; I did not want to take on too many work responsibilities just in case I was needed to deal with a family crisis.

6. Treatment/ Care Support

1. I am unaware of any obstacles my son faced in obtaining treatment, care, and support.
2. It is my belief that [S] was not offered counselling as I'm confident that he would've mentioned this to me if it had been the case. At no point were my late husband and I offered counselling for what we went through. The strain on our relationship was so great that at one point we were close to separating.

7. Financial Assistance

1. I am aware that my daughter-in-law has received financial assistance following my son's passing. In respect of the Trusts and Funds set up to support the infected, my observation is that if the government had paid monthly payments to the infected starting in the 1990s, that would have been more helpful and beneficial to families than a single lump sum.
2. My son was on a family holiday in [GRO-B] when he died. I am aware that the MacFarlane Trust paid for my son's body to be repatriated.
3. Following their father's death, I have continued to support my grandchildren financially throughout their university years and with other educational exams, as I feel a duty to provide for them as if they were my own children.

8. **Other Issues**

1. I wish to express my gratitude for the ongoing work of this Inquiry. We put our trust in the hands of these professionals to keep our children safe. They ignored the dangers and sadly many children passed away. My son and the children of countless other families should not have died.
2. I regret that many of the infected and affected – including my late husband – have passed away without having had the satisfaction of knowing the Inquiry's outcome. I hope that this matter can be settled as swiftly as possible so that survivors and their families can finally have closure. We deserve answers.

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Statement of Truth

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

Signed...

GRO-B

Dated...

12 Nov 2022