Witness Name: GRO-B
Statement No: WITN7258001
Exhibits: **WITN7258002-3**
Dated: 13th Sept 2022.

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

WRITTEN STATEMENT OF GRO-B

I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 13 September 2022.

GRO-B will say as follows: -

Section 1: Introduction

1. My full name is GRO-B and my date of birth is GRO-B 1965. My address is known to the Inquiry. I am married and have 3 children. I work for the National Health Service as an IT Manager.

2. I have been married twice. My maiden name was GRO-B which was my name when I had my transfusion (my medical notes of the time are in this name). Then I married and became GRO-B I then got divorced and remarried becoming GRO-B

3. I wish to speak about my infection with Hepatitis C (HCV) as a result of a transfusion in child birth.

4. I confirm that I am not currently legally represented and that I am happy for the Inquiry Team to assist me with my statement.

5. I also confirm that I have had the option to seek anonymity and the Inquiry's statement of approach explained to me. I can confirm that I am requesting anonymity.

6. I have given the Investigator a number of documents; these letters written to me by the NHS are produced as Exhibits **WITN7258002 and 3.** A schedule of all the documents produced as exhibits is listed at the end of this statement.

Section 2: How Infected

7. Following the birth of my 3rd child on the GRO-B 1987; I lost quite a lot of blood and continued to do so when at home. I was taken back into The Northern General Hospital (now part of Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust) on the GRO-B 1987; as my midwife thought I would need a D & C (Dilation and Curettage). As it happened this was not the case.

8. I recall the Doctor/ Consultant asking if I was always this pale. They did a blood test and an hour or so later the same doctor came into the room and said I needed an immediate blood transfusion, which I refused initially.

9. I asked why I couldn't have iron tablets instead, but was told by the same doctor if I did not have the transfusion, given the rate I was bleeding I would have a cardiac arrest and die. She asked why I was so against it, and I told her I was scared of HIV, which was prevalent at the time. She assured me "You have nothing to worry about as all the blood is now heat treated".

10. I went ahead with the transfusion but under duress. I had 3 pints of blood on the GRO-B and GRO-B and was discharged the following day.

11. I have my postnatal medical notes from the hospital (these are hand written and some numbers/ letters a hard to read), it shows that I had the 3 transfusions over the 2 days, and gives the batch numbers as:
68519509
99867203 or 998672D3
68940406 or 689404D6
This is produced as **exhibit WITN7258003**

12. 9 years later; I received a letter from the National Blood Services dated April 1st 1996 saying I may have been infected with a virus known as Hepatitis C and

they would like to check my blood. The letter emphasised that there is no relationship between Hep C and HIV or AIDS These are letters are **exhibit WITN7258002 (Pages 1 to 6)**

13. Up to this time I had had no specific symptoms to worry me about any infection. I did have a bone infection in the sacroiliac joint of my pelvis, this started on 24 December 1994 and I was in hospital for 3 weeks. The doctors were never able to identify what had caused this despite multiple tests, so looking back it may have been connected to the HCV.

14. I made an appointment to see my GP as I had never heard of Hep C and he was unable to provide me with any information as this was all relatively new to them, even in 1996.

15. After my initial blood test I went back a week or so later for the results with a work colleague. I found the whole thing very 'cold' and matter of fact. I was told I had anti-bodies for the Hep C virus. I remember asking 'does this mean I have it' and was told I have the anti-bodies! I would rather been told yes or no.

16. My colleague actually explained to me that raised anti bodies meant 'yes' I did have the virus.

17. I went to The Central Sheffield University Hospitals - Royal Hallamshire Hospital (now part of Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust) for my 'care' from that time, I was dealt with initially by the Infectious Diseases Department

18. The hospital did liver biopsies 4 times over a period of 6 years, this every 2 years from 2004 to 2010. The letter re the initial biopsy is **exhibit WITN7258002 (page 7).**

19. These biopsy tests were very painful and very invasive, they were done to see if you were eligible for treatment. If you didn't score over 6 (on the Knodell Scoring System to calculate the Hepatic Activity – with 10 being the worst score) you didn't get treatment. I was usually scored about 2.

20. I had no other risk factors to getting HCV: I have not had any other transfusions, I have never taken drugs intravenously, and I have no tattoos or piecing's. I had

my ears pierced when I was 11 years old, this was in a reputable establishment in England.

Section 3: Other Infections

21. As far as I'm aware I have not contracted any other infections, than HCV.

Section 4: Consent

22. I don't know that I have been tested without my knowledge or consent or used for research purposes.

23. I do not believe I was provided with adequate information about my infection or how to deal with it.

Section 5: Impact

24. The mental effect on me has been the worst thing. I didn't mention the HCV to anyone because of the stigma attached to it.

25. I hated the bright yellow 'Category 3' warning stickers, these were placed on your paperwork to show you were infected with a high risk infection but it never said what this was whenever you had blood taken. I always wanted to tell the Phlebotomist "what I have is from a blood transfusion".

26. Also I was mortified to find out you are put in a different coloured body bag when you die in hospital with HCV. I found this out because I work in a hospital, when I was talking to the mortuary assistant I saw 2 different coloured body bags. He explained they use one colour body for anyone with no issues and another if you have HIV or HCV (I presume to alert the undertaker). I cried when I found this out

27. I recall asking my nurse specialist at the time if this virus would kill me, to which she replied so matter of fact 'oh yes', which was very difficult to deal with. As a mother of three young children I was absolutely heart broken, I could not get my head around this.

28. When your Hospital Consultant asks how long you have been infected? You tell him since **GRO-B** 87 and his response was "You actually remember the day you shared the needle?" As I was responding 'You've obviously not read my notes'.

29. I cried when I came out of that clinic and that was the last time I went to the Infectious Diseases Department. I remember going to see my GP (I can't remember why) I told her and she referred me to Dr Gleeson in the Gastro and Hepatology Department still at the same hospital, where I stayed until I had my treatment.

30. Dr. Gleeson arranged almost immediately for me to start treatment, he didn't worry about me having a score of 6 or above on the Knodell Scale.

31. **GRO-B**

32. I knew that the genotype of my HCV was important. I tried find out what genotype I was but wasn't able to, the hospital kept fobbing me off saying it was difficult for them to find out. Eventually I found it on some paperwork.

33. I suffered with Psoriasis; which was exacerbated when I was on my treatment. I was seen by my GP regularly to try different treatments (of which none worked) and was finally referred to Dermatology. I did mention this to the Hep C Clinical Nurse Specialists who told me they could have helped me had I mentioned it!

34. In a letter I was sent in January 1998 **exhibit WITN7258002 page 8 – 10**. There was an explanation of previous procures and a new medication might become available later (Interferon and Ribavirin). The doctors intended to repeat Ultrasound Liver Biopsy every 2 years.
It also states the doctor was please that I had tackled my alcohol issue. This was never discussed with me because, I didn't have any alcohol issue. Maybe

because this was what they were used to dealing with, not because of a transfusion, in my case.

Treatment

35. My treatment began mid Dec 2008 for approx. 12 months which I completed, I was given Ribavirin and Interferon - Injection every Sunday and a tablet every day.

36. I suffered with side effects to this treatment; unbelievable tiredness, I was in full time employment and my children were 21, 23 and 25. I recall having to cancel a planned holiday..

37. I had to have regular blood tests – I hated these because of the Cat 3 stickers. I also had 2 eye tests as there were side effects from the treatment. It was described to me as like looking for cotton wool behind your eyes.

38. Due to the stigma surrounding HCV at this time, my infection was all kept very hush-hush from my family and work.

39. I had my children tested as a precaution that I might have passed the infection on. I was concerned about them given it was years after that I found out about this.

40. Being intimate with my husband, was hard as I cannot recall anyone explaining the chance of passing the virus on.

41. Only one work colleague knew about my infection (my line manager). She told me if ever I had an accident at work where I bled I had to deal with this myself and not to let the first aider help me. There was a time I did cut myself quite badly and had to go into the ladies toilet to try to sort this out. No-one in the office could understand why I didn't use the first aider.

42. I also remember being so unbelievably tired at work and crying about that. Many days being at work was so hard, just through being so tired.

43. It was very difficult with my immediate family, if you ever bled not letting anyone near you.

44. Also in the back of my mind was that I had been told this was going to kill me.

Section 6: Treatment/Care/Support

45. I do not think I got the appropriate advice when I was first diagnosed by the Infectious Diseases Unit. It got better when I moved to the Gastro and Hepatology Department under Dr. Gleeson.

46. They would only give me a dental appointment at the end of the working day. Again this was another time you had to disclose the infection, when you didn't want to due to the embarrassment.

47. No counselling or psychological support was made available to me.

Section 7: Financial Support

48. I think I heard that financial assistance was available to those infected with HCV via the media.

49. I applied to the Skipton Fund and was granted the stage 1 payment in 2004.

50. I don't think that I had any preconditions, before I was able to get this money.

51. It was never made apparent to me that once the Skipton Fund closed, I should have been moved over to English Infected Blood Support Scheme which entitled me to additional financial help but this never happened. The Hep C Trust have told me they have lots of cases like this currently.

52. I have contacted the English Infected Blood Support Scheme and I am waiting for them to respond to me.

Section 8: Other Issues

53. I have no other matters that I would like to raise.

Precis of documents supplied

Original document title	Exhibit number and page	Relevant date	Precis
National HCV Look Back Programme	WITN7258002 Pages 1-3	24/01/96 (Form completed)	National HCV Lookback Form LBF1 Identification of Fate of Implicated Component Donation Number GRO-B Red Cells Northern General Hospital GRO-B Date of transfusion GRO-B 87 Form completed 24/01/96
National HCV Look Back Programme	WITN7258002 Page 4	12.1.96	Title: Hepatitis C Look-Back Letter To Mr Fraser (he was an Obs & Gynecology Consultant) From Dr. D.A. Jones. Senior Clinical Medical Officer Re Mrs GRO-B DoB GRO-B Starts: 'The Transfusion Service has conducted a review of pervious donations from donors now known to be infected with Hepatitis C'. It has been decided to contact the recipients of blood originating from these donors should be traced. Dr Fraser given a 14 day option to either council or cause the patient to be tested himself, or it would be referred to the clinician or GP currently responsible. Dr R. Fraser elects not to council the patient.
National HCV Look Back Programme	WITN7258002 Page 5	1.4.96	Letter from National Blood Service Dr D.A. Jones Senior Clinical Medical Officer (as above) To Mrs GRO-B Lookback letter (in agreement with GP) re blood transfusion on

			27/08/87 at the Northern General Hospital. The blood may have been carrying an infection known as Hepatitis C. She should take a blood test. In bold 'I should emphasise that there is no relationship between Hepatitis C and HIV or AIDS'
National HCV Look Back Programme	WITN7258002 Page 6	25.4.96	Letter from National Blood Service Dr D.A. Jones Senior Clinical Medical Officer (as above) To Mrs GRO-B 'Further to your meeting with Dr Hewson on 25.4.96 this is to confirm that you are positive for the presence of antibodies to the Hepatitis C virus'. Then offers a referral to Dr Mike McKendrick for further tests and advice, should receive an apt. in 4 to 6 weeks.
National HCV Look Back Programme	WITN7258002 Page 7	11.4.97	Letter from The Central Sheffield University Hospitals From Dr M Schmid (Registrar to Dr Mike McKendrick) To Mrs GRO-B Going to be admitted on 18.4.97 for an ultrasound liver biopsy.
National HCV Look Back Programme	WITN7258002 8-10	14.1.98	Letter from The Central Sheffield University Hospitals From Stephen T Green MD To Mrs GRO-B In relation to a call from GRO-B 13.1.98 Explanation of previous procures and new medication available (Interferon and Rimavarin – presumed to be Riberviron). Intends to repeat Ultrasound Liver Biopsy every 2 years. Please that she has tackled the alcohol issue. States talk of genotyping of Hepatitis C is 'running before we are walking'. [KD comment - Interesting comment for 1998]. Always upsetting when a patient isn't happy. 'Many patients have found it extremely useful to talk to either

			Hepatitis C Social Worker and councillor who works with us'.
Summary	WITN7258003 1 page only	21.8.87 (First date shown)	Postnatal Notes (Medical notes) Relates to 3 units of blood given on 27 & 28.8.87. Batch numbers: GRO-B GRO-B

Statement of Truth

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

Signed GRO-B

Dated 13th Sept 2022.