

Witness Name: **GRO-B**

Statement No: WITN7264001

Dated: 2nd November 2022

## INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

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FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF **GRO-B**

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I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 20<sup>th</sup> 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 **GRO-B** and my address is known to the Inquiry.
2. I live with my partner **GRO-B**
3. I intend to speak about my mother's infection of hepatitis C which we, as a family, believe she contracted from a blood transfusion in the **GRO-B** My brother **GRO-B** has also made a statement to the Inquiry under witness number **GRO-B** but with differing aspects of how we experienced our mother's illness. In particular, the nature of her

illness, how the illness affected her, the treatment she wasn't offered and the impact it has had on her, on me and the whole family.

## **2. How Infected**

1. I can remember sometime after we moved into the new family home in approximately [GRO-B] my mother coming home from the Diabetic Clinic at the [GRO-B] and being very upset. She sat us down and said she had been diagnosed with hepatitis C and there was no treatment for this infection.
2. I became very concerned as we did not know how this was going to affect her whilst living with her diagnoses with Type 1 Diabetes, and the problems she had, trying to keep on top of that and keeping it under control.
3. I remember my mother saying the doctor at the [GRO-B] had asked her if she had had any blood transfusions. I knew that she had received blood transfusions on two separate occasions when my brother [GRO-B] and I were born. We were both big babies and my mother had a [GRO-B] delivery for me and further complications with my brother.

## **3. Other Infections**

1. I am aware my mother was diagnosed with Type 1 Diabetes in her early [GRO-B] and has been struggling lately with brittle bones.
2. I am unaware of any other infections other than hepatitis C.

## **4. Consent**

1. As far as I am aware my mother did not give consent to receive a blood transfusion nor was she told of the risk of receiving one.

2. As far as I am aware my mother was not informed of any testing for hepatitis C.

## 5. Impact

1. After my mother knew she had contracted hepatitis C she became very depressed and compulsive. She often got upset about it and I would often see her crying, even though she tried to hide it. She has always tried to be the rock of the family, and I know it was hard for her to change to this new situation that I am sure she felt quite traumatised by.
2. I remember she was ill for many years. She was jaundiced, very weak and had bouts of sickness. Everything changed in our family life. My mother tried her best to keep herself well but couldn't. Certain things that we had planned as a family, turned into her being unwell. My father would obviously make the best of it but I also worried about him and his mental health.
3. At home, my mother became tasked at keeping everything clean, just as she had been advised by the NHS as best practice so as to mitigate the risk of cross infection. She would never let us use her cutlery or drink out of her cups and would wash them separately or leave them until last. Even in the bathroom her toiletries were stored in a different place to where we kept our things.
4. My mother became cautious when doing her bloods for her diabetes. Previously, she would prick her finger anywhere around the house but since learning of her hepatitis C, she now locks herself away and then cleans where she had done the test.
5. My mother decided she didn't want anyone to know about her contracting hepatitis C which I understood, so as a family, we kept it to ourselves. I remember at the time, there was stigma regarding the hepatitis virus. In the press it was wrongly connected and associated with drug addiction and troubled lifestyles. My mother was very

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embarrassed about this because she had to inform medical practitioners of the disease; something she should not really have had to do.

6. Hepatitis C, without question, blighted her life and my own. Seeing her suffer like that over many years changed our way of life significantly.
7. I believe my mother's illness had an impact on my dad's life too. He had to care for her and had to work many extra hours to make ends meet. It was extra pressure on him, which was stressful and tiring.

### **6. Treatment/Care/Support**

1. My mother was not offered treatment and was told there wasn't any treatment for hepatitis C.
2. I think the way my mother was informed of having hepatitis C wasn't very caring. She was told very bluntly by the doctor after being asked if she drank heavily, which she never has.
3. As far as I am aware, my mother did not receive any information readily from the health authority about hepatitis C and how to manage it. The knowledge she gained was from the television and articles we found, which were very limited and often stigmatising.
4. I know my mother did not receive any counselling or support. I don't really know how this is acceptable. It almost seems that the NHS' stance at the time was to not provide anything that might suggest some sort of accountability.
5. With the new Inquiry, we are as a family, starting to become clearer as to why and what was going on, which makes the rest, up to date, an even worse scenario with culpability marginally addressed.

### **7. Financial Assistance**

1. My mother didn't receive any financial assistance through contracting hepatitis C.
2. I know she was going to apply to the Skipton Fund in the mid 90s but was told not to because "she did not meet the criteria". This wasn't accurate by the selection criteria as I understand it, via its own application notes.

#### 8. Other Issues

1. I believe my mother's diagnosis of Type 1 Diabetes is because she was infected with hepatitis C. The timeframe of when she was very poorly and her diagnosis, run in parallel with each other. As with most of our learning as a family, the more the years went on the more we discovered, and now there are more recent studies that suggest a link between hepatitis C and Type 1 Diabetes.
2. In reference to the letter of the **GRO-B** from **GRO-B** (M.R.C.P) to my mother's GP Dr **GRO-B** which is exhibited to my mother's statement **GRO-B**), I find it deeply upsetting and quite frankly astonishing that a highly qualified professional could suggest a disease could be passed on to my mother via someone who had not even been examined by the said Doctor and had not even been in close contact with my mother. My girlfriend at the time had never been tested for hepatitis and the reference to her living in **GRO-B** previously had no bearing on anything. How the said doctor could conclude that this "may well be the source of infection" is simply ridiculous in any event.
3. This new process with Sir Brian Langstaff has been very helpful and we will be following its progress closely. We know more information now as a family than we ever have since my mother's initial, albeit late, diagnosis.

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## Statement of Truth

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

Signed. GRO-B .....

Dated. 2/11/22 .....