

ANONYMOUS

Witness Name **GRO-B**

Statement No: W7303

Exhibits:0

Dated: 19 November 2022

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF **GRO-B**

GRO-B will say as follows: -

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is **GRO-B** I currently reside at **GRO-B** My date of birth is **GRO-B**. I am unmarried.
2. This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my full medical records. If and in so far as I have been provided with limited records the relevant entries are set out in the medical chronology at the end of this statement.

Section 2. How infected

3. I required a blood transfusion at **GRO-B** in 1986 as a result of a suicide attempt.
4. When I came around after the blood transfusion, there was yellow tape around my bed which said Hepatitis C hazard and I queried this with the medical staff who said it was not there for that reason, it was there for another

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reason, and I accepted what they had said. I don't know if I had any tests for Hepatitis C after the transfusion before I left the hospital. If I was tested, I was not told about it or told the results.

5. Over the years following the blood transfusion, I complained to my doctors about many symptoms which looking back now are classic Hepatitis C symptoms, but I was always dismissed, and no tests were carried out. I was complaining of aches and pains, extreme fatigue as well as itchy skin. Various doctors over the years said it could be due to my diet, or my bedding or what my bedding was washed in, but no tests were carried out.
6. It was not until I moved in 2002 that I had some blood tests as part of a medical and it came back that I was infected with Hepatitis C.
7. I have taken drugs in the past but have never shared needles or anything like that. I had not been sexually active between the time of the blood transfusion and the positive Hepatitis C blood test, the only risk factor where I could have contracted the infection was the blood transfusion and this fits in with the time line of symptoms, I suffered from following that.
8. I have tried to obtain my hospital medical records. I have been informed by GRO-B that my medical records no longer exist and have been destroyed.

Section 3. Other Infections

9. I do not believe I have contracted any other infections from the blood transfusion, only the Hepatitis C.

Section 4. Consent

10. I was unaware I was being given a blood transfusion. I was out of the count for around 24 hours, it was an emergency situation and so they had to do it.

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The next thing I remember is coming around slowly being cold and thirsty and I was told this was to do with the blood loss.

11. They did take some blood samples from me when I came round, but I do not know what these were for.

Section 5. Impact of the Infection

12. It felt like I was going to the doctors regularly with symptoms like itchy skin, which was driving me nuts, I was then just told it was down to poor diet and things like that but was never given any blood tests to check what it actually was. I was also told it could be an allergic reaction to what my bedding was washed in.
13. I experienced for many years extreme fatigue, I would find myself nodding off, fatigue was such a big issue. I also complained a lot of abdominal pain, it was a pain that was hard to describe a bit like toothache after the tooth has been taken out. I also had insomnia. I had the symptoms over many years and guess I just got accustomed to them.
14. I also remember feeling down, feeling flat and devoid of life because I was going to the doctor with all these symptoms and was just being dismissed, people were not believing me, and they were not doing anything about it. Not much attention was paid to mental health issues then either and I never played the mental health card or anything like that. Mental health just wasn't not discussed back then.
15. When I was given the diagnosis, it felt almost like being handed a death sentence, all the stuff I had previously heard about Hepatitis C made me feel like I was on borrowed time. The diagnosis blew my head apart, I thought I was being given a terminal illness and wondered how long I had left.
16. My social circle is very small, and it was difficult to keep my diagnosis confidential. When people found out they avoided me like the plague as I was seen as an infectious person. I was treated a lot differently to everyone else

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and kept separate from people on occasions which made me stand out like a sore thumb. I felt extremely isolated.

17. I have brain fog and my memory recall is not what it was, I can be having a conversation and will forget what I am saying.

18. My family were concerned when I was diagnosed, my sister and father were very worried about me, they were also very supportive.

Section 6. Treatment/care/support

19. I have faced difficulties getting treatment, I was told the local authority could not afford to fund the treatment, but eventually treatment was funded, approximately 3 years after my diagnosis. I had combination therapy and had horrific side effects. I would have to take tablets and have a weekly injection. I had pegylated interferon and for around 48 hours after taking it I would be violently sick and have hot and cold sweats, this would happen each week. I was given something to try, and counter act the effects and something to help me sleep at night. I was in a constant state of feeling unwell when having the treatment. The treatment was successful in clearing the infection.

20. I have had some discussions with one of the Hepatitis nurses, but I have not had any formal counselling.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

21. I have not had any financial assistance from the trusts or funds, I was not aware of them.

Section 8. Other Issues

22. I feel let down by the system if they were aware that I had contracted Hepatitis C so many years ago and no one informed me, although I do understand back in the 1980s, they may not have been aware of the extent of the damage it

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could cause. However, once they were aware and started to realise that infections had been transmitted via blood transfusions, they should have made more of an effort to trace people instead of suppressing and burying information.

23. What has driven me to get involved and provide a statement is to try and ensure those responsible are held to account and from a financial perspective to have some sort of compensation for how this has affected me over the years. I have tried my best in the past to hold people accountable and have written letters but have not got anywhere, hence the reason for providing a statement.

Anonymity

24. I do wish to be anonymous.

25. I do not want to give oral evidence to the Inquiry.

STATEMENT OF TRUTH

I believe the contents of this statement are true.

Signed ...

GRO-B

Dated:

19/11/22