

Witness Name: Liaqat Ali  
Statement No: WITN7434001  
Exhibits:0  
Dated: November 2022

## INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

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### FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF LIAQAT ALI

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I, Liaqat Ali will say as follows:-

#### Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Liaqat Ali. I reside at   
 My date of birth is  1978. I am married and I live at home with my wife and 4 of my children.
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 was attacked when I was quite young. The person who attacked me stabbed me in the back of my leg and in my back as well as my hand. As a result of the attack, I required a blood transfusion. I had lost a lot of blood as I was bleeding from 2 or 3 different stab wounds.

4. I am not sure how much blood I was given, it might have been 2 or 4 bags of blood.
5. I was very young at the time, I was only 16 years old, I was told nothing about any of the risks associated with having a blood transfusion.
6. As a result of the blood transfusion, I was infected with Hepatitis C.
7. When I was informed I had been infected with Hepatitis C, I was just told that I had got it, I was not sure what it was. I had to go to a different hospital which specialised in disease and infections. I went to Gartnavel Hospital in Glasgow, I was in a lot of pain and feeling really sore, I was young and wasn't sure what was going on. My GP had referred me for blood tests and I was admitted to hospital with pain and while in hospital they tested for Hepatitis C and told me I had been infected and had to be referred to Gartnavel.
8. No one actually told me what the infection was in terms of its implications or what would happen. When I went to Gartnavel they told me I had to go onto medication. I had to stay away from people, stay away from my own family members. I remember it so strongly now even after 26 years. I was not allowed to share the same towels, plates, cutlery, that kind of thing. I felt dirty and very isolated. In those days we didn't have WIFI and google, the internet was not a big thing, so I was not able to research what it was I had been diagnosed with. I was just given a leaflet and had people telling me how it was a dirty disease.
9. I felt so isolated, even today I still have that kind of feeling, I wonder what it was I did wrong to be put through that. I was young and when you are young you are still developing as a person and setting you up for the kind of person you will be for the rest of your life. I was set up to be scared and isolated and feel that even now. I would have been a different person and had a different life had I not been infected at such a young and impressionable age. I am still suffering today, the medication has left me with severe mental health side effects including depression.

10. I was definitely not given adequate information to help me manage and understand the infection. It was just a case of you have Hepatitis C, this is the medication to take, to stay away from people and that was it. I only found out about the medications side effects not that long ago when I looked on-line and I have most of the side effects still. I wondered to myself every day what is wrong with me, my mind is affected, my memory is like fog, now I know it is the medication I took that causes it.
11. I was a mystery for a number of years with the pain I was suffering from, the doctors could not point to what it was, but it was due to the infection and medication.
12. I should have given information at a much earlier stage. When they gave me the blood transfusion, they should have provided me with more information and information on the possibility of contracting Hepatitis C from it, and thereafter I should have been monitored afterwards to check for any signs of infection.
13. There was no compassion at all when I was informed of the infection, they just basically sent a letter, no one at the hospital called me in to talk to me about it, I was told by my GP that I needed to be isolated from my family and not share things with them.
14. I was given a packet of injections and had to inject myself in the stomach every week and to take tablets I had been given. They also gave me a yellow sharps bin to put the used syringes in. At first, I couldn't inject myself, I was thinking what was going on, I was not in a good place, I actually tried to kill myself, I took an overdose of Tramadol, a significant amount. I had just got fed up with it all, it was looked upon as a dirty disease and frowned upon in the community. One day at hospital I saw someone I knew and they asked me why I was there and I told them without thinking that I was there to get tested for Hepatitis C and it got around and people that knew me looked upon me as if I was a piece of dirt. I didn't deserve to be spoken to how I was spoken to or to be treated like that, I was made to feel like I had done something wrong which was not the case.

### **Section 3. Other Infections**

15. To my knowledge I have not been infected with anything else other than Hepatitis C.

### **Section 4. Consent**

16. I do not believe I have been treated or tested without my knowledge and/or consent.

### **Section 5. Impact of the Infection**

17. The infection has been the story of my life, it is still having an impact on my mental health now. I have severe depression and have been diagnosed with schizophrenia. I find it hard to communicate and meet friends.

18. It is a very bizarre and weird fact that I still feel the same pain as when I was told to be isolated. I was going to the Mosque on Fridays and people were talking about me and said I was diseased, I just wanted to kill myself for bringing disgrace on my family. The most annoying part of this is that they are still not acknowledging the fact that people got infected after 1991 even though there is now so much information out there about it. Even in 1997 people were receiving infected blood. I was reading recently that Canada have brought a criminal charge against Revlon Health Care in the USA and the lovely government here who infected us knowingly with infected blood are now just basically saying yeah, we did do that, sod you, you go and live this shitty life we have given you.

19. Due to all of the worry the Hepatitis C infection has caused me I now suffer from hypertension. I have psychiatric issues, schizophrenia and depression because of this, even though it is 26 years ago it feels like yesterday. I had lots of dreams when I was a young lad and lots of things I wanted to do, but

being given Hepatitis C as a result of infected blood I was made into the person today that I didn't want to be. I wanted to be someone who was strong and moved forward with their life. I wanted to become an airline pilot but the infection took that opportunity away from me.

20. I had many side effects from the treatment I had for the infection. I have depression and the severe mental health problems I have are a side effect from the medication I was given. I was questioning what was wrong with me for all these years, but now reading up about it, it was the medication for the infection that made me like this. I am on medication for these severe mental health side effects and will be for the rest of my life. My issues only started after I had started the treatment.

21. I have not been to the dentist as I am too scared to go. When I brush my teeth and get bleeding, I still go to the full effect of cleaning the sink out with bleach. People laugh at my precautions saying it's been a long time ago, but that's the point it's a long time ago and I am still suffering. As I have said I was told to be isolated, to keep everything separate even today if I go into the bathroom and cut myself shaving I bleach everything and make sure no one gets near it even after all of these years.

22. I avoid socialising as a result of my mental health problems, I find it hard to explain my problems to people so just avoid socialising.

23. We have felt the stigma of the infection as a family. When word got out into the Asian community there was massive stigma. People shunned me and kept away from me, I sensed it when I went to the Mosque no one would sit beside me or be near me so I stopped going, the stigma associated with the Hepatitis C was too much for me. I couldn't manage anymore so stopped going, I just wanted out.

24. I am not able to work, I am on sickness benefits. Every time I tried to work I had problems. When I was younger my father owned a restaurant and I used to work for him but seeing knives and the thought of people cutting themselves or me cutting myself and infecting someone caused problems for

me so I just left. I moved into different roles and had different jobs here and there, but then people started talking about AIDS and I was fearful that if someone knew about my infection what would they do. I was on a work night out with colleagues and they were making jokes about sexually transmitted diseases and were chucking condoms around. I worried what they would say if they found out about my Hepatitis C so I never went back to work after that and stopped working. I have tried to do something, to get jobs but it all flashes back to me whether people will know or find out I have had it, how they would react, would they be my friend, no I think they would take the piss.

25. I started a job a few weeks ago, it was a nice job in a call centre and I went in on the first day of training that went well then on the second day of training there was a man there who said he was the health and safety first aider, he was the first aider for mental health and explained his role and if there were problems to come and talk to him about it. I was sat there thinking this is a trap, they want to trap me and find out I have got mental health problems and why and they would then find out about my Hepatitis C, I panicked and never went back. I was really keen on the job as well, but could not cope.

26. The employment problems I have had as a result of the infection has had a financial impact on my family. My first wife left me as a result of problems connected with the infection. I am now married to my second wife.

## **Section 6. Treatment/care/support**

27. I have not faced problems getting medical treatment. Although the medical treatment I received for the Hepatitis C, Interferon and Ribavirin has caused me mental health problems as outlined above. As I had no internet at the time of taking the medication I was unable to search in regards to the side effects I was experiencing.

28. I have had counselling and have recently been speaking with a counsellor arranged through the Inquiry who has been helpful. She told me that by speaking with me it was obvious what happened destroyed my life, it

completely changed it, I started off as a young lad with a future to look forward too, but the infection left me not being able to think straight or concentrate on a career path and my life totally changed as a result.

## **Section 7. Financial Assistance**

29. I have received no financial assistance.

## **Section 8. Other Issues**

30. I remember in 1987 I had a fall and cracked my head open and had to go to hospital as it bled a lot. I cannot remember what treatment I had as a result of this visit, whether I was given blood or not. I would have been between 12 and 14 at the time. I cannot see any mention of this in my medical record. I recall having surgery in 1987 and have the scar from it still, but again that is not in my records. I wonder therefore if it was possible I could have picked up the infection earlier than previously thought.

31. I just want to know, basically the government or NHS knew they were giving people infected blood, or blood that could be infected and the fact that the last person on record to be given infected blood was in 2007 how can they have a cut-off date for 1991 for financial support. It is unfair and does not make sense.

32. Even if, let's say they do away with the cut-off date and pay compensation, I have still lost my youth, my young days, who I was. Money cannot bring that back to me. When I was told I had this disease people in my communities looked down on me as a piece of dirt, as rubbish. I stopped going to the Mosque, my kids were bullied because of my infection, it completely messed up my head, I cannot think straight, I cannot do anything.

**Anonymity**

33. I do not want to be anonymous. I want people to know who I am, I want people to see what has been done to me. I want people to find me to read my statement and if they have been affected to come forward and challenge the cut-off date. Now the suggestion is of compensation being paid, so the government are not saying to me yes, we are sorry we gave you this blood, but you know what there is something to apologise for, that's all, there is nothing else that money can ever do.

34. I would like to give oral evidence to the Inquiry.

**Statement of Truth**

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

Signed GRO-C

Dated 20/11/22