

ANONYMOUS

Witness Name: GRO-B

Statement No: WITN7466001

Exhibits:0

Dated: November 2022

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

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FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF: GRO-B

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I, GRO-B will say as follows: -

**Section 1. Introduction**

1. My name is GRO-B I was born on GRO-B I live at GRO-B  
GRO-B
2. I live with my partner GRO-B and her GRO-B who we look after full time.
3. I was infected with Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) via a contaminated blood transfusion which I received post-surgery in 1980.
4. This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my medical records. I am waiting for these which I applied for in October 2022.

**Section 2. How infected**

5. I was infected with HCV via a contaminated blood transfusion which I received post-surgery at the [GRO-B] in 1980.

6. As far as I am aware no information was given to my parents regarding the risk of infection from blood transfusions. In my view, if my dad had known that there was a risk, he would not have allowed me to have the blood transfusion. I do recall that my dad was very worried about the surgery that I was undergoing as there was a chance that I could [GRO-B]  
[GRO-B]

7. I was told that I had been infected with HCV by my GP, Dr Perkins, at the Eaton Wood Medical Surgery in or around 2002. [GRO-B]

[GRO-B]

8. I recall that I had attended my GP surgery because I was suffering with bowel issues and having trouble sleeping (both of which I now know can be symptoms of HCV). It was while I was attending this routine appointment with Dr Perkins that she casually mentioned that I had been infected with HCV. She said something like "*somewhere along the line you have contracted Hepatitis C. It is nothing to worry about though and it seems that your body has cleared the virus on its own*". It was a very mundane chat and I remember questioning her regarding how on earth I had become infected as I had never done anything which could have led to me being infected. Everyone knew about AIDS at that time, and I remember asking Dr Perkins if I had that as well and she said something like "*oh no, you don't have anything like that*".

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9. It felt like Dr Perkins was telling me about HCV almost off the record. It was a face-to-face appointment, albeit for another reason, but there was no follow up letter or anything else that one would expect following such a bombshell diagnosis. It was like she was almost telling me in a dismissive way and then immediately moved onto another medical matter. It felt like she was thinking "*oh that is done and dusted now*".
10. Dr Perkins gave me no practical or any useful information about HCV. She told me nothing about the risks of transmission either. After the appointment, I remember panicking about AIDS and going off and researching AIDS and HCV when I got home.
11. Looking back, the only possible risk factor in my history for HCV would be the blood transfusion which I received post-surgery in 1980.

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

12. Apart from HCV, as far as I am aware, I was not infected with any other viruses via the contaminated blood transfusion.

### **Section 4. Consent**

13. I confirm that I was tested for HCV without my knowledge or consent. No medical professional or anyone else ever told me that they were testing me for Hepatitis C. It is worrying looking back thinking that they took bloods from me, likely solely for this very purpose, yet failed to have even mentioned this fact to me.
14. Given the above, it is certainly possible that I was tested for other viruses without my knowledge or consent. I think the medical professionals probably tested me for HIV without my knowledge or consent.
15. Similarly, it is not implausible that I could have been used for the purposes of research without my knowledge or consent.

**Section 5. Impact of the Infection**

16. It is difficult to comment with certainty in relation to which symptoms were and were not caused by the HCV as I had been unknowingly living with this virus for GRO-B by the time that I was finally told in 2002.
17. Looking back, I remember suffering chronic bowel irritation, cramps and back pain. I also recall being extremely lethargic and exhausted which started when I was aged about GRO-B which has continued to the present day. It was so bad that I ended up staying on the sofa most days and then sleeping there at night as well. Even if I had slept all night, I still woke exhausted. The sofa in my parent's lounge basically became my bed. At the time, none of these symptoms made any sense but now I know that I was infected with HCV it finally all makes perfect sense.
18. I also used to get very bad pains in my head which were much worse than simple headaches. The pain was incredibly sharp, and it literally forced my eyes shut due to the severity of it. I ended up having a brain scan at the GRO-B in the late 1990s to early 2000s but as far as I can recall there was not a sinister explanation for these. I am now aware that some people with HCV suffer very bad migraines and headaches.
19. I have struggled mentally for most of my life and experienced confusion and brain fog. As a result of this, I found school very difficult to the extent that I failed my exams and left at the age of 15. I always thought that I was just less brainy than the other children at school, which was sad and with hindsight, I can see that this was not the case at all. As a result of these problems, I suffered a real lack of confidence both at school and then later on in life.
20. I couldn't talk to anyone about how I was feeling as I didn't know why I was feeling like this, and I didn't know I had HCV until 2002 by which time I had lived with HCV for the best part of GRO-B I don't know when my body self-

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cleared the virus which is what Dr Perkins told me but what I do know is that I still suffer with a lot of these HCV symptoms today.

21. When I did finally find out about my infection in 2002, I could not tell my dad as he had sadly passed away in GRO-B. The only person I told was my girlfriend as I had to tell her as she was my intimate partner. I was frantically worried about the risk of transmission, and I was well aware of AIDS as there had been a lot of publicity about that in the past. I felt that it was definitely the right thing to do in telling my girlfriend but worryingly Dr Perkins did not tell me anything about passing the infection onto others, but I am assuming that if she was right about my body having managed to self-clear the virus then I presume I would not be a risk in terms of transmission of the virus to others. However, I can't be clear about such matters as I was not given any information about HCV by Dr Perkins.

22. Other than my girlfriend, I did not tell anyone else about my infection as I felt embarrassed and didn't want anyone to know. I was also worried about suffering stigma. I remember being full of questions after my visit to Dr Perkins, but I didn't really know who, or where, to turn for advice on HCV.

23. I did not undergo any HCV treatment as Dr Perkins told me that I had self-cleared the virus. However, I still struggle with HCV symptoms today.

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

24. I have not suffered any discriminatory behaviour from medical professionals in relation to my HCV. I have not suffered any stigma in the wider society because, with the exception of my girlfriend, I did not disclose my infection to anyone. As stated above, the reason I did not tell anyone was due to both embarrassment and the fear of stigma.

25. I have never been offered any counselling or psychological support in consequence of being infected with HCV.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

26. I have never received any financial assistance from any of the Trusts and Funds. I did not know that financial assistance existed until very recently and I am now in the process of applying to EIBSS.

Section 8. Other Issues

27. I want the Inquiry to provide a full explanation about exactly what went wrong to cause this tragedy. It is not about the compensation, rather, it is about providing answers and finding closure. Why did this happen to a little **GRO-B** **GRO-B** is what I want to know. **GRO-B** My father would never have let me have that blood transfusion if he had been informed about the risks of infection.

Anonymity

28. I wish to apply for anonymity.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed **GRO-B** .....

Dated 17/11/22 .....