

ANONYMOUS

Witness Name: **GRO-B**

Statement No.: WITN7535001

Exhibits: Nil

Dated: 29 November 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 5 November 2018.

I, **GRO-B** will say as follows: -

Section 1: Introduction

1. My name is **GRO-B**. My date of birth is **GRO-B**, and my address is **GRO-B**. I am retired and I have been married for **GRO-B** years and I have two children. In this statement I intend to speak about my infection with Hepatitis C following a blood transfusion. In particular, the nature of my illness, how the illness affected me,

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the treatment received and the impact that it had on my family and our lives together.

Section 2: How Infected

2. I believe that my husband, [GRO-B: H], was given a blood transfusion during a hip operation in 1972. A six-inch pin was inserted into his hip at Killearn Hospital in order to treat a slipped upper femoral epiphysis. I understand that [H] would have been under anaesthetic during this operation and therefore it is possible that he was given a blood transfusion without his knowledge. I do not know whether [H] was advised of the risks of receiving a blood transfusion.
3. It was discovered that [H] had Hepatitis C in 1999 after he gave blood at work. Following this, I was tested, and it was found that I also had Hepatitis C.
4. I was advised that Hepatitis C would affect my liver and kidneys, and that the infection would progress over time. I was also advised that this was not something that I needed to worry about.
5. I do feel that adequate information was given to me at the point of diagnosis.
6. I felt generally healthy following my diagnosis, so I decided that it was better just to get on with it. I would go to the doctor if I felt ill.
7. I do feel that my husband and I could have been given the information earlier. If [H] had not given blood, we would not have discovered the Hepatitis C.
8. I was advised somewhat about the risk of cross infection, but mainly just about contact of blood if you were to cut yourself. I felt dirty because of my infection, and I began to feel like a leper.

Section 3: Other Infections

9. I do not believe that I have ever received any infections other than Hepatitis C because of contaminated blood.

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Section 4: Consent

10. I do not believe that I have been treated or tested without my knowledge, without my consent or without being given adequate or full information.
11. I do recall at one stage being tested for HIV, and I was given full information about treatment plans for my Hepatitis C.
12. I do not believe that I have been treated or tested for the purposes of research.

Section 5: Impact

13. The mental impact of having Hepatitis C has been devastating. My Infection is always at the back of my mind, and I tend not to talk about it. I know that if I were to constantly think about the infection it would be easy to reach a stage where I wanted to hide from everyone and not do anything.
14. The physical impact of having Hepatitis C has been limited although I do have scarring on my liver as a result of the Hepatitis C.
15. I was initially given treatment in the 1990s for my Hepatitis C, I was treated again in 2012-13 and these were unsuccessful. I am currently receiving another round of treatment for my Hepatitis C. I understand that I have been on Ribavirin , Interferon and Vosevi in the past.
16. My first round of treatment was an injection of interferon once a week and tablets daily. This lasted for around 3 or 4 months. I became anaemic very quickly and I was not responding to the treatment. My second course of treatment was an injection of interferon and smaller tablets three times a day. Both treatments were unfortunately unsuccessful. I have also been prescribed Vosevi, I was told that I was a non-responder and I never heard anything further about it..
17. I found the side effects of my first treatment debilitating. I lost weight, had aching muscles and lost muscle tone. I was very emotional. During my second treatment the side effects were similar but were significantly worse.

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18. When my treatment did not work the first time I was devastated, and I did not want anyone to touch me or to come near me. My husband's treatment was successful the first time and this had an impact on us as a couple. I was angry, and slightly resented him and although I tried not to let this have any significant impact on us, it was difficult. My husband was very supportive of me throughout my treatment and the infection, but I did find this difficult.
19. I felt the impact of having Hepatitis C often. Every time I filled out a form for medical care, I had to confirm that I had Hepatitis C. I recall that my husband and I attended the same dental practice for years, and on the dental practice becoming private, we were not added to the waiting list. We had attended that dentist for years, and we were removed, while people who had just moved to the area were accepted.
20. My Hepatitis C had an impact on my social life. I wouldn't ever talk about my infection, and I heard people on the news discussing Hepatitis C and saw the reactions of those around me. I felt guilty that I had Hepatitis C and those around me did not know about it. I found my infection very isolating and I became self-contained.
21. My family thought that the infection was awful, and I found us often reiterating that we were physically healthy, but we had to accept that we had been infected with Hepatitis C.
22. I felt the social stigma of having Hepatitis C mainly when I was seen by medical professionals. I felt like I had often been judged before entering the situation and this caused me to feel unclean.
23. I worked in care at the time of my diagnosis. I found the work tiring, and during the first treatment I had to take some time off for pernicious anaemia. During my second treatment I was devastated emotionally and physically as I found this to be more aggressive. I had to take time off and my manager referred me to occupational health. I never discussed my treatment with my manager, and I ended up being on long term sick because of my treatment. I spoke to

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occupational health once, and I did not receive any support from my manager during my time off.

24. I did not suffer significantly financially because of my time off, I was on full pay for six months and on half pay for the other six months. My relationship with work suffered as I felt angry and hurt – the total lack of support from work was difficult at this time.

Section 6: Treatment/Care/Support

25. I have not been offered counselling or psychological care or support due to becoming infected with Hepatitis C.

Section 7: Financial Assistance

26. I have never received financial assistance as a result of becoming infected with Hepatitis C.

Section 8: Other Issues

27. I wish to remain anonymous throughout this Inquiry.

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Statement of Truth

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

Signed

GRO-B

Dated _____