

ANONYMOUS

Witness Name: GRO-B

Statement No: WITN7548001

Exhibits: 0

Dated: December 2022

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF GRO-B

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. We moved to the GRO-B.
3. I am being cared for 24/7 by one of my wonderful sons, GRO-B, in my own house.
4. I was infected with Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) via a contaminated blood transfusion following complications during the GRO-B in GRO-B at the GRO-B.
5. This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my full medical records. My lovely son, GRO-B, has applied for GRO-B
GRO-B.

Section 2. How infected

6. I was infected with HCV via a contaminated blood transfusion following complications during the [GRO-B] in [GRO-B] at the [GRO-B] [GRO-B].
7. [GRO-B]
8. As far as I can recall I was not given any information or advice regarding the risk of infection from blood transfusions.
9. In or around [GRO-B], my GP in [GRO-B] told me that I had been infected with Hepatitis C. I was not given adequate information or advice in relation to the management of my infection. I was told that there was no cure for Hepatitis C and that I would have to live with it.

Section 3. Other Infections

10. I don't think I received any other infections, apart from HCV, from the contaminated blood transfusion.

Section 4. Consent

11. I don't know if I was treated or tested for Hepatitis C or other viruses without my knowledge or consent.
12. I am unaware as to whether I was treated or tested for the purposes of research without my knowledge or consent.

Section 5. Impact of the Infection

13. As a result of the HCV, I developed liver problems which developed into Cirrhosis. This required extensive medical treatment.
14. I developed and have Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma.
15. I have gall stone issues and wear a Percutaneous Cholecystostomy.
16. I have Atrial Fibrillation.
17. I suffer with anxiety, stress and worry because of my HCV infection which requires constant medical attention.
18. I have lived with the extreme worry of transmitting this infection for all my life. I was petrified of infecting my children in the house and panicked about cleaning things like kitchen utensils. I wanted to protect my children.
19. I experience extreme fatigue, nausea and irritability due to my HCV infection.
20. I underwent Harvoni treatment [GRO-B] about 7 years ago which cleared the HCV. This treatment was hard, but it saved my life.
21. Our family suffered stigma because we told close family members about the HCV, but people talk and the news got out. People then avoided our family due to fear of infection.
22. On top of my HCV, I also had to care for my disabled husband who required care on a 24/7 basis. He had Emphysema and he passed away in [GRO-B].
23. I now require 24/7 care and my wonderful son [GRO-B] is providing this for me.
24. Over the years, I had such bad jaundice and was always incredibly yellow in colour, but I tried not to complain. Family and friends would come over to my house and notice my extreme yellowness (both my eyes and skin). My lovely daughter, [GRO-B], took me to most of my GP and hospital appointments in

relation to my jaundice and tiredness, but I never wanted to complain. I wanted to downplay things as I am not one to moan. My daughter used to tell the doctor that I was sleeping all the time, but I would always dispute this and say "*you think I sleep all day?! I am fine*". In fact, I used to warn my daughter before the appointments not to tell the doctor too much. She would be like "*but mum, he needs to know*".

25. Looking back, I think one of the hardest things for me was the unbelievable tiredness I experienced and still experience. I was always exhausted and sleeping. I tried so very hard to fight this terrible sleepiness, but I often fell asleep. This made life very hard for me and for my lovely children. It was also very difficult as I lived my life for 20 years not knowing why I felt like this. At least once I found out I started to understand and make sense of how I had felt and sadly have always felt. The extreme tiredness has never left me.

26. I was and am a tough cookie. I grew up in [GRO-B] during the war and started out with nothing but love and drive.

27. The reason our family moved from the [GRO-B] to the [GRO-B] in the [GRO-B] was because my husband's mother had passed away and my husband wanted to be with his father who was living [GRO-B]. To be fair, I did not really have much choice in the matter. We sold our house in [GRO-B] and I packed up my [GRO-B] children and moved to [GRO-B]. I had a tough time, as the first three months of being in the [GRO-B] were spent in a property which was not one which I would have chosen as it required a lot of remedial work, and I was so very tired. I had to struggle with [GRO-B] children in a [GRO-B], on top of which my husband then got sick and had to apply for disability. However, I believe that it was the love of my family that got me through.

28. We still have that wonderful love in our family, and I am so happy to be cared for and cherished by my children. Every day, one of my children will come and do something special with me, like going for a pizza or taking me out on an adventure. I feel very lucky to have my children around me and we make the most of every minute of our shared time.

Section 6. Treatment/care/support

29. I underwent Harvoni treatment about 7 years ago. All my treatment for HCV [GRO-B]

[GRO-B]

30. My lovely daughter, [GRO-B], was the one who found out about Harvoni, and it was her who pushed this and actually got the ball rolling with the medical professionals. One of [GRO-B]'s her friends mentioned this treatment to her, and she turned every stone in order to get this for me. My medical insurance would not pay for it as it was an expensive treatment. We therefore had to get a different [GRO-B] medical insurance which then funded it. The whole procedure was a struggle, but the treatment saved my life so was a miracle treatment in both mine and my children's eyes. I think that this treatment should have been offered to me as soon as it became available; it was suitable and yes it was expensive, but I was infected through no fault of my own by a contaminated blood transfusion. Would I have been offered it if [GRO-B] had not pushed for it? Would I have been able to have it if the alternative insurance policy refused to fund it?

31. I have never been offered any counselling or psychological support in consequence of my HCV infection.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

32. I have never received any financial assistance from any of the Trusts and Funds set up to distribute payments. Until very recently, I did not even know such support existed. I never received any information from the NHS, Trusts or Funds in relation to this.

Section 8. Other Issues

33. I would like the Inquiry to find out the truth and give the poor people who have suffered long overdue answers.

Anonymity

34. I wish to apply for anonymity.

Statement of Truth

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

GRO-B

Signed

Dated December 12, 2022