

ANONYMOUS

Witness Name: GRO-B

Statement No: WITN7571001

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. My occupation is GRO-B.
3. GRO-B
4. I make this statement in relation to my mother, GRO-B: M, who was born on GRO-B and is currently aged GRO-B. She was infected with Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) via a contaminated blood transfusion during complications during GRO-B at the GRO-B
GRO-B
5. This witness statement has been prepared without the benefit of access to my mother's medical records. My GRO-B has applied for her GRO-B
GRO-B

6. My mother and my [GRO-B] also intend to provide witness statements to the Inquiry.

Section 2. How Affected

7. My mother was infected with HCV following a contaminated blood transfusion received due to complications [GRO-B]
[GRO-B]

8. [GRO-B]

9. I am unaware as to whether any information or advice was provided to my mother in relation to the risks of being exposed to infection from blood transfusions.

10. In or around [GRO-B] my mother was informed by her GP in [GRO-B] that she had contracted Hepatitis C. I don't know whether she was given adequate information to understand and manage the infection.

Section 3. Other Infections

11. I don't know whether my mother received any other infections, apart from HCV, from the contaminated blood transfusion.

Section 4. Consent

12. I do not know whether my mother was treated or tested without her knowledge or consent. Similarly, I do not know whether my mother was used for the purposes of research without her consent. [GRO-B]
[GRO-B]

Section 5. Impact of the Infection

13. The HCV damaged my mother's liver which resulted in Cirrhosis for which she required extensive medical treatment.
14. She also developed and now has Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma.
15. She has gall stone issues and wears a Percutaneous Cholecystostomy.
16. My mother suffers with Atrial Fibrillation.
17. My mother suffered with extreme fatigue, nausea and irritability.
18. All my mother's treatment for HCV [GRO-B] and I am aware that she underwent Harvoni treatment about 7 years ago.
19. My mother suffers with constant anxiety, stress and worry because of her HCV infection which has required constant medical attention.
20. On top of her HCV, my mother also had to care for my disabled father, who had Emphysema. He needed 24/7 care from her. He passed away in [GRO-B]
21. Currently my mother is confined to bed and requires a carer 24/7 and currently my brother [GRO-B] is fulfilling that role.
22. I was and still am deeply affected by my mother's infection. I first found out about the Hepatitis C when I was quite young as my father told me in or around the very late [GRO-B] I remember this conversation as if it had taken place yesterday. My father was crying as he told me; he was quite an emotional man who was already very poorly with Emphysema and was on a respirator and ventilator. My father knew that he did not have much time left himself and was telling me that I must take care of mummy. I was really confused as I did not know that my mum had Hepatitis C. He told me not to discuss her infection with anyone as people might think that she had AIDS.

23. Looking back and knowing what I now know, it is almost unbelievable that my amazing GRO-B mother was able to care for my sick disabled father whilst she was so poorly. She was literally exhausted and slept so much yet she continued to work and somehow managed to push through the relentless lethargy. My mother was a truly remarkable woman who was not always able to do the things she wanted to do because she was caring for my father and her GRO-B children. She did such a great job though; we always had clean clothes and a roof over our heads, but our upbringing was definitely tough although my GRO-B siblings and I were and our so loved. The love we have in our family is unbreakable.
24. My mother had such bad jaundice and was always incredibly yellow in colour, yet she never once complained. I really admire how she dealt with things. Family and friends would come over to our house and notice her extreme yellowness (both her eyes and skin) and when I took her to the GP GRO-B in relation to her jaundice or tiredness, she would always downplay it and how she was feeling fine. If I told the doctor that my mother was sleeping all the time, she would always challenge me and say "*you think I sleep all day?! I am fine*". In fact, my mother used to warn me before the appointments not to tell the doctor too much. I would be like "*but mum, he needs to know*".
25. My mother worked in a GRO-B a few miles from our home and one of my friends had seen my mother walking to work on one occasion following which she telephoned me and said, "*Oh GRO-B I know this is a personal question but does your mum have Hepatitis C?*". On hearing this, my heart sank as very few people knew about my mum's diagnosis as my father had told me to keep it secret. I replied, "*why do you ask?*" This friend replied that I would need to have my mum checked and she confided in my that she, herself, had Hepatitis C. She said that it was the colour of my mother that had made her suspect that she too was infected.
26. I used to accompany my mother to all her GP and hospital appointments. I remember going to one hospital appointment to be told by the consultant, who specialised in Hepatology, that my mother only had 5 years to live. He said that

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he had never seen anyone with such bad Hepatitis C as my mother. I was utterly horrified.

27. Then the Harvoni treatment came out and saved my mother's life. My mother felt poorly during the treatment, but it did cure her Hepatitis C. However, shortly after this she sadly developed Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma which I believe was either caused by the Hepatitis C or the Harvoni treatment as we haven't got any history of cancer in our family.
28. Things that didn't make sense previously in relation to my mother's behaviour now all make perfect sense. When I was growing up, my mother used to be so tired and would often fall asleep during the day. My aunt, who lives in [GRO-B] [GRO-B] always used to say that my mother has slept all her life. She was always exhausted yet acted so strong. My mother is the least lazy person you could ever meet and thinking about how hard she must have fought that terrible Hepatitis C and the extreme lethargy which it brought to her brings tears to my eyes.
29. My mother used to drag herself out of bed to earn a living. She told us that she had to work to look after her family. My mother always wanted to be independent and to be able to provide for us. I actually remember crying telling my mother that she did not need to do this as we would all help her, and that we could find another way. She was so strong but when she got home from a morning shift at work she would pass out in her bed, such was the exhaustion from the Hepatitis C.
30. My mother grew up in [GRO-B] during the war and started out with nothing but love and drive. We still have that wonderful love in our family, and I am so happy that my mother is still with us today. My mother is my absolute world. I like to treat my mother and ensure she has the best times after all she has endured in her life. Every day, one of my siblings is with her and we take her out for pizza and do lovely things with her. I now spend 3 or 4 days per week with my beloved mother and I take her on outings to different [GRO-B] She loves going to [GRO-B] where we eat in front of the ocean. It is quite close to [GRO-B] and my mother sleeps all the way there and all the way back as even today,

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without the Hepatitis C, her energy levels have never recovered. She still struggles with lethargy and exhaustion.

31. I also remember taking my mother to see one of my clients on an occasion. I am a [GRO-B] by trade, and I also plan and arrange [GRO-B] [GRO-B]. Shortly after my mother retired, I asked her to come to the office with me. My manager noticed my mother sitting in the lobby and said to me "oh god is your mother ok?". I was really embarrassed as my mother was so incredibly yellow in colour. I knew what the manager was thinking as people had started to recognise the yellowing which accompanied Hepatitis C. My mother looked so awful but after the Harvoni treatment she started to look better. In fact, today she looks absolutely beautiful and so much better than she did 15 years ago. When I think that the Hepatology consultant gave my mother just 5 years to live it frightens me how close we came to losing her from the Hepatitis C, but I am so proud of my mother for fighting. I remember that consultant talking about the fact that my mother had genotype 1 which was apparently very resistant to treatment and at that time I think he said there was no treatment available for my mother. She has amazed us all.
32. The reason our family moved from [GRO-B] to [GRO-B] in the [GRO-B] was because my father's mother had passed away and my father wanted to be with his father who was living [GRO-B]. My mother did not really have much choice in the matter. My parents sold their house in [GRO-B] and my mother packed up her [GRO-B] children and moved to [GRO-B]. She had a tough time, as the first three months of being in the [GRO-B] were spent in a property which was not one, she had chosen and was one which necessitated a lot of remedial work. My mother had to struggle with [GRO-B] children [GRO-B], on top of which her husband then got sick and had to apply for disability.
33. My mother took on the roles of husband, wife, mother and father and somehow managed wonderfully. Yet my poor mother was also dealing with something far worse and sinister, yet no one, not even my mother, knew about this. This was Hepatitis C.

34. My mother's remarkable strength of character, despite her infection, got us through the [GRO-B]". There were terrible [GRO-B] in [GRO-B] The [GRO-B], and my mother went to the supermarket which was [GRO-B] from our house in those [GRO-B] to feed her family. My mother had this ability to just get on with things and always had a smile on her beautiful face.

35. In terms of stigma, we did experience this despite the fact that we very much limited who we told as I always remembered my father's advice to me when he told me about my mother's infection all those years ago. We only told close family and friends, but people talk and information is passed on. It was really sad to see some of our family and friends coming to our house and smelling my mother's delicious food and yet when asked if they wanted anything, they replied that they were not hungry. You could see that they were starving and just didn't want to eat the food which my mother had prepared for fear of catching Hepatitis C.

36. There is one incident of what I would call both stigma and ignorance which really springs to mind and, in my view, was made more shocking, since it concerned a [GRO-B] who worked at the [GRO-B]. I told this [GRO-B] who is also [GRO-B] that my mother had Hepatitis C and obviously as she [GRO-B]. I remember her saying to me, [GRO-B] [GRO-B]". I was dumbfounded, shocked and aghast. This was a [GRO-B]; how could a [GRO-B] be so ignorant? After this, I remember starting to really research and look into Hepatitis C as I could not believe the state of knowledge in the [GRO-B].

Section 6. Treatment/care/support

37. We did not know that there was any treatment for HCV until a few years ago. My mother was treated with Harvoni about 7 years ago. [GRO-B]
[GRO-B]

38. Neither my mother nor I have ever been offered any counseling or psychological support in consequence of her HCV infection.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

39. Neither my mother nor I have received any financial assistance from any of the Trusts or Funds set up to distribute payments.

40. We GRO-B and did not know that financial assistance was available. The obstacles we faced in this regard were lack of knowledge and correspondence from the NHS/Trusts/Funds regarding my mother's infection and the fact that financial assistance was available.

Section 8. Other Issues

41. I want my mum to be compensated for the difficult years she has had to endure as a result of the HCV.

Anonymity

42. I wish to be anonymous.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed..... GRO-B

Dated..... 12/22/22