

Witness Name: GRO-B

Statement No.: WITN1822004

Exhibits: 0

Dated: 14 th March 2025

## INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

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**WRITTEN STATEMENT OF** GRO-B

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I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 10 March 2025.

I GRO-B, will say as follows:

1. My name is GRO-B, my date of birth is known to the Inquiry. My address is known to the Inquiry.
2. I am an advocate & campaigner for victims of the Contaminated Blood scandal. My work comprises meeting with MP's, members of the House of Lords and other prominent officials to attain allies and further my advocacy for infected victims, many of which do not have a voice. In addition, I work with the EIBSS on focus groups and I am also a core participant in the Infected Blood Inquiry.

**Please describe the involvement of people infected and affected in the decision-making regarding compensation (whether by Government or IBCA or both) as you have experienced it.**

3. I have been included with focus groups. I met with David Foley at IBCA and I was invited to join Cabinet Office (CO) meetings. I was asked to be involved in the testing and role out of the online calculator.

4. When I spoke with David Foley I set out several key things that I wanted to be involved with because I knew I could provide helpful input. David Foley agreed that I should be involved and explained he would arrange further meetings. This was in January 2025, but I have heard nothing from him since. I know a number of meetings have taken place; I know there have been 2 CO meetings, but despite being told I would be involved, I have been excluded.
5. The promises made that I could and should be involved were just words in the air. I was completely fobbed off. I work hard for the community and have done so for many years. I am also a victim. I am not paid for the work I do on behalf of the community; I do it because I care, because many in our community cannot do it themselves – I am their advocate. I was told I would be listened to and then nothing; I cannot begin to explain how disrespectful it is not just to me but to all those for whom I advocate.
6. I am not paid for the work I do on behalf of the community. I have to cover my own travel costs and expenses. For example, I am coming to London to meet Lord Howe – this is going to cost me in the region of £300.00. My support payments have to fund the work I do for the community. I basically work 6 or 7 days a week providing support and advocacy for victims and campaigning on behalf of the community.

**Please describe the principal concerns which you have in relation to the involvement of people infected and affected in the decision-making regarding compensation (whether by Government or IBCA or both)**

7. Further to the release of the 2nd set of Regulations issued by the Government/IBCA, the infected community are extremely concerned and despondent regarding the amendment to the Severe Health Conditions (Special Category Mechanism SCM) criteria, which has a devastating effect on the level of compensation victims are being offered.
8. In the 1st set of Regulations the Government/IBCA issued in August 2024, the SCM criteria (from the Expert Group) states that *Those who have*

*already been recognised as qualifying for the enhanced payment categories under the Support Schemes would not need to produce further evidence to qualify.*

9. However, under the 2nd set of Regulations released in February 2025 this criteria has been drastically changed. What I can only describe as a much stricter and frankly merciless set of criteria have been adopted. The 2<sup>nd</sup> set of Regulations seek to remove the aforementioned criteria of those who would automatically qualify due to their enhanced status under the Support Schemes. This cannot be allowed to happen; the impact of this proposed change will be financially devastating.
10. Under the 2<sup>nd</sup> set of Regulations, using John Doe as an example, who qualifies for Severe Health Conditions under Regulations 1 as a recipient of enhanced SCM payments, but not under the revised Regulations 2, his compensation claim is reduced by £400k. This is disgraceful.
11. I strongly argue that the infected community is being further penalised by the new SCM criteria. As a community we are being further victimized, which is reprehensible.

**Are there any particular steps or measures which you consider could be taken by Government, IBCA or both to alleviate any detrimental impact upon people infected and affected? If so, please set them out.**

12. The Government must remove the changes in Regulations 2 regarding the Severe Health Conditions (SCM) criteria. The Government should revert back to what their Expert Group stated in their Report: *Those already recognized as qualifying for the enhanced payment categories under the Support Schemes would not need to produce further evidence to qualify.* (Infected Blood Inquiry Response Expert Group Final Report, 16 August 2024, page 27, RLIT0002467). It is only by taking this step, by which I mean removing the offending Regulations, that members of the infected community will not face even more discriminatory and harsh treatment. Regulations 2 are a money saving exercise by Government at the expense of those who so desperately need full and fair compensation.

**Statement of Truth**

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

Signed \_

GRO-B

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Dated 14 th March 2025

