

Witness Name: Robert GRO-B

Statement No.: WITN2258014

Exhibits: **None**

Dated: 4<sup>th</sup> February 2021

## INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

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### SECOND WRITTEN STATEMENT OF ROBERT GRO-B

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I provide this supplementary statement, following my first written statement which was provided in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 5<sup>th</sup> November 2018, to provide further information which may be relevant to the Inquiry.

1. Upon reflection of my first statement, I fear that the Inquiry have not heard the extreme damaging consequences of being infected by the NHS. The consequences of being infected and the treatment have left me with severe lifelong problems that leave me severely disabled with extreme pain and forced to walk with a stick.
2. I was diagnosed by Dr GRO-D then in that same appointment she collapsed because of her own health problems. As a result of this, I was given no information. Looking in my medical notes now, there is no mention of what occurred that day, it looks like it was a standard consultation with no mention that I was someone who would need proper counselling, information and support. I left that appointment in a fog with no information and no invitation to come back and make it right. I did not know if I was contagious or dangerous to be around. No attempt to

contact me again was ever made by the hospital and no apology was ever issued.

3. The significance of this is that I want it clearly acknowledged that this did occur. When I raise this now I get strange looks from the clinician reviewing my records as there is nothing in there to reflect what happened, which leaves me feeling like I look like a liar. If a patient's notes do not reflect the truth and doctors pick and choose about what goes in there, what else are they choosing not to include?
4. Depression has been a consequence I should never have had to endure. When it developed through the treatment, I felt as though I was falling deeper and deeper in to a black hole. It has continued onto this day, despite the strong medication I describe in paragraph 27 of my first statement. When it is in full force I can't get out of bed, wash or eat. I cannot bear the sound of the television being on. I have also emotionally hurt my family who at one point, could not understand why I was not getting better. I used to be the life and soul of the party but today I find I can barely be in a room with four people. The depression that has developed from the interferon treatment has resulted in me attempting to commit suicide several times.
5. When I started the interferon treatment, it was like a light switch. This chemically induced depression has gone from one extreme to the other. I have reached out for help many times and it has taken ten years for the proper support to emerge. I live in the Highlands of Scotland. There are no groups, no people that I can talk to. Now I wake up every day with the same thought. Will I kill myself today?
6. I was a very successful executive with a track record of achieving the impossible. I worked constantly from the age of eight, I had no idea what it was not to work, and I never had a desire to stop working. Hepatitis C treatment has stopped everything in its tracks and has severely damaged my future wishes, desires and goals. I had no awareness that by taking the treatment I would have these lifelong consequences. Prior

to treatment I had a lot of responsibility in my job working with the Scottish Government and had achieved a lot in my life. I was working with the Government creating pathways and installing confidence in isolated communities to become part of mainstream society. My family and I were very proud of what I achieved doing this. The loss of my career is a lost opportunity, a loss of potential future income and a loss to society. I believe we are entitled to better support and compensation style payments. We are victims of the Government and should be compensated for our suffering.

7. Up until the point I needed support, I was a higher level tax payer. Now I am forced to go to an annual PIP review and a DVLA review once a year on average, for humiliating assessments. At my last assessment my support was stopped because I had the audacity of wearing brightly coloured clothes, for trying to take care of my personal appearance. It has been reinstated now after appeal but the previous support is not backdated. The state of someone's mental health is often not visible. Do the Government feel I am only entitled to full support if I wear clothes that have been worn for a week? How we care for the most vulnerable in society is a reflection on who we are. The system is unfair and designed to catch you out, not support. The assessor asks the same question several times in different ways trying to catch you out. There is an incredible sting in its tail, knowing that the institution who gave me this infection is now continuing the trauma in these ways.
8. I am unbelievably angry about what has been done to me. That I have to argue for my basic human rights. It has all but ended my life.

**Statement of Truth**

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

**GRO-C**

Signed Robert GRO-B Feb 5, 2021 17:44 GMT

Dated Feb 5, 2021