

Witness Name: Brendan Brown

Statement No.: WITN4496021

Exhibit: None

Dated: 26 August 2021

## **INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY**

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### **FIFTH WRITTEN STATEMENT OF BRENDAN BROWN ON BEHALF OF NHSBSA**

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I, Brendan Brown, Director of Citizen Services of National Health Service Business Services Authority ("NHSBSA"), will say as follows: -

1. I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 5 July 2021. As with my first four statements, this statement is based on information available to the NHSBSA from its records of the England Infected Blood Support Scheme ("EIBSS") and the knowledge of members of the EIBSS team. I have made clear where the information is from my own personal knowledge.

#### **Section 1: Introduction**

2. My full name is Brendan Craig McMahon-Brown (known as Brendan Brown) and I am the Director of Citizen Services at NHSBSA, based at Stella House, Goldcrest Way, Newburn Riverside, Newcastle Upon Tyne NE15 8NY. Details of my professional background and career are set out in my first statement.

#### **Section 2: Response to criticisms of W1210**

3. My attention has been drawn to criticism made by witness W1210, to the Inquiry in relation to his involvement in campaigning on haemophilia and contaminated

blood. In particular, my attention has been specifically drawn to two comments he has made in his third written witness statement.

4. In paragraph 180 of this statement, W1210 states that *“all the historical support schemes including the now EIBSS have allowed widows to apply for some form of ongoing support. This option has not been and continues not to be available to those who have either lost children or those who have lost parents.”* On behalf of the EIBSS team and NHSBSA, I would like to express my deepest sympathies to anyone who has lost a parent or a child due to infected blood or infected blood products.
5. As previously mentioned in my earlier evidence to the Inquiry, NHSBSA administers EIBSS on direction from the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care in compliance with a specification set by the Department for Health and Social Care (“DHSC”). NHSBSA must administer EIBSS in accordance with that specification and the rules it sets out, which have been defined by DHSC. NHSBSA would of course provide additional support for children and/or parents of deceased beneficiaries if it were directed to do so by DHSC and a corresponding amendment to the EIBSS specification was made. However, NHSBSA has no power to act outside of the EIBSS specification and what it has been directed to do.
6. In paragraph 181 of his third written statement, W1210 also states that *“For many years the government, the Department of Health and the EIBSS often say in press comments in response to the Parliamentary questions and elsewhere that they provide support to those infected or affected by Contaminated Blood products.”* His view is that *“the reality is that as of present day, and historically, they only provide support to those infected and widows. Their inaccurate statements have the effect of saying to those who have lost children and those who have lost parents, that you are not affected by what has happened to you because you are not able to apply for ongoing support. I believe these statements are purposely misleading to make it appear to the General public, the press and uninformed Members of Parliament they have done a lot more than they have and continue to do.”* I am very sorry to hear

that the term “affected” may have been misinterpreted in this way and may have caused any upset. That was most certainly not the intention and nor was the term intended to be misleading in any way.

7. In addition to those infected with Hepatitis C and/or HIV and the spouses, civil partners and long-term partners of deceased beneficiaries, EIBSS does provide financial and non-financial support to others. I therefore believe the broad term “infected or affected” is appropriate. By way of example, EIBSS provides:

- a. A discretionary one-off payment of up to £900 per year towards counselling costs which can be to support a beneficiary's family as well the beneficiary.
- b. Support to the estates of people who died before joining the scheme if the person with stage 1 or stage 2 Hepatitis C or HIV died before applying to join the scheme. Such support is available to the deceased's personal representative, which may not be a spouse, civil partner or long-term partner and could include a parent or child depending on the deceased's circumstances.
- c. A discretionary payment of up to £4,500 for the person arranging the funeral when an infected beneficiary has passed away (who again may not necessarily be a spouse, civil partner or long-term partner and could encompass someone else close to the deceased depending on their individual circumstances).
- d. Child payments to the primary care provider of the child or children of an infected beneficiary. These means-tested payments are to help with the costs of bringing up children of an infected beneficiary. The payments are available to a parent/surviving partner of the deceased beneficiary but, depending on the circumstances, they could also be made to another individual (such as a grandparent, uncle/aunt or other person) who is the guardian of an infected beneficiary's child who has sadly lost both parents.
- e. Signposting to a range of financial and benefits advice through the 'Financial and support services' section of the EIBSS website (<https://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/financial-and-support-services>), which is available for families as well as partners of a deceased beneficiary.

- f. Funding of hospital travel costs, which can be applied for by immediate and extended family members (such as a child, sibling, parent, grandparent or grandchild as well as spouse/partner) of an infected beneficiary who has been hospitalised as well as an infected beneficiary registered with EIBSS.
8. I would like to take the opportunity again to assure everyone and the Inquiry that the EIBSS team are absolutely dedicated to providing support. They are accessible and want to help people as much as they possibly can within the scope of the scheme specification. EIBSS will continue to make payments that we are directed to make to the best of our abilities.

**Statement of Truth**

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

Signed 

Dated 26 August 2021