

Witness Name: MARTIN BELL

Statement No.: WITN4728050

Exhibits: WITN4728051 –

WITN4728054

Dated: 28th September 2022

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

WRITTEN STATEMENT OF MARTIN BELL

I provide this statement on behalf of SIBSS in response to the request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 08 September 2022.

I, Martin Bell, will say as follows: -

Section 1: Customer satisfaction

1. **Please provide an update on any customer satisfaction data you hold (the Inquiry has details of the surveys you carried out in 2018 and 2020 [WITN4728023 and WITN4728024].**

1.1 No further customer satisfaction survey has been carried out since 2020. We do not like to overload our members with too many demands for feedback. The SIBSS Advisory Group has not yet agreed a date for the next survey. Given the original intent for surveys every three years, we expect the next one to be issued in 2023.

1.2 SIBSS did distribute a survey on behalf of the Scottish Infected Blood Psychology Services (SIBPS) in 2021. The results of that survey will be held by SIBPS. Their details are: <https://www.sibps.scot.nhs.uk/> or Contact - Scottish Infected Blood Psychology Service - 0131 537 9128.

Section 2: Support for psychological needs

2. The Inquiry seeks any updates to the information previously provided about access to specialist psychological support for (i) those infected by blood and blood products and (ii) their families and carers.

2.1 Scottish Infected Blood Psychology Services are now available on request to members, their families, and carers. See WITN4728053

3. The Inquiry understands that since SIBSS submitted evidence to the Inquiry, the Scottish Infected Blood Psychology Service has commenced operations. Please set out how registrants are signposted to this service by SIBSS, what the uptake has been, the service it provides and details of any feedback you have received from users of the service.

3.1 Members are signposted to SIBPS via the SIBSS Newsletter and our website.

Link to Newsletters on website: -

<https://www.nss.nhs.scot/patient-support-schemes/scottish-infected-blood-support-scheme-sibss/access-the-sibss-newsletter/>

Link to SIBPS on website: -

<https://www.sibps.scot.nhs.uk/>

3.2 Specific correspondence relating to SIBPS are: -

16/08/2021	Psychology Survey sent out on behalf of SIBPS
07/09/2021	Launch of SIBPS letter sent out including information leaflet WITN4728052
27/09/2022	Newsletter Including article on SIBPS
05/04/2022	Newsletter Including article on SIBPS

3.3 SIBPS supports people who contracted Hepatitis C and/or HIV from blood and/or blood products given during medical procedures in Scotland. The service also welcomes referrals from relatives of those infected, including spouses, parents, children, siblings, partners, and bereaved family members.

SIBPS allows self-referral and gives clinical psychology support in relation to grief, traumatic memories, anger, anxiety, low mood, or any of a number of other psychological difficulties.

SIBPS services are mostly delivered remotely, either by telephone or by a secure video-calling service. Remote therapy allows access to the service from home, wherever the infected or affected person lives. In certain circumstances it may be beneficial to meet in person, and SIBPS can arrange that if needed.

3.4 We are unable to confirm the uptake as SIBPS has that information. The members that have shared with us that they are using the service are very happy with it.

3.5 We continue to pay invoices for those members using an alternative counselling service. Details of these service providers are:

- Lorraine Martin, Lead Therapist, Essential Counselling Services - solutions@GRO-C
- Terry Daly, Therapist, Glasgow - terry.daly@GRO-C
- Sarah Woodcock, Evolve Counselling, Inverness - info@GRO-C

Section 3: Provision between the four nations

4. The Inquiry is seeking updated information from all four of the schemes, to get the most up to date picture as to what support is available to registrants, and to understand what if any anomalies still exist between the schemes. What if any changes have you made to the support (both financial and non-financial), since your last witness statement?

4.1 Since my last statement, SIBSS has made parity payments to ensure all members receive payment in line with revised Scottish Government direction. That direction is in turn derived from Four Nation discussions and agreements that are beyond SIBSS's remit.

4.2 Other than our parity payments, the only change to our grant system since my last written response is that SIBSS no longer means tests applications for grants under £5000. This change is reflected in SIBSS guidance - WITN4728051

4.3 Current payment levels are:-

Regular Payments Infectees

SIBSS Infectees						
Payment Type	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23
Hep. C Stage 1	£1,000	£1,000	£10,000	£10,000	£9,456	£9,749
Hep. C Stage 1 - not noticiably	£0	£1,000	£10,000	£10,000	£9,456	£9,749
Hep. C Stage 1 Moderately	£0	£6,300	£18,989	£19,312	£18,912	£19,498
Hep. C Stage 1 Severely	£0	£18,900	£28,531	£29,016	£28,680	£29,569
Hep. C Stage 2	£27,000	£27,000	£28,531	£29,016	£28,680	£29,569
HIV	£27,000	£27,000	£28,531	£29,016	£28,680	£29,569
Coinfected	£37,000	£37,000	£44,531	£45,288	£45,072	£46,469
Winter Fuel	included in above	included in above	included in above	included in above	£544	£561

Regular Payments Partners

Partners						
Payment Type	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	20/22	22/23
Hep. C Stage 1	£1,000	£1,000	£7,092	£7,092	£7,092	£7,312
Hep. C Stage 1 - not noticiably	£0	£1,000	£7,092	£7,092	£7,092	£7,312
Hep. C Stage 1 Moderately	£0	£4,725	£13,846	£14,079	£14,184	£14,624
Hep. C Stage 1 Severely	£0	£18,899	£21,000	£21,357	£21,510	£22,177
Hep. C Stage 2	£20,250	£20,250	£21,000	£21,357	£21,510	£22,177
HIV	£20,250	£20,250	£21,000	£21,357	£21,510	£22,177
Coinfected	£27,750	£27,750	£33,000	£33,561	£33,804	£34,852

Lump Sums		
Payment Type	Infectee	Estate /Partner
Hep. C Stage 1	50000	20000
Hep. C Stage 1 - not noticiably	50000	20000
Hep. C Stage 1 Moderately	50000	20000
Hep. C Stage 1 Severely	50000	20000
Hep. C Stage 2	70000	70000
HIV	80500	70000
Coinfected	150500	70000
Bereavement Fund		10000

4.4 One off grants are also available – WITN4728051.

4.5 Non-financial support, in the form of the SIBPS, is covered in Section 2 above.

Section 4: Advice and advocacy services

5. Does the scheme provide an advocacy service to those wishing to make an application to the scheme?

o If so, please provide details.

o If not, is this something that could be offered by the Scheme?

5.1 SIBSS does not provide an advocacy service to those wishing to make an application to the scheme. We do advise applicants on the process and that a medical professional is required to complete the application form for them and make them aware of local support schemes on our website. See WITN4728054

5.2 SIBSS has no plans to offer an advocacy service to those wishing to make an application.

6. Does the scheme provide an advice and/or advocacy service to assist the registrants with accessing medical care and support and/or social care and support?

o If so, please provide details.

o If not, is this something that could be offered by the Scheme?

6.1 SIBSS does not provide an advice and/or advocacy service to assist registrants with accessing medical care and support and/or social care support. We signpost members to local council schemes on our website. See WITN4728054

6.2. We have no plans at this stage to offer this service.

7. The Inquiry understands from WITN4728031 that you provide a service to assist registrants in accessing benefits advice. Please provide information as to this service, how registrants are made aware of it, the take up of this service, and any feedback you have received about it.

7.1 SIBSS has a benefits lawyer that can provide support when required. Our current advisors are Benefits Brighton, 20 Cornwall Gardens, Brighton, BN1 6RJ. T: 07770 666115 E: benefitsbrighton@gmail.com

The original lawyer, Neil Bateman and Company Ltd, has retired. SIBSS inherited his services from Skipton. Neil's last known details are Neil Bateman and Company

Ltd, GRO-C Suffolk, GRO-C

Note, all consultations, past and present are conducted by phone.

7.2 We use our Newsletter to advertise this service to our members.

7.3 Four members have used this service successfully. One individual was reported by Neil Bateman as being unsuccessful. He was unable to help due to the behaviour of the client so he referred her back to Citizens Advice Bureau for help. SIBSS has no additional detail on that specific case.

- 8. Does the scheme provide an advice and/or advocacy service to assist registrants with access to financial products and/or advice on what to do with any lump sum payments (including the £100,000 interim payment recommended by the Inquiry):**
- o If so, please provide details.**
 - o If not, is this something that could be offered by the Scheme?**

8.1 SIBSS does not provide an advice and/or advocacy service to assist registrants with access to financial products and/or advice on what to do with any lump sum payments.

8.2 SIBSS advises members to seek independent financial advice. SIBSS itself is not qualified or registered to give independent financial advice. SIBSS therefore has no plans to offer this service.

Section 5: Accountability

- 9. What is the nature of the scheme's accountability to the Scottish government?**

9.1 As detailed in previous statements, SIBSS was established by the Scottish Government. NHS National Services Scotland (NSS) was commissioned by Scottish Government to run the Scheme. NSS is a non departmental government body and its Chief Executive Officer, as Accountable Officer, is accountable to Scottish Government for the Scheme's performance. Day to day running of the Scheme is conducted by the Scheme Director and quarterly meetings are held with Scottish

Government to review performance and discuss the practical details should changes be directed, such as the parity payments mentioned previously.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed _ **GRO-C** _

Dated ___ 28 Sep 22 _____

Table of exhibits:

Date	Notes/ Description	Exhibit number
01.07.2021	SIBSS - Guidance on Support and Assistance Grants	WITN4728051
07.09.2021	SIBSS - SIBPS Service launch letter	WITN4728052
01.08.2021	Scottish Infected Blood Psychology service (SIBPS) Patient	WITN4728053
19.08.2022	(NHS National Services Scotland web page) Find further support	WITN4728054