Witness Name: Paul Noonan
Statement No.: WITN5469001
Exhibits: **WITN5469002 - 003**
Dated: 12/08/2022

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

WRITTEN STATEMENT OF PAUL NOONAN

I provide this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 26 April 2021.

I, Paul Noonan will say as follows: -

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Paul Noonan. My date of birth is GRO-C 1966, and my address is known to the Inquiry. I am a self-employed decorator.

2. I intend to speak about my Hepatitis C ("**HCV**") infection. In particular, the nature of my illness, how the illness affected me, the treatment I have received, and the impact it has had on my life.

3. I can confirm that I am not legally represented and that the provisions for anonymity have been explained but I am happy for my story to be in the public domain. I have signed the Consent Form on the basis that it will only be submitted with my signed statement when complete.

Section 2. How Infected

4. I was adopted as a child, and I have four siblings, only one of my siblings is my parents' biological child. Growing up, my relationship with my adoptive parents was fine, especially with my father, until he passed away when I was 15 years old.

5. My memory is not great nowadays, but I use dates of nearby events to remember important moments. For example, I know that my brother was born in GRO-C 1971 and that my accident happened just before he was born. Therefore, I would have been around 3 or 4 years old at the time of the incident.

6. When I was around 3 or 4 years old, we lived in one of those old-style Victorian houses that was being renovated, so we had builders moving things around. I remember in the kitchen there was a box that connected to buzzers in each room where in days gone by, they could use them to summon the servant. The builders put the box that showed which room was calling outside.

7. As a child, I was curious about what was in the box, so I went to take a look at it. Unfortunately, there was a glass panel in front of the shutters and when I tried to get through to see what was behind the shutters, my hand went through the glass panel, and it sliced my left wrist open. I think the glass panel was about 4 inches high and about a foot long.

8. My mum was in the garden at the time, so I ran to her because blood was squirting out of my cut. My mum was a doctor, so she knew what to do. She quickly wrapped up my bleeding hand in a kitchen roll and drove me to the closest hospital to us at the time, which was Willesden General Hospital.

9. When we got to the hospital, there was so much blood that it had soaked through the kitchen roll, even though I had held my hand over my head because my mum had told me to keep the hand elevated.

10. I lost a lot of blood, so I know I was given a blood transfusion, but I am not sure how much blood I received. I remember seeing more than one bag of blood, possibly as many as four whilst I was there.

11. A doctor stitched my hand, but my mum oversaw the stitches because she was also a trained surgeon. I remember having a conversation with my dad when we were on holiday when I was around 14 years old, and that was how I found that out. They put in 20 micro stitches underneath and 20 micro stitches on the outside. I still have an L shaped scar on my hand, which is about 2 inches long.

12. My mum and I never discussed the fact that I had a blood transfusion. However, while I was at the hospital, I remember her saying, "you've had an awful lot of blood". I also remember my mum discussing with my dad, who was shocked at the state of me when he came back from work, that I might have been given three or four pints of blood.

13. My mum used to run a GP surgery which is still in GRO-C even though I don't know if she practices anymore GRO-C GRO-C GRO-C. My mum was my doctor for most of my childhood.

14. When I was 15 my father passed away, which changed many things for my family. My relationship with mum rapidly deteriorated, and we stopped seeing eye to eye.

15. As a teenager, I used to help out my mum by doing reception work, and GRO-C GRO-C

GRO-C

16. GRO-C

17. GRO-C

18. When I was 16, GRO-C This made me leave home and for a couple of weeks I was either living rough or staying with friends. It was only after two weeks and my arm was still aching, I went to the hospital, probably the Central Middlesex. As a result of attending hospital, GRO-C By this time, I was in bed and breakfast accommodation and I did not wish to return home. Consequently, GRO-C

19. GRO-C when I reached sixteen and a half years old, I tried to get my medical records because I wanted to register with a new GP. The practice tried first and then my hostel supervisor but both wee told by my mum that they were lost so I was unable to get them. I ended up getting a new GP, and it felt like everything that happened to me earlier in my life, along with my records, no longer existed.

20. As far as I am aware, that was the only time I have ever had a blood transfusion. I have never used drugs in an intravenous fashion. I got a tattoo done in 1991 or 1992, and it was done in a clean and professional

tattoo shop. I have received no medical treatment overseas and I have always been faithful in my relationships.

Section 3. Other Infections

21. I do not believe that I have received any infection other than HCV as a result of being given infected blood. I know I was tested for HIV after I was formally diagnosed with HCV and that was negative, thankfully

Section 4. Consent

22. I don't know if I was asked to consent to the test when I went to the pop-up donation centre in Kilburn, which I will discuss below. All I did was give my name and address, and I thought they would take the blood and do what they wanted with it. I did not know my blood would be tested for anything.

23. I obviously don't know if consent was giving when I had the transfusion due to my age, but as my mum was a doctor I don't think it would have been an issue. By the same token, I am not aware if there was any discussion about possible risks involved.

24. I have been part of HCV clinical research trials at least twice, but I consented to those.

Section 5. Impact

25. In February 1990, I attended a pop-up blood donor centre set up in a church hall in Kilburn. It was the first time I had donated blood, and I went with my girlfriend GRO-C r.

26. Not long after, I think about a month, or so after, I received a letter from the Blood Transfusion Service (BTS). The letter instructed me to attend

St Mary's Hospital but did not state why, just that it had to do with my recent donation. Unfortunately, I no longer have a copy of the letter.

27. At St Mary's Hospital, I met with a doctor, and he informed me that my blood had tested positive for HCV. I did not know what it was. I had never heard of HCV, only HBV or HIV.

28. I asked the doctor about the risks of passing it on sexually because of my relationship with GRO-C. The doctor told me to be careful about cuts and cover them, use a condom during sex, and not let other people touch my blood. They told me that I was a carrier and there was nothing I could do about it. I was also instructed not to have unprotected sex and not to drink alcohol. I was dumbstruck. I had no idea where I had picked this up and there was little information given to me about how I could have contracted it or even how long I had been infected

29. I was going backwards and forwards to St Mary's Hospital, and was monitored every three months. I had to have a liver biopsy done. The needle went into my side, and I had to lie still for ten hours, but it was fine, and I didn't feel any pain. I cannot remember if they told me I had any scarring on my liver afterwards.

30. I was worried about passing the infection on to someone else, so I made sure to use a condom every time. However, one time the condom broke and even though I told GRO-C GRO-C she ended up getting pregnant. It was never suggested by any medical professional that my partner be tested for the virus.

31. Our daughter GRO-C was born in 1998. I asked the doctors when she was born about whether it was possible that she could be infected, but they did not seem to know much about it. I was shocked by this. What if I had passed it to the baby? Surely there was something they could do to check but no, nothing. This was a very anxious time for me. I don't

know if they ever tested GRO-C, but I know that GRO-C still used to give blood while we were together, so I assume that it would have been picked up.

32. I didn't want children in the first place due to being infected, so I got a vasectomy in 2000 as I did not want the risk of giving HCV to my kids. I did not want my children to be born with a potentially fatal disease that would follow them around all their lives. I did not think HCV was as serious as HIV, but there was a lot about HIV at the time and I had seen what it meant medically and socially, for those who were infected with it. The vasectomy went fine, with no complications, and they treated me well.

33. Around 2005, I got called in for a test at the Royal Free to see if I would be suitable for a clinical trial of Ribavirin and Interferon. This took some time. The trial was for a year, and I had to inject myself once a week and take tablets. I was told I could have the injection in alternate sites, but I could not do it in my leg, so I had to have it in my stomach or my arm.

34. I suspected that I might be receiving a placebo of the Ribavirin tablet, and this was confirmed for me when I stopped taking them for a few weeks, and one of the nurses mentioned that my sugar levels were very low.

35. I had to collect the tablets at St Mary's Hospital every couple of weeks, but I had regular check-ups at the Royal Free every three months. They would take more blood, do more tests and check my weight at these appointments.

36. Before I was formally diagnosed with HCV, I did not notice any symptoms. When I was about 17, the whites of my eyes were yellow, but I did not know I had anything, so I did not think much about it. I have difficulties with my memory which I have had from a very young age.

Someone could start telling a joke, and by the time the joke is finished, I have already forgotten it.

37. During the trial I had few side effects from the Interferon. I was very tired but this is something I just put up with and my memory and thinking processes were a bit worse than normal but nothing too terrible.

38. I hardly sleep now, and I only need around two and half hours of sleep to function. I can work nights and days as long as I get my two and half hours of sleep. I am usually up all night, and this started just after the trial finished around 2008. I slept properly, more or less, before that.

39. At the end of the trial, I went for a follow-up appointment at the Hepatology department at St Mary's Hospital, and I was seen by three doctors who informed me that the treatment had not worked.

40. I was a bit disappointed because I had spent a year of my life doing it, but what can you say in response to that? They said that there was a new treatment due onto the market but it was not yet available, but they would put me in for it when the time came. This was around 2008 or 2009 I believe.

41. Between 2009, and 2014, I attended more appointments at the Royal Free or St Mary's to give blood for tests until I moved to GRO-C and so my hospital changed to Park Royal Hospital.

42. I think St Mary's Hospital referred me to Professor Rosenberg at The Royal Free. Professor Rosenberg recommended that I should wait for an effective oral antiviral treatment. Around the same time, I agreed to participate in an HCV research project run by Professor Rosenberg at the Royal Free, which I fully consented to. The research began around March or April 2014 and lasted for about a year.

43. In January 2018, I was referred by the Royal Free to Central Middlesex Hospital for a course of treatment. My HCV nurse Wendy was great. She told me that it was an American company-owned drug which was highly successful but very expensive. I recall £10,000 being mentioned.

44. I was initially given a date for the treatment, but I think it was pushed forward after some people dropped out. I know there was a delay between when I saw Wendy and when I started treatment. It lasted about six months, and I can recall still going through the treatment around Christmas time.

45. The treatment involved taking two tablets a day, one in the morning and one in the evening. I cannot recall if I experienced any side effects other than lethargy nor can I recall the name of the drug.

46. I am self-employed, so if I had been unwell, I just would not have gone to work. It is good, but sometimes it can be hard because if I don't go to work, I won't earn any money. Sometimes I employ people if I can and take 10% from the jobs they do.

47. I went back to the hospital one month after I finished the course of treatment, and they took a set of bloods. Then another set a month after that, and two weeks later, I got the results that I was clear.

48. I was very excited to hear that I was clear of the virus after all the time I had been infected. It was a constant worry in my profession – and my personal life. I also thought maybe now I can finally give blood because I have a rare blood group A rhesus D negative. However, the nurse explained that I cannot because I still have the antibodies to the virus.

49. It is bittersweet to be clear now as I still wonder if I had been given Ribavirin instead of the placebo in 2005, maybe I could have been cured 13 years earlier.

50. When I was younger, I was prone to injury, I dislocated my wrist at 13, I have broken my arm before, I also crashed a motorbike and busted my knee, but treatment for these injuries has never been compromised by having HCV, and I don't think they were caused by HCV. I always declare I have HCV to the medical professionals before any procedures.

51. About 15 years ago, I dislocated my shoulder and had to have surgery at St Mary's Hospital. I was kept until last, and they did not explain why I would have to wait until the end. I arrived at 8 am in the morning, and I had to wait with no food or drink all day. I was seen last, and they kept me in over the weekend. I was on a general ward.

52. After that procedure, my whole mouth was covered in cold sores, I had blisters around my lips, and I went back in to complain. I said your equipment must have been dirty because I never had a cold sore before that.

53. I have had braces, but I went to do that privately, so I had no issues. As mentioned, I tell medical people what my problem is and it is the same with dentists and I have had no issues.

54. It has affected me workwise because I do a physically demanding job with tools, and I have to be careful all the time, especially with cuts. Once on a job, I sliced my finger with a Stanley knife, and even though I had someone around, I did not let him help me. I would never take the risk.

55. My business takes me into people's homes 95% of the time, and they have children, so I am very cautious. If I have any cuts, I put a plaster on it until it heals. I wash off wounds and clean the skin to make sure there is no blood on it. I don't tell people about it, whether employees or co-workers, because they do not need to know.

56. It affected my relationship with GRO-C before we eventually split up GRO-C I have a current

partner, and we have been together for 15 years, GRO-C

GRO-C

GRO-C Even now it still worries me that something could go wrong and I could not live with myself if I infected her - or anyone for that matter.

57. There are only a few people who know because I am embarrassed about it and because of the nature of my job. I am self-employed, and I get most of my business through word of mouth recommendations. I don't advertise. One word of it could damage my client base, as I do primarily residential work, and the people usually have families and children. It is like a spider web. All it takes is one word, and it will affect how much work I get. As we know, there is a stigma attached to HCV and too many put it in the same bracket as AIDS. It would be the kiss of death for my business if it got out.

58. I was instructed to abstain from alcohol so going out is not as it used to be. It limits me from going out, but I still do it from time to time and tell people that I am on antibiotics or have a chest infection to explain not drinking.

59. When I was around 17/18, I was drinking a lot, and it really affected me, but then I stopped drinking and started having weak lagers like Stella or Fosters. I am usually sober, but I can still have a good time. Presently I have not had one drop of alcohol in a whole year. The only boring part is staying for afters when you are drinking orange juice.

60. When I was younger, before I qualified professionally as a decorator, it limited the sort of jobs I could do. I could not take on hands-on jobs that required a lot of contact with people, things like bar work or handling food which all my friends were doing at the time.

61. Decoration doesn't always pay, so I also do other handy jobs like building cabinets. Word of mouth has taken me quite far and I have a sound reputation.

62. I have not been in contact with most of my family for a very long time. I ran into my brother on the street a few years ago, and it turns out that he is also not in contact with my mother. GRO-C

GRO-C

63. No one in my family knew I had HCV until I ran into my younger brother on the street. I have no idea if any of my siblings were ever tested for HCV. There has been no impact relationship-wise with any of them because of the infection. I have always kept it tight.

64. The last time I saw my mother was when I was around 16 and a half. I went around to the house to collect clothes and other personal items GRO-C GRO-C. Later, when I turned 18, and was allowed to know, I was told by the deputy head at my hostel that my mum had phoned GRO-C GRO-C GRO-C I believe she has now moved to GRO-C

65. I had enough on my plate at the time. I was 17 or 18 and trying to feed and shelter myself, so I did not return. My father passed away in 1981, and it took a couple of years until I cried.

66. GRO-D

Section 6. Treatment/Care/Support

67. I have never been offered counselling or psychological support either at the time of diagnosis or later when I was undergoing treatments. They have sometimes handed out generic leaflets but nothing specific.

68. I try to be a happy person, and I deal with it, so even if I may have been depressed and do get down, I sometimes shake it off with time. Sometimes when I get stressed, I get dry skin and eczema, but I am alive, and that's all that matters. I have never had depression that I am aware of or been treated for such.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

69. I became aware of the Skipton Fund through Professor Rosenberg at the Royal Free in 2014. They sent me all the forms. I filled them in without any problems and Professor Rosenberg endorsed it and sent it to Skipton in April 2014.

70. I received a letter on 15 April 2014 refusing my application and informing me that my doctor could not provide records confirming if I had received blood or blood products.

71. I was aware that Willesden hospital was now gone and turned into a mental health hospital. I did not make any other attempt to find records because I was aware that my mother had done something to my medical records after seeing them on the table at home.

72. There was nothing in my current GP records before when I moved at 17. So, it feels like I did not exist before 17, and that is 40 odd years ago. I was unsure what else I could do with the letter from the Skipton Fund because I could not prove anything, so I just left it alone.

73. I feel like my mum would not be very helpful if someone were to contact her GRO-D. There has been no contact since.

Section 8. Other Issues

74. I don't think that it was the fault of the NHS because no one knew what HCV was therefore how could they test for it, so I understand. In fact, I still think no one knows what it really is and the type of impact it can have.

75. I am grateful that I have been cured. I am one of the lucky ones as I did not have too many side effects of the infection to suffer, but I wonder how much different my life would have been without it.

76. I exhibit two documents below:

- **WITN5469002.** Is a letter from Professor Rosenberg to Dr Gosain which states that he has completed my Skipton Fund application, and acknowledges that I contracted HCV through NHS blood products.
- **WITN5469003.** Is a letter to Dr Gosain dated 24 January 2018 from my first meeting with nurse Wendy, which confirms when I started the final course of HCV treatment.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed GRO-C

Dated 12/08/22