Witness Name: Jane TREGUNNA

Statement No. WITN5500001

Exhibits: Nil

Dated: 3 / 3 / 2023

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

WRITTEN WITNESS STATEMENT

OF

JANE ELIZABETH TREGUNNA

I provide this statement in response to a request made under Rule 9 of The Inquiry Rules, 2006 dated 8th March, 2022.

I, Jane Tregunna, will say as follows:-

Section One - Introduction

1. My full name is Jane Elizabeth Tregunna and I was born on GRO-C 1961 in Cornwall. By marriage, I was once known as Jane Kenealy, but I am now a divorcee and living alone in Somerset. I am a mother of two currently working as a packer for a food producer. My address is known to the Infected Blood Inquiry.

2. I grew up in GRO-C, living with my mother, father and elder sister. My father served in the Royal Navy, so we also travelled whilst I was young, spending short periods of time in Australia and Libya, dependent upon his postings, but generally we stayed in the one place and I settled in GRO-C once I'd left home.

3. Using this statement, I intend to speak of my having contracted Hepatitis C (also referred to within this statement as Hep' C and / or HcV) as a direct result of my having received a National Health Service blood transfusion following an Ectopic Pregnancy. In particular, I wish to tell the reader of the manner by which I came to be infected, how I learned of that infection many years later, and of the financial assistance I have received as a result.

4. This statement has been provided with limited access to past medical records, and certain incidents I will discuss took place many years ago. As such, whereas I have sought to be as accurate as possible with dates, in some cases these have necessarily been given as approximate dates where the true date is no longer known to me.

Section Two - How Infected

5. In so far as I am aware, neither of my parents had or acquired any health issues, in particular, neither had or were carriers of any hereditary conditions of the, blood, such as Haemophilia, they were both fit and healthy people.

6. My birth was natural, with no medical complications although I was six weeks premature, and no blood transfusions or blood products were used. As a baby, whilst travelling to Australia, I suffered with a bout of pneumonia, and then when I was fifteen I had to have a tonsillectomy aged fifteen, an operation which was carried out at the Royal Naval Hospital in Devonport. This was a routine procedure and I am not aware of any blood having been given to me or of the use of any blood products.

7. I am a person who has never indulged in the use of intravenously taken controlled drugs, and I have not been sexually promiscuous. I do have tattoos, but these were professionally inked upon me in 2012, in sterile conditions by a tattoo artist who wore gloves and showed me the needles within their sterile packaging prior to their use – I have therefore never exposed myself to any of what can be considered to be 'risk factors' associated with Hepatitis C infection.

8. I met my future husband when I was about eighteen years of age, left home at twenty-one, and married in 1982 when I was about twenty-two. Prior to my wedding, I fell pregnant with my care being handled through our local General Practitioner's (GP) surgery, specifically a Dr M.F. Vital of the Dean Cross Surgery in Plymstock.

9. Having handled the initial stages of my pregnancy locally, my GP referred me to the Freedom Fields Hospital when a significant, potentially life-threatening issue arose – I had an Ectopic Pregnancy.

10. My boyfriend and I had travelled to spend a weekend with his parents in GRO-C GRO-C Whilst there, I became unwell, a situation which worsened, and on the Saturday, I vomited, suffered diarrhoea, and fainted. There was also severe pain which I felt all down one side of my neck and which was only ever relieved through my lifting an arm above my head.

11. We did nothing that day, I just tried to deal with it as best as was possible, but on the Sunday, with nothing have improved, my boyfriend's parents called their GP, and he called upon me at their home.

12. I told the doctor that I was pregnant –about six weeks into the pregnancy at that time – and he examined me, part of which involved him placing his hands upon my stomach, something I found to be incredibly painful.

13. Their GP suggested that I had 'food poisoning,' and suggested that I merely *"take it easy,"* and *"put your feet up."* I wasn't very happy with his diagnosis and treatment plan, but knew no better. I had absolutely no idea at that time that an egg had been developing in one of my fallopian tubes, which had ruptured the previous day, and that I had been bleeding internally ever since.

14. We took his advice, I 'put my feet up,' and the following day, Monday, we returned to GRO-C where my mother took one look at me and said that I was to go and see my doctor, which I did, the following day, now Tuesday.

15. By this time, I was really struggling to cope with the pain whilst also feeling so faint and generally unwell. My GP examined me and in so doing took my blood pressure, the result of which seemed to give him considerable cause for concern and he wanted me to go to the hospital straightaway.

16. I can remember him having explained the urgency of the situation to me using a sort of Monopoly board analogy, *"Go straight to hospital, do not pass 'go,' just go straight there."*

17. We didn't use an ambulance, but by then I was in agony, faint, looked as 'white-as-a-sheet,' and finding myself really short of breath. My stomach had become badly swollen and was extremely tender to the touch.

18. The GP didn't call for an ambulance as my boyfriend took me – it would have been quicker for us to go straight there (as the doctor had advised), rather than our waiting for an ambulance. The doctor didn't prescribe any medication, for example, as pain-relief – I cannot now recall why this was, but it may have been as either it would have taken time to secure any medication he prescribed, and as with waiting for an ambulance, I simply didn't have that time; or it may have been as he didn't want to impact upon whatever the hospital may have needed to do to help me thereafter.

19. The doctor directed us to attend the Freedom Fields Hospital in Plymouth whilst he called them whilst we were in transit, to provide such information as he could as regards my being an incoming urgent case. We arrived at the hospital and I went straight in through their Accident and Emergency (A&E) Department where the staff seemed to be waiting for me to arrive.

20. Very quickly, I was admitted and examined, with my blood pressure being considered and then some blood taken for tests. I was given an Ultrasound Scan, and this revealed the ruptured fallopian tube. Apparently, as was explained to me, the neck pain I had been experiencing was a result of my having lost so much blood following the rupture as to have caused the collapse of a vein or veins – they had constricted for want of blood flowing through them. I'd been bleeding internally for four days.

21. The pregnancy, my first, had not been planned by either my boyfriend or I, and we had been considering our options, including my having a termination, before any of this happened. My boyfriend and I had visited my GP's surgery to discuss a termination with a doctor, and seen a different practise doctor, not Dr Vital, someone who appeared to me to have been a devout Catholic.

22. At the time, my boyfriend and I had been undecided as to what to do, but wanted to explore all possibilities, including termination. Unfortunately, the doctor I saw was very much against terminations and made that opposition quite clear to us, detailing the downside of the procedure and although not advising against it, sought to influence me in that direction. My boyfriend and I were still deciding what to do for the best, when I became unwell and was rushed into Freedom Fields.

23. My boyfriend was able to stay with me whilst I was being initially examined and then prepared for theatre and I was most grateful for that, someone close and reassuring at a most trying time, although I wasn't really thinking too clearly at the time, not considering what was going on, what would happen, and so on, I wasn't what you may consider to have been 100% 'with it' or fully aware of what was going on – all I can recall thinking was that at least the termination decision appeared to have been taken out of our hands.

24. When I saw the Ultrasound Scan images, the doctors treating me told me that what I could see was *"just a blood mass,"* and that they *"were going to have to get rid of that."*

25. I was put onto a saline drip and then taken into an operating theatre for surgery. I can remember having been asked to drink a lot of water before the procedure, apparently to inflate my bladder to *"make things easier,"* but I don't recall too much – mainly that as a result of all of the water I had consumed, I really wanted to be able to go to the lavatory, only to be told that they *"would take care of that in surgery."*

26. I do however remember having had a number of forms put in front of me, literally as I was being wheeled away from A&E and towards the operating theatre. They were consent forms, but I wasn't really functioning as I would have liked at that time,

27. I was literally bleeding to death and not really thinking straight. I do not remember what I may have been told at the time, as to what they were going to do, how, in what way or why – or of any risks which may have been associated with the surgery I faced – I just signed wherever I had to, I didn't even read the forms. However, I was never told anything as regards the likelihood of my requiring a blood transfusion, be that in surgery or afterwards.

28. I cannot remember when or where I fell asleep, but I must have, and as such believe that I received a general anaesthetic, but I have little or no recollection of much other than leaving A&E on a trolley *en route* to the theatre or even of waking up afterwards – as looking back, it's all a bit of a blur – but I do recall having woken up *in* the operating theatre whilst the operation was actually being performed.

29. I can remember waking up with an intense pain in my stomach and finding the clinicians suctioning some blood out of me. I could feel it as they worked alongside the cut they had made in my side. I recall my wanting to tell them that I was there, that I was alive, I was awake, but was unable to do so as my arms were strapped down, a mask was on my face and I was unable sit up.

30. I recall an anaesthetist, or someone, opening my eyelids, and I can recall her saying that, *"we have got to get her back,"* but I cannot remember anything else of the procedure I underwent from that time.

31. A day or two later, I spoke to a House Officer (doctor) about this. She explained to me, that by the time I had been taken into surgery, I had lost so much blood that they had only been able to give me a light anaesthetic dose rather than a heavy one, but that both were general anaesthetics.

32. Post-surgery, I came around in some sort of post-operative recovery ward or room where I was the only patient and there didn't seem to be anyone around. I was initially drowsy, but conscious and very cold but could see no one – there was no one there for a long time, or at least so it seemed to me.

33. I seem to remember my having slipped in-and-out of consciousness for a while before properly waking up, with a nurse talking to me, in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) where I had been given a room all to myself.

34. I cannot now remember whether or not I was on a drip of any form at that time, but I do recall having been fitted with an intravenous heart monitor, via a cannula. I can recall the nurses having spoken to me about it and told me that they had needed to measure it to ensure that when they took it out, they could check to see that they had it all and that none had been left behind. There were a lot of machines in my close proximity, but I cannot now remember which, if any, I had been connected to.

35. When I awoke, I had difficulty breathing but fortunately a nurse was close by and witnessing my distress, called for a doctor. I was put onto Oxygen and made to sit up with them explaining to me that as a result of my having been given so much liquid, including blood, over such a short period of time, by lying down all of the time some of the fluid had got into my lungs – I believe that within my medical notes it was referred to as a Pulmonary Oedema.

36. I also had a very high temperature, so they put an electric fan over me and opened all of the windows nearby – I can remember thinking that it was cold enough to have been snowing outside.

37. The explanation I was given (as above, Paragraph 35) was the first indication that I had received blood whilst in the operating theatre. I have absolutely no recollection of any 'blood transfusion' conversations with any clinicians prior to the Pulmonary Oedema explanation I received.

38. Within my medical notes it states that some four pints of blood were removed from my stomach and I remember the House Office having told me that at some point I had only half of the blood running through my body and doing its job as I should have – the rest I had bled out.

39. I can only draw one conclusion from the above fact, that being my having urgently required a transfusion of blood to replace that which I had lost through internal bleeding, and which those treating me had needed to remove. Furthermore, I believe that Pulmonary Oedema was often encountered as a result of a blood transfusion.

40. Once no longer on a drip, I was moved, initially into a side-ward and then onto a more traditional 'Nightingale Ward.' I believe that the heart monitor was removed prior to my having been moved to the side-ward, but I am not sure. What I do know is that I was not given any blood whilst a patient on the wards.

41. What I do remember is that this all took place at a time when a great number of people were on strike – it wasn't a national Strike, but it may as well have been as it impacted all across the country and in all walks of life, hospitals having been no exception.

42. Because of the strike, Freedom Fields Hospital appeared keen to release as many patients as was possible from their wards, and as such I found myself transferred from them to the Green Bank Hospital, Plymouth towards the end of my hospitalisation, post-op.'

43. No special provisions were made at either hospital to accommodate my boyfriend's needs – the father of the child we had lost. He could only come in to see me during hospital visiting hours, which were strictly observed, and I can recall having sent other visitors away as there was 'nothing they could do' to help.

44. Within a week of the operation, and as I was told, *"because of the strike,* I was discharged into the care of my GP. It was around this time that I first heard of a blood product called 'Factor Eight,' something which was apparently being used to speed the healing process, but I do not know if I was ever given any.

45. I hadn't been told anything of what had taken place in theatre, beyond that which I have already mentioned, until I met with my GP about a week after my hospital discharge.

46. The doctor told me that during the course of the operation at Freedom Fields, a fallopian tube had been removed together with some associated detritus from the rupture. I was told that when I had been admitted, had I left it any longer, I would have died, quite possibly within just three days and that I would have to be extremely careful were I to seek to have any children thereafter.

47. I wasn't given anything further to say that I had undergone a blood transfusion – nothing verbally, no written information and nothing to have to carry to show to others (i.e. any doctors treating me) if it were ever required nor had I been given anything of this nature by either hospital.

48. Personally, I consider myself to have gone through a near-death experience, difficult to describe other than as I have around my having 'woken up' whilst in surgery, and heard the *"we have got to get her back"* comment.

49. I believe that it was when I was given blood during the course of this surgery, that I was infected with Hepatitis C – the blood used had been contaminated.

50. I recovered from the ectopic pregnancy and resultant surgery, and went on to marry my boyfriend, moving out of my family home to set up home with him. This was in around 1982 / 1983, and at the time I was working for one of the main high street banks whilst my husband was serving in the Royal Navy.

51. I cannot now remember when it happened, but as a result of my having broken my nose, I had Rhinoplasty Surgery as an inpatient at Derriford Hospital, Plymouth, but I have absolutely no recollection of my having been given any blood or any blood product to facilitate this operation and / or my recovery from it.

52. This operation would have been a fairly standard procedure, and as it took place more recently, I believe that I would remember if I had been given any blood and / or blood product(s). I do not.

53. However, the rhinoplasty was not the same sort of emergency admission I had experienced before, and I would have had to have experienced some form of pre-operative assessment / screening which, I believe, should have included my blood having been taken and tested – on the one hand to be cross-matched to ascertain my blood group and ensure that some was to hand if required in theatre, and as a more general health screening process.

54. I do not know if my blood was tested for Hepatitis C, but feel that this may have been an opportunity for the medical authorities to have done so – this may have led to Hep' C having been discovered, diagnosed, and my condition having been brought to the attention of an HcV specialist (for monitoring / treatment) a long time before it was to be known, many years later.

55. I knew that I had been given a blood transfusion, and that surgery had most probably saved my life, so I developed a wish to 'give something back' as a means of saying 'thank you' to the National Health Service, its staff and the work they do, so I decided to become a blood donor.

56. I became a donor, using a local blood donation centre which I believe was located in GRO-C, Devon. I had already given blood a few times (I cannot now recall just how many), when I received a letter from the GRO-D GRO-D saying that *"at that time,"* they were *"unable to accept my blood."* I believe that this took place in about 1984, although exactly when is unclear.

57. The letter did not explain *why* they couldn't accept my blood, nor did it tell me of anything untoward which they may have found as regards my blood. Equally, I was not directed to seek any form of treatment, be that through my GP or any other.

58. The content of this letter was of such a bland nature as not to give me any cause for concern, and I just thought, at the time, that there had been some sort of minor issue, not even necessarily associated with the blood I had given, so I took it no further, didn't query it, didn't take it to my GP, I just let it pass.

59. Worst still, I continued to give blood, having thought that this had been a 'one off' situation, and did so for a good few years, twice a year as was then the norm'. No further letters arrived.

60. Again, I believe that this represents a missed opportunity for HcV to have been diagnosed – the GRO-D *must* surely have tested my blood for any contaminants before passing it on for use elsewhere? If not, then this was sadly remiss of them and a major failing as contaminated blood – my contaminated blood, as given on previous occasions – would have entered the supply chain.

61. In fact, this is probably the strongest opportunity for the authorities to have found out that I had Hepatitis C as my blood *should* have been tested on more than one occasion, and not just for grouping / cross matching as may have been the case in when I had been in hospital.

62. In so far as my general health was concerned, at that time I was young, fit and healthy and did all of the things a young married woman would do should she wish to do so, including my socialising with friends.

63. However, as time went by, I found that drinking with friends would quite often leave me feeling ill, and I'd experience pains in and around the area of my liver. There were some occasions when the pain was so intense that I passed out – but none of this was alcohol 'abuse' related, I wasn't getting drunk or was a problem drinker, it happened even when I drank the smallest amount.

64. I went to see my GP on two or three occasions of this having happened, and I was always examined, and my account taken verbally, but no one ever followed it up – no tests, in particular blood tests were undertaken regarding this, on each occasion it was merely attributed to having been a virus, so I had no idea why this may have been happening and again, opportunities for an early diagnosis were missed.

65. At some time in or around 1989, my life altered considerably – I left my marriage, we sold our home, and I left my job at the bank to travel to London where I had enrolled on a college course. Our marriage had reached its own natural conclusion and we separated, later divorced and I reverted to using my maiden name.

66. I took a course in Community Theatre Arts with the Rose Bruford College in Sidcup, Kent – something which I had always wanted to do, but during my time as a student, I experienced some additional, albeit minor, health issues.

67. I had Laryngitis as a result of which I had to be assisted by a Speech Therapist at the Sidcup Hospital, over a period of about two years, receiving voice coaching and breathing coaching, and also had to have some surgery. This was elected surgery conducted at the Lewisham Hospital to remove some nodules. I did not receive any blood / blood products in connection with this.

68. In or around Winter, 1990 I began to feel really unwell, but with no apparent cause, and found one of the effects was that I simply didn't want to eat anything. I went to see a GP in Catford, South London (located somewhere on Lewisham Way), and told him what I was experiencing including the fact that I was trying to take some supplements, but could keep nothing down, not even them.

69. I was given some prescribed medication, and urine was taken for testing, but no blood. Things didn't improve on the medication, so I went back to the GP's, again seeking help, and was told top stop taking my medication as it *"clearly isn't doing you any good,"* and was given something else to try. I think that I had to go back a couple of times before the condition eased – I think, of its own accord.

70. No blood was ever taken for testing, and again, I believe that this shortcoming represents yet another missed opportunity as blood tests may have revealed the presence of Hepatitis C.

71. In around 1991 / 1992 I graduated from college, but remained in London until about 1996 when I left the United Kingdom for Japan where I took up employment as an English teacher. I remained in Japan for about two and a half years, experiencing no health issues whilst there.

72. I then continued travelling, moving in and around Central America until the end of the 1990's, and as with my time in Japan, enjoying good health. I then briefly returned to the UK before moving on again, this time to Asia, spending some twenty years in India where I engaged in various activities; running an English Restaurant, a small café in Goa, and working in trekking and more general tourism in the Himalaya. I had no health issues whilst there.

73. I had two children whilst living in India, two daughters both of whom were naturally delivered with no complications and without the need for me to even receive any pain control – at my insistence. The first was an hospital birth, but as that went well, despite the warning I'd received at the Freedom Fields Hospital, I decided to have the second in a birthing centre, in water. Again, it passed without incident.

74. I returned to live in the UK in 2019, initially in West London before moving to the West Country in 2020. From my time in South London until the end of 2020, I had experienced no untoward health issues and there had been no outward symptoms that anything may have been amiss.

75. Towards the end of 2020, one of my children was experiencing some issues with her digestive system, for which she had been to see her GP. As a result of her being investigated, she called me to suggest that I had a test for Hepatitis C. She had undertaken such a test, and been found to be negative, but suggested that I have one as it had been a 'good idea' to have done so, whatever the outcome.

76. As a result, I went to see my GP at a group practise, Fromefield Surgery, Frome. I wasn't asked *why* I may want to have such a test, and I wasn't charged for the service. They took blood from me and sent it off for testing.

77. The surgery subsequently contacted me to tell me that the blood test had shown that I had Hepatitis C, and that I was being referred to the Royal United Hospital, Bath for further investigation through their Hepatology Department. The process from initial test to referral was very quick and very easy.

78. At the Royal United Hospital, further tests were required, which I distinctly remember as I have a fear of needles, and I was placed under the care of a Consultant Hepatologist, but my actual care was conducted through a nurse, Clinical Nurse Specialist Sarah Gardiner.

79. I cannot fault Sarah in any way – she was truly amazing, very sympathetic, always had or made time for me, and I only ever saw her at outpatients appointments. She explained the diagnosis to me and suggested that I try a course of treatment using a medication called Epclusa.

Section Three - Other Infections

80. I do not know if my blood was tested for anything other than Hep' C, it may have been, but I was unaware of that if it was – certainly I was never told that it was being checked for anything other than HcV and I wasn't treated for anything else.

81. To the best of my knowledge, I was only ever infected with Hepatitis C as a result of my having been given contaminated blood by the NHS.

82. Whilst in India, prior to the birth of my first child, a doctor asked that I submit to a test for the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), which I did, and which came back negative. In so far as I am aware, this was part-and-parcel of the Indian healthcare process, and as such was something which I was obliged to undertake, so I did, I never thought 'why' I may have to be doing so.

83. The test was conducted using blood taken from me – as this was in India, I made a point of ensuring that only a sterile sharp was used to take the blood, being careful to see that it came from a sealed packet. This was because issues of health-hygiene were a concern across India, and HIV / AIDS was then well known about and I'd been brought up knowing that precautions were essential.

Section Four - Consent

84. I have already mentioned that I was required to sign some forms of consent whilst being taken through A&E at Freedom Fields into the operating theatre, but at that point in time I would have signed anything if it offered some prospect of relief from the problems I faced. I wasn't in a fit state to make informed decisions, but this was an emergency situation so perhaps it's not of such gravity – I needed the blood transfusion, without it I would have died.

85. That aside, I have always been aware of what procedure I may be facing (e.g. the rhinoplasty operation and / or the removal of the nodules in my throat), or why blood may have been being taken, and consented to these taking place.

86. I underwent an HIV test with my consent, but am unaware of any other tests having been conducted other than those which occurred late on in my tale as regards HcV – if my blood was tested for Hep' C beforehand, I had not been informed and had not therefore consented, albeit that I would have done so if it offered to improve my health position at any given time.

Section Five - Impact

87. I didn't know that I had Hepatitis C for a period of some forty years and as such its impact has been considerably lessened, at least mentally and I have not experienced any form of stigma which may have otherwise have been the case had my infection been known.

88. As for symptoms, I have experienced depression, a condition which hadn't started until after the ectopic pregnancy, but which I have had to cope with since my early twenties.

89. I experienced the aches and pains in and around my liver, but which were dismissed as having been attributable to 'a virus' at the time.

90. I now have aching joints, and more general aches and pains, something which has been getting worse as I have aged – but I have put these down to the ageing process as opposed to anything else, again as I didn't even know that I had HcV.

91. The GRO-D allowed me to give blood although they clearly knew or suspected that *something wasn't right* with the blood I had given on at least one occasion. Looking back, now over the past two years following my diagnosis, this has played on my mind and had a considerable psychological impact upon me – how many people have become infected through use of my blood? It's a question which plays on my mind impacts my mental wellbeing. It's left me feeling 'dirty.'

92. Over the years I have changed my lifestyle a lot, especially after the issues with drinking in my early twenties. I stopped drinking, which impacted upon me socially as I went from 'active participant' in any event to 'designated driver,' and even now I only ever allow myself an occasional glass of wine. On the plus side, I believe this precautionary measure may have protected my liver, or at the very least reduced the impact of the infection upon me.

Section Six - Treatment / Care / Support

93. I was very young when I first fell pregnant, and then lost the baby as it was an ectopic pregnancy. I'd no previous experience of pregnancy, was in a fledgling relationship in which we had been considering termination, and had been living at home with my parents when it happened. I was otherwise fit and healthy with little or no experience of hospitals and major health issues.

94. I had been growing increasingly more and more frightened leading into my emergency admission to Freedom Fields Hospital, and was left bewildered post-operation and discharge. I simply didn't really know what had happened, why it had happened, what had been done to resolve it or what that involved, and what the future held for me in terms of my health.

95. No psychological support was offered, or perhaps even available at that time but I feel that it should have been and may have been of benefit, but there was little or no information and absolutely no counselling.

96. With the benefit of hindsight, having someone to speak to would have helped as there were a lot of unanswered questions, uncertainty and doubt in my mind. Had I have been able to sit down with someone and speak about it, in confidence, may have meant that I wouldn't have had to carry this mental anguish with me over the years, as I did. It was a case that the physical side of the problem had been addressed, but the mental side was simply left behind for me to deal with, on my own.

97. I went onto an HcV treatment course, using Epclusa in December, 2020. It was a three months course of treatment which ended in March, 2021 and saw me having to take a single pill, once a day, every day over the three months and at the same time of day.

98. In advance of my commencing the course, I was forewarned of a number of possible side effects which I may encounter, and given an information card to produce should I have needed to show it to my GP to secure any further assistance. Sarah Gardiner provided me with all of the available information, and card, describing likely problems which I remember included feeling generally unwell, nauseous, or having late periods – she was very thorough.

99. Fortunately, I did not experience any of the side effects she had detailed. I wasn't monitored during the course, but was told that should I have had any issues, then I would have to return to the hospital or give her a call. She was very approachable in that regard and I recall my having called her on a couple of occasions, including one where I had been late in taking my medication, when she had been very reassuring.

100. Once I had completed the course, I went to my GP's practise for a blood test, to check the viral load and at the same time to consider my B12 levels for any deficiency. I was subsequently told that the Hepatitis C Virus was no longer detectable in my blood – it had gone (and also that my B12 was okay). Apparently, liver function tests conducted also returned god results and there didn't appear to have been any lasting issues arising from the infection. I have since been discharged.

101. I have never been offered or received any form of psychological support following the news that I had contracted Hepatitis C, or whilst being treated for the same. I can't really say if this would have been beneficial as I had Sarah's support and almost as soon as I knew that I had Hep' C, I was placed on a treatment course and then it was gone – it all happened so suddenly.

Section Seven - Financial Assistance

102. I was told of the existence of the England Infected Blood Support Scheme (EIBSS) by Sarah at the Royal United Hospital who suggested that I apply. I did just that, was successful with my application, and have since received approval for a Stage 1 payment.

103. I encountered no particular problems with the application process.

Section Eight - Other

104. The Freedom Fields and Green Bank Hospitals no longer exist, their services having been transferred to Derriford Hospital, Plymouth some time ago. Green Bank was also once known as the Plymouth General Hospital.

105. These two hospitals were opposite one another on the same road, and I believe that I went into Freedom Fields and was then transferred to Green Bank, but it may have been the other way around as with the passage of time, I cannot now be absolutely sure. Freedom Fields provided a maternity facility, so I think that I went in there, but Green Bank had a more general A&E, so again it could have been there, I simply cannot remember which, but I was confined in both as a result of the Ectopic Pregnancy.

106. I initially met with personnel of the Infected Blood Inquiry in April, 2022 and subsequently received a draft witness statement from them for my consideration. However, receiving a detailed account of what happened to me, and reading it through brought about quite considerable mental anguish on my part, and I placed it aside rather than return it as I became unsure as to whether or not I wished to participate any further.

107. Of more recent times, I have followed both media coverage of the work of the Inquiry, and viewed live testimony of witnesses attending the hearting room, and it both served to highlight the gravity of this situation and made me regret not having returned my statement any earlier than I have.

108. I am now content to submit this statement for the use of the Inquiry, and can only say that it is an adequate and accurate reflection of my experiences, such as I now remember them.

Statement of Truth

I believe that the facts stated within the witness statement are true.

Signed: GRO-C

Dated: 3 March 2023.