

NOT RELEVANT

Witness Name: Richard van Oppen

Statement No.: WITN7675001

Exhibits: None

Dated: 24<sup>th</sup> February 2023.

## INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

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### WRITTEN STATEMENT OF RICHARD VAN OPPEN

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I provide this statement in response to a Request under Rule 13 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 6 February 2023.

I, Mr Richard van Oppen, will say as follows: -

#### Section 1: Introduction

1. My name is Richard van Oppen. My date of birth is GRO-C 1937 and my address is known to the Inquiry.
2. On the dates relevant to the documents referred to in Section 2 hereof I was HM Coroner for the County of Devon (Exeter & East Devon District). I am now retired.

#### Section 2: Response to criticism contained in DHSC0006199\_018, DHSC0006199\_030 and INQY0000421

3. I have now considered the letters which seek to criticise me (DHSC0006199\_018 and DHSC0006199\_030). I am unable to respond to the specific cases on which they rely as the names and dates are not included save to note that the complaints appear to me possibly to indicate a subjective and/or personal view of what was required by the law. No formal complaint was ever made to me.

4. It is, however, my recollection that there was, regrettable but nevertheless understandable, a reluctance at times and, on rare occasion, an omission by relevant personnel to comply with the law governing the recording of AIDs related deaths. I regret that at this distance in time I am unable to provide details of specific instances.
5. I have read the document "Presentation on the Registration of Death and the Coronial System" (INQY0000421). I believe that in all AIDs' related deaths reported to me I acted throughout in accordance with Coronial Law objectively, correctly and with compassion. I was not appealed. I have not been the subject of any formal complaint, and am not aware of any such. I was at all times wholly willing to engage constructively with all properly interested parties and authorities on relevant issues of coronial law and practice.

**Statement of Truth**

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

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

GRO-C

Dated

24<sup>th</sup> February 2023.