Witness Name: Adam Fleming
Statement No.: WITN1875001
Exhibits: WITN1875002 - 006
Dated: 3 September 2022

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

FIRST WRITTEN STATEMENT OF ADAM FLEMING

I, Adam Fleming, will say as follows: -

Section 1. Introduction

1. My name is Adam Fleming and my date of birth is GRO-C 1983. My address is known to the Inquiry.

2. I am 39 years of age, married with two young children. I work as a Solicitor.

Section 2. How infected

3. I was diagnosed with severe Haemophilia A in February 1985 when I was nearly two years old. My medical states that prior to my diagnosis, at 9 months old, my doctors noticed bruises on my legs and knee and a difficulty with my blood samples. My medical records show that I received Factor VIII and cryoprecipitate in 1984 for various bleeds before I was diagnosed with Haemophilia A in 1985 **[WITN1875002].** Due to the passing of time, my Mother does not recall how many times I was given Factor VIII and cryoprecipitate

4. I was treated at the Royal London Hospital Haemophilia Centre under the care of Dr Colvin. I was treated there from November 1983. I transferred to the care of Kent & Canterbury Hospital in around September 2002.

5. I doubt my mother was given any advice beforehand on the risk of exposure to infection from blood and blood products. I have asked my mother about this and she cannot recall ever being advised of the risks.

6. The earliest I remember Hepatitis C being discussed was when I was around 10 or 11 in 1993 or 1994. The earliest note I can see of it in my medical records is 1995 **[WITN1875003].** This note from my medical records states I was probably infected with Hepatitis C from the mid 1980's and that I showed abnormal liver results during this period.

7. I cannot recall what advice was given to me regarding my infection. I don't think I was given any information on the risks of transmitting this infection to others.

8. In hindsight, I do think that I should have been given more information about Hepatitis C earlier.

9. In 2001 I underwent a 6-month treatment of interferon and ribavirin and successfully cleared the Hepatitis C infection **[WITN1875004]**.

Section 3. Other Infections

10. I do not believe that I received any infections other than Hepatitis C as a result of being given infected blood products. I recall being told my test for HIV was negative and being retested for this regularly. I also received a letter stating I was at risk of having been exposed to vCJD **[WITN1875005].**

Section 4. Consent

11. I suspect my parents consented to the treatment without being informed of the potential risks. However, my mother does not recall.

Section 5. Impact

12. Fortunately, thus far and as far as I am aware I have not suffered from a lot of physical symptoms as a result of my Hepatitis C infection. It wasn't until I got older that I started to understand what my infection and diagnosis meant. I remember once at a check-up the doctor thought my spleen was inflamed but other than that I do not recall many physical symptoms. I can remember the doctor checking and feeling my stomach and liver at every appointment. It was the mental affects following my treatment that really impacted me.

13. I held off starting treatment until I finished school in 2001 and took the decision to take a year out to have the treatment. I had a 6-month treatment of interferon and ribavirin. I had to take 3 tablets every morning and every night. During this treatment I seemed to have a new infection every other day. I felt unwell for the duration of the 6 months however it was nothing unmanageable. I felt achy occasionally like I had the flu. My doctor warned me I could have felt a lot worse but fortunately this never came to fruition. I remember when I read the leaflet containing the side effects, the one that stuck in my mind was the risk you could become infertile due to the treatment. That was quite scary at the age of 18. I didn't really have any choice, I had to take the treatment. I clearly remember going through the medicine leaflets in my kitchen one evening – I suspect that memory will always stay with me.

14. Mentally the treatment made me feel quite exposed, but I got on with it. I treated it in the same way as I have treated my prophylaxis treatment for my whole life. It impacted me as it felt I was putting my life on hold for a year while all my friends

went to university or to work. I spent 6 months working at the pub down the road and having treatment – I felt like my life had stalled.

15. I recall going to the dentist once and being told I should not be there in the middle of the day. The dentist told me I should tell the receptionist I was infected with Hepatitis C so they could disinfect and throw everything away. I remember finding this pretty upsetting. I would have been maybe 16 at the time.

16. My family were quite resilient about my diagnosis really. Mum asked lots of questions at check-up appointments. I will always remember Dr Colvin telling her that the worst-case scenario was that I might need a liver transplant before I reached middle age. I imagine this was pretty terrifying for my mother to hear. It certainly was for me. I have two sons of my own now and I can only imagine what impact that could have on you as a parent especially if you as the parent had consented to the treatment. Although I suspect my parents consented to the treatment without being informed of the potential risks. I'm not even sure my doctor at the time was in control or fully aware of the risks. I suspect they were not aware of the way in which the UK Government was recklessly sourcing donor blood.

17. Socially, being infected with Hepatitis C affected me as I didn't drink alcohol until I was 20 or 21. At that age when your mates are all starting to drink and go clubbing, there's an impact when you can't do these things. Even working at the pub, I was always asked why I wasn't joining in with this, that and the other. I had to deal with this as well as with telling people I had Hepatitis C and not knowing what their reaction was going to be or if they even understood what that was.

18. Fortunately, I didn't face many educational affects as I waited until I finished school before starting my treatment. I feel fortunate I was so young as I think you are much more resilient at that age and it is easier to shut things out.

19. Luckily this also meant my infection didn't really affect my future career prospects although taking a year out to have the treatment has put me a year behind where I am now, and I have missed out on a year's earning capacity.

20. The ongoing impact has meant that there is always that nagging feeling in my mind thinking what if the infection hasn't gone or what if it comes back. I think about this a lot and I suspect I always will. I also do not know what damage was done whilst I had the virus. Only around 5 years ago did they stop regularly testing me for Hepatitis C because it was no longer detectable, but I still worry. Those kinds of thoughts are always there. The psychological affects will always be with me.

21. My infection history has had a huge impact on my ability to obtain life insurance. It has made it so difficult as I cannot get critical illness cover. I am the main earner in my family. My life insurance payment is weighted, and I pay a lot more than other people my age. This is all as a result of something I was infected with during my treatment and have since cleared. I recently became a partner at my firm, and they can't add me to key man insurance policies. I have had to tell people at work about my infection history, as well as financial advisors associated with the firm too. I appreciate this is a 'nice problem to have' but it's another example of my life being impacted by the infection.

22. I recall around two or three years ago I had to get a letter and records from my GP. My GP phoned me up asking me to come in immediately. I went into my GP and the doctor said when she was writing my letter she found a letter from the NHS stating I had Hepatitis C antibodies **[WITN1875006]**. This sent me into a blind panic. I started to worry that my wife would therefore have it, and maybe even my children (I knew nothing of how or if it could be passed to children by an infected mother). I called the haemophilia centre who, after some investigation, discovered this was a letter from Public Health England to let my GP know I had antibodies which I now understand is because I have had treatment for the virus. I live in constant fear of another day like that, or of something worse.

23. I feel like my infection has left both me and my family at a disadvantage despite the fact I have had successful treatment and have cleared my Hepatitis C infection. It may not have had massive physical side effects, but it has massively affected my life in every other aspect ever since.

24. I struggle to talk about the fact I was infected with Hep C. I think I probably need to speak to someone about it properly. I feel like a bit of an imposter at times. So many people lost their lives. People in the same position as me. Children like me treated for the same condition at the same time never made it to their teen years and some of those that did have had to live with the stigma of being infected with AIDS. I was lucky but it haunts me every day that it could have been different.

Section 6. Treatment/Care/Support

25. I did not receive any counselling or psychological support and I wish this was something that was made available to me at the time.

Section 7. Financial Assistance

26. I received financial support from the Skipton Fund. I received the stage 1 payment of £20,000 around 2004/2005. I found out about the Skipton Fund around 2003 as when I went to Kent University, I had to change hospital and I attended a routine appointment. I recall it was at this appointment my haemophilia nurse told me about the possibility of financial support. I had no idea up until this point.

27. I also receive the periodic payments from EIBSS, this was £300 monthly initially but has now increased. I also received a further £30,000 in 2021 when they levelled up the UK support in line with the support offered by other home nations.

28. I don't recall the application being a difficult process. I did not sign a waiver; the payments were clearly labelled ex-gratia. Although, at the age of 22, that was a lot of money so I can't say I cared too much.

Section 8. Other Issues

29. I sat as a Trustee of the Haemophilia Society for 2 years in around 2010 – 2012. I have to say at that point I had given up hope of there ever being a public inquiry into these issues. I never thought it would happen. I have taken a keen interest in the Inquiry since it started and can only express thanks and gratitude to all that have campaigned, acted, and participated in the Inquiry to date.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed **GRO-C**

Dated ..03.09.2022........