

Witness Name: Alasdair Murray

Statement No: WITN3076001

Exhibits:

Dated: 23 April 2019

INFECTED BLOOD INQUIRY

WRITTEN STATEMENT OF ALASDAIR MURRAY

I, Alasdair Murray, of GRO-C will say as follows:-

1. I make this statement in response to a request under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 dated 4 April 2019.
2. I was born on GRO-C 1970. I became a Trustee of the MacFarlane Trust in 2014 and Chair in May 2016 until the Trust's closure in February 2019.
3. Since I am no longer a Trustee and the Trust has closed, I no longer have access to any of the Trust's documents. This statement is therefore necessarily based solely on my recollection of events and without the benefit of reviewing relevant documents.
4. I agreed to meet Mrs Walton in May 2018, following a direct written request to me by Nadhim Zahawi MP. I recall that it was initially unclear who would be attending the meeting, but Mr Zahawi's office subsequently informed me that Mrs Walton wanted to come, and I agreed that she could attend. In the event, Mrs Walton was accompanied by her sister in addition to Mr Zahawi. The meeting took place in Mr Zahawi's office and there was no formal agenda or any scheduled length.
5. As I recall, Mrs Walton and her sister did most of the talking during the meeting, outlining their views about the loan and expressing the view that

it should either have been a grant originally or should have been converted to a grant subsequently. Mr Zahawi expressed robustly his point of view that a loan should never have been made. My comments were mostly confined to providing relevant context on behalf of the Trust concerning the loan based on my reading of the case files and discussions with the Chief Executive. I had not been involved in the decision making concerning the original loan or subsequent consideration of Mrs Walton's requests that the loan be converted to a grant. I was not setting out my personal position in relation to the matters Mrs Walton raised, but trying to explain as best I could on behalf of the Trust the context for the previous decisions of the Trustees.

6. I was not made aware of any factual evidence during the meeting which had not previously been covered in extensive correspondence between the Trust and Mrs Walton over many years as contained in the case file. Neither the Trust nor I made any commitment to conduct a formal investigation into the circumstances of Mrs Walton's loan either before or during the meeting. Having listened to her concerns and those of Mr Zahawi at the meeting, I did, however, feel it was right to test the principles applicable in Mrs Walton's case again, particularly as the closure of the Trust was now looming. I, therefore, offered to discuss the case again at the next available board meeting. I asked Mr Zahawi to put a request for the Trust to do this in writing. I do not believe that this letter contained any new information requiring another more forensic examination of the details of the case.
7. To the best of my knowledge, the suggestion that a loan register had been lost had been previously considered by the Trust and there was no evidence to support this claim. This is not how the loan information was maintained by the Trust rather it was kept as part of the individual files of the beneficiary. However loans were always reviewed as part of the audit process and aggregate information provided in the annual report. Any historical loss of loan information would have been material to the accounts and should have been picked up and reported by the auditors in

the accounts. It would also have required reporting to the Charity Commission. As far as I am aware this has never happened in the Trust's history. In my time as a Trustee, existing loans were regularly discussed at board meetings and again were subject to audit.

8. As I had committed at the meeting, the issue of the principles around the loans were discussed at the regular board meeting in July 2018. The outline of that discussion is contained in the Board minutes to which I no longer have access but which are available to the Inquiry. As I recall, the overall view was that Trustees believed it would not be fair on other beneficiaries, some of whom had repaid loans, to write off the loan. The loan forms a significant part of the Trust's remaining assets and it was the view of Trustees that it should ultimately be available for the benefit of all beneficiaries.
9. Following the production of draft minutes, the outcome of the board debate was communicated to Mrs Walton by letter in September 2018. The slight delay was because it was summer and the Chief Executive and I were away at different points. I had also hoped we might have firm news on transferring the loans to another organisation, but in the event that took slightly longer to reach a point where this could be confirmed.

Statement of Truth

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

GRO-C

Signed _____

Dated 23/4/19