

Witness Statement Ref. No. 012/3

NAME OF CHILD: Adam Strain

Name: Alison Armour

Title: Dr.

Present position and institution:

Consultant Pathologist at the Royal Preston Hospital, Preston, Lancashire and Consultant Home Office pathologist MB BCH BAO FRCPath DMJ (Path).

Previous position and institution:

[As at the time of the child's death]

Senior Registrar Forensic Medicine- State Pathologist's Department, Belfast

Membership of Advisory Panels and Committees:

[Identify by date and title all of those between January 1995 - May 2012]

Previous Statements, Depositions and Reports:

[Identify by date and title all those made in relation to the child's death]

OFFICIAL USE:

List of previous statements, depositions and reports attached:

Ref:	Date:	
011-010-034	29.11.95	Report of Autopsy on Adam Strain
011-010-030	18.06.96	Deposition at the Inquest on Adam Strain
011-010-033		Transcript of oral evidence at the Inquest on Adam Strain
093-022	12.04.06	PSNI Witness Statement
WS-012/1	15.03.11	Inquiry Witness Statement
WS-012/2	29.11.11	Second Inquiry Witness Statement

IMPORTANT INSTRUCTIONS FOR ANSWERING:

Please attach additional sheets if more space is required. Please identify clearly any document to which you refer or rely upon for your answer. If the document has an Inquiry reference number, e.g. Ref: 049-001-001 which is 'Chart No.1 Old Notes', then please provide that number.

If the document does not have an Inquiry reference number, then please provide a copy of the document attached to your statement.

I. QUERIES IN RELATION TO YOUR MEDICAL QUALIFICATIONS, EXPERIENCE, TRAINING AND RESPONSIBILITIES

(1) Please provide the following information:

- (a) Describe your work commitments at the State Pathologist's Department from the date of your appointment to December 1995;

I commenced work as a Senior Registrar, Forensic Medicine, State Pathologist's Department, Belfast on 1st February 1993 and remained in that post until December 1995.

- (b) Was there a written job description for your post in 1995? If so please provide copy of the same. If not, what were the functions and responsibilities of the post?

I am unable to recollect whether there was a written job description for my post in 1995, although it is possible that there was. I do not, however, have a copy of any such job description. The functions and responsibilities of the post were to perform autopsies and post-mortem histology work, as required by the State Pathologists Department.

- (c) Describe the accountability of a Senior Registrar Forensic Medicine- State Pathologist's Department, Belfast at that time;

In 1995, Senior Registrars performed coronial autopsies independently. At that time forensic autopsies were performed at Consultant level. Overall managerial responsibility for staff would have rested with the Head of the Pathologist's Department.

- (d) Were professional Codes of Conduct incorporated into the contracts of those healthcare professionals involved in the care and treatment of Adam Strain in 1995?

I have no knowledge of what, if any, Codes of Conduct would have been incorporated into the contracts of those healthcare professionals involved in the care and treatment of Adam Strain in 1995.

- (e) Did you receive, in 1995, any training, supervision or continuous professional development?

To the best of my recollection there were no formal processes in place for training, supervision or continuous professional development in 1995.

- (2) Please state whether there was any guidance, practice or policy in 1995 in respect of:

- (a) Record keeping in respect of autopsy examinations;
- (b) The quality and accuracy of descriptions of findings at autopsy;
- (c) Photographic records of the body or objects found in it such as sutures;
- (d) The conduct of histopathological investigation of organs at autopsy;
- (e) The weighing of organs;
- (f) The amount of clinical information which is incorporated into autopsy reports;
- (g) The standards expected with regards to the conduct of autopsy;
- (h) Training and/or mentoring of non-consultant level pathologists, and the curricula upon which such an approach was based;
- (i) Records of which professionals were involved in autopsy and post-autopsy analysis;
- (j) Assistance and supervision for non-Consultant level Pathologists;
- (k) Disseminating and sharing information;
- (l) Contributing to teaching and training programs;
- (m) As to the presence of clinicians during autopsy.

I have no recollection of what, if any, guidance, practice or policy may have been in place in 1995 in relation to the above listed issues.

- (3) Please advise precisely on Professor Crane's involvement in the autopsy and the provision of the autopsy report on Adam Strain?

Professor Crane did not have any involvement in the autopsy or the provision of the autopsy report on Adam Strain.

(4) Please explain the practice in 1995 in the State Pathologist's Department in Northern Ireland regarding the following:

(a) Where an autopsy should take place, including the considerations involved in deciding whether it should take place off the royal site;

To the best of my recollection, in 1995 the practice was that autopsies in relation to hospital deaths would normally have taken place at the treating hospital.

(b) Who should sign or co-sign the Report on Autopsy in circumstances where the pathologist is not a consultant, and where expert opinion has been sought and relied upon.

In 1995, a pathologist who had completed with MRCPATH would have signed the Report on Autopsy themselves, irrespective of whether they held a Consultant post. In a coronial autopsy, it would not have been considered necessary for every person who had offered an opinion in relation to the case to have co-signed the report.

(5) Please state your view on whether it would have been easier to use Adam Strain's case history as a vehicle for learning had there been agreement as to the role dilutional hyponatraemia played in Adam's death?

I anticipate that a hospital clinician would be better placed to address this query.

(6) Please state, in 1995 and present, whether the conduct of coronial autopsies were/ are covered by NHS rules. If not, please provide details of who governed/ governs the same.

I cannot recollect what, if any, rules were in place in relation to the conduct of coronial autopsies in 1995. The Royal College of Pathologists issues guidance for pathologists but is not responsible for governing coronial autopsies.

(7) Please state whether the performance of coronial autopsies were/ are governed by the Royal College of Pathologists (RCPATH)? What guidance was available from the RCPATH regarding the same?

Please see answer (6) above. I cannot recollect what, if any, specific guidance was available from the Royal College of Pathologists in 1995.

(8) Please comment on the findings and recommendations of the Brodrick Report (1971) and which of these, if any, have been implemented in respect of the conduct of coronial autopsies.

I consider that this very broad question would be more appropriately addressed by Professor Lucas, in his role as expert witness to the Inquiry.

(9) Please describe all communications between you and Professor Crane and/or Mr. Leckey, the Coroner, in relation to Adam Strain. Please identify all such correspondence and furnish copies

thereof.

I have detailed below the communications between myself and Professor Crane and/or Mr Leckey, the Coroner, in relation to Adam Strain. To the best of my recollection I had no further correspondence with either individual other than the correspondence listed below, namely:

- I am aware that there is a note stating that I telephoned the Coroner on a number of occasions, including on 29th November 1995, 1st December 1995 and 8th December 1995 to discuss the Autopsy Findings. I do not recollect the details of any such telephone calls, it would, however, have been normal practice in 1995 to make verbal contact with the Coroner (011-025-125).
- On 8th December 1995 I wrote to Professor Crane, this letter was copied to Mr Leckey the Coroner, Dr Murnaghan, Hospital Administrator, Mr Calvin Spence, BMA and the Medical Protection Society (011-023-123);
- A Memorandum was sent to the Coroners Office on 8th December 1995 to notify the Coroner that I had conducted the Autopsy on Adam Strain (011-024-124);
- The Coroner sent me a letter dated 13th December 1995 (011-027-128 to 011-128-129);
- On 20th December 1995 I wrote to Dr Sumner at the Hospital for Children, NHS Trust, Great Ormond Street, London. This letter was carbon copied to Mr Leckey (011-028-130 to 011-028-031);
- On 22nd December 1995 I wrote to Professor Berry, St. Michael's Hospital, Bristol. This letter was carbon copied to Mr Leckey (011-028-151 and 011-028-152).
- I am aware that there is a note that Mr Leckey spoke to me by telephone in early January 1996. I have no recollection of this telephone call (011-033-165);
- A letter was sent to me by Mr Leckey dated 5th January 1996 (011-035-167);
- A letter was sent to me by Mr Leckey dated 19th January 1996 (011-043-176);
- A letter was sent to me by Mr Leckey dated 26th January 1996 (011-048-181);
- A letter was sent to me by Mr Leckey dated 8th February 1996 (011-050-184);
- A letter was sent to me by Mr Leckey dated 27th March 1996 (011-054-189);
- I wrote to Mr Leckey on 29th April 1996 (011-064-199);
- A letter was sent to me by the Coroner's Office dated 16th May 1996 (011-068-203).
- A letter was sent to me by Mr Leckey dated 29th May 1996 (011-077-212);

- I wrote to Mr Leckey on 3rd June 1996 (011-079-214);
- A letter was sent to me by Mr Leckey dated 26th June 1996 (011-085-220).

In addition to the above communication a copy of my Autopsy Report was sent to Mr Leckey. I am unable to recollect the precise date on which this was done.

- (10) State whether you sought advice or assistance from Professor Crane or any other consultant pathologist in the State Pathologist's Department in relation to Adam's autopsy and Report and if so what advice or assistance was provided.

I recollect discussing the case informally with Dr Derek Carson (then a Consultant Pathologist) and Dr Alan Cromie (then a Trainee Forensic Pathologist). Dr John Press (Consultant Pathologist) may also have been present at the time of this informal discussion. I recollect that both Dr Carson and Dr Cromie considered the potential cause of death may have been hypoxia-anoxia and recommended that the anaesthetic equipment was checked. This was subsequently done.

- (11) With respect to the letter sent by you to Professor Jack Crane dated 8th December 1995 (Ref:011-023-123) in which you offered to attend a meeting to discuss the case of Adam Strain in full, please advise:

- (a) Whether you received a response to this letter either orally or in writing? If oral please state what was said, if in writing please provide copy of the same;

I do not recollect whether I received a response to this letter either orally or in writing.

- (b) Whether such a meeting ever took place? If so who was present, what was its outcome, and please provide a minute/ record of the same.

To the best of my knowledge no such meeting took place.

- (c) If no such meeting occurred, please give your view as to why not?

I am unaware of why no such meeting occurred.

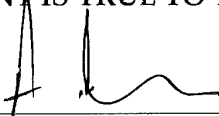
II. GENERAL

- (12) Please provide any further comments you might wish.

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THIS STATEMENT IS TRUE TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE AND BELIEF

Signed:



Dated:

12th June 2012