

Witness Statement Ref. No.

020/1

NAME OF CHILD: RAYCHEL FERGUSON

Name: Marie Ferguson

Title: Mrs.

Present position and institution:

Previous position and institution:

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

Membership of Advisory Panels and Committees:

*[Identify by date and title all of those between January 2000 - November 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:	
012-025-135	17/03/02	Statement to PSNI for Purposes of Inquest
012-028-144	05/02/03	Deposition to the Coroner
095-002-005	01/09/05	PSNI Witness Statement
095-003-009	01/09/05	PSNI Witness Statement
095-004-014	22/08/05	PSNI 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

I. QUERIES ARISING OUT OF YOUR DEPOSITION TO THE CORONER

Raychel's Medical History

- (1) Briefly, describe Raychel's medical history prior to 7<sup>th</sup> June 2001, and clarify whether she was generally a well and healthy child.

She was generally fit and well. Completely normal for a nine year old child.

At Accident and Emergency Department of Altnagelvin

- (2) "At Casualty, Raymond my husband carried Raychel into the cubicle as we were taken right away. A doctor began to examine Raychel and he stated it could be a problem with her appendix and he decided to give her some pain relief in the form of an injection. Shortly after this injection she began to brighten up and came back to herself." (Ref: 012-028-145)

- (a) If you can, identify by name or description the doctor who examined Raychel upon arrival at Casualty and administered the injection.

I do not remember his name now. I cannot even give a detailed description of him. I only remember thinking he was from the Middle East or Asia. I did find him difficult to understand.

- (b) Did this doctor explain why s/he believed "it could be a problem with her appendix"?

There was no explanation as to why, he just said it could be her appendix.

- (c) Was any other possible diagnosis suggested to you by this doctor or by any other member of medical or nursing staff?

No

- (d) How would you describe Raychel's condition before she received the injection for pain relief, and for how long had she been in that condition?

She was sick from being at home to Casualty. I thought she was back to normal after the injection. It was from about 4.15pm that Raychel started complaining.

- (e) How would you describe Raychel's condition after she received the injection for pain relief? In what way did she "brighten up"?

Her colour came straight back and she was talking. She was told she was getting an operation and I remember her saying "I'm not staying in here". That was typical of Raychel.

- (f) If you can recall, did any other doctor examine Raychel after she received the injection? If so, who was this doctor, and did you discuss Raychel's condition with him/her?

No

- (3) *"The doctor left us with Raychel and returned a short time later stating that if her pain increased they would have to open her up and remove the appendix even if it did look healthy and normal, as this was procedure. I signed a consent form to allow the operation to go ahead."* (Ref: 012-028-145)

- (a) Can you recall by name or description the doctor who advised that it might be necessary to "open her up" if the pain increased, and who took the consent from you?

Same Doctor as above. I recall it was him who also produced the consent form.

- (b) In your police statement (Ref: 095-002-005) you refer to Dr. Makar examining Raychel. For the avoidance of doubt, at what point in the sequence of events after arrival at Casualty was Raychel seen by Dr. Makar?

It was almost immediately upon arriving at Casualty. It was not long.

- (c) Insofar as you are aware, specify the steps were taken by Dr. Makar in relation to Raychel?

He examined her right hand side, just below her belly button and as I have said, confirmed it may be her appendix.

- (d) At the point when you signed the consent form to allow the operation to go ahead, had Raychel's pain increased? If so, please describe her condition at that time.

I signed the consent form after the injection.

- (e) If Raychel's pain had not increased at the point when you signed the consent form, please give details of the information given to you that led you to sign the consent form?

This was because I was advised she was to be kept in as a precautionary measure and that the consent was needed in case she took bad as we were told the operation did not take place until early hours of the next morning as Raychel had eaten.

- (f) Did the doctor explain his diagnosis of Raychel's condition and the need for surgery before you signed the consent form?

I simply understood she had to get her appendix out and I signed the consent form.

- (g) Did you ask any questions of the doctor before you signed the consent form? If so, what did you ask and what answers did you receive?

I queried when the operation would be. We were told it would be 3 or 4am or words to the effect that it would be the early hours of the morning and so the consent form needed signing.

#### Admission to Children's Ward

(4) *"We waited in A&E for a while until a bed was available in the children's ward and when she was transferred to the children's ward she was still in good form. The doctor who was looking after Raychel in A&E said that it would be the early hours of the following morning before any operation could take place and that an Anaesthetist would have her examine her as well."* (Ref: 012-028-145)

(a) You have described Raychel as being in "good form." Please explain what you mean by this

Well her "form" was good. Her colour had come back and as far as I could see she was back to her normal self - chatting away.

(b) Please clarify whether Raychel was experiencing any pain when she reached the children's ward?

No

(c) Were you present when the Anaesthetist examined Raychel? If so, did you ask any questions to or receive any information from the Anaesthetist?

I cannot recall this at this point but when we came back (around just after 11pm) there was a man at Raychel's bedside who was just leaving. My memory is that a Nurse told me he was the Anaesthetist and had examined Raychel.

(5) Records show that Raychel received intravenous fluids when she was admitted to the children's ward. Was Raychel's need for intravenous fluids explained to you? If so, what explanation did you receive and who provided this explanation to you.

No. Nothing.

#### Theatre for Appendicectomy

(6) *"When Raychel was settled in the children's ward we went home in order to get her some clothes as she was going to be staying. At about 22.50 hours and we had only been home about 10 minutes and the hospital rang saying that they needed us to return as they were taking Raychel to theatre. I accompanied Raychel to theatre and she was still in good form."* (Ref: 012-028-145)

(a) You have again described Raychel as being in "good form." What did you mean by this, and clarify whether Raychel was experiencing any pain when she arrived at theatre?

Raychel did not seem to be to be in any pain as she was getting wheeled down into theatre. She was chatting away to the Nurse about her sports day.

- (b) Was there any further discussion with the surgeon or the anaesthetist in relation to Raychel's need for surgery when you arrived at theatre with Raychel?

I don't recall anything specific now but my memory is that someone mentioned a face mask would be used to knock Raychel out. I cannot recall who this was. My memory is that it was a man who told me this.

- (c) What was your understanding of why it was necessary for Raychel to undergo surgery at that time?

We thought that whoever was going to do the operation did not want to hang around. We thought it strange as she was not long after her dinner. We just assumed the Doctors knew best.

#### Returning from Theatre

- (7) *"A nurse said that Raychel would be back on the ward within the hour, so at 00.30 hours on 08 06 2001 we returned to the Children's Ward waiting on Rachel. Raychel did not return until about 02.10 hours and I questioned a nurse as to the delay before she arrived and all I was told was that they had no word yet. When Raychel returned we were so glad to see her that we didn't ask what they delay had been."* (Ref: 012-028-145)

- (a) In your police statement you described the nurse who advised you that Raychel would be back on the ward within the hour, as aged *"between 40 -50 years of age and tall"* and that it was not Nurse Noble (Ref: 095-002-005). Please confirm that this is your evidence and clarify whether you can add anything to this description?

I do not think it was Nurse Noble but I cannot be completely sure.

- (b) In your police statement (Ref: 095-002-005) you said that you could not describe the nurse who you questioned in relation to the *"delay"*. Please confirm that this is your evidence and clarify whether it remains the case that you cannot describe the nurse concerned?

Confirmed.

- (c) What was your state of mind during this period when there was a *"delay"* in returning Raychel to the ward?

After 12.30am, that's when we started to worry and we asked about the delay. We were told it should not be much longer for Raychel to be out of the anaesthetic and we accepted that. But then by 1.30am we were really worried. We asked again about the delay. We were told she was in the recovery room now and that everyone is different in terms of as to when they come around. These discussions took place between us and the Nurses up on the ward but I cannot now recall any names or descriptions.

- (d) In the period after you were told that there was *"no word yet"*, did you seek reassurance from nursing or medical staff, and if so, did you receive any reassurance?

We accepted what they said in the first instance and left it at that.

- (e) Identify by name or description anyone else you spoke to about the "delay" in returning Raychel to the ward.

Unfortunately I cannot do this now.

- (f) When Raychel returned to the ward did you receive any information in relation to the following matters:

- (i) The outcome of the operation;

No. But we just were so glad to see Raychel back.

- (ii) Raychel's condition;

No

- (iii) How she might recover from surgery (i.e. the likely post-operative course);

No

- (iv) The treatment plan going forward?

No

In relation to each of these matters, please explain what you were told, and who provided you with the information.

We weren't told anything. We were just overcome with a sense of relief seeing Raychel. Raychel was lying on her right side as far as I remember and I further recall Raychel opened her eyes and closed them again, just the once. Just seeing her was such a relief.

#### Developments on the Morning of the 8<sup>th</sup> June 2001

- (8) *"At 06.00 hours I left the hospital as Raychel had not wakened and my husband stayed. After a phone call at about 09.00 hours I returned to see Raychel as she was now awake. Raychel was in bed and colouring in and told me that she had been sick."* (Ref: 012-028-145)

- (a) Please confirm that it is your evidence that you arrived at the hospital at approximately 10.00 hours, as per your statement to the police (Ref: 095-002-005).

It may have been slightly earlier, perhaps between 9.30am and 10.00am. Also, my memory now is that Raychel was not in her bed when I arrived. My memory now is that Raychel was sitting at a small table and chair colouring in. The moment I walked in my husband said "there's your mammy" and Raychel immediately got up and gave me a hug with both arms and said "guess what mammy I was sick". I just replied "oh God. Were you love".

- (b) When you arrived at the hospital did your husband leave, or did he stay with you?

He stayed for about 45 minutes.

- (c) How would you describe Raychel's condition when you first saw her at the hospital that morning?

Raychel told me that she was sick but she looked ok to me then and I was just so glad to see her.

- (d) Did nursing staff explain to you the nursing plan for Raychel for that day? If so, what were you told?

No

- (e) Did nursing staff give you any instruction about reporting the following matters to them in relation to Raychel:

- (i) Episodes of vomiting;

No

- (ii) Consumption of fluids by mouth;

No

- (iii) Urination.

No

If you did receive any instruction in relation to any of these matters, describe the instruction you were given, and indicate whether you complied with the instructions.

No

- (f) Did you obtain any other information from Raychel or anyone else about the fact that she had been sick before you arrived at the hospital? If so, what information did you obtain?

I just asked my husband and my husband said "well not unless she was sick when I was at the shop".

- (g) Did you report to nursing or medical staff the fact that Raychel had been sick before you arrived at the hospital? If so, who did you report it to and outline the discussion that took place.

No

- (h) Were you present when Raychel was seen by any doctor on the morning of the 8 June 2001? If so, did you discuss Raychel's progress with a doctor?

No

- (9) *"At about 12.00 hours I took Raychel to the toilet and as she was about to leave the toilet she began to vomit which was large in volume, she was bright red and came out in a cold sweat. She*

*returned to bed and I informed a nurse that she had been sick but the nurse said that this was normal."* (Ref: 012-028-145)

- (a) How long had you been at the hospital before Raychel vomited as described above?

I now recall that even before the 12 noon vomit that at around 11am Raychel vomited then as well. I think it was just a small vomit but I cleaned this with a tissue. It was more like a slime. Then at 12 I remember carrying Raychel to the toilet with the intravenous drip also pushed by me as well. No one offered to help. She did use the toilet. Then I took her over to the sink in the toilet to wash her hands but she said "I'm going to be sick". Her face was really red and I could see the sweat breaking out on her, although her head was cold to touch. Then there was a huge vomit into the sink. I could see all the rice that she had eaten come up. My first thought was that she had vomited because she was operated on with a full stomach and this was why she was sick. She was "panicky" but I told her she was going to be all right.

- (b) Were you with Raychel throughout the period between your arrival at the hospital and the time when you brought her to the toilet, or did you leave (for any period of time) for breaks?

Yes. I was with her through that period and did not leave.

- (c) Was anyone else present with you during this period?

Ray until around 11.00am

- (d) In the period between your arrival at the hospital and the time when you brought Raychel to the toilet, how would you describe her condition?

After Raychel said to me "guess what mammy I was sick", I can't recall her talking much apart from Raychel saying she wanted to go to the toilet. However, a little girl on the next bed did try to befriend Raychel but she was not successful. She offered Raychel a book to read. Raychel did try to acknowledge the girl but it seemed to me she was in a bit of a daze, just looking at the girl. I therefore said to the little girl, "thank you" but Raychel remained quiet and still.

- (e) Confirm that it is your evidence that Raychel did not leave her bed in the period after your arrival at the hospital that morning, until you accompanied her to the toilet, as per your police statement (Ref: 095-002-006)?

Raychel went to her bed after I arrived and did not leave it until I carried her to the toilet.

- (f) Did you have any dealings with nursing or medical staff in the period between your arrival at the hospital and the time when you brought Raychel to the toilet? If so, identify any nursing or medical staff you dealt with, and outline the nature and content of any discussions which took place.

No. However my memory is that my husband did mention the "slime" vomit to the Nurses on the ward when he was leaving.



- (g) If you can, please identify by name or description the nurse to whom you reported when Raychel vomited during the visit to the toilet?

All I can remember is a Nurse who was small with dark hair. I reported this as I was coming out of the toilet. I said she filled the sink with the dinner she had the day before.

- (h) Did the nurse examine Raychel after you reported the episode of vomiting to her?

No. But she did say that someone would be along to look at Raychel.

- (i) Insofar as you are aware, did the nurse take any other steps in relation to Raychel after you reported that she had been sick?

No

- (j) What did you understand by the nurse's explanation that Raychel's vomiting was "normal"?

I took this to mean that it was normal due to the effects of the anesthetic.

- (k) Apart from telling you that the vomiting was "normal" did the nurse provide you with any other information or advice at that time?

No

- (l) At that time were you reassured by what the nurse told you about the vomiting?

I had to take the Nurses at their word at the time. It was not a question of reassurance. I just accepted what I was told.

Developments on the Afternoon of the 8<sup>th</sup> June 2001 Before 15.00 Hours

- (10) *"As the day progressed she became sick more often and at one point she was vomiting bile on the bed and a nurse said that her stomach was empty and she wouldn't be sick any more. We left the hospital at 15.00 hours...."*(Ref: 012-028-145 & -146)

- (a) After the vomit which occurred during the visit to the toilet, please indicate (approximately) how many more episodes of vomiting were experienced by Raychel before you left the hospital at 15.00 hours?

I am certain that there were two vomits but this could have been three.

- (b) If it is not appropriate to describe her vomiting during that period in terms of individual episodes, how would you describe the vomiting?

Each time she got up on the bed and heaved. It was slimy and plenty of it.

- (c) How would you describe Raychel's condition in the period between you taking her to the toilet and 15.00 hours, when you left the hospital?

She seemed to be going downhill. There was no conversation.

- (d) When Raychel vomited during that period, was the vomiting caught by a receptacle of any kind? If so, describe what she was vomiting into and what was done with the receptacle.

I can remember for certain two kidney full trays of vomit. My husband took them out each time. My recollection is that the kidney trays were left by the Nurses after Raychel was sick (ie, the 11.00am sick).

- (e) With reference to your statement that Raychel *"was vomiting bile on the bed"* please, identify by name or description the nurse who spoke to you in relation to the this vomiting and clarify the following:

I do not remember her name nor a description of the Nurse.

- (i) Was there vomit on the bed sheets?

I do not remember now but I remember my husband telling me there was.

- (ii) Did this nurse see the vomit?

I do not remember

- (iii) If so, at what time (approximately) did she see the vomit?

I do not know.

- (iv) Apart from telling you that Raychel's stomach was now empty and she wouldn't be sick any more, did this nurse provide any other information or advice?

No

- (v) At that time were you reassured by what the nurse told you?

Again, from memory at the time I must have accepted what the Nurses told me.

- (vi) Insofar as you are aware, did this nurse take any other steps when you advised her of the fact that Raychel had vomited bile?

No, no steps were taken at any time.

- (vii) Did you speak to this nurse again after she told you that Raychel would not be sick anymore? If so, when did you speak to her and outline the conversation that you had with her.

No.

- (f) If you can, identify by name or description any other member of nursing staff to whom you reported Raychel's vomiting during this period?

Any time Raychel was sick, I or my husband would have said to the Nurses Raychel was sick. I cannot recall names or descriptions.

- (g) How frequently did you report Raychel's vomiting during this period, and if you can, state the (approximate) number of times when you reported?

Every time.

- (h) Did you ask for any action to be taken in relation to Raychel's vomiting during this period? If so, what did you ask for and what reply did you receive?

We just reported the vomiting and we dealt with it.

- (i) Was Raychel examined by any nurse at any time after she vomited in this period?

No.

- (j) Was Raychel vomiting when you left the hospital at 15.00 hours?

Not exactly at that time as we would not have left. I knew that Raychel's Godmother was coming to see her and allow me to sort out the other children at home.

- (k) Did anyone remain with Raychel when you left the hospital at 15.00 hours?

No. As above, her Godmother was coming.

- (l) Did Raychel leave her bed in the period after returning from the toilet (which you have referred to as 12.00 hours), and the time you left the hospital at approximately 15.00 hours? If so, what was her purpose in leaving her bed and for how long did she leave her bed on each occasion?

I am not sure. I have a memory of taking Raychel to the toilet again but I am not sure if this is an accurate memory and I may be wrong.

- (m) Were you with Raychel throughout the period after returning from the toilet, and the time you left the hospital at approximately 15.00 hours, or did you leave (for any period of time) for breaks?

Yes

- (n) Was anyone else with you during this period?

My husband, Ray.

Developments on the Afternoon of the 8<sup>th</sup> June 2001 After 15.45 Hours

- (11) *"...[I] returned at approximately 15.45 hours and Raychel appeared listless and not her lively self. She continually vomited and later in the evening a doctor gave her an injection in her arm to stop her being sick, plus suppositories. Raychel continued to vomit bile and later on it turned to blood and again a nurse said that it was only natural"* (Ref: 012-028-146)

- (a) Did anyone else accompany you when you returned to Raychel at 15.45 hours?

No.

- (b) State precisely what you meant by the description of Raychel as "*listless and not her lively self*"? Describe as fully as possible Raychel's condition when you returned at 15.45 hours.

Raychel was just lying on the bed on her back listless and looked red and flushed. The lady who had a child in the opposite bed told me that while I was away that Raychel did nothing but be sick since I had left.

- (c) Did Raychel remain in the condition that you have described as "*listless and not her lively self*," or did her condition change during the late afternoon?

When I immediately arrived I started taking out cards made by Raychel's school friends and putting them up. I tried to talk to Raychel but she was not really taking me on at all. I then got into bed beside her.

- (d) Did you speak to any member of nursing staff about your concern that Raychel "*appeared listless and not her normal self*"? If so, please address the following matters:

I just dealt with Raychel on my own by getting into the bed with her. I just assumed the Nurses had dealt with her being sick when I was away.

- (i) If you can, identify by name or description the person(s) you spoke to.

No

- (ii) At what time (approximately) did you speak to any such person?

No

- (iii) Outline the content of any conversation that you may have had.

No

- (iv) Insofar as you are aware, were any steps taken by nursing or medical staff after your discussion with them?

No

- (e) In relation to the description of Raychel "*continually*" vomiting after you returned at 15.45 hours, please address the following matters:

- (i) During what period of time did Raychel "*cont inually*" vomit?

We were dozing in the bed and I was awoken by Raychel beginning to heave. From when I came back the first vomit was around 5pm.

- (ii) What did you mean by the phrase "*continually vomited*" and in the context of this account, clarify whether you were drawing a distinction between actual vomiting, and nausea or retching?

Raychel was heaving quite frequently leading to the vomit at around 5pm. In my mind she was continually vomiting when she was in Hospital. I cannot describe it any other way.

- (iii) When Raychel vomited during that period, was the vomiting caught by a receptacle of any kind? If so, describe what she was vomiting into and what was done with the receptacle.

I used the trays. I left the trays at the bottom of the bed and went and told the Nurses.

- (iv) Were nursing staff aware that Raychel was "*continually*" vomiting as you describe? If so, identify by name or description those nurses who were aware, and clarify how they were made aware of this situation?

I went out to tell them but I do not recall who I told now. I was starting to panic at this stage. I had a feeling something was not right. Raychel was like a zombie at this stage.

- (v) Did you speak to any member of nursing staff about Raychel's vomiting? If so, identify by name or description who you spoke to, and outline the conversation that you had.

As above.

- (12) In your police statement you explained how a female visitor to the hospital had told you that Raychel had not stopped being sick during the period when you were away from the hospital (15.00-15.45 hours), and how this caused her to get the nurses (Ref: 095-002-006). In a subsequent statement which referred to your evidence at the Inquest, you said, "I don't know if this lady told the nurses" (Ref: 095-003-012).

Please clarify what your evidence is with regard to whether this woman told the nurses about Raychel's condition.

My memory now is that this lady did tell the Nurses and told me that she had done so.

- (13) In your police statement you explained how you and Raychel "*dozed off for a while*" but that you were then wakened again by Raychel retching (Ref: 095-002-007). Please confirm that this is your evidence, and state the approximate time at which Raychel fell asleep and the period of time when she was asleep.

Yes. I confirm this is the position. It was between 4 and 5pm. I recall that there was nail polish at the side of the bed and I asked Raychel did she want her nails painted (as she loved that) but she just stared at me.

#### A Doctor Attends with Raychel

- (14) Describe your understanding of the circumstances which led to a doctor attending with Raychel.

I believe it was because Raychel was sick at around 5pm as I went out and told the Nurse.

**(15) At what time, approximately, did a doctor attend with Raychel?**

It was long after I went out.

**(16) Were you told the name of the doctor who attended with Raychel?**

No. All I can recall is that he was tall with light coloured hair and young then. He would have been in his thirties or so as far as I can recall. There was a Nurse along with him.

**(17) What was Raychel's condition at the time when the doctor was in attendance with her?**

She was zombie like then.

**(18) Which members of family, if any, were present when Raychel was attended by the doctor?**

Just myself.

**(19) Which members of nursing staff, if any, were present when Raychel was attended by the doctor?**

There was one Nurse but her identity I do not know.

**(20) Insofar as you are aware, what was the doctor told about Raychel's condition before he provided her with medication, and who provided him with this information?**

As far as I know, or can surmise, it must have been a Nurse who I told Raychel was sick.

**(21) Insofar as you are aware did this doctor,**

No

**(a) Examine Raychel;**

No. He just gave the injection.

**(b) Consult her notes?**

I have no memory of him reading any notes at all.

**(22) Did you have an opportunity to discuss Raychel's condition or the doctor's findings with him? If so, please outline what was discussed, and what you were told.**

No.

**(23) Were you reassured by the doctor's attendance or anything that you were told by him?**

I was not told anything by him but I must have assumed that the injection might help and would have to wait and see. Especially since it had worked at Casualty the day before.

- (24) Did the doctor explain to you why he was administering an injection and suppositories? If so, what were you told?

Not to my memory but I would say that possibly her or the Nurse did say that, that was it now and she would not be sick anymore as her stomach was empty.

- (25) How would you describe Raychel's condition after the doctor attended with her?

No difference. She remained lifeless. She really was zombie like in the bed and I cannot, unfortunately describe it any other way.

- (26) Did the medication which Raychel received from the doctor have any effect on the vomiting which she was experiencing, or on her general condition? If so, please describe the effect, and how long it lasted for.

No.

- (27) After receiving the medication from the doctor, at what time (approximately) did Raychel next vomit?

It was not long after but definitely within the hour.

- (28) Were nursing staff made aware that Raychel was continuing to vomit bile after the doctor had attended? If so, identify by name or description the nursing staff who were made aware of this, and explain how they were made aware of this.

I do not recall going back out to the ward corridor. As Raychel vomited I continued to collect this in the trays and leave them at the table at the end of the bed. It was obvious that Raychel was being very sick.

- (29) At what time (approximately) did Raychel's vomiting of bile turn to blood?

The vomit before the Doctor came seemed to me to have blood in it and I thought this is what it took to get the Nurse to get the Doctor.

- (30) Identify by name or description the nurse who first observed the blood in the vomit and who commented that this was "only natural," and state:

I cannot remember.

- (a) At what time (approximately) did this discussion take place?

Between round 5.30pm - 6pm but I cannot be certain.

- (b) Insofar as you are aware, did this nurse take any action when she became aware that the vomit contained blood?

I think that is what caused her to go and get the Doctor in the first place.

- (c) Apart from advising you that this was "only natural" did the nurse provide you with any other information or advice.

No.

- (d) Were you reassured by what the nurse told you?

No.

- (31) Insofar as you are aware, did Raychel leave her bed at any time during the remainder of the 8 June 2001 (after you returned to the hospital at 15.45 hours)? If so, what was her purpose in leaving her bed and for how long did she leave her bed on each occasion?

No.

- (32) In your police statement (Ref: 095-002-007) you explained that you stayed at the hospital from 15.45 hours until 19.45 hours, that you had been joined by your husband and children and Raychel's friend at 18.15 hours, and that you took the children home at 19.45 hours before returning to the hospital at sometime after 22.00 hours? Please confirm that this is your evidence.

Confirmed. I would also add that a friend from Raychel's School class, Sarah McCullagh, also aged around 9 then as well and her mother Teresa, visited Raychel at about 7pm or shortly after. Teresa said to me that she thought Raychel was just after her operation as she looked so unwell. Raychel's friend tried to talk and chat with her but there was no response from Raychel at all. They left as they thought Raychel was not well at all.

#### Developments on the Night of the 8<sup>th</sup> June 2001

- (33) *"At around 21.30 hours my husband informed me that Raychel had vomited more blood and she was complaining of a really sore head. A nurse then gave Raychel what I was told was Paracetamol for pain relief. Raychel was bright red in the face. Then after the Paracetamol she continued to throw up, but a while later she settled and fell asleep. I believe that she was very weak. At about 00.40 hours both Raymond and I left advising the staff to ring if she woke up."*  
(Ref: 012-028-146)

- (a) Insofar as you are aware, did Raychel continue to complain of a sore head after the nurse gave her Paracetamol for pain relief? If so, please address the following matters:

I do not know personally as I was not there then. My husband can answer all this better I believe.

- (i) How frequently did Raychel complain of a sore head after receiving Paracetamol?
- (ii) Were any ongoing complaints of sore head reported to a nurse? If so, please identify by name or description the nurse to whom these complaints were reported?
- (iii) If further complaints of sore head were reported to a nurse, did nursing staff take any further action in relation to this symptom? If so, what steps were taken?
- (iv) Did you seek or obtain from a nurse an explanation for Raychel's complaint of sore head? If you did obtain an explanation, what were you told, and were you reassured by what you were told?



- (b) How frequently did Raychel vomit after receiving the Paracetamol?
- (c) When Raychel vomited during this period, was the vomiting caught by a receptacle of any kind? If so, describe what she was vomiting into and what was done with the receptacle.
- (d) How would you describe the nature of the vomiting (e.g. did it contain blood) and the quantity of the vomiting which occurred in the period after Raychel received the Paracetamol?
- (e) At what time (approximately) did Raychel stop vomiting and settle to sleep?
- (f) Were nursing staff aware that Raychel continued to vomit after she received the Paracetamol? If so, identify by name or description those nurses who were aware, and clarify how they were made aware of this situation?

(34) In the period after 21.30 hours, how frequently was Raychel seen by a nurse?

I can only say that I arrived back shortly after 10 or at 10 and when I first arrived no one was attending her. Raychel was on her right side. There was blood or slabber at the side of her mouth. I cleaned it. She opened her eyes once and looked at me. I said something to the effect "mammy's here". But she just closed her eyes. There was no conversation.

(35) In the period after 21.30 hours did any member of nursing staff discuss Raychel's condition and treatment with you? If so, identify by name or description the nurse who you spoke to, and outline what you were told.

No.

(36) Were you aware that Raychel was seen by a Dr. Curran at approximately 22.15 hours on the 8 June 2001? If so, please explain what you know or were told about the following matters: No.

- (a) The purpose of Dr. Curran's visit?
- (b) What Dr. Curran was told about Raychel's history and condition?
- (c) Whether Dr. Curran examined Raychel?
- (d) Dr. Curran's findings?
- (e) Whether he considered her notes?
- (f) Whether he provided her with medication and the purpose this medication?
- (g) Whether he provided any explanation or reassurance in respect of Raychel's condition?

The Events of the 8<sup>th</sup> June 2001

- (37) By the time that you and your husband left the hospital at 00.40 hours, please clarify the approximate time and periods (during the 8 June) when you personally observed Raychel vomiting, nauseous or retching, and describe any periods of time when she was free from those symptoms?

11.00am was the slimy vomit. At 12 there was the large vomit that consisted of rice into the sink at the toilet. Then two more vomits and when back at around 3.45pm or thereafter, there were two more vomits. She was sick all the time and heaving continually.

- (38) By the time you and your husband left the hospital at 00.40 hours, please state the approximate number of occasions or episodes when you personally observed Raychel actually passing vomit during the 8 June 2001?

6.

- (39) When you and your husband left the hospital at 00.40 hours, what was your understanding of the following matters:

- (a) the nature and severity of Raychel's condition;

We believed she was asleep then and the worse was over as that is what we were led to believe.

- (b) the cause of Raychel's condition;

Sickness as a result of operation.

- (c) Raychel's prognosis;

None.

- (d) the treatment that had been provided for that condition;

None apart from the paracetamol and injection.

- (e) the treatment that was being provided for that condition?

None.

The Period After Raychel's Seizure

- (40) *"I did not see Raychel until about 04.50 hours. In the interim a Dr. McCay told Raymond and I that Raychel was seriously ill and when we saw her we were advised that she would be going for a CAT scan. She had the scan and Dr. McCay told us her brain was clear and that if he could get her sodium it would be better."* (Ref: 012-028-146)

- (a) You have referred to "Dr. McCay". Can you describe him and insofar as you are aware, identify his medical specialty?

This should be Dr McCord I believe. A small man with white hair.

(b) What did you understand by Dr. McCay's description of the brain being "clear"?

I remember him saying her brain was clear but Belfast saying they needed another scan. My sister was there, Kay, and I recall me saying to her "thank God, Raychel's brain is clear, she will be all right".

(c) Were you reassured by what Dr. McCay told you?

At the time, yes.

(41) *"A doctor in ICU with a beard said that she was very seriously ill and that there was a lot of pressure inside her head and that they would operate to reduce the pressure. We were told that it would take a week or two weeks before we knew what was wrong."* (Ref: 012-028-146)

(a) Did you understand from this conversation, that Raychel would undergo surgery?

Yes.

(b) If so, did you subsequently ask any doctor to explain why Raychel was not being offered surgery? If you did ask this question, who did you direct it to and what explanation were you given.

I do not understand this. Should "not" be "now"?

(42) Before Raychel was transferred to the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children, did you seek or obtain any explanation for Raychel's deterioration? If so, who spoke to you about this and what were you told?

I recall Nurse Noble offered me a cup of tea and saying that Raychel went down hill very quickly and that she didn't know what happened. This would have been when up at the ward even before getting down to the ICU. Up at the ward, Doctor McCord told me that Raychel was seriously ill but that if we could only get her sodium up it would be better. I specifically remember those words, ie, "if we can only get her sodium up".

(43) Was the reason for transferring Raychel to the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children explained to you? If so, what explanation did you receive and who provided this explanation to you?

We both believed and understood that she was going for an operation to the Royal as a result of what we were told in particular by the Doctor with the beard. Previously when we were at the area waiting for the Catscan on Raychel I specifically recall Doctor Nesbitt coming through the double doors carrying a brown brief case. The area was dark and he just walked straight ahead. This must have been in the early hours of the morning around 6am.

#### Transfer to the RBHSC

(44) At the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children, did you seek or obtain any explanation for Raychel's deterioration? If so, who spoke to you about this and what were you told?

When we arrived at the Royal, Doctor Nesbitt was getting back into the Ambulance and seemed to us to be in a hurry to get away. He told us that Raychel had a comfortable journey and that

there was plenty of movement which was a good sign. I took some comfort in this. However, he seemed to be in a hurry to leave and we just let him go on.

## II. MEETING WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF ALTNAGELVIN HOSPITAL ON THE 3<sup>rd</sup> SEPTEMBER 2001

- (45) Before participating in the meeting on the 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2001, what was your understanding of the purpose of that meeting?

It was me who requested the meeting. I wanted to know what happened to Raychel - that is all. I just wanted to be told the truth. It was three months after the event and my other children were going back to School.

- (46) In terms of how the meeting was conducted, did it live up to your understanding of its purpose? If it failed to live up to your understanding of its purpose, please explain why.

I left the meeting totally confused believing it to be pointless. I remember feeling a sense of Raychel being blamed for her own death or that we were in some way responsible.

- (47) At the meeting did you receive an explanation for the cause of Raychel's deterioration and death? If so, please outline the explanation that was given to you and identify the person who provided it to you.

No. Just that Raychel went downhill very quickly. My memory is that Nurse Noble continually said that they had no concerns about Raychel. I remember her continually repeating the phrase that they had "no concerns" which was really annoying at the time and even more annoying now looking back on same. I specifically recall her sitting with her arms folded, shaking her head and saying that they had no concerns about Raychel.

- (48) If you did receive an explanation for the cause of Raychel's deterioration and death, how satisfied were you with that explanation? If you were left dissatisfied by the explanation given, please explain the cause of your dissatisfaction.

Not applicable.

- (49) How satisfied were you with the willingness or ability of Altnagelvin representatives to answer your questions or those of the persons who accompanied you to the meeting?

Completely and utterly dissatisfied. I look back on this meeting now with some disgust, anger and annoyance. To me it was just the beginning of a cover up by Altnagelvin Hospital. They had three months to get their version of events in order and the meeting was deeply upsetting.

- (50) Was there any other aspect of the meeting which caused you dissatisfaction or concern?

I would say that the tone and atmosphere at the meeting was aggressive and defensive. My main memory is of Nurse Noble sitting back on her chair with her arms folded and saying that they had no concern. I was emotionally still very upset at this time. I hardly had time to grieve and I had to get on with looking after my other children and I know I would have been upset at the meeting.

- (51) If you were dissatisfied with any aspect of the meeting, did you take steps to bring your concerns to the attention of the Altnagelvin authorities? If so, what steps did you take and what response did you receive?

When I left the meeting I was disgusted with the behavior of Altnagelvin Hospital. I was dealing with the death of my daughter and trying to understand what happened and getting on with dealing with my other children. I remember my husband had thoughts of killing himself as he said to me more than once "that he wanted to be with Raychel". My life was in turmoil and the meeting made the turmoil in my life even worse. Even to this day I really do find it very hard not to get agitated and angry looking back at the behavior of Altnagelvin at that meeting. Their behavior was appalling as they knew, or must have known, full well what happened to Raychel by that stage.

- (52) After this meeting, did you seek to engage in any further discussions (whether orally or in writing) with the authorities at Altnagelvin Hospital? If so, please specify all further attempts to engage with Altnagelvin, and explain the outcome.

No

- (53) If you did not further engage with Altnagelvin following this meeting, was there any particular reason(s) for this?

No. I was disgusted with Altnagelvin and did not trust them or believe a word they said. That remains my position today. I do not believe or trust Altnagelvin or their legal representatives at all. I have read so much documentation in relation to my daughter's case including correspondence from the legal representatives of Altnagelvin over many years and their behavior and the behavior of their client remains utterly appalling. Everything with them involves aggression and a defensive mindset and in the context of my daughter who would have lived but for the treatment that she received at the hands of Altnagelvin, is simply shocking.

- (54) A record was made of the meeting which took place on the 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2001 (Ref: 022-084-215 to -224). Please state whether you regard this as an accurate record of the meeting. If it is inaccurate or incomplete in any material respects, please indicate.

No.

### III. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

- (55) Please provide any further points and comments that you wish to make, together with any relevant documents which you hold which have not been provided to the Inquiry to date.

I reserve the right to make a further statement as deemed appropriate and if appropriate I will expand further on my answer in relation to 54 above but at this time I believe I have answered all questions to the best of my ability.

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

Signed:

*M Ferguson*

Dated:

13<sup>th</sup> December 2012