

Witness Statement Ref. No.

055/2

NAME OF CHILD: RAYCHEL FERGUSON

Name: Elizabeth Lynch

Title: Auxiliary Nurse

Present position and institution: Retired

Previous position and institution: Auxiliary Nurse / NVQ 2 Direct Care

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

Membership of Advisory Panels and Committees:

[Identify by date and title all of those since your witness statement dated 25th June 2005]

Previous Statements, Depositions and Reports:

[Identify by date and title all those made since your witness statement dated 25th June 2005]

OFFICIAL USE:

List of previous statements, depositions and reports attached:

Ref:	Date:	

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 IN RELATION TO YOUR QUALIFICATIONS, EXPERIENCE, TRAINING AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1) Please provide the following information:

- a) State your nursing or nurse related qualifications as of the 8th June 2001, and the date on which you received those qualifications.

NVQ. 2 Direct Care February 1998.

- b) State the date on which you first took up employment as an Auxiliary Nurse at the Altnagelvin Hospital. 1983

- c) Describe your career history before you were appointed to Altnagelvin Hospital.

Post Office Clerk /Play Group Supervisor/ Direct to Welsh Margetsons Factory employee.

- d) Describe your work commitments to the Altnagelvin Hospital from the date of your appointment to the 8th June 2001, stating the locations in which you worked and the periods of time in each department/location. Ward 10 - 1983 Children's. Ward 31 - 7 months orthopaedic. Ward 6 - Children's 18 year, assist nurses with care of children. Make beds/report repairs/wash babies/Treat Head Lice/ Order Stock/accompany children to X-ray.

- e) From the date of your appointment as an Auxiliary Nurse at Altnagelvin Hospital until June 2001, quantify the experience you had gained in providing for the care of post-operative children on a paediatric ward.

Auxiliaries do not do observation. on post-operative patients.

- f) Describe your duties as an Auxiliary Nurse at Altnagelvin Hospital on the night shift of 8th -9th June 2001.

Change Beds if needed/ give out suppers/ Check Temperature, Pulse & Respsirtatory if needed/Check on children.

2. At the time of your appointment to Altnagelvin Hospital as a Staff Nurse were you provided with training or induction and if so,

- (a) Describe the training or induction which you received.

Nursing Auxiliary Introduction.

- b. State the date or the approximate date when you received any training or induction.

I cannot recall the exact date it was when I took up post in 1983.

- c. Identify the person(s) who delivered this training or induction.

I cannot recall the name of the Trainer.

- d. Indicate if you received any documentation at this training or induction.

I cannot recall if I received any documents.

- (3) Provide full details of any advice, training or instruction which was provided to you at Altnagelvin Hospital in order to inform you about any of the following issues:

- Hyponatraemia
- Post Operative Fluid Management N/A
- Record keeping regarding fluid management

And address the following -

- a. Who provided this advice, training or instruction to you? n/a
- b. When was it provided? n/a
- c. What form did it take? n/a
- d. What information were you given? n/a
- e. In particular what information were you given in relation to the allocation of responsibility for prescribing intravenous fluids for post-operative children? n/a

II. QUERIES ARISING OUT OF YOUR INITIAL STATEMENT TO THE INQUIRY (WS-055/1)

(4) *"Staff Nurse Sandra Gilchrist asked me to help her to change a bed. I was about to give out the suppers, so I put the trolley back into the kitchen and went into Room I, to help with Raychel's bed. I did not see the vomit on the sheet. We changed the sheet. Did the suppers starting at Room P. I went back into Room I to give the children their suppers (4 beds in I) spoke to Mr. Ferguson child appeared to be sleeping. He said Raychel was sick. I reported same to Sandra."* (WS-055/1 Page 3)

- a. What time did you typically give out suppers on Ward 6?
After handover report was over.

- b. Before being asked to assist Staff Nurse Gilchrist with changing the sheet on Raychel's bed, had you been advised of Raychel's history, condition and treatment?
At night handover report.
- c. If so, who advised you, and what were you told? S/N Michaela Rice.
- d. At what time, approximately, were you asked to assist Staff Nurse Gilchrist with changing the sheet on Raychel's bed? After handover report.
- e. Were you in a position to observe Raychel's condition at that time? If so, what was her condition?

I recall her being very quiet.

- f. Do you know whether the episode of vomiting on to the bed sheet was recorded in Raychel's nursing notes? If so, who recorded it? No, I do not know.
- g. Do you know whether nursing staff carried out any examinations or provided any treatment to Raychel after Raychel vomited on to the bed sheet? No.
- h. At what time, approximately, did you return to Room I and speak to Mr. Ferguson?

When I was giving out the suppers. I cannot recall the exact time.

- i. Do you know what Mr. Ferguson meant when he said to you that "*Raychel was sick*" Was this a reference to the fact that she had vomited, was it a reference to her general condition, or was it something else?

I asked Mr Ferguson if he needed vomit bowls or the bed changed and he said No. He did not elaborate. The vomit bowl was on the window sill.

- j. Why did you report Mr. Ferguson's comments to Staff Nurse Gilchrist?

I was taught always to report to staff anything of concern.

- k. What exactly did you report to Staff Nurse Gilchrist and what was her response?
I said Mr Ferguson said Raychel was sick. She said she would call in and see him.

- l. Did you anticipate that Staff Nurse Gilchrist would take some action in response to your report?

Yes she is an excellent Nurse and very reliable.

- m. Do you know whether Staff Nurse Gilchrist or any other member of the nursing team took action when you reported your conversation with Mr. Ferguson to her? If so, what action did they take?

I cannot recall what action was taken.

- n. Do you know whether the sickness reported to you by Mr. Ferguson was recorded in Raychel's nursing notes? If so, who recorded it?

I do not know. This was not my responsibility to follow these matters up and check notes.

- o. Were you in a position to make any other observation of Raychel at that time apart from to note that she appeared to be sleeping? If so, what observations did you make?

I did not make any other observations of Raychel.

5. *"When I went back later Mr. Ferguson was gone. Raychel appeared to be sleeping. I did not have any further involvement until 3am."* (WS-055/1 Page 3)

- a. At what time, approximately, did you go back to Room I?
I cannot recall.

- b. What was your purpose in going back to Room I?
I walked around the ward at night checking all the patients when I could.

- c. What system of monitoring or checking patients was in place in Ward 6 at that time?

There was monitoring by myself as the nursing auxiliary. The nursing staff did an ongoing observation throughout day/night on the children.

- d. What role did you play in the system of monitoring or checking patients on the 8/9 June 2001?

See (b)

- e. Do you know what time Mr. Ferguson left Ward 6 at? In the alternative at what time, approximately, did you last see Mr. Ferguson?
I do not recall.

- f. Do you recall seeing Mrs. Ferguson in Ward 6 that evening?

No.

- g. Did you examine Raychel when you returned to Ward I at that time? If so what findings did you make?

She was asleep.

- h. Were you in a position to make any other observation of Raychel at that time apart from to note that she appeared to be sleeping? If so, what observations did you make?

I made no other observations.

- i. Did you report your visit to Room I to any member of the nursing team? If so, who did you report to and what did you report?

My normal practice was that after any episode I would report any concerns to the nursing staff.

6. *"I went into Room I to check on the children. I saw that Raychel's bed was wet. I walked over to see too (sic) her. When she started to draw up her arms and her hands were clenched. I immediately called to Ann [Noble] who was also in the room; she was giving another child medicine. She came immediately over to see Raychel. Ann called a male medical doctor who was sitting at the desk to look at the child she asked me to stay with her and she went to summon other assistance. Ann Noble came back. Doctor asked for an airway. I ran to the treatment room and got one. I don't think it was used at that stage. Child was taken up to the treatment room."* (WS-055/1 Page 3)

a. Had Raychel been checked by any other member of the nursing team in the time between your attendances with Raychel? If so,

i. Who checked her? In relation to 3am SN Noble.

ii. At what time, approximately, was she checked? 3am .

b. How much time passed between the point at which you identified that Raychel's arms were drawn up and her hands clenched, and the arrival of the male medical doctor?
It took seconds, as he was at the nursing station outside Room I.

c. What assistance did Staff Nurse Noble go to summons?
Surgical Drs. & Parents.

d. What assistance was she able to obtain? See (b).

e. How long did you remain with Raychel before moving on to other duties?

Until Staff Nurse Noble returned to Room 1.

f. What was Raychel's condition during the period when you remained with her?
She was fitting - Doctor was working with her.

7). On the evening of the 8th June 2001 were you party to the discussion which led to the decision to contact the surgical JHO (Dr. Curran) and to ask him to see Raychel? If so, did you contribute to that discussion and what did you say? No.

8). When Dr. Curran arrived on Ward 6 to see Raychel, did you have any dealings with him with regard to Raychel? If so, please explain the dealings that you had with him? No - n/a

9). Are you aware of whether any consideration was given to asking a more senior doctor (than a JHO) to see Raychel during the evening of the 8 June 2001? No, not party to any discussions regarding this matter.

10). During the evening of the 8th June 2001 do you know whether a member of the paediatric medical team on duty at or near the Ward 6? Yes, Doctor was present at nurses station outside room i.

11). Do you know whether and in what circumstances nursing staff could ask a member of the paediatric medical team to examine a 'surgical patient' about whom there was a concern? No - not within my remit. I reported areas of concern to the nursing staff.

12). On the evening of the 8th June 2001 do you know whether it have been possible to contact a member of the paediatric medical team and ask them to examine Raychel? The Medical Doctor was present at the nurses station. See my answer to 6(b) above.

13). On the evening of the 8th June 2001 do you know whether nurses gave any consideration to asking a member of the paediatric medical team to examine Raychel? I do not know. I was not party to such discussions.

14). Do you know why a member of the paediatric medical team not asked to examine Raychel at any time before Dr. Johnston saw her at the time of her fitting? I do not know. Not within my remit/area of responsibility.

III. QUERIES ON THE ISSUE OF FLUID MANAGEMENT

Please provide clarification and/or further information in respect of the following:

15). Explain fully any action that you took in relation to the following aspects of Raychel's fluid management: Auxiliary Nurses were not involved in Fluid Management.

- a) Checking the appropriateness of the fluid that she was receiving; n/a
- b) Checking the appropriateness of the rate of infusion; n/
- c) Monitoring her oral intake; n/a
- d) Addressing the replacement of her gastric losses; n/a
- e) Monitoring her urine output; n/a
- f) Monitoring her vomiting. n/a

16). Prior to 9th June 2001:

- a) State your knowledge and awareness of the cases of Lucy Crawford, Claire Roberts, or Adam Strain, and the issues arising from those cases.
I was not aware of them.
- b) State the source(s) of your knowledge and awareness and when you acquired it. n/a
- c) Describe how that knowledge and awareness affected your care and treatment of Raychel. n/a

17). Since 9th June 2001:

- a) State your knowledge and awareness of the cases of Lucy Crawford, Claire Roberts or Adam Strain, and the issues arising from these cases.
Since June 2001 I have become aware of Hyponatraemia from incident review meeting with staff. There was also posters on the ward about Hyponatraemia.
- b) State the source(s) of your knowledge and awareness and when you acquired it.
There were posters on display on the ward. I cannot be specific about the time.
- c) Describe how that knowledge and awareness has affected your work.
Nursing auxiliaries are not responsible for fluid management.

18). Prior to Raychel's death were you aware of the literature which highlighted the dangers posed by the administration of hypotonic fluids to children during the immediate post operative period? eg. Arieff AI, Ayus JC. British Medical Journal 1992; 304; 1218-1222. Hyponatraemia and death or permanent brain damage in healthy children, or Halberthal M, Halperin ML, Bohn D. British Medical Journal 2001; 322; 780-782. Lesson of the week: acute hyponatraemia in children admitted to hospital: retrospective analysis of factors contributing to its development and resolution.
No. Not within my remit/ area of responsibility as a nursing auxiliary to keep up to date with medical literature.

19). Describe in detail the education and training you have received in fluid management (in particular hyponatraemia) and record keeping, to include any particular training relating to fluid management in children, and provide dates and names of the relevant institutions/bodies, by reference to the following (if applicable): Nursing Auxiliary. Not relevant – see my response at 15 above.

- a) Undergraduate level. n/a
- b) Postgraduate level. n/a
- c) Hospital induction programmes. n/a
- d) Continuous professional development. n/a

20). Prior to 9th June 2001 describe in detail your experience of dealing with children with hyponatraemia, including the:
I had no experience of Hyponatraemia .

- a) Estimated total number of such cases, together with the dates and where they took place. n/a
- b) Nature of your involvement. n/a
- c) Outcome for the children. n/a

21). Since 9th June 2001, describe in detail your experience of dealing with children with hyponatraemia, including the:

Nursing auxiliaries are not responsible for fluid management. Please see my response at 15 above.

- a) Estimated total number of such cases, together with the dates and where they took place. n/a

b) Nature of your involvement. n/a

c) Outcome for the children. n/a

IV. GENERAL

Please address the following:

22). The Inquiry has been provided with observation sheets in respect of Raychel for the 7th June (020-016-031) and the 9th June 2001 (020-016-032)? Do you know whether an observation sheet was completed for the 8th June 2001? Not within my knowledge as a nursing auxiliary.

If an observation sheet was completed for the 8th June 2001, please address the following matters:

- a) Do you know what has become of that document? No.
- b) Did you make any entries in that document? No.
- c) If you did make entries in that document are you able to provide any indication of the content of those entries? n/a

23). In terms of the care plan that had been formulated for Raychel:

- a) Was the care plan available at the bedside, and if not, how was it accessed? No.
- b) Were you allocated any task with regard to the application of the care plan for Raychel? If so: No.
 - I. What task were you asked to carry out? n/a
 - II. Who asked you to carry out that task? n/a
 - III. When were you asked to carry out the task? n/a
 - IV. How did you carry out the task? n/a
- c) During the period when you were on duty what arrangements were in place for evaluating the care provided under the care plan and state, As a nursing auxiliary, I was not aware
 - I. How was this task performed? n/a
 - II. Who was responsible for evaluating the care provided under the care plan? n/a
 - III. At what time, or in relation to what events, was evaluation to be carried out? n/a

d). During the period when you were on duty what arrangements were in place for updating the care plan and state, See my response at (c) above - not aware.

- I. How was this task performed? n/a
- II. Who was responsible for updating the care plan? n/a
- III. At what time, or in relation to what events, was updating the care plan to be carried out? n/a

24). After Raychel's death were you asked to take part in any process designed to learn lessons from the care and treatment which she received and your role in it, to include any issue about her fluid management? If so,

- a. Describe the process which you participated in. - Yes, I attended a Incident review meeting.
- b. Who conducted it? Dr Raymond Fulton
- c. When was it conducted? 12 June 2001.
- d. What contribution did you make to it? I do not recall.
- e. Were you advised of the conclusions that were reached, and if so, what were they? I recall discussions about Solution 18 being withdrawn and they were to send notification to the other hospitals referring to deaths from Hyponatraemia.
- f. Were you advised of any issues relating to your role in Raychel's care and treatment? No.
- g. Describe any changes to fluid management practice that you were made aware of at Altnagelvin Hospital following Raychel's death. Solution 18 was no longer used on surgical patients.

25). Provide any further points and comments that you wish to make, together with any documents, in relation to: I have nothing further to add.

- a. The care and treatment of Raychel in Altnagelvin Hospital between the 7th - 9th June 2001.
- b. Record keeping.
- c. Communications with Raychel's family about her condition, diagnosis, and care and treatment.
- d. Working arrangements within the surgical team and support for junior doctors.
- e. Lessons learned from Raychel's death and how that affected your practice at Altnagelvin or elsewhere.
- f. Current Protocols and procedures.

g. Any other relevant matter.

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

Signed: *Elizabeth Lynch*

Dated: *21st June 2012.*