

Witness Statement Ref. No. 083/1**INQUIRY INTO HYPONATRAEMIA-RELATED DEATHS****Name:** Francis Rice**Title:** Mr**Present position and department/employer:**

Acting Chief Nursing Officer – Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety.

Length of time in post:1st March 2005 – Present.**Previous position and department/employer in 1995:**Mental Health Services Manager, Down Lisburn HSS Trust , Linenhall Street,
Lisburn..**Previous position and department/employer in 2000:**Nursing Officer – Mental Health, disability and Older people, Department of Health, Social Services
and Public Safety.**Previous position and department/employer in 2001:**

Nursing Officer – Mental Health, disability and older people – DHSSPS.

Membership of Professionals Bodies:

Nursing and Midwifery Council

Particular areas of interest*[Please attach additional sheets if more space is required]***(i) On what date did you become the Acting Chief Nursing Officer?**

1ST March 2005

(ii) How and when did you first become aware of the deaths of Adam, Lucy and Raychel?

I am unable to recall when I first became aware of the deaths as my role at that time was Nursing officer for Mental Health, Disability and older people and would therefore not have been involved in or informed of this. I believe it was shortly after the broadcast of the television programme which I now know was the UTV insight programme in October 2004.

(iii) Describe in detail the steps you took:

- (1) to discover why the children died;**
- (2) why the DHSSPS was not made aware of the deaths at an earlier stage; and**
- (3) to ensure that lessons would be learned for the future.**

None, as this was not relevant to my role at that time which was Nursing officer for mental health, disability and older peoples services.

Particular areas of interest (Cont'd)

- (iv) Give details of your colleagues within the DHSSPS with whom you discussed the steps to be taken in response to the deaths of Adam, Lucy and Raychel to include the reasons why and when they were contacted by you and the outcome of your discussions.**

I had no discussions with any colleagues within the DHSSPS in relation to the matter.

- (v) Explain the role and responsibility of the DHSSPS in the education/training of student nurses and nurses.**

Contractual and service level agreement arrangements have existed between the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS) as commissioners of pre-registration nursing and midwifery education and the universities as providers of pre-registration nursing and midwifery education since 1997. These arrangements were developed to ensure effective working partnerships between education and service providers fundamental for fitness for practice, purpose and award.

The DHSSPS reviewed Service Level Agreements with education providers for the provision of pre registration and post registration Nursing and Midwifery Education in 2001. The underpinning principle for the operation of the agreements was to secure a partnership approach to nurse education between Health and Personal Social Service (HPSS) providers and education providers that ensured fitness for practice (Nursing and Midwifery Council registration), purpose (role requirements – Employer) and award (academic requirements).

In addition in 2001the DHSSPS entered into tri-partite partnership agreements with HPSS and education providers. The underpinning principle for the operation of the agreements was to secure a partnership approach to pre-registration nursing and midwifery education between health and personal social service providers and commissioned education providers that ensures fitness for practice, purpose and award. Education providers are required to operate partnership forums with HPSS providers to oversee the provision of pre-registration education programmes, curriculum development and review.

Post-registration education and training programmes have been commissioned by the DHSSPS in partnership with the HPSS via two Education Commissioning Groups since 2001. Directors of Nursing from each HPSS Trust and Board are in membership of the Education Commissioning Groups. Post registration education and training programmes are commissioned from a range of programme providers including universities and the in-service education consortia. This process is managed by the chairpersons of each Education Commissioning Group and a Business and Contracts Manager seconded to the Department from the HPSS.

The Director of Human Resources is the budget holder for nursing education and training and chairs the Departmental Agreement Management Group. This group is charged with overseeing the implementation of the Service Level Agreement between the Department and universities. A Nursing Officer from the Nursing and Midwifery Advisory Group is a member of this group and provides professional advice to the Director of Human Resources.

(vi) Give details of any advice given by your Group in respect of changes to the education/teaching of student nurses and nurses in fluid management and record keeping as a result of lessons learned following the deaths of Adam, Lucy and Raychel.

I was not in the Acting Chief Nursing Officer position at the time of these incidents. As previously stated I took up the Acting Chief Nursing Officer post on 1st March 2005 and I anticipate that the question will be answered in the witness statement of Miss Judith Hill, the Previous Chief Nursing Officer, or Queens University Belfast.

(vii) Give details of any discussions you had with colleagues both within the DHSSPS and outside in order to provide advice to nursing colleagues in fluid management.

I had no discussions with colleagues within the DHSSPS or outside to provide advice to nursing colleagues in fluid management.

(viii) In your role as a member of the Departmental Board, explain what information you received or solicited about the procedures, investigations and events that followed the deaths of Adam, Lucy and Raychel

I was not a Departmental Board member until March 1st 2005.

(ix) Again in your role as a member of the Departmental Board, explain what steps you took to discover why the children died and to ensure that any lessons would be learned.

I was not a Departmental Board member until March 1st 2005.

Other points you wish to make including additions to any previous Statements, Depositions and or Reports

[Please attach additional sheets if more space is required]

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

Signed: *James Rice*

Dated: *7/7/05*