

Witness Statement Ref. No.

155/1

NAME OF CHILD: Claire Roberts

Name: RCN(Chris) Clarke

Title: Dr

Present position and institution: Consultant Anaesthetist, Craigavon Area Hospital

Previous position and institution: Specialist Registrar in Anaesthetics
[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 1995- November 2011]

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:	

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.

- (1) State the date when you were first appointed as a Paediatric Anaesthetic Registrar by the Royal Group of Hospitals (Royal) and describe your experience as a Paediatric Anaesthetic Registrar in the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children (RBHSC) and any other hospital in which you worked prior to 21st October 1996.**

In October 1996 I was employed as an anaesthetic registrar by the Royal Group of Hospitals. As part of my training I was attached to The Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children (RBHSC) for three months, commencing August 1996.

- (2) Describe your work commitments to the Royal from the date of your appointment as a Paediatric Anaesthetic Registrar including the department/s and locations in which you worked and the periods of time in each department/location, and particularly over the period 21st October 1996 to 23rd October 1996.**

My work commitments were daytime duties in RBHSC while on call covered emergencies in RBHSC and Royal Maternity Hospital. I have no memory or records to show my work commitments over this period.

- (3) State the times at which you were on duty between 21st October 1996 to 23rd October 1996 and in particular:-**

- (a) Whether you were present in the hospital or**

My on call required me to be on site while on call.

- (b) Whether you were on call during that period**

I presume I was on call the night of 22/23 October 1996 as Dr. McKaigue has recorded my name as being on-call, however I have no recollection of this.

- (c) What contact you had with Claire and her family during that period including where and when that contact occurred**

I have no memory of any contact with Claire or Claire's family

- (4) Describe what you considered to be your role in relation to and responsibilities towards Claire and her family over the period from her attending A&E in RBHSC on 21st October 1996 until 23rd October 1996 when ventilatory support was withdrawn, and in particular:**

- (a) From Claire's attendance at A&E at RBHSC until her arrival in Allen Ward**

(b) While Claire was in Allen Ward until her admission to PICU

(c) From admission to PICU until her death

As the on-call anaesthetist my only role was to respond to the call for emergency airway management. My role would have ended when the patient was transferred to ICU.

(5) Describe in detail your actions in the care, management and treatment of Claire between her attendance at A&E at RBHSC on 21st October 1996 and 23rd October 1996 when ventilatory support was withdrawn, and in particular:

(a) State the reasons for those actions.

(b) Specify which actions were carried out on the express instruction of other clinicians, identifying each clinician and describing the respective instructions given.

(c) State whether you sought advice or consulted with any other clinicians prior to taking any of those actions, and if so:

(i) Identify the clinician/s from/with whom you sought advice or consulted and state when you sought advice or consulted them

(ii) State what advice was given by the clinician/s

(iii) If you did not seek any such advice or consultation, explain why not.

(d) State whether you reported Claire's condition including her blood results to any other clinician at any time during that period, and if so:

(i) Identify the clinician/s to whom you reported and state the time at which you reported

(ii) The means by which you conveyed that report e.g. Orally, in person, by telephone, in writing etc.

(iii) State precisely the information conveyed to that clinician

(iv) State whether Claire was reviewed or reassessed as a result of that report or whether her care/treatment was changed and provide details thereof. If not:

(v) Explain the reasons why not.

I have no memory of my role in the care of this patient.

(6) In regard to Claire's medical notes and records, identify precisely the entries that you made or which were made on your direction and state below:

- (a) When each of the identified entries was made
- (b) The source of the information recorded in the entry

I can find no notes made by me in the chart.

(7) *"I attempted to intubate - not successful. Anaesthetic colleague came and intubated her orally with 6.5 tube" (Ref: 090-022-056)*

- (a) State if you were the "[a]naesthetic colleague" who "came and intubated" Claire.
- (b) If so, state who asked you to attempt the intubation, what was discussed and when and where this happened.
- (c) Identify the note in which you detailed the intubation of Claire, and if you did not note this yourself, explain why.

It would appear I was the "anaesthetic colleague". I can find no note made by me and I cannot remember any details of the call.

(8) *"9 yr old girl admitted to PICU from Allen Ward. Suffered a respiratory arrest. Was initially bagged and intubation performed by Dr. Clarke (SPR) Anaes on the ward. At the time of the intubation vomiting was noted in oropharynx - liquid material. No solid material. Folturim intubation, trachea was sucked out and a small amount of watery material was aspirated." (Ref: 090-022-058)*

- (a) Following the intubation of Claire, state with whom you discussed the intubation , what you discussed and when and where this occurred. In particular, state if you contacted Drs Steen or Webb, and if so, explain why. If not, why not.
- (b) State from where Dr McKaigue got the information regarding the intubation that he details in his note above at Ref: 090-022-058.

Unable to answer as I have no recall of these events.

(9) Identify the Consultant whom you believed to be responsible for Claire and her management, care and treatment between her admission on 21st October 1996 and her death on 23rd October 1996, and explain the basis for this belief.

Unable to answer as I have no recall of these events.

(10) Identify the members of the medical team on duty between Claire's admission on 21st October 1996 and her death on 23rd October 1996, and the positions each person held during that period.

Unable to answer as I have no recall of these events.

(11) Identify the members of the Allen Ward nursing team on duty between Claire's admission on 21st October 1996 and her death on 23rd October 1996, and the positions each person held during that period.

Unable to answer as I have no recall of these events.

- (12) Describe the communications that you had with the Consultant responsible for Claire on her admission, including:
- (a) Time of each communication
 - (b) Means by which the communication was made
 - (c) Nature of each communication
 - (d) Whether any advice or direction was given by the Consultant in relation to Claire's treatment and care, and if so the nature of that advice or direction

No records of me being involved in any of these communications. (12a-d)

- (e) Describe any protocols, if any, in place at the RBHSC on 22nd October 1996 for referral of a patient from the admitting consultant to another consultant due to the unavailability of the admitting consultant

Unable to answer as I have no recall of any such protocols.

- (13) State what communication you had with Dr. Heather Steen in relation to Claire between 21st October 1996 and c. 04.00 on 23rd October 1996 including:
- (a) The date and time each communication was made, and the means by which communication was made e.g. in writing, telephone, in person etc.
 - (b) Identify who initiated each communication and the reason for each communication being made.
 - (c) State what information you gave Dr. Heather Steen about Claire during each communication.
 - (d) State what advice or instructions Dr. Heather Steen gave you in relation to Claire on each occasion and what the plan of care was for Claire following each communication.
 - (e) Identify any document where each communication is recorded and produce a copy thereof.

There are no records to suggest I had any communications with Dr. Steen. (13a-e)

- (f) If no communication was made, explain why not.

My communication would have been with the senior anaesthetist on-call (Dr McKaigue), however I have no recollection of this.

- (g) State whether Dr. Steen attended and examined Claire at any time between Claire's attendance at A&E on 21st October 1996 and Claire's death on 23rd October 1996, and if so, state the date, time and location of that attendance and examination.

Unable to answer as I have no recall of these events.

- (14) State what communication you had with Dr. David Webb in relation to Claire between 21st October 1996 and c. 04.00 on 23rd October 1996 including:

- (a) The date and time each communication was made, and the means by which communication was made e.g. in writing, telephone, in person etc.
- (b) Identify who initiated each communication and the reason for each communication being made.
- (c) State what information you gave Dr. David Webb about Claire during each communication.
- (d) State what advice or instructions Dr. David Webb gave you in relation to Claire on each occasion and what the plan of care was for Claire following each communication.
- (e) Identify any document where each communication is recorded and produce a copy thereof.

There are no records to suggest I had any communications with Dr. Webb. (14a-e)

- (f) If no communication was made, explain why not.

As per answer 13f.

- (g) Identify any protocols/guidelines from 22nd October 1996 to date governing the request for and provision of a specialist opinion by another consultant, and the transfer of care and management of a child to another consultant, and furnish copies thereof.

Unable to answer as I have no recall or any copies of such protocols/guidelines.

- (15) Describe your communication with Claire's parents and family and in particular:

- (a) State what information you communicated to Claire's parents and family, and what information they gave to you.
- (b) Identify to whom you gave this information.
- (c) State when and where you told them this information.
- (d) Identify where the information you communicated/received was recorded or noted.

- (e) State whether you recorded Claire's parents'/family's understanding of this information and their concerns, and if so, identify the documents containing that record. If you did not record this, explain why not.
- (f) State if you discussed Claire's condition at any time with her parents. If so, state when, who was present, and what was discussed, where this is noted, and if it was not noted, explain why it was not noted.
- (g) State whether you informed Claire's parents/family of the diagnosis, its implications and the treatment needed, and if so, state when you provided this information, to whom and where this communication is recorded. If you did not provide this information, explain why not. If any such communication is not recorded, explain why not.

No records to suggest I had any communication with Claire's family.

- (16) Describe your perception of the seriousness or otherwise of Claire's condition during your care of her, and the reasons for this.

Any patient who needs intubation as an emergency is seriously ill. Unable to comment further.

- (17) Prior to 21st October 1996:

- (a) State your knowledge and awareness of the case of Adam Strain, his Inquest and the issues arising from it
- (b) State the source of your knowledge and awareness and when you acquired it
- (c) Describe how that knowledge and awareness affected your care and treatment of Claire

No memory or awareness of this case or any influence it may have had.

- (18) Since 21st October 1996:

- (a) State your knowledge and awareness of the case of Adam Strain, his Inquest and the issues arising from it
- (b) State the source of your knowledge and awareness and when you acquired it
- (c) Describe how that knowledge and awareness affected your work

No memory or awareness of this case or any influence it may have had.

- (19) Describe in detail the education and training you received in fluid management (in particular hyponatraemia) and record keeping through the following, providing dates and names of the institutions/bodies:

- (a) Undergraduate level

No records of specific teaching on hyponatraemia

- (b) Postgraduate level
- (c) Hospital induction programmes
- (d) Continuous professional development

I teach fluid balance as a core aspect of anaesthetics and intensive care. I have supplied teaching on this subject to both undergraduate medical staff and to nursing staff in the Southern Trust. (19b-d)

(20) Prior to 21st October 1996, describe in detail your experience of dealing with children with hyponatraemia, including:

- (a) the estimated total number of such cases, together with the dates and where they took place
- (b) the number of the children who were aged less than 10 years old
- (c) the nature of your involvement
- (d) the outcome for the children

I have no memory of dealing with hyponatraemia cases in children prior to 1996 other than that associated with normal fluid balance issues.

(21) Since 21st October 1996, describe in detail your experience of dealing with children with hyponatraemia, including:

- (a) the estimated total number of such cases, together with the dates and where they took place
- (b) the number of the children who were aged less than 10 years old
- (c) the nature of your involvement
- (d) the outcome for the children

I have no memory of dealing with any cases of severe hyponatraemia in children.

(22) Identify any 'Protocols' and/or 'Guidelines' which governed Claire's care and treatment.

Unable to answer.

(23) Provide any further points and comments that you wish to make, together with any documents, in relation to:

- (a) The care and treatment of Claire from her attendance on 21 October 1996 to her death on 23rd October 1996.
- (b) Record keeping

- (c) **Communications with Claire's family about her condition, diagnosis, and care and treatment.**
- (d) **Lessons learned from Claire's death and how that has affected your practice**
- (e) **Current Protocols and procedures**
- (f) **Any other relevant matter**

No comment

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

Signed:



Dated:23/12/11