

Witness Statement Ref. No. 166/166/1

NAME OF CHILD: Claire Roberts

Name: Colin Gaston

Title: Dr Colin Gaston

CONSULTANT PAEDIATRICIAN,  
THE ULSTER HOSPITAL, DUNDONALD, BELFAST, BT16 1RH

CONSULTANT PAEDIATRICIAN, NORTH DOWN & ARDS HOSPITAL TRUST

*[Identify by date and title all of those between January 1995- November 2011]*

NONE

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

NONE

**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 Consultant Paediatrician.

I was appointed as a Consultant Paediatrician on 1st March 1996. Prior to this I had been a Consultant in Canada from Sept 88 – February 96.

(2) State the date on which you first become involved in the medical care of Claire Roberts.

I first met Claire and her family 30<sup>th</sup> May 1996.

(3) Describe your role in the care and treatment of Claire.

Acting as Consultant Paediatrician assessing whether she had attentional difficulties given her background of moderate learning difficulties and history of seizures from age 6-months to 4-years.

(4) *"It was nice to meet Claire on first occasion at the Thursday morning clinic at the Ulster, May 30<sup>th</sup> [1996]. Claire, 9 years 5 months, is known to have moderate learning difficulties and history of seizures from 6 months to 4 years of age. She has been off Epilim for the past year and seizure free."* (Ref: 090-013-018)

(a) State when, in your knowledge of Claire and her history and condition, was the last known occasion of her suffering a seizure prior to her admission to the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children on 21<sup>st</sup> October 1996.

By report from parents, Claire's last seizure occurred when she was 4-years old

(5) *"phone call: Sept 11 96: well, more focused on Ritalin 10mg*

*worse off Px....*

*Plan 1 more wk Ritalin 10mg am + M. to call me..."* (Ref: 090-013-017)

(a) State when Claire was first prescribed Ritalin.

(b) State when Claire was first administered Ritalin.

The date that Claire was first prescribed Ritalin and then administered would be with Dr McMillan GP.

(6) "Phone call Oct 2 96. Dry mouth. Viscious. Pacing. ?agitated/unsettled

30mins after Ritalin

??greater social awareness

∴ Hold meds

Restart on a w/e @ just 5mg. M to call 5 days later..." (Ref: 090-013-017)

(a) State whether Claire was still being:

(i) prescribed

(ii) administered

Ritalin at the time of her admission to the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children on 21<sup>st</sup> October 1996.

I cannot say from the records if Claire had restarted Ritalin but my belief is that she has not.

(b) If so, state the dosage and how frequently she was receiving this dose.

(c) If not, state the date on which Claire's:

(i) prescription

(ii) administration

of Ritalin was stopped.

Ritalin trial was stopped on October 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> 1996 – following phone discussion with Claire's family.

(7) State whether any RBHSC clinician discussed Claire Roberts, and in particular her previous medical history, with you:

(a) between 21<sup>st</sup> October 1996 and 23<sup>rd</sup> October 1996

(b) after 23<sup>rd</sup> October 1996

and if so, identify that person by name and position; state the date, time, location and nature of the discussion, whether you made a note thereof, and if so, please furnish a copy of the note.

On 22<sup>nd</sup> October 1996 I faxed my two Consultation Letters and details of phone calls to Claire's family to Dr Neil Stewart SHO on Allen Ward at RBHSC but I cannot recall if I had a direct conversation with any of the Doctors there.

- (8) State whether you were informed of Claire's death on or about 24<sup>th</sup> October 1996, and if so:
- (a) State when, by whom, by what means and what information you were given at that time
  - (b) Identify any correspondence or note of the information, and provide a copy thereof

I was aware that Claire had died but have no record of the exact time or circumstances. I Met with Claire's parents following her death. I was not able to add any insight into why she had died.

- (9) 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<sup>st</sup> October 1996 to her death on 23<sup>rd</sup> 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

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

Signed:

*Col. Carter*

Dated:

*24<sup>th</sup> Feb 2012*

