

Witness Statement Ref. No. 258/1

NAME OF CHILD: Claire Roberts

Name: Mr William Roberts & Mrs Elizabeth Roberts

Title:

Previous Statements, Depositions and Reports:

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

OFFICIAL USE:

List of previous statements, depositions and reports:

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. QUERIES

The Inquiry would be grateful if you could provide answers in respect of the following queries:

Mr Roberts' statement dated 29th September 2005

(1) Mr Alan Roberts made a statement dated 29th September 2005 (Ref: 096-001-004) in which he stated: *"My wife and I stayed with Claire for the rest of that morning [of 22nd October 1996] and when both grandparents arrived around 13.00 we went for lunch. We actually went into Belfast for some personal items for Claire, in the hope that her viral infection would pass and she would possibly be ready to leave hospital the next day. On returning to hospital at around 14.00 grandparents informed me that a Doctor had examined Claire. I left the hospital at 15:00 to collect our two sons from school with my wife remaining in hospital with Claire."*

(a) Please identify the "Doctor" who "examined Claire"

We cannot recall the doctors name. Mrs Elizabeth Roberts recalls the doctor introducing himself as a Neurologist.

(b) Please state at what time you left RBHSC on Tuesday 22nd October 1996.

We cannot recall the time but it was in the early afternoon.

(c) Please state whether you attended RBHSC at all on Monday 21st October 1996, or prior to 13.00 on Tuesday 22nd October 1996. If so,

(i) Please state the times at which you were present at RBHSC.

(ii) Please identify any doctor(s) and nurse(s) you spoke with in either Accident & Emergency or Allen Ward. Please describe, so far as you can recall, the conversation you had with them, including where and when it took place, and their opinion(s) of Claire's condition.

- (iii) Please describe any history you gave to the doctor(s) and the nurse(s) at RBHSC including information regarding Claire's past history of seizures, vomiting and/or diarrhoea.
- (iv) Please state if you were present during the 'ward round' on the morning of 22nd October 1996.
- (v) Please state, so far as you are aware, whether any blood or urine samples were taken from Claire at any time, and if so, how many samples were taken, when, by whom, and for what reason (if known).

We only attended the RBHSC on Tuesday afternoon on the 22 October 1996.

Afternoon of 22nd October 1996

- (2) Please describe, so far as you can recall, your understanding of Claire's condition during your time with her that day, based on your impression of her and the information given to you by the doctors / nurses.

Our understanding was that Claire was in hospital for observation due to her being unwell overnight. We expected Claire would be out of hospital within a day or so.

- (3) Please describe any information given to you during 22nd October 1996 about:
 - (a) The name of the consultant responsible for Claire between 21st and 23rd October 1996
 - (b) A formal takeover of Claire's case by the neurology department
 - (c) The nature of treatment and its significant side effects
 - (d) Claire's diagnosis
 - (e) Claire's prognosis

We received no information about points (a) to (e).

- (4) Please state, so far as you can recall, whether Claire received any oral fluids whilst you were with her and if so describe, so far as you can, what those fluids were, the quantity, when Claire was given them and by whom.

No oral fluids were given while we were with Claire.

- (5) Please state, so far as you are aware, whether any blood or urine samples were taken from Claire during your time at RBHSC on 22nd October 1996, and if so, how many times samples were taken, when, by whom, and for what reason (if known).

No blood or urine samples were taken while we were with Claire.

- (a) Please state whether Claire wore nappies during her time on Allen Ward on 22nd

October 1996.

We cannot recall

- (b) Please describe, so far you are able, the level of Claire's urine output on 22nd October 1996.

We have no knowledge of Claire's urine output on the afternoon of 22 October 1996.

Dr Andrew Sands

- (6) Please state if you spoke with Dr Andrew Sands during 22nd October 1996, and if so:

(a) to (d) We only spoke to one doctor (neurologist).

- (a) State when you first spoke with Dr Andrew Sands, and, in particular, please:

(i) State for how long your conversation with Dr Sands at this time lasted.

(ii) Describe the history that you gave to Dr Sands at that time of Claire's previous history of seizures and the treatment she had previously received for this.

(iii) Describe any other history you gave to Dr Sands at this time including information regarding vomiting and/or diarrhoea.

(iv) Describe any specific concerns that you expressed to Dr Sands, when you expressed them to Dr Sands and his response to you.

- (b) State when and where any subsequent conversations with Dr Sands took place, and please describe:

(i) What was discussed, if anything

(ii) Any information he gave you about Claire, her condition or her treatment.

- (c) State if Dr Sands expressed at any time during your discussions with him:

(i) His view of the seriousness or otherwise of Claire's condition

(ii) Any concerns about her condition.

- (d) Describe any possible diagnoses that Dr Sands discussed with you at that time, and any treatment or action he was going to take as a result. In particular, please state if any of the following were discussed with you:

(i) Non-fitting status (Ref: 090-022-053)

(ii) Encephalitis (Ref: 090-022-053)

- (iii) Encephalopathy (Ref: 090-022-053)
- (iv) *"No seizure activity observed"*(Ref: 090-022-053)
- (e) Please state if you expressed any concerns about Claire to anyone else, and if so, identify to whom, when you did so, what you expressed, and the nature of any response.

We did not speak to anyone else.

Dr David Webb

- (7) Please state if you spoke with Dr David Webb during 22nd October 1996, and if so:

We have now been informed that Dr Webb was the neurologist.

- (a) Please state when you first spoke with Dr Webb

We spoke with Dr Webb around lunchtime on 22 October 1996.

- (b) Please describe the history that you gave to Dr Webb of Claire's previous history of seizures and the treatment she had previously received for this.

We cannot recall giving Claire's previous history to Dr Webb. We believe that Mrs Margaret Magill discussed Claire's history with Dr Webb.

- (c) Dr Webb notes at Ref: 090-022-053 that Claire had *"known learning difficulties."* Please state if you and Dr Webb discussed this.

We cannot recall giving Claire's previous history to Dr Webb. We believe that Mrs Margaret Magill discussed Claire's history with Dr Webb.

- (d) Dr Webb also notes at Ref: 090-022-055 that Claire had *"loose motions on Sunday and vomiting Monday."* Please state if you and Dr Webb at any time discussed this.

We did not discuss this with Dr Webb.

- (e) Please describe any other history you gave to Dr Webb at this time including information regarding vomiting and/or diarrhoea.

We did not discuss any other history with Dr Webb

- (f) Please describe any concerns you expressed to Dr Webb about Claire, including what concerns you had, when you expressed them to Dr Webb, and the nature of his response to your concerns.

Following the examination by Dr Webb, Mrs Elizabeth Roberts recalls enquiring about meningitis and Dr Webb stating that meningitis had been ruled out. This conversation took place in Allen Ward at Claire's bedside.

Mrs Elizabeth Roberts whose eyesight was very limited in October 1996 recalls Mrs Margaret Magill commenting that if only she could see Claire, that Claire was smiling at her.

Mr William Roberts recalls Claire holding his hands and pulling herself up on the bed, that Claire was lethargic at that time but wanted out of the bed.

- (g) Please state if you expressed your concerns about Claire to any other personnel, and if so, identify to whom you expressed your concerns, when you did so, what you expressed, and the nature of their response.

We had no discussions with any other personnel

- (h) Please state if Dr Webb expressed at any time during your discussions with him:

- (i) His view of the seriousness or otherwise of Claire's condition

No concerns were expressed. We were just relieved that meningitis had been ruled out.

- (ii) Any concerns about her condition.

No concerns were expressed.

- (i) Please describe any possible diagnoses that Dr Webb discussed with you at that time, and any treatment or action he was going to take as a result. In particular, please state if any of the following were discussed with you:

- (i) "*Acute encephalopathy*" (Ref: 090-022-054)

- (ii) That Claire had "*some focal seizures on Monday with right sided stiffening*" (Ref: 090-022-055)

- (iii) "*Meningoencephalitis*" (Ref: 090-022-055)

- (iv) "*Enterovirus*" (Ref: 090-022-055)

- (v) Non-convulsive status epilepticus

- (vi) The medication that Claire was being administered

Dr Webb did not discuss any possible diagnoses with us.

- (j) Please state for how long your conversation with Dr Webb lasted.

Our conversation with Dr Webb lasted for a few minutes. We would estimate that Dr Webb was with Claire for around 10 minutes.

- (k) If you spoke further with Dr David Webb at any other point prior to 03:45 the following morning, and if so, state when and where this took place, and describe what was discussed.

We only had one conversation with Dr Webb around lunchtime on 22 October 1996.

- (l) Please describe the basis for the assumption that the "*medication ... was having a sedation effect*"

We have no knowledge of this.

Other doctors and nursing staff

- (8) Please state whether you asked any doctor or nurse at any time about Claire's condition (other than Dr Sands or Dr Webb as detailed above), and, if so, please :

- (a) Identify whom you asked
- (b) State when and where you asked
- (c) Describe what you were told in response.

We did not ask any other doctor or nurse about Claire's condition.

- (9) Please explain if you were informed at any time that:

- (a) Non-fitting status epilepticus was a working diagnosis for Claire
- (b) Encephalitis was a working diagnosis for Claire
- (c) Encephalopathy was a working diagnosis for Claire
- (d) Claire was receiving anti-convulsant medication
- (e) Claire was receiving more than one type of anti-convulsant medication
- (f) It was believed that Claire may have a neurological illness
- (g) Claire's neurological signs were being observed on an hourly basis
- (h) Claire was being assigned a Glasgow Coma Scale score hourly and that this dropped to 6 at 16.00 and 21.00 (Ref: 090-039-037).

If so, please identify who told you about it, when and where this occurred, what was discussed, and your reaction to the discussion. If not, please explain how you would have reacted had you known.

We were not informed at any time of points (a) to (h). Our understanding was that Claire had a minor illness and was in hospital for observation. If any of the above points had been discussed it would have had raised all sorts of concerns and worries.

- (10) Please identify the ward nurse(s) who reviewed Claire up to 21.15.

- (a) Please describe any discussions you had with the ward nurse(s) regarding Claire's

condition, treatment and/or medication, including when and with whom you had any discussions and the subject of those discussions.

- (b) Please describe, to the best of your recollection, the nursing care Claire received including:
- (i) how often Claire was checked, and
 - (ii) how concerned the nursing staff were for her condition.

We did not discuss Claire with any nurse, we only visited for around one hour on Tuesday afternoon.

Subsequent meetings with RBHSC clinicians

- (11) Please describe any communication you had with the hospital between Claire's death and the UTV Insight programme on 21st October 2004.

We had no communication with the hospital between Claire's death and the UTV Insight programme on 21 October 2004.

- (12) Please describe your actions in the immediate months following the UTV Insight programme on 21st October 2004, including:
- (a) Your initial reactions to the programme
 - (b) Whom you contacted at RBHSC/RVH after seeing the programme, when you did so, the purpose of your contact, and what was said
 - (c) The actions that RBHSC took to meet you and your wife following your contact

We did not watch the UTV Insight programme.

- (13) Please describe any communication you had with the RBHSC following Claire's inquest.

We had no communication with the RBHSC following Claire's death.

- (14) Please state if you were asked by RBHSC or the Trust to be involved in any way with a discussion / review / audit about what happened to Claire, your experience, and any lessons which could be learned following Claire's death.
- (a) If so, please explain your involvement (if any), and who asked you to be involved and when.
 - (b) If you were not asked, please state whether you would have expected to have been included.

We were not asked by the RBHSC or the Trust to be involved in any follow up to Claire's death.

Additional Comments

- (15) Please provide any further points and comments that you wish to make, together with any documents

Mr Roberts
9/8/2012

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