

**NAME OF CHILD:** Claire Roberts

**Name:** Dympna Curley

**Title:** Ms.

**Present position and institution:**

I retired from the post of Head of Communications for Belfast Trust in May this year.

**Previous position and institution:**

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

I was Head of Corporate Communication for the Royal Hospitals Trust from June 2001.

**Membership of Advisory Panels and Committees:**

*[Identify by date and title all of those between January 1995 - October 2012]*

None

**Previous Statements, Depositions and Reports:**

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

I have not made any statements, depositions or reports before this.

**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) Please state your qualifications as at 1996;**
- (2) Please describe your career history before you were appointed Directorate of Corporate Affairs;**

**(Questions 1 and 2)**

After qualifying as a journalist from the College of Business Studies, Belfast in 1975, I worked for Belfast Telegraph Newspapers for 16 years until 1991 when I was appointed Publicity Manager for the Health Promotion Agency. In 1998 I was appointed as a senior manager in the Corporate Affairs office at The Royal Hospitals Trust and in 2001, following the retirement of the Director of Corporate Affairs, I was appointed Head of Corporate Communication.

- (3) Please provide information regarding your work at the Royal Group of Hospital (RGH) from the date of your appointment;**
- (4) Please describe the role, function and accountability of your post as at 2004, including those individuals to whom you reported, and who reported to you;**
- (5) Was there a written job description for your post in 2004? If so, please provide copy of the same.**

**(Questions 3,4 and 5)** My role was to make sure that requests for information were facilitated in line with the Trust's commitment to openness and to advise the Chief Executive and Board of Directors on public relations issues including media and other external stakeholders. I managed a range of corporate communication services including a 24 hour media enquiry service, responses and briefings to elected representatives, major incident communications, the Trust's intranet and internet content, a monthly staff newsletter, internal and external events. I reported to the Chief Executive – and approximately 10 members of staff reported to me. There was a written job description for the post. Please see attachment.

- (6) Please identify your predecessor and successor in post;**

My predecessor was Gerry Carson, Director of Corporate Affairs. My successor – Head of Communication for Belfast Trust which includes the Royal hospitals – is Bronagh Dalzell.

- (7) Please state whether you were aware of the cases of Adam Strain and Claire Roberts in 2004 and if so please describe the extent of your knowledge;**
- (8) Please state whether you had any engagement with or role in the cases of Adam Strain and Claire Roberts and if so please provide full details of the same including;**

(a) Any and all advices sought and received;

(b) Any and all information sought and received.

(9) Please state when the case of Claire Roberts first came to your attention and the circumstances of the same.

(Questions 7,8 and 9) I was not aware of the case of Adam Strain until the corporate communication office was contacted by the Insight team. I had no role in his case. I may have sought answers to some of Insight's queries about him if I happened to take the call in the press office but I don't remember doing so.

I first became aware of Claire Roberts case when one of her parents phoned the hospital the day after the Insight programme. The switchboard staff put the call through to corporate communication because media (UTV) was mentioned and I remember taking the call. I think it was Claire's father and I put him in touch with clinical psychologist Dr Nichola Rooney in the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children who was my main point of contact when someone had a worry or concern about a child patient.

(10) Please provide full details of the day to day functions of Corporate Affairs in 2004, including:

(a) The kind of matters Corporate Affairs would have been involved in;

(b) The primary individuals with whom Corporate Affairs would have liaised/worked, and/or received instructions from;

(c) The protocols, guidelines and practices governing Corporate Affairs;

(d) How such protocols, guidelines and practices were implemented, monitored and supervised to ensure compliance, and by whom.

(Question 10 –a,b,c,d)

On a day to day basis the corporate communications department was the busy central point for all public relations activity on behalf of the Trust - general enquiries from journalists, elected representatives and individual members of the public. The questions ranged from condition checks on patients who had been involved in road accidents to queries about specific issues like the number of heart operations performed every year. The press officers would have several queries out for response at any one time – and often it was difficult to get a response from the person holding the information as they were busy with clinical work.

In getting responses to queries the corporate communication team liaised with the Directors of the Trust but more often with the managers/senior clinicians in charge of specific areas of the service.

Protocols in the office focussed on the speed of response to information requests and on maintaining patient confidentiality. These were drawn up and implemented by the corporate communication team – and monitored by me.

(11) In respect of the UTV Insight documentary (*'When Hospitals Kill'*- 21<sup>st</sup> October 2004) please

state:

**(a) The role Corporate Affairs played in respect of this programme;**

The role of the corporate communication staff was to seek and provide answers to the Insight team.

**(b) Any role you played in respect of this programme;**

My role was to ensure that responses were provided and that the Trust was treated fairly by the Insight team.

**(c) Any and all contact that you had with Mr. or Mrs. Roberts in relation to this programme;**

I believe I spoke to Mr Roberts the day after the Insight programme. I don't remember speaking to him on any other occasion.

**(d) The approach taken by Corporate Affairs in relation to this programme and under whose instruction;**

The communication staff did their best to respond to Insight's questions in the same way as they would have done to any media queries. I have a memory of a large number of complex questions on an email. I also recall discussion with George Brangham, the Trust's solicitor, having been told in the office that Insight intended to publicly state that the Trust had deliberately misled the Coroner and whether there was anything we could do about this as it was not true and had the potential to damage public confidence in our services. It was decided that a letter to Insight would be drawn up by Mr Brangham's office underlining the Trust's deep concern about the allegation.

**(e) Was a connection made by the Trust/Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children (RBHSC) between the programme and the case of Claire Roberts either before or after broadcast?**

No. Not until the family phoned the hospital and their concerns were investigated.

**(f) What requests for information and comment were received from UTV;**

I don't have a list of the questions from that time as it was not our practice to keep them. A search of the Trust's archived emails has been carried out to determine if there are any relevant emails and these are being provided to the Inquiry.

**(g) What information and comment was given to UTV, specifying by whom, to whom and when?**

I do not have copies of the responses and cannot recall the details of who provided the information and when.

**(h) Please identify those individuals engaged in this process;**

The two press officers I specifically remember being engaged in the process were Jo McGinley

and Christine Stewart. We liaised with the Medical Director Dr Michael Mc Bride, Mr George Brangham and clinicians in the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children.

**(i) Who bore responsibility for this process;**

I was responsible for the communication process.

**(j) What internal responses were generated by any such requests;**

I don't remember any specific internal responses.

**(k) What internal responses were generated by the broadcast of the documentary;**

I cannot remember.

**(l) What external responses were generated by the same;**

I don't recall any – apart from the phone call from the Roberts family.

**(m) Whether any record or documentation of this process was made, and if so please provide the same;**

**(n) If same was created, but is now no longer available please state what became of it.**

(Question 11, m and n) We did not make a record of the process.

**(12) In respect of the email sent by Ms. Christine Stewart, Press and Public Relations Officer, Royal Hospitals Trust on 20<sup>th</sup> September 2004- "I've just spoken with Dr. Bob Taylor, Consultant Anaesthetist in PICU, who was involved in the management of Adam Strain and gave evidence at the Inquest. Following a detailed examination of the issues surrounding patient AS there were no new learning points, and therefore no need to disseminate any information" (Ref: 023-045-105) - please state the following:**

**(a) What department did Ms. Stewart work in?**

**(b) The role, function and accountability of a Press and Public Relations Officer?**

(Question 12 a and b) Christine Stewart worked in the corporate communication office, responding to enquiries from journalists or elected representatives and assisting with VIP visits or other functions. She reported to the senior press officer Jo Mc Ginley and ultimately, in communications, to me.

**(c) What role Corporate Affairs took in relation to Public Relations matters;**

The corporate communications office was responsible for the Trust's public relations.

**(d) What steps Corporate Affairs took in relation to investigating whether there were any new learning points from the case of Adam Strain?**

I don't remember corporate communications taking any steps to investigate whether there were

any learning points – apart from asking the question we were asked. This was not our role.

- (e) **What steps Corporate Affairs took in relation to investigating whether there were any new learning points from the case of Claire Roberts?**

This was not our role.

- (f) **Who took responsibility for determining whether there was a need for disseminating information, on what basis and under what guidelines, protocol or practice;**

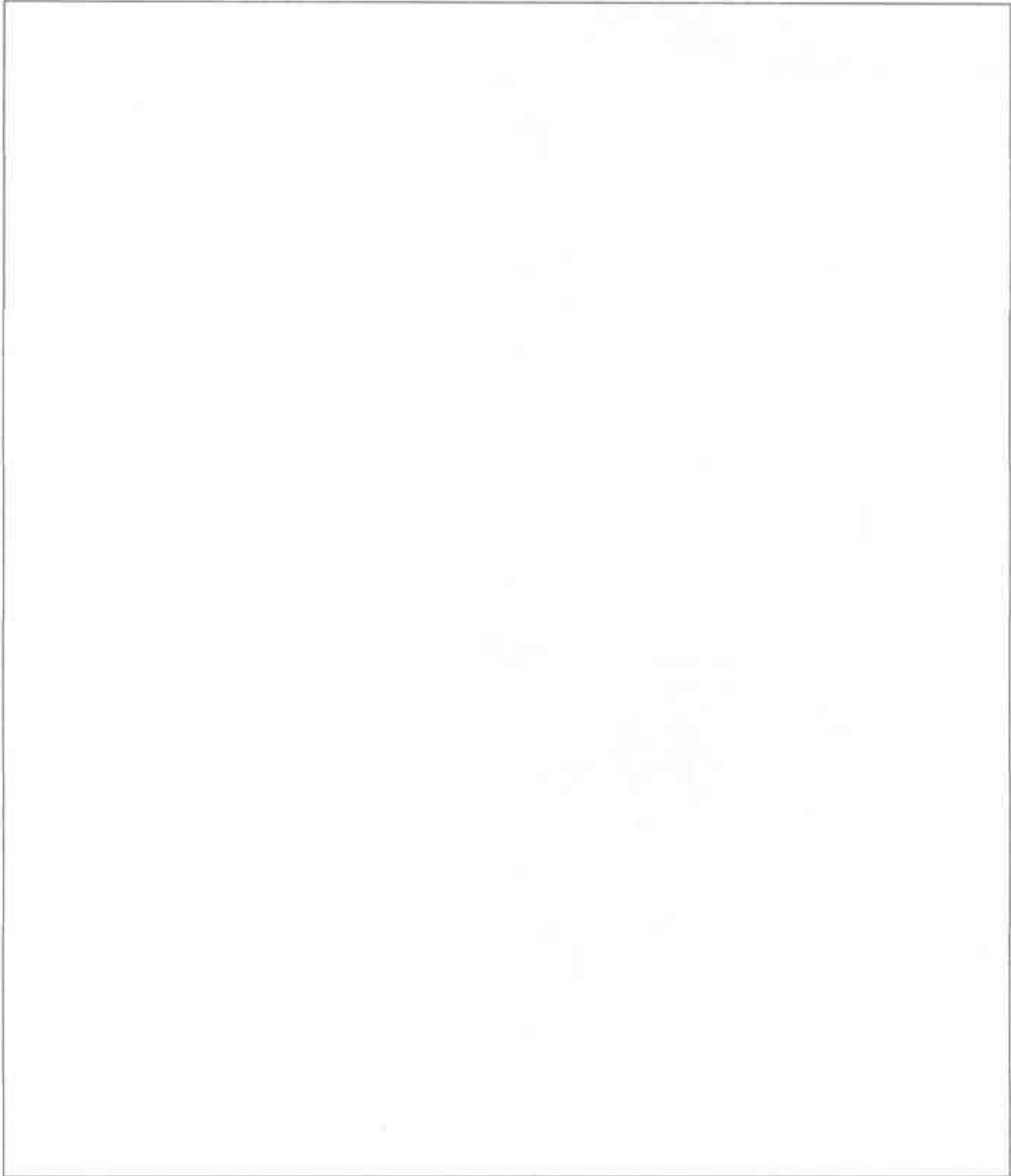
The Medical Director.

- (g) **How were such decisions reviewed, monitored and/or audited to ensure information was being properly disseminated?**

This would have been done primarily through clinical channels.

(13) **Please provide any further comments you may wish to make;**

(14) **Please provide any further documents or materials you may wish to include.**



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

**Signed:** *Lymona Curley*

**Dated:** *21. November 2012*

## **The Royal Hospitals**

### **Job Description**

**Title of Post:** Head of Corporate Communication

**Responsible to:** Chief Executive

**Reporting to:** Chief Executive

**Grade:** Senior Manager

**Location:** Corporate Communication

**Job Summary:** The post holder will be the key advisor to the Chief Executive and the Board of directors on all public relations issues including media, external and internal communications.

He/she will be required to plan, co-ordinate and develop effective public relations practices in line with the Trusts objectives and in recognition of the strategic importance of good communication. The post holder will be required to think innovatively and to demonstrate excellent writing skills together with a high level of interpersonal and communication expertise.

#### **Principal duties and Responsibilities**

1. Develop, lead and monitor a proactive communication strategy to meet the needs of the divisional management structure and the Trust as a whole.
2. Key point of contact for all public relations issues likely to affect the reputation of the Trust.
3. Responsible for briefing and advising the Chairman and Chief Executive on all appropriate public relations/communication issues.



4. Responsible for the management of the publication unit, the media and public relations unit, which includes a 24 hour press office and the special events office which together comprise the Corporate Communication department.
5. Responsible for the management of the department budget to ensure cost effective and efficient use of public funds.
6. Preparation of papers for Trust Board and other executive meetings and attendance at these to advise on all matters relating to public relations and communications
7. Responsible for all communication on behalf of the Trust regarding major incidents. This includes the activation of the communications crisis team and monitoring of same to ensure that arrangements to mobilise the team are kept in a ready state and under constant review.
8. Responsible for developing closer links with external bodies and partnership working through public relations and communication.
9. Responsible for the provision and development of all media skills training for key staff who represent the Trust.

July 2003

## **Staff Management Responsibilities**

1. Delegate responsibility and authority to staff within his/her control, consistent with effective decision making, while retaining responsibility and accountability for results.
2. Review and develop a Corporate Communication business plan in line with the Royal Hospitals business plan.
3. Participate in the selection and appointment of staff reporting to him/her in accordance with the Royal Hospital policies.
4. Review individually and at least annually the performance of the immediate subordinate staff, provide guidance and personal development requirements and advise further training where appropriate.
5. Maintain staff relationships and morale among staff reporting to him/her.
6. Take such action as maybe necessary in disciplinary matters in accordance with procedures laid down by the Royal Hospitals.
7. Ensure compliance with the Royal Hospitals Health and Safety Policy.

July 2003

## **The Royal Group of Hospitals and Dental Hospital Health and Social Services**

### **Employees of the Royal Hospitals are required to support its Mission which states:-**

“It is our fundamental purpose in the Royal Hospitals to provide the highest quality cost effective health care, as an outstanding acute general hospital and tertiary referral centre, through exceptional service to our patients, staff and community in an environment of education, teaching and research.”

### **General Responsibilities**

Members of staff are expected at all times to provide a caring service and to treat those with whom they come into contact in a courteous and respectful manner.

Staff are expected to demonstrate their commitment to the Royal Hospitals by their regular attendance and the efficient completion of all tasks allocated to them.

All staff must comply with the Royal Hospitals No Smoking Policy.

All duties must be carried out in compliance with the Royal Hospitals Health and Safety Policy and statutory regulations.

The Royal Hospitals is an Equal Opportunities Employer. You are required to adhere to the Trust's Equal Opportunities Policy throughout the course of your employment.

To ensure the ongoing confidence of the public and officers of the Royal Hospitals and to maintain high standards of personal accountability, staff must abide by the Code of Business Conduct.

July 2003

## **The Royal Hospitals**

### **Job Specification**

**Title of Post:** Head of Corporate Communication

**Location:** Corporate Communication

#### **Essential Criteria**

1. University Degree or a recognised professional qualification and 3 years experience in Corporate Communication at middle/senior level.
2. A significant track record in handling media and public affairs for government, major public bodies or leading private sector organisations.
3. The ability to perform under pressure and public scrutiny.
4. The ability to think innovatively and implement organisational change.
5. High level of interpersonal and communication skills.
6. The ability to gain the respect and trust of others within the Royal Hospitals as well as community representatives.

#### **Desirable Criteria**

1. Membership of National Union of Journalists or Institute of Journalists.
2. Awareness of health service management issues.

[REDACTED]

---

**From:** Martin.moore [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 26 November 2004 11:01  
**To:** Maguire, Philip; Lisa Cartmill (E-mail); mdunne alt; Laoise O'Murchu; Nikki Milligan; Sadie B; clare.baxter [REDACTED] Sadie.bergin [REDACTED] Anita Carroll; Edgar, Leona; Christina.martin [REDACTED] Ivan Maginnis; Pauline Treanor; Tmullan@[REDACTED] 'Mccann, Grainne'; public.relations greenpark; don.heaney homefirst; Joanmccallan/gillian Clarke (E-mail); Elizabeth Owen; Nataleen Surgenor; Mcclenaghan, Angela; Gibney, June; Mulholland, Margaret; Bronagh.mcveigh; Stewart, Christine; Dympna Curley; O'Neill, Josephine; Mary Graham; McCullagh, Theresa; Young, Anne; Paula Kavanagh; Ruthro [REDACTED] [REDACTED] JHall slt; Donna; Skelly@[REDACTED] Campbell, Dr Henrietta; Clive.gowdy [REDACTED] Sholto Carnew  
**Subject:** RE: Audit Report On Waiting for Treatment In Hospitals  
**Attachments:** jay slavin-utv live-25 11 04(2).doc

Hello all

Transcript of UTV live piece attached

Martin

<<Jay Slavin-UTV Live-25 11 04(2).doc>>

|                        |                                  |
|------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <b>Programme</b>       | UTV Live                         |
| <b>Date &amp; Time</b> | 25 November 2004 – 18.17         |
| <b>Subject</b>         | Child deaths inquiry             |
| <b>Prepared By</b>     | Typist: [REDACTED]<br>MMU: PF/PF |

TRACEY MAGEE

Angela Smith meets the parents of Rachel Ferguson, one of the three children whose death from hyponatraemia was the subject of UTV's Insight Programme "When Hospitals Kill". As the result of that programme, the Government announced an inquiry to be chaired by Barrister John O'Hara. But the families are unhappy about the inquiry's terms of reference. Ahead of their meeting Jay and Debra Slavin outlined what they would telling the Minister.

JAY SLAVIN

We want clarity and accountability in this inquiry, we want it to be far reaching enough and powerful enough to go over where it needs to go, and if required and appropriate bring certain individuals to book.

TRACEY MAGEE

What happens if you do not get a satisfactory answer from Angela Smith today?

JAY SLAVIN

We believe if we're not satisfied with the answers we get today we will seek legal advice to see what options are open to us, but we will be withdrawing our support from the inquiry.

TRACEY MAGEE

Afterwards the Ferguson's said they'd been reassured by the Minister but they would now be seeking an urgent meeting with John O'Hara to put their concerns to him.

[REDACTED]

---

**From:** It Admin (No-reply) <IMCEAEX-\_O=ROYALHOSPITALS\_OU=FIRST+20ADMINISTRATIVE+20GROUP\_CN=RECIPIENTS\_CN=JO+[REDACTED]@ [REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** 20 October 2004 16:15  
**To:** Dympna Curley  
**Cc:** Michael McBride; Crean, Peter; Taylor, Bob; Hanrahan, Donncha; Steen, Heather  
**Subject:** FW: Ulster Television v Royal Hospitals  
**Attachments:** e-mail - jo mcginley.doc

Please find attached the latest correspondence between the Trust and UTV. The programme is due to go out tomorrow night at 9.00pm. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you require any additional information.

Jo McGinley  
Media and PR manager  
Corporate Communication  
Ground Floor, East Wing  
The Royal Hospitals  
Grosvenor Road  
Belfast  
BT12 6BA

Tel: [REDACTED]  
Fax: [REDACTED]  
E-mail: [REDACTED]



20 October 2004

RGH/O/291/GB

Ms Jo McGinley  
Media & PR Manager  
Corporate Communication  
Ground Floor, East Wing  
The Royal Hospitals  
Grosvenor Road  
BELFAST  
BT12 6BA

**BY E-MAIL & FIRST CLASS POST**

Dear Ms McGinley


***ULSTER TELEVISION PLC -v- ROYAL GROUP OF HOSPITALS***

I refer to our previous telephone conversation.

Please find attached a copy of the letter sent to the Solicitors acting on behalf of Ulster Television PLC.

Should you wish to discuss this matter further, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Gary Daly  
for Brangam Bagnall & Co  


Enc

GD-TT-20-10-04

RGH/O/291/GB

JRR/IC/238

20 October 2004

Messrs Maclaine & Co  
Solicitors  
Lombard Chambers  
13 Lombard Street  
BELFAST  
BT1 1RH  
*DX 411 NR BELFAST*

**BY FAX & DX**

Dear Sirs

***ULSTER TELEVISION PLC -v- ROYAL GROUP OF HOSPITALS***

We acknowledge receipt of your letter of 12 October 2004.


Unfortunately, by the time Lucy arrived at the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children, there was little that could have been done to help her. The staff at the RBHSC did their very best to treat Lucy at that time and subsequently assisted the Coroner by providing detail of the events leading up to her death.

There is no question of anyone in the Royal Hospitals having misled the Coroner as to the cause of Lucy's death. The post-mortem examination was, in fact, carried out at the request of the doctors and with the consent of Lucy's parents.

The diagnoses that our doctors made did not contradict one another. Both of the doctors concerned were evaluating Lucy from different perspectives of her illness.

We require an unqualified retraction of the allegation that you have made and an undertaking that you will not publish it in the forthcoming programme or elsewhere. We can indicate that if you do not retract the allegation, the Trust reserves its right to take legal action against you and/or your Servant or Agent. In addition, the Trust's employees who gave evidence may also seek any remedy or redress which may be available.

Yours faithfully

Gary Daly  
for Brangam Bagnall & Co  


GD-TT-20-10-04

[REDACTED]

---

**From:** Michael McBride <IMCEAEX-\_O=ROYALHOSPITALS\_OU=FIRST+20ADMINISTRATIVE+20GROUP\_CN=RECIPIENTS\_CN=MICHAEL+[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** 05 November 2004 17:12  
**To:** William Mckee; Dympna Curley; John Stewart; Steen, Heather  
**Subject:** FW: UTV Insight Program

For information.  
Michael

-----Original Message-----

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 05 November 2004 15:46  
**To:** 'Brangams (g.daly [REDACTED])'; 'g.brangam [REDACTED]'  
**Cc:** Michael McBride  
**Subject:** UTV Insight Program

Further to Mr Walby's letter of 4th November 2004 we have had a telephone call from Dr Caroline Stewart stating that she has been approached by PSNI and asked to prepare a statement which should include a response to the following questions:

1. Your position in the hospital at the time.
2. How did you evaluate LC? Did you assess her or take advice from others? If so, who?
3. What records did you make?
4. What doctors did you see having a part in LC's care?
5. Who did you discuss LC's care with?
6. What did you tell Dr H?
7. When did you tell Dr H?
8. Was any counselling/support offered to staff following LC's death?

Dr Stewart has advised that this statement has been requested as part of the "public enquiry". We have been given to understand that a similar approach has been made to at least three other doctors. We have no clear information available as to the Terms of Reference for this enquiry and no written request has been directed to Dr Stewart. I am writing on Mr Walby's instructions, to make you aware of this matter and to seek your advice on any steps we may need to take to assist our employees/former employees in this regard.

Many Thanks

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

---

**From:**

It Admin (No-reply) [REDACTED]

**Sent:**

20 October 2004 16:15

**To:**

Dympna Curley

**Cc:**

Michael McBride; Crean, Peter; Taylor, Bob; Hanrahan, Donncha; Steen, Heather

**Subject:**

FW: Ulster Television v Royal Hospitals

**Attachments:**

e-mail - jo mcginley.doc

Please find attached the latest correspondence between the Trust and UTV. The programme is due to go out tomorrow night at 9.00pm. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you require any additional information.

Jo McGinley  
Media and PR manager  
Corporate Communication  
Ground Floor, East Wing  
The Royal Hospitals  
Grosvenor Road  
Belfast  
BT12 6BA

Tel: [REDACTED]

Fax: [REDACTED]

E-mail: [jo.mcginley](mailto:jo.mcginley) [REDACTED]