

Witness Statement Ref. No.

374/1

NAME OF CHILD: CONOR MITCHELL

Name: Lorna Cullen

Title: Mrs

Present position and institution:

Ward Sister/Manager, Medical Admissions Unit (MAU), Craigavon Area Hospital, Southern Health and Social Care Trust

Previous position and institution:

Nursing Sister (Grade G), Medical Admissions Unit, Craigavon Area Hospital

Membership of Advisory Panels and Committees:

None

Previous Statements, Depositions and Reports:

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.*

**I. QUALIFICATION, TRAINING, EXPERIENCE**

(1) Provide clarification and/or further information in respect of the following:

- (a) State your nursing qualifications and the date you qualified as a nurse.

Registered Nurse, October 1975

Registered Midwife, February 1977

Diploma in Professional Development of Nursing, July 1991

BSC Honours in Nursing, October 1993

- (b) Provide a detailed account of your career history post qualification, and provide an up to date CV.

Staff Nurse, Theatres, Craigavon Area Hospital,  
November 1975 - February 1976

Commenced Midwifery Training, Southern General Hospital, Glasgow  
March 1976 - February 1977

Completed intensive care course, Southern General Hospital, Glasgow  
March 1977 - May 1977

Staff Nurse, Intensive Care Unit, Craigavon Area Hospital,  
September 1977 - October 1979

Staff Nurse, Coronary Care Unit, Craigavon Area Hospital,  
October 1979 - October 1982

Ward Sister (Grade F), Acute Medical Ward, 4 South, Craigavon Area Hospital  
November 1982 - September 1983

Ward Sister (Grade G), Acute Medical Ward, 4 South, Craigavon Area Hospital,  
October 1993 - September 2002

Project Manager, Creating new Medical Admissions Unit, Craigavon Area Hospital,  
September 2002 - February 2003

Ward Manger (Grade G)/Band 7 Medical Admissions Unit, Craigavon Area Hospital,  
March 2003 – present.

- (c) State whether you have any qualifications or experience in the field of paediatrics.

No registered paediatric qualification, however during my student nurse training I spent time in Paediatric Wards and ENT which cared for children under 14 years. Throughout my time on Acute Wards I have cared for children between the ages of 14 -16 years.

- (d) Describe your work commitments to the Craigavon Area Hospital from the date of your appointment as a nurse, stating the locations in which you worked and the periods of time in each department/location.

Staff Nurse, Theatres, Craigavon Area Hospital,  
November 1975 – February 1976

Staff Nurse, Intensive Care Unit, Craigavon Area Hospital,  
September 1977 – October 1979

Staff Nurse, Coronary Care Unit, Craigavon Area Hospital,  
October 1979 – October 1982

Ward Sister (Grade F), Acute Medical Ward,  
4 South, Craigavon Area Hospital  
November 1982 – September 1983

Ward Sister (Grade G), Acute Medical Ward, 4 South,  
Craigavon Area Hospital,  
October 1993 – September 2002

Project Manager, Creating new Medical Admissions Unit,  
Craigavon Area Hospital,  
September 2002 – February 2003

Ward Manger (Grade G/Band 7) Medical Admissions Unit,  
Craigavon Area Hospital,  
March 2003 - Present

- (e) Describe your duties as a “G” Grade Sister in the Medical Admissions Unit on the 8 May 2003.

As a Grade G Sister my role was to manage and co-ordinate the care of patients by a multi-disciplinary team, ensuring they were cared for in a professional manner within a safe environment in the unit.

- (f) How was the management and supervision of the nursing staff working on MAU organised between yourself and the Grade F Nursing Sister (Sister Elizabeth Brennan/Dickey) when each of you were on duty in or about May 2003.

Each wing of MAU is divided into two teams. There is a nurse in charge on each wing who allocates nursing staff to work in each team and this is done at the beginning of each shift. The nurse in charge on both wings liaise with me on a regular basis to update me on the status of each patient. This system was in place in May 2003.

- (2) Describe in detail the education and training you have received in fluid management, the prevention of hyponatraemia and record keeping in relation to fluid balance, to include any particular training relating to fluid management in children, and provide dates and names of the relevant institutions/bodies, by reference to the following:

- (a) Undergraduate level.

As a student nurse fluid balance management was part of my training

- (b) Postgraduate level.

- (c) Hospital induction programmes.

- (d) Continuous professional development.

As part of my continuous professional development I attended training in the administration of paediatric intravenous infusions, the completion of the paediatric fluid balance chart and the triggers for reporting clinical incidents related to hyponatremia in Craigavon Area Hospital on 13<sup>th</sup> October 2009.

## II QUERIES ARISING OUT OF CONOR'S CAGHT HOSPITAL CASENOTES: FILE 88

With reference to the content of Conor's CAGHT Hospital Casenotes, please provide clarification and/or further information in respect of the following:

- (3) At any time on the 8<sup>th</sup> May 2003 did you have any involvement in the nursing care provided to Conor while he was a patient in MAU? If so, provide a detailed account of the care which you provided.

I was not responsible for any aspect of Conor's care.

- (4) If you were responsible for any aspect of Conor's nursing care while he was a patient in MAU, and if you made any entry in his case notes with regard to his condition or care, refer to that entry and transcribe the entry which you made.

N/A

- (5) At any time on the 8<sup>th</sup> May 2003 did you have any involvement, directly or indirectly, in supervising the nursing care provided to Conor while he was a patient in MAU? If so, provide a detailed account of the care which you supervised, and how you exercised that supervision.

Shortly after Conor's arrival to MAU bed space F1 located on the back wing Sister Brennan advised me that this was not a suitable environment for him to be and he was being moved to a side room located at the front wing of MAU which had become available. I agreed with Sister Brennan's judgement that this was appropriate for Conor.

- (6) If you had no involvement in supervising the nursing care provided to Conor while he was a patient in MAU, who was responsible for exercising supervision of that care, and how did you expect this supervision to be exercised?

Sister Dickey/Brennan was in charge of the front wing of MAU and was therefore involved in supervising the nursing care provided to Conor.

- (7) Who was responsible for managing Conor's fluid needs in the Medical Admissions Unit during any period when he was a patient there?

Medical Staff were responsible for prescribing the fluids Conor needed and nursing staff were responsible for administration and recording the fluids.

- (8) Do you know why no record made of fluid output in the Intake/Output Chart (Ref: 088-004-063) in respect of Conor?

I do not know why there was no record made in the fluid output in the Intake/Output Chart

- (9) Who was responsible for completing the Intake/Output Chart when Conor was a patient in MAU?

The nursing staff that were allocated to his care on the front wing of MAU.

- (10) Who was responsible for supervising the person(s) responsible for completing the Intake/Output Chart when Conor was a patient in MAU? How would you have expected such supervision to have been exercised?

The nurse in charge on each shift of the front wing of MAU would be responsible for supervising the nursing staff in their delivery of patient care. I would expect that the nurse in charge would be ensuring staff caring for patients had their documentation completed accurately. All staff are trained in record keeping and are accountable and responsible for keeping up to date documentation on each patient they care for.

- (11) Was there any process in place in 2003 in the MAU of Craigavon Area Hospital for ensuring that nurses with responsibility for completing fluid management records (such as intake/output charts) did so in a manner which complied with best practice? If so, fully describe that process, and clarify whether it applied to Conor's case?

The process that was in place was, all student nurses have fluid management record keeping (such as input/ output charts) as a core element of their training. Each member of nursing staff were responsible and accountable for ensuring all patients who had intake/ output records were accurately completed. This did apply to Conor's case.

### III. QUERIES ARISING OUT OF THE 'GUIDANCE ON THE PREVENTION OF HYPONATRAEMIA'

With reference to the *Guidance on the Prevention of Hyponatraemia* (Ref: 007-003-004) which was issued by the Chief Medical Officer in March 2002, please provide clarification and/or further information in respect of the following:

(12) Was the Guidance brought to your attention and if so state,

The 2002 guidance was not brought to my attention.

(a) Who brought the Guidance to your attention?

(b) When was it brought to your attention? In particular were you aware of the Guidance before you had any dealings with Conor?

Guidance on hyponatraemia was first shared with me in September 2009.

I was not aware of the 2002 guidance before Conor's admission to MAU.

(c) In what way was the Guidance brought to your attention?

I was made aware that Hyponatraemia training was being set up for all nursing staff who cared for children for 0-16 years in September 2009.

(13) Insofar as you are aware, was the Guidance brought to the attention of the other nurses working in the Medical Admissions Unit, whether before or after Conor was treated there?

As far as I am aware nursing staff in MAU were not aware of the Hyponatremia Guidance for 2002 before Conor's admission to MAU, the nursing staff were made aware of these guidelines in September 2009.

(14) Have you ever received training in the use or application of the Guidance and if so state,

(a) Who provided you with training?

Practice Development Team in the Southern Health and Social Care Trust provided the training.

(b) When and on how many occasions have you been provided with such training?

Two occasions - on 13<sup>th</sup> October 2009 and 11<sup>th</sup> October 2011.

(c) What form did the training take?

13<sup>th</sup> October 2009: 2 hour session – PowerPoint presentation.

11<sup>th</sup> October 2011: Questions & Answers Competency Assessment

(d) What did you learn from the training?

I learned that all staff caring for patients between the ages of 1- 16 years must maintain a competent level of knowledge and skills on fluid management, the need to adhere to the DHSSPS Paediatric Parenteral Fluid Therapy Guidance (1-16 years) September 2007, to recognize inappropriate intravenous fluid calculations and prescriptions and take appropriate action, importance of completing intake and output charts accurately, recognising the signs and symptoms of Hyponatremia and the need to take action if blood results are outside the normal reference range (contact Doctor).

(e) Was the training of an adequate quality or standard for the work that you do?

Yes.

(15) Have you ever received written information in relation to the use or application of the Guidance and if so please provide a copy and state,

(a) Who provided you with the written information?

Director of Acute Hospital Services.

(b) When did you receive it?

November 2009

(c) What did you learn from the written information?

All nursing staff caring for under 16 year olds must have attended training in Hyponatraemia. All guidance is available for consultation at ward level to follow accurately.

(d) Was the written information which was given to you of an adequate quality or standard for the work that you do?

Yes.

(16) Please address the following matters:

(b) The Guidance was reproduced as an A5 poster. Please clarify to the best of your knowledge whether the Guidance was displayed in the Medical Admissions Unit of Craigavon Hospital on the 8<sup>th</sup> May 2003?

There was no guidance displayed in 2003 that I am aware off.

- (c) If you are aware of any other location(s) within the Hospital where the poster was displayed, please indicate.

I am not aware of any other locations.

- (17) Was the Guidance applicable to fluid management in the circumstances of Conor's case?

Yes it would have been applicable but I was unaware of this Guidance at the time of Conor's admission.

- (18) If the Guidance was applicable to fluid management in the circumstances of Conor's case, did you or the other nurses in the Medical Admissions Unit, apply the Guidance during the period of time when Conor was a patient in that Unit? If so, and where applicable,

I could not take any of these steps as the Guidelines were not available.

- (a) Describe the steps you took under 'Baseline Assessment'.
- (b) Describe the steps that you took under 'Fluid Requirements'.
- (c) Describe the steps that you took under 'Choice of Fluid'.
- (d) Describe the steps that you took under 'Monitor'.
- (e) State whether you applied the Guidance in all respects that were relevant to your duties and responsibilities?
- (f) If you did not apply the Guidance in all relevant respects, identify the respects in which the Guidance wasn't applied?
- (g) In respect of any part of the Guidance that you did not apply, explain why you did not apply it?

#### IV. GENERAL

Please address the following:

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

I don't have any further points, comments or documents in relation to the points raised below.

- (a) The care and treatment of Conor on 8<sup>th</sup> May 2003.
- (b) The Guidance on the Prevention of Hyponatraemia.
- (c) Fluid management.



(d) Record keeping in association with fluid management.

(20) After the death of Conor Mitchell in the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children on the 12 May 2003 (following his treatment in the Craigavon Area Hospital) were you asked to take part in any process designed to learn lessons in relation to any issue relating to his fluid management? If so,

I have no recollection that was asked to take part in any process designed to learn lessons in relation to any issue relating to Conor's fluid management.

(a) Describe the process which you participated in.

(b) Who conducted it?

(c) When was it conducted?

(d) What contribution did you make to it?

(e) Were you advised of the conclusions that were reached, and if so, what were they?

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

Signed: *R. Callan*

Dated: *08/10/13*

