

**Young, Christine**

**From:** Moore, Martin  
**Sent:** 28 October 2004 09:44  
**To:** Gowdy, Clive; Campbell, Dr Henrietta; Maguire, Philip; Baxter, Clare; Edgar, Leona; 'colm.shannon'  
**Subject:** Impartial reporter Crawford case story 28.10.04

## Police investigate Lucy case

The Sperrin Lakeland Trust is under extreme pressure to come up with answers about their handling of the case of Lucy Crawford, the 17-month-old Letterbreen girl who died in April 2000.

Lucy died as a direct result of mistakes at the Erne Hospital, and last week a UTV programme claimed that the health trust lied to the family and covered up their part in the little girl's death.

The PSNI is now investigating the case, and Health Minister, Angela Smith says she is concerned about the allegations, and is giving careful consideration to her next move. And the Trust's own watchdog body, the Western Health and Social Services Council is calling on the Minister to instigate a public inquiry. Four local Assembly members, representing the four major political parties, have also called for an independent inquiry to get at the truth.

One of them, DUP member Arlene Foster, went further and called for senior members of the Trust to "seriously consider their position."

The UTV programme "When Hospitals Kill", presented by investigative journalist, Trevor Birney, featured the cases of three children in Northern Ireland who had died needlessly in hospitals. He claimed that some medical staff at the Erne Hospital had lied to the Crawford family about the cause of Lucy's death, and went on to say that he had obtained evidence that Sperrin Lakeland Trust Chief Executive, Hugh Mills had covered up the death.

Mr Birney went on to point out another Trust director, Bridget O'Rawe had promised the Crawford family a full investigation which never took place. Altnagelvin consultant paediatrician, Dr Murray Quinn, who prepared a now-discredited report on the death which failed to find out what happened, admitted on air that he was "sweet-talked" into writing it.

The programme showed that the failure to investigate Lucy Crawford's death properly meant that lessons were not learned that could have prevented the death of Raychel Ferguson in the Altnagelvin hospital in Derry a year later.

Yesterday, Raychel's mother, Mrs Marie Ferguson contacted the Impartial Reporter to call for Mr Mills's resignation.

"Hugh Mills should resign immediately," said Mrs. Ferguson. "If he had carried out a proper investigation, my wee girl would be alive today. I want a full inquiry to tell me why I had to stand over a hospital bed and watch my child die."

Mrs. Ferguson went on: "The Chief Medical Officer, Henrietta Campbell should also resign. The programme proved that she does not even understand what caused the children's deaths."

Following the programme last week, the Impartial Reporter sent 11 questions to the Trust about the allegations. Among them, we asked if Mr Mills covered up the case, if Ms O'Rawe lied to the family, and if either of them was now considering their position.

The Trust refused to answer our questions, but instead gave us a statement pointing out that the General Medical Council was conducting an ongoing investigation and the Trust's own analysis was also being held. However, the GMC is only investigating the individual doctors, and the Trust 'root cause analysis' is another internal initiative.

The Trust has similarly refused to answer our questions since Lucy's inquest last year.

But following the television programme, pressure is mounting.

Maggie Reilly, Chief Officer of the watchdog body, the Western Health and Social Services Council, said her organisation wanted a public inquiry and would be contacting the Minister.

"All along we have been very concerned about the lack of independence in the review carried out by the Sperrin and Fermanagh Trust. Following the Insight programme, we were deeply troubled by some of the allegations and as a Council we will be writing to the Minister to see how she will respond to this."

DUP Assembly member, Arlene Foster said:

"I am personally very deeply concerned at the revelations about procedures for investigating hospital deaths in the Erne Hospital. The Erne hospital is my local hospital and as a mother of small children, I understandably share the concerns of many of my constituents.

"Hospital patients and their relatives place a huge amount of trust in medical professionals and that trust can be eradicated by the suggestion of cover ups. Those in positions of responsibility should work to rebuild that lost trust by showing clearly that no doctor is above the law. They must also ensure that in serious circumstances such as these, the hospital management does not know more about a patient's case than their own relatives.

"I echo the call of my Party colleague, the DUP's Health spokesman Iris Robinson, for a full public enquiry into the death of Lucy Crawford. Furthermore, the judgement of senior Trust members must be called into question and they ought to seriously re-examine their positions," said Mrs Foster.

Sinn Fein Assembly member and MP for Fermanagh-south Tyrone, Michelle Gildernew said she backed her party's call for an inquiry.

Sinn Fein spokesperson for health, John O'Dowd called on the Health Minister, Angela Smyth to "initiate a full, independent inquiry into these deaths to ensure that mistakes, if they were made, are not repeated in the future. It is important that the Minister acts swiftly on this matter in order to prevent public confidence in the health service being further eroded."

Ms Gildernew said she "fully endorsed" the statement, adding: "We need to be sure that these things do not happen again. We need a full and proper procedure to get to the truth."

Tom Elliott, Ulster Unionist Assembly member, said serious allegations required answers, and he would back "whatever steps were necessary, including a public inquiry."

"The allegations made by Insight require answers from the medical profession and authorities. It is vital that the

public have confidence in the entire medical profession."

SDLP member, Mr Tommy Gallagher said: "The family in particular and the public are entitled to know the full facts." He said he supported an independent investigation in order to determine whether there are grounds for a full public inquiry.

The PSNI issued a statement saying they would be examining the programme, and the Impartial Reporter understands a senior investigative officer has been assigned to the case.