

DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE

BACKGROUND

In April 2000, 17 month old Lucy Crawford died following admission to the Erne Hospital and subsequent transfer to the Royal Group of Hospitals (RGH). The cause of death as recorded on the death certificate issued shortly after her death was "Cerebral Oedema, gastroenteritis dehydration".

Subsequently a Coroner's Inquest, completed on 19 February 2004 concluded that Lucy died from

- (a) Cerebral Oedema
- (b) Acute dilutional hyponatraemia
- (c) Excess dilute fluid.

This inquest followed the inquest into another death from hyponatraemia of a 9 year old girl, Raychel Ferguson who died at Altnagelvin Hospital in June 2001. There were a number of similarities in the two cases with the administration of excess diluted fluid being cited in both as contributing to the death. In the context of these deaths, a further death of child, Adam Strain, has been referred to. Adam died in November 1995, following renal transplant surgery. His autopsy confirm cerebral oedema due to dilutional hyponatraemia and impaired cerebral perfusion as cause of death.

THE UTV INSIGHT PROGRAMME

The UTV Insight Programme broadcast on Thursday 21 October raised a number of allegations about the treatment of Lucy Crawford and the subsequent investigation into her death. These included specific references to the actions of individual doctors, the management of Sperrin Lakeland Trust and the Department's Chief Medical Officer.

INQUIRY

The Department has concluded that it should investigate the allegations raised by the programme under article 54 of the Health and Personal Social Services Order (NI) 1972.

THE TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Terms of reference of the inquiry are:-

- To determine whether the care provided to Lucy Crawford, Raychel Ferguson and Adam Strain complied with best professional practice as accepted at the time of her admission to hospital
- To determine whether the Northern Ireland health care system responded appropriately following their deaths
- To report on the above issues to the Department of Health and Social Service and Public Safety