

024-018-026

RF - ALTNAGELVIN

TRAGIC LOSS: Ray and Marie Ferguson with a portrait of their daughter Raychel (9) who died at Derry's Altnagelvin Hospital following routine surgery in 2001

Hospital tragedy girl's mother to sue

THE mother of nine-year-old Raychel Ferguson, who died after routine surgery at Altnagelvin Hospital in June 2001, is suing the hospital over the little girl's death.

Raychel was admitted to Altnagelvin on June 7 2001, hours after returning home from St Patrick's Primary School in Pennyburn, Derry, complaining of stomach pains.

Having undergone an appendix operation in the early hours of the following morning, Raychel was then violently ill on several occasions over a 12-hour period.

The following morning Raychel suffered a seizure and stopped breathing. She

was rushed to the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children where scans revealed that she had suffered severe brain damage.

Her parents, Marie and Raymond, took the decision to turn off her life-support machine.

Last February an inquest into Raychel's death heard that her life might have been saved had she been given a saline solution to counter the loss of vital salts.

The inquest was told that Raychel, from Coshquin, died from acute cerebral oedema - swelling of the brain - brought on by hyponatraemia, the medical term for water imbalance.

Marie Ferguson said the family were taking the legal action against Altnagelvin because they wanted questions answered relating to Raychel's death.

A spokeswoman for Altnagelvin Hospital said representatives of the hospital trust had met the Ferguson family after Raychel's death.

"The trust's legal advisers recently met with the family's legal advisers to discuss the matter," she added.

"The matter is now the subject of litigation and the trust is not therefore in a position to make any comment in the public arena."