

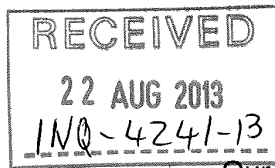


Business Services  
Organisation

## Directorate of Legal Services

— PRACTITIONERS IN LAW TO THE  
HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE SECTOR —

2 Franklin Street, Belfast, BT2 8DQ  
DX 2842 NR Belfast 3



Your Ref:  
JOH-0395-13

Our Ref:  
HYP W50/03  
HYPH099/04

Date:  
22<sup>nd</sup> August 2013

Mr Justice O'Hara QC  
Chairman of the Inquiry  
Arthur House  
41 Arthur Street  
Belfast  
BT1 4GB

Dear Sir,

### **RE: INQUIRY INTO HYPONATRAEMIA-RELATED DEATHS-RAYCHEL FERGUSON GOVERNANCE**

Thank you for your letter of 19<sup>th</sup> August 2013 which refers to Mrs Conlon's correspondence of 1<sup>st</sup> August 2013 and 15<sup>th</sup> August 2013.

In relation to Mrs Conlon's letter of 1<sup>st</sup> August 2013 (BC-0208-13) which asked that the Trust review the minutes of the Hospital Management Team and Hospital Executive meetings for the years 1999 - 2003 and extract any information relating to Lucy Crawford, Raychel Ferguson, Hyponatraemia or any other information relevant to the Inquiry. I confirm that the Western Trust is in the process of completing a review of those documents and we hope to be in a position to forward the relevant minutes to you no later than Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2013.

However, I would ask you to note that copies of the minutes for the Hospital Executive and Hospital Management Team meetings for the period January 2001 to December 2002 have already been provided to the Inquiry in our letters of 20<sup>th</sup> January 2012 and 21<sup>st</sup> February 2012 respectively (BPC-0073-13).

We have been assured that this request has been prioritised and is being treated as urgent by the Trust.

Turning to Mrs Conlon's letter of 15<sup>th</sup> August 2013 (BC-0211-13) which requests copies of the minutes of the meeting held by Mr Bradley with the Local Directors of Nursing and the Area Board Chief Nurses. The identity of the individuals who conducted the searches on behalf of the Trust and the Board and who could not locate the aforementioned documentation is also sought. As set out in our letter of 15<sup>th</sup> August 2013 (BC-0207-13) neither the Trust nor the Board have been able to locate these documents, this remains the case and therefore we are

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unable to provide same. We responded to Mrs Conlon's letter (BC-0211-13), on behalf of the Western Trust and the Board on 20<sup>th</sup> August 2013 and 21<sup>st</sup> August 2013 respectively.

You will note from our letter of 21<sup>st</sup> August 2013 that the Board is conducting a further search in order to ascertain whether copies of the minutes of the meeting of the Area Board Chief Nurses might have been retained by the Chief Nurses in the Southern, Northern or Eastern Health and Social Services Boards. However, it is Mr Bradley's belief that, due to the nature of the meetings, these documents would not have been retained after the individuals left post. We will confirm the results of those searches to you by 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2013.

Furthermore we are instructed by the Western Trust that they do not believe that they would have had any obligation to retain these documents from 2000. Under the current Departmental guidance "Good Records Good Management" the Trust would only be required to retain such documents for a period of two years. Enquiries are being made with the Trust's IT department in order to ascertain whether these documents might have been retained on computer by any of the Directors of Nursing, from the other Legacy Trusts, who would have attended these meetings.

I am assured that both the Board and the Department have conducted thorough searches for these documents and indeed continue to do so. Unfortunately it appears that due to the nature of these documents and the passage of time they may not have been retained by either organisation, certainly to date neither has been able to locate same.

I wish to assure you of the Trust and Board's best endeavours to locate these documents.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Wendy Beggs', with a large, sweeping loop at the end.

Wendy Beggs  
Assistant Chief Legal Adviser