



Coroners Service
for Northern Ireland

MR JUSTICE WEIR

PRESIDING JUDGE

FOR THE CORONERS SERVICE

FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

8. 8. 2012

John O'Hara Esq., Q.C.,
Chairman
The Inquiry into Hyponatraemia-related Deaths
Arthur House
41 Arthur Street
BELFAST
BT1 4GB

Dear Chairman.

I refer to the letter from the Secretary to the Inquiry of the 27th September 2012 to Mr John Leckey, the Senior Coroner, requesting a witness statement from him.

As you know the Senior Coroner has already made a statement to the Inquiry and had also made a statement to the police: in addition he made the full Coroners Service file relating to his investigation of the death of Lucy Crawford and the Inquest papers available to the Inquiry. The Senior Coroner has at all times been anxious to assist and cooperate with the Inquiry to the extent appropriate given his status as a Judicial Officer.

The present request for a witness statement poses very detailed questions relating to the Senior Coroner's investigation of the death. Given the passage of time and the numbers of cases with which he has dealt with since, the Senior Coroner has now no personal recollection of this case over and beyond that which appears in his previous statements and is contained in the file. It would be regrettable if by replying that it is not now possible for him to answer the questions posed, an erroneous impression were created that the Senior Coroner was being evasive or uncooperative.

There are also several questions which go directly to the Senior Coroner's judicial decision-making and the exercise of his judicial functions which it is respectfully considered are inappropriate and should not be posed.

I should therefore be grateful if you will kindly reconsider the request for a further witness statement given the foregoing circumstances.

Yours sincerely,
R. J. Allen

Presiding Judge for the Coroners Service of Northern Ireland