

# The Inquiry into Hyponatraemia-related Deaths

Chairman: Mr John O'Hara QC

Ms Wendy Beggs  
Directorate of Legal Services  
2 Franklin Street  
BELFAST  
BT2 8DQ

Your Ref: NSCS071/1

Our Ref: CM-0054-11

Date: 25<sup>th</sup> October 2011

Dear Ms Beggs,

**Re Investigation into the death of Conor Mitchell**

**Your Client: Southern Health & Social Care Trust**

You are aware that the Inquiry is examining the circumstances leading to the death of Conor Mitchell on the 12<sup>th</sup> May 2003. One particular issue which the Inquiry is investigating concerns the decision to admit Conor on to an adult ward and the implications of that decision.

Conor was brought to the Craigavon Area Hospital on the 8<sup>th</sup> May 2003. At that time he was aged 15, but it has been said that he had the physical appearance of an 8 year old boy. His weight was recorded as being 22 kg [088-002-020].

The Inquiry is aware from a deposition provided to the Coroner by Dr. Suzie Budd, that after examining Conor in the Accident and Emergency Department she referred him to the Paediatric Team for further management [087-029-133]. This is also recorded on the Accident and Emergency Department's record [088-002-020]. However, Dr. Budd was advised that Conor's age meant that he was unsuitable for admission to the Paediatric Ward. He was instead admitted into the Medical Admissions Unit.

The Inquiry is also aware of the evidence given by Sister Irene Brennan at the hearing of NMC's Conduct and Competence Committee on the 11<sup>th</sup> July 2011 which examined the conduct of Staff Nurse Ruth Bullas. She said that at that time it was Hospital policy to admit patients over the age of 14 on to the Medical Admissions Unit (page 74 of the NMC Transcript).

At this stage we would be grateful if you would immediately forward to this office a copy of the hospital admissions policy which governed this area in May 2003, and which determined that Conor should be treated on the Medical Admissions Unit.

**Secretary:** Bernie Conlon

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We would also like to receive any guidance which may have been issued to nursing and medical staff with regard to the factors which were to be taken into account when making a decision on the appropriate ward for a patient.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'C. Martin', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Caroline Martin  
Solicitor to the Inquiry