

**From:** A Browne  
Safety & Quality Standards Unit

**INV/78/2008**

**Date:** 6 February 2008

1. Maura Briscoe
2. PS/ Michael McGimpsey

**REQUEST FOR MEETING WITH MINISTER RE HYPONATRAEMIA  
ENQUIRY**

**Issue:** Request to meet with constituent's family to discuss their concerns that any lessons learned from the death of their daughter Raychel Ferguson are properly apprehended by the health service.

**Timescale:** 11 February 2008.

**Presentational Issues:**

**Recommendation:** That Minister accepts the invitation to meet the Ferguson family.

**Introduction**

1. Mark Durkan, MP MLA has written inviting Minister to meet with his constituents, the Ferguson family, to discuss possible lessons that may be learned from the circumstances of their daughter Raychel's death from Hyponatraemia.

### **Background to this case**

In 2004 Angela Smith MP announced an Inquiry into the events surrounding and following the deaths of 3 children from hyponatraemia related causes between 1995 and 2001. The Inquiry was set up in November 2004 but suspended in October 2005 pending the outcome of PSNI investigations. The cases were passed to the Public Prosecution Service and in January 2008 PPS announced that no prosecutions will be pursued.

### **Further information**

In April 2007 NPSA Alert 22: Reducing the risk of hyponatraemia when administering intravenous infusions to children was sent as circular HSC(SQS) 20/07 to Chief Executives of all HSC Trust and to RQIA for cascading to independent hospitals and hospitals.

### **Recommendation**

6. I attach for Minister's consideration a draft response to Mark Durkan MP MLA which accepts the invitation to meet the Ferguson family.

A Browne  


cc: Secretary

Mark Durkan MP MLA  
Constituency Office  
23 Bishop Street  
Derry  
BT48 6PR

February 2008

Thank you for your letter of 4 February and your invitation to meet with your constituents, the Ferguson family. I am sorry to learn of the disappointment and concern experienced by the family following the announcement of the Director of Public Prosecution that there will be no prosecutions arising from the death of Raychel.

I would be pleased to meet the Ferguson family on a mutually suitable date to discuss this matter. Perhaps you would arrange for your secretary to contact my diary secretary, Lindsay McMullan on telephone [REDACTED] to arrange a suitable date.

Michael McGimpsey MLA

FROM THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH,  
SOCIAL SERVICES AND PUBLIC SAFETY  
Michael McGimpsey MLA



Department of

## Health, Social Services and Public Safety

AN ROINN

Sláinte, Seirbhísí Sóisialta  
agus Sábháilteachta Poiblí

MINISTRE O

Poustie, Resydënter Heisin  
an Fowk Siccar

Mr John O'Hara QC  
The Bar Library  
PO Box 414  
Royal Courts of Justice  
Chichester Street  
BELFAST  
BT1 3JP

Castle Buildings  
Stormont Estate  
BELFAST BT4 3SQ

Tel: [REDACTED]

Fax: [REDACTED]

Email: private.office@[REDACTED]

Our Ref: INV/78/2008

February 2008

I received the attached letter from Sir Alasdair Fraser on 4 February confirming that the Public Prosecution Service will not be initiating any criminal proceedings in respect of the death of Raychel Ferguson. I am still awaiting a reply from the Chief Constable to ascertain whether the PSNI intend to further investigate any other hyponatraemia-related deaths, and specifically that of Claire Roberts.

However, the position on the three children named in your Inquiry's Terms of Reference now seems much clearer and I would be grateful if you could confirm the date on which you expect the Inquiry to reconvene. I understand that work is ongoing to re-staff the secretariat and that new offices should be available from 1 March.

It would also be helpful to know when you intend to speak to the families concerned as I have received a request to meet the Fergusons and would hope to meet with all the families in due course. I would prefer, if possible, to leave these meetings until after you have advised the families of your proposals for the future conduct of the Inquiry.

I look forward to receiving your reply.

Michael McGimpsey MLA

Minister for Health, Social Services and Public Safety

FROM THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH,  
SOCIAL SERVICES AND PUBLIC SAFETY  
Michael McGimpsey MLA



Department of

Health, Social Services  
and Public Safety

AN ROINN

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MINISTRE O

Poustie, Resydenter Heisin  
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Mr. Mark Durkan MP MLA  
Constituency Office  
23 Bishop Street  
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Tel: [REDACTED]  
Fax: [REDACTED]  
Email: private.office@[REDACTED]

Our Ref: INV/78/2008

13<sup>th</sup> February 2008

*Handwritten signature: E. H. H.*

Thank you for your letter of 4 February and your invitation to meet the Ferguson family. I am sorry to learn of their disappointment at the decision of the Public Prosecution Service and would wish to assure them that I remain fully committed to the Inquiry chaired by John O'Hara QC.

As you know, the Inquiry will examine the care and treatment of a number of children, including Raychel, and consider the action of the statutory authorities. I am determined that we should learn from these tragic deaths and take the appropriate action.

I expect to hear from John O'Hara shortly about his proposals for the resumption of the Inquiry and would be pleased to meet the Ferguson family on a mutually suitable date thereafter. Perhaps you would arrange for your secretary to contact my Diary Secretary, Lindsay McMullan, on telephone [REDACTED] to arrange a suitable date.

*Handwritten signature: Michael McGimpsey*

*Handwritten signature: Michael*

Michael McGimpsey MLA  
Minister for Health, Social Services and Public Safety