

Death of 12-year old girl contributed to by neglect

Rory Badenoch, instructed by Osborne, Morris & Morgan Solicitors, represented the parents of 12-year old, Sinead Garahee-Sugrue, at the inquest into her death at Addenbrookes Hospital on 3 December 2018.

Before HM Assistant Coroner, Rosamund Rhodes Kemp at Huntingdon Law Courts on 26th and 27th November 2019.

Background

Sinead suffered from a complicated neurological condition (hydrocephalus) since birth for which she had been under the care of Addenbrookes Hospital. Despite her condition she lived a full, happy and active life.

Investigation

Following Sinead's death, the Trust carried out an internal investigation which identified numerous deficiencies in the care provided to Sinead which resulted in her death. The Trust accepted that had there been more effective communication regarding Sinead's Care Plan, the warning signs of Sinead developing a seizure would have been spotted, and that had these signs been acted upon in an appropriate and timely manner it is likely Sinead's subsequent cardiac arrest and death would have been avoided.

Conclusion

Following the two-day inquest the Coroner concluded as follows:

"Sinead was 12 years old at the time she was admitted to Addenbrookes Hospital due to complications with a ventricular shunt which had been in place since she was 3 days old and which was malfunctioning. Although the problem with the shunt was identified and a treatment plan formulated, due to a series of miscommunications and lack of knowledge of a) her atypical seizure presentation, b) raised intracranial pressure c) underlying infection and (d) shortage of senior cover, her deterioration on the 21st November was not identified nor acted upon quickly enough to prevent the arrest which led to irreversible brain damage. But for these problems on balance she would have survived. There has been a contribution by neglect."

Sinead's parents, Liz and James, commented, *"Our beautiful girl's life was lost unnecessarily. Our lives will never be the same without her. We raised concerns about the care Sinead was receiving in the hospital whilst she was still alive. Having our suspicions confirmed is heart-breaking. What particularly upsets us is that the knowledge we had gained regarding Sinead's care over her precious 12-years of life, that we had meticulously documented in her Care Plan, was ignored and not acted upon. We sincerely hope that Sinead's death is not in vain and that the Trust will learn from their mistakes and not let another family suffer as we have and continue to suffer."*