

Scottish Hospitals Inquiry

Witness Statement of

Rachael Noon Crossan

WITNESS DETAILS

1. My name is Rachael Noon Crossan. I was born on [REDACTED]. I am [REDACTED] years old and I am [REDACTED].
2. I am the mother of [REDACTED]. [REDACTED]'s date of birth is [REDACTED]. He is 13 years old.
3. I live with my husband, [REDACTED], and my 3 children [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] in [REDACTED].

OVERVIEW

4. My son is [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] was diagnosed with a Medulloblastoma, which is a brain tumour, in January 2017 when he was 8 years old. [REDACTED] was treated at the Royal Hospital for Children ("RHC") and the Beatson West of Scotland Cancer Care Centre ("The Beatson") between January 2017 and December 2017, when he finished his treatment. He attended the RHC as both an in-patient and an out-patient and the Beatson as an out-patient during this period. [REDACTED] still attends the RHC as an out-patient for Magnetic Resonance Imaging ("MRIs") and reviews.
5. I have provided the Inquiry with a timeline, prepared by my solicitor, showing the dates on which [REDACTED] attended hospital and the wards where he was

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treated. The timeline is attached to this statement at appendix 1 (RC/01) and I confirm that it is accurate to the best of my recollection.

6. ██████ spent time in wards 2A, 2B, 2C and 3A of the RHC. He did not spend any time in the adult hospital. ██████ was discharged on 8 September 2017 and we were never back in a ward after that. My husband and I took it in turns to go to the hospital as we had a younger daughter to look after. I can speak to the experience which ██████ and I had on these wards.

FAMILY BACKGROUND

7. I live with my husband ██████ and three children in ██████, just outside ██████. ██████ is my middle child, his brother ██████ is ██████ and his younger sister, ██████ is ██████.
8. ██████ is in ██████ year at secondary school. He was in Primary ██████ when he was first admitted to hospital. ██████ is a happy and funny boy. He likes to play football and go out with his friends. ██████ also likes to play video games and at the moment is really into Pokémon Go.
9. ██████ gets on well with his brother ██████ and his sister ██████. As a family we like to go on holiday together and enjoy days out and the cinema.

SEQUENCE OF EVENTS: THE FAMILY'S EXPERIENCE AT THE RHC

Initial admission to hospital: January 2017

10. ██████ became unwell in November 2016, when he was 8 years old. We took him to the GP and he ended up at The Royal Alexandra Hospital ("RAH"), in Paisley on 27 December 2016, getting tests for two days. Initially it

was thought he had a virus. We attended at the RAH again on 3 January 2017 and got sent home the same day. It was the same thing he was there for and they said it was migraines then and they did some basic tests. On 16 January 2017 we ended up at the RAH again and it was discovered that he had a brain tumour. He got transferred to the RHC that day and was admitted to ward 3A in the RHC. He was diagnosed with medulloblastoma and had surgery to remove the tumour four days later. He did not move wards or rooms during this stay and was there for exactly two weeks. He was then discharged back home.

██████████'s initial treatment: End January 2017 to April 2017

11. ██████████ started attending the Day Care Department on ward 2B in the RHC. This is the day care ward in the Schiehallion Unit. Wards 2A and 2B are the wards that treat children with cancer.
12. Ward 2A is the in-patient ward in the Schiehallion Unit. The room had a bed for ██████████, a pull down bed for us, a sink in the room and a shower, a sink and a toilet in the bathroom. I don't really remember much else except it was very hot in the room.
13. ██████████ went to ward 2B for regular tests and he also got stem cells extracted to give them back to him at the end of each cycle of chemotherapy. When he got stem cells extracted they brought a big machine into the room. There was a line that took the blood from ██████████. It went into the machine and then it was put into bags that they took away and froze, to give back to him later. I'm not really sure what the machine did exactly.
14. He attended day care approximately once a week during this time and remained mainly as an out-patient apart from when he went into ward 2A on 7 February 2017 for two days, as an in-patient, to get his first line fitted. He had surgery to have the line fitted.

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15. [REDACTED] was then back in ward 2A on the 13 February 2017 when they discovered they had put the wrong line in. This was then removed in surgery and a new one put in. They realised the wrong line had been put in when he went to have stem cells extracted, to give back to him at the end of each cycle of chemotherapy, and the hospital could not get anything because it was the wrong line. They had put in a dialysis line, instead of the long squiggly one and the tubes were too small. I don't know the name of the line they replaced this with. He was in for two days.
16. On 27 February 2017 [REDACTED] started at The Beatson for radiotherapy. I took him there from home, in the car. He went there once each day, Monday to Friday, for six weeks. During that time [REDACTED] attended day care in ward 2B for blood tests and he went into ward 2A for a couple of days on 10 March 2017 because he took a high temperature after a blood transfusion. He had taken an infection, I don't know what it was but they started him on antibiotics, but again I don't know which antibiotic he was on.
17. This was what they did each time [REDACTED] took a high temperature. They would give him paracetamol and start him on antibiotics straight away. They then took a blood sample and sent that away.

Experience in Ward 2A and 2B: 22 May 2017 – 29 August 2017

18. On 22 May 2017 [REDACTED] was admitted to ward 2A for chemotherapy. He was there for six days. He went in on the Monday, got his chemotherapy during that week and then on the Saturday he got his stem cells back. We were then discharged home.
19. [REDACTED] went through four cycles of chemotherapy in May, June, July and August. He got admitted to ward 2A each time for that. We then went back to Day Care in ward 2B the following week for blood tests and ambisome, after

each cycle. I don't know what the ambisome was for, just that that's what he got. He was usually only in ward 2B as a day patient once, the week after his chemotherapy, but sometimes it was twice depending on the results of his blood. [REDACTED] was then at home for the following two weeks before starting his next cycle.

20. On 1 June 2017, after his first round of chemotherapy, [REDACTED] was at home when he developed a high temperature. We took him in to day care first and they admitted him to ward 2A straight away. They gave him paracetamol, started him on antibiotics and took his blood for testing. I don't know what antibiotic it was.
21. A nurse came and told us later that [REDACTED] had developed group A Streptococcus. We had to go into isolation after that and we were in hospital for two weeks. I wasn't told how he had contracted it. I googled it and it said it was a throat infection. It wasn't in his Case Note Review so I just assumed it wasn't related to the hospital environment. It didn't delay his cancer treatment.
22. On 17 June 2017 [REDACTED] was in getting bloods taken in ward 2B and his line stopped working. It had cracked; it crystallised so he needed a new one then. He got admitted to ward 2A and went for surgery to have that done. [REDACTED] was in for 2 days.
23. On 30 June 2017 we were in ward 2B, day care, when he took a reaction to his platelets. I'm not really too sure what the platelets are but they're different from the stem cells. The stem cells they put in are his own and I think the platelets come from someone else; I don't really know. They were just part of his treatment. He just took a high temperature and came out in hives when we were in ward 2B and they admitted him to ward 2A. We were there for 2 days and they gave him antihistamines as they thought it was an allergic reaction. After he got the antihistamine, they gave him platelets each time.

24. On 17 July 2017 [REDACTED] went in for chemo, to ward 2A, until the 22 July 2017. He then went back on 24 July 2017 to ward 2B for ambisome, through his line. This was a normal part of his treatment.
25. On 28 July 2017 he got admitted to ward 2A. We had taken him because he had febrile neutropenia, a high temperature, but no infection came back in his bloods this time, so he was okay, it must have just been a bug. He got discharged home on 1 August 2017 and went back to day care on 2 August 2017 for ambisome. He went to day care once or twice after that for his routine bloods.
26. On 14 August 2017 [REDACTED] was admitted to ward 2A for chemo and then discharged on 21 August 2017. He was back in to day care on ward 2B on the 23, 24 and 25 August 2017 for ambisome and blood tests.
27. On 25 August 2017 [REDACTED] spiked a temperature when he was being monitored after he got his platelets in day care and he got admitted to ward 2A. He was there for two days and discharged on 27 August 2017.

[REDACTED]'s admission for Enterobacter Cloacae: 30 August 2017

28. On 30 August 2017 [REDACTED] went to ward 2B for a platelet transfusion. He started shaking, he was cold and had a high temperature. He got admitted to ward 2A and about two days later I was told by a Doctor, I don't know his name, that [REDACTED] had a gram negative infection and the antibiotics they were going to give him first might not work and they may need to change them. In the end he had three different antibiotics. They gave him tazocin at first and it seemed to be working and then after a few days he started to go downhill again, so they changed it to Gentamicin.
29. During this stay [REDACTED] was moved to ward 2C for two days. They said we were getting moved because a sicker child was coming in and

seemed to be ok but then he didn't get any better and they said the Gentamicin wasn't working so they put him on meropenem on 4 September 2017.

30. It was when he was in ward 2C, on 4 September 2017, my husband had gone in and found ██████ shaking again and he had a fever. My husband wanted ██████ back in 2A again, so he complained to the doctor and managed to get him moved.
31. Ward 2C was a horrible ward to be in, really not nice. I don't know exactly what it was but I don't think they were checking the temperatures enough and I don't think they understood the extra care needs of children with cancer. It was a big ward and it just seemed that they just put everyone in there from other wards; it just wasn't nice at all. They just seemed too busy, they had too many kids to look after.
32. I wasn't told anything about the antibiotics or any more about what a gram negative infection was and it was only after I got the medical notes last year that I found out it was *Enterobacter Cloacae*.
33. On 5 September 2017 ██████ got his line removed. His cancer treatment had finished and they said that although they would have liked to have left it in for another couple of months in case he needed any more tests, they had decided to remove it and they would, if he needed any other tests, just put a cannula in to do them. ██████ was then discharged on 8 September 2017. He went back to weekly day care appointments in ward 2B. We were never in ward 2A again after that. The appointments went on for about two months up until December 2017. We've not been back on the wards since then.
34. ██████ is well now, his chemotherapy was successful and all he gets now is MRIs at the RHC. The last one was in January 2021 and he's on six monthly appointments now and the next one is in August.

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35. [REDACTED]'s six monthly appointments are done on the computer now and it's been fine, there's no issues with communication at all, it's been good.

Facilities in Ward 2

36. In ward 2A the facilities were fine. There were places to sit and they had the kitchen, microwave and the fridge where you could store food in. We mostly ate from Marks & Spencer because we were taking it in turns go to the hospital and we had a younger daughter to look after too. I used the facilities to make coffee and heat food up in the microwave. [REDACTED] didn't eat anything because he was tube fed. There was the play room in ward 2A also. [REDACTED] went a couple of times but it was really too young for him and he wasn't old enough for the teenagers room so he wasn't really interested. The play leaders would come into his room and he sometimes did arts and crafts or use the computer, things like that, but he was too ill most of the time to do anything. Ward 2B didn't have anything. The kids got their lunch and dinner if they were in but there was nothing for the parents.

WARD 2A: OBSERVATIONS ABOUT THE BUILDING

37. I remember that one day they were checking the air quality with some sort of vacuum type of machine. This was in our room in ward 2A. We were in a few rooms in ward 2A but I don't remember what room numbers we were in. I did ask them what they were doing and they told me it was an air quality check. It was two ladies that were doing it and they looked like they were from an outside agency because they didn't have hospital clothes on. I don't know when this was, but it must have been when we were there in 2017.
38. I also remember when we were in ward 2A some rooms had white sheets over some of the doors but I never saw any workmen. I don't know what that

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was for. Again, this would have been in 2017 during the timeframe when we were in. I asked a nurse what was going on but I was told it was some work getting done. I didn't have any other problems there but I found the hospital was really warm in any ward we were in.

WARD 2A – WATER ISSUES

39. We didn't have any issues with the water at all. I think there were maybe issues with the water the following year but we weren't in-patients then.

HEALTHCARE ASSOCIATED INFECTIONS

HAls: Events

40. ██████ took unwell on 30 August 2017, when he was in ward 2B. He got admitted to ward 2A and I was only told two days afterwards that it was a gram-negative infection. There was no mention of how he got it. ██████ was quite ill at the time, his tumour had gone but the chemo made him ill because his immune system was low. The infection also made him ill or he would have been fine apart from the chemo treatment.
41. He got treated with antibiotics, he was on tazocin and gentamicin and then they changed it to meropenem. ██████ got home on 8 September 2017 and continued with an oral antibiotic but I can't remember the name of that one. After he got home, he was fine.
42. When ██████ picked up his infection all I was told was that it was gram-negative and the antibiotics might not work. That was really it, I didn't ask anything more about it as I don't like to know things, I just get on with it. If I

know too much, I don't like that, I'd rather not know at the time because it could make it worse and make me worry too much.

43. Other than this infection, ██████'s health and treatment wasn't affected by the hospital in any other way. There were no issues at all with the building or any of the facilities. I also found that the care was great.

PREVENTATIVE MEDICATION

Preventative medication: events

44. When ██████ was an in-patient he was on different medicines, Posaconazole, Acyclovir. I think the Posaconazole was an anti-fungal medication and that Acyclovir was for chicken pox or cold sores, or a virus. I don't know who told me about them but I was told by someone that ██████ was on them to prevent him getting any viruses.

OVERALL EMOTIONAL IMPACT ON ██████ AND HIS FAMILY

Emotional Effects

45. We didn't have any problem with the hospital when we were there, we were concerned later on once we heard about the issues within the hospital. It made us recall our time there and made us think about what could have happened. It's difficult now to think that it could have been worse.
46. We heard about it all on the news and then we got the letter saying we would be involved in the Case Note Review. There was no communication from the hospital prior to this. It affected us all, even ██████ knows now. He's blaming the hospital and the water for everything that happened, just because he's

reading it in the news. We were getting on with our lives but this has taken us back, you get good days and bad days especially when it's on the news.

COMMUNICATION

47. The communication I had with the hospital was fine, I never had any problems. I never had any problems about [REDACTED]'s treatment or the safety of the hospital. The communication is the same now as it was then.

OVERSIGHT BOARD / CASE NOTE REVIEW / REPRESENTATIVE GROUPS

48. I've had a letter from the Case Note Review that I mentioned earlier. This letter confirms that [REDACTED] contracted enterobacter cloacae and that it was probably a result of the hospital environment. I didn't want a meeting with them, I'd had enough by then. We just wanted to move on with family life. They've gone through a lot of stuff but whether it's true or not, right or wrong, I don't know. I don't think it's set in stone with all the "probables" and "probabilities". It's not a yes or a no.
49. I'm on the NHS GGC Paediatric Facebook group. I don't really go on it much but it's nice to see pictures of the kids and things like that. I don't take part in it and it wasn't there when we were at the hospital. I don't contact any other families or speak to them either.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

50. I don't know how I feel about the hospital now but I hope they fix what was happening at the hospital, I wouldn't like it to happen to anyone else. The staff

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were perfect, the care was great, it wasn't their fault that things were happening.

51. I believe that the facts stated in this witness statement are true, that this statement may form part of the evidence before the Inquiry and be published on the Inquiry's website.

APPENDIX 1 – RC/01- TIMELINE**November 2016 – end of January 2017**

- November 2016: ██████ became unwell. He was taken to his GP and to the Royal Alexandria Hospital, Paisley. Initially it was thought he had a virus.
- 16th January 2017: It is discovered at the Royal Alexandra Hospital that he had a brain tumour. He was transferred to the QEUH on the same day. He was admitted to ward 3A. He was admitted for 2 weeks. He did not move wards or rooms during this time. ██████ was diagnosed with medulloblastoma.

End of January 2017 - April 2017

- ██████ is discharged to his own home at the end of January 2017. He then started attending the Day Care Department for regular tests leading up to him commencing radiotherapy on the 7th April 2017. ██████ was an outpatient from January until April. He attended Day-Care approx. once a week during this time.
- February/March 2017: ██████ had a central line fitted. On this occasion he was admitted to ward 2A for 2-3 days. The wrong central line was put in the first time and this had to be replaced. This was discovered when he went to have stem cells extracted and the hospital could not get anything because it was the wrong line. Rachael cannot recall exact dates and does not know the room numbers.
- 27 February 2017: ██████ commences radiotherapy at the Beatson Hospital for 6 weeks and completed his last day on 7 April 2017.

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April 2017 – August 2017

- 7th April 2017: ██████ completes radiotherapy at the Beatson Hospital.
- After 6 weeks this treatment is completed and ██████ returns to QEUH to ward 2B. He started to receive blood transfusions and stem cells.
- 22nd May 2017: ██████ is admitted to Ward 2A to commence chemotherapy. He remained an inpatient for 6 days and was then discharged home. He did not move wards at this time. Rachael cannot recall if he moved rooms.
- ██████ went through 4 cycles of chemotherapy, 1 cycle a month. May, June, July, and August 2017. He was admitted every month for this purpose to ward 2A.
- 1st June 2017: ██████ develops Strep A and was admitted for two weeks to 2A. This infection was not an infection that was linked to the hospital environment.
- 28th July 2017: Admitted to 2A due to febrile neutropenia. Blood cultures are negative.
- 1st August 2017: ██████ is discharged home
- 2nd August 2017: ██████ attends daycare to ward 2B for ambisome infusion
- 14th August 2017: ██████ is admitted to ward 2A for chemotherapy with stem cell support.
- 21st August 2017: ██████ is discharged home
- ██████ attends DayCare on the following dates: 23rd August, 24th August, 25th August: ward 2B

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- 25th August 2017: During ██████'s daycare appointment he became febrile and was admitted to ward 2A. Antibiotics commenced but blood cultures remained negative.
- 27th August 2017: ██████ is discharged home.
- 30th August 2017: ██████ attended ward 2B for a platelet transfusion but became unwell. Blood cultures are taken and enterobacter cloacae is identified. He is admitted and receives antibiotics – Tazocin which he received until the 3rd September and Gentamicin which he received until the 6th September 2017.
- 4th September 2017: ██████ develops a fever and starts to receive an antibiotic called meropenem.
- 5th September 2017: ██████'s line was removed and antibiotics were stopped. He also moved wards around this time but Rachael cannot recall which ward he moved to. Possibly moved to 2C or 3C. He was then moved back to 2A during this admission.
- ██████ was discharged on the 8th September 2017 and then he returned to attending DayCare/clinic appointments for a period.
- ██████ goes to Clinic now for MRI and reviews. He has had no further admissions to QEUH to raise for the timeline.

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