

Witness Statement Ref No

**WITNESS STATEMENT TO THE PUBLIC INQUIRY INTO THE OUTBREAK OF
CLOSTRIDIUM DIFFICILE IN NORTHERN TRUST HOSPITALS**

WITNESS NAME: PETER MULHOLLAND

STATEMENT

I Peter Mulholland say as follows:

1. **Statement of Peter Mulholland**

My name is Peter Mulholland and I live at an address that is known to the Inquiry team. By profession I am a funeral home manager. I am also the son of Robert Mulholland who died at Whiteabbey Hospital on 9th February 2008.

2. **Admission to Hospital**

My father was admitted to Whiteabbey Hospital on 12th September 2007 and stayed there until his death on 9th February 2008.

I think he was originally in Ward 2 but was later moved to an isolation room. Although he was subsequently moved back to the ward and then back again to the isolation room at a later date. I am not sure of the dates but he was moved between these two locations.

3. **Visits**

I personally visited him everyday he was in hospital and other members of the family and few friends visited on numerous occasions.

4. **Care**

My father set extremely high standards and if he was not happy with something he would complain but he had nothing but praise for Whiteabbey Hospital. The care at Whiteabbey Hospital was of a very high standard. I have nothing but gratitude and respect for all the doctors, nurses and staff as they cared for us as a family.

In particular Dr Gilmore looked after my father like his own son.

My family and I have nothing but praise for everyone in Whiteabbey Hospital.

5. **Treatment**

He received all the medication he required and staff tried very hard to improve his quality of life. He was washed regularly and shaved and his hair was always brushed. The staff really cared for him which the family very much appreciated.

6. **Cleanliness**

The only area that you could make any criticism of would be the entrance hall. After that the rest of the hospital is spotless. Everything from floors, wards, bed linens, crockery and the staff uniforms were perfectly clean and tidy.

7. I saw the cleaners brushing and polishing the floor, cleaning beds, rails and mattresses, disinfecting everything and doing a thoroughly good job.
8. Protective clothing including aprons and gloves were readily available in the isolation ward and these were then disposed of after use.
9. However, one small point would be that we were taking my father's pyjamas home for washing and would like to have been told at the start about the special bags that were available for use in the washing machine.
10. My father had to use a bed pan and bottle and these were immediately taken away after use and were always replaced.
11. There were plenty of gel dispensers on the ward and although I and all my family used these religiously every time we came in and out of the hospital, not all of the visitors were as conscientious. I actually spoke to some of them about this. The doctors or nurses always used the gel.
12. **Communication**

I did not receive any written information, documents or leaflets about C difficile nor did I see any notices on the notice board or on the ward door.

However I was extremely satisfied with the verbal information that I received from the doctors and nurses who kept me and my family fully informed throughout about my father's condition. They told us what the condition was, the difficulties in controlling it, the risks involved particularly with older people catching it and the type of precautions to be taken.

13. I spoke to Dr Gilmore, the ward sister and staff nurse and they were all extremely supportive, helpful and sensitive to the whole family. They always kept us in the loop and were always available when we wanted to talk to them.

14. **Food**

My father was happy with the food and the plates, cups, trays and utensils were always clean. The tray was always taken away after use and any spillages were mopped up immediately.

15. **Death Certificate**

The primary reason for my father's death was heart failure and I was most surprised to note that C difficile was included on the death certificate. This was put on automatically and the family did not request this to be included.

16. **Conclusion**

It has to be said that the care which the hospital give and the circumstances surrounding the death can affect the family's grieving process and I owe a debt of gratitude to Whiteabbey Hospital for the excellent care and attention that they gave to my father which enabled him to leave this world with dignity.

17. **Antrim Area Hospital**

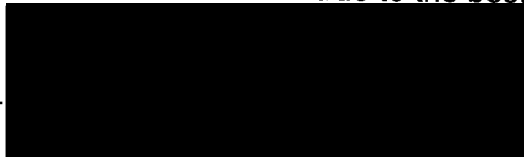
Unfortunately my experience of Antrim Area Hospital is completely different to my experience of Whiteabbey Hospital.

18. During the early part of 2007 my father became unwell and was rushed to Antrim Area Hospital. When I got to the Accident & Emergency Department about one hour later I was appalled by the condition of the place as it looked like a public car park. It was absolutely disgusting. There was dirt everywhere. It was in a deplorable condition with blood on the floor and trolleys.
19. I accept that the department was busy but this should not excuse the fact that the place was filthy.
20. Despite the fact that I requested that my father be dealt with, he was left lying on a trolley for some five or six hours.
21. He was eventually admitted to the cardiac ward where he was kept for about three weeks. The cardiac ward was not much cleaner than the Accident & Emergency Department.
22. The communication and treatment at Antrim Area Hospital was virtually non-existent and after my father's discharge he made me promise that under no circumstances was I ever allow him to be admitted to Antrim Area Hospital ever again.
23. This was a promise that I made him and so when I originally telephoned for an ambulance on 12th September 2007 I specifically told the operator that my father could be taken to any hospital but under no circumstances would I allow him to be taken to Antrim Area Hospital.
24. However when the ambulance arrived they told me that they had instructions to take him to Antrim Area Hospital. Words were exchanged and I refused to allow this to happen and sent the ambulance away.

25. I then contacted our general practitioner the following day and he arranged for my father to be admitted to Whiteabbey Hospital.
26. I would also like to add that the authorities tried to transfer him from Whiteabbey Hospital to Antrim Area Hospital and I again dug my heels in and refused to allow him to be transferred. I would never have allowed my father either to be admitted to or transferred to Antrim Area Hospital.

I declare that this statement is true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Signed: .



Dated: 6/8/2010