

- [Essex Chronicle](#)
- [Brentwood Gazette](#)

Inquest: Husband plans to sue hospital after reports were lost



Thursday, September 22, 2011



[Essex Chronicle](#)

[Follow](#)

A GRIEVING husband waited five years for answers over his wife's death only for the Essex Coroner to decide it was an accident.

Peter Long's wife Lydia died at Broomfield Hospital from serious head injuries after she mysteriously fell in the ward toilets on October 4, 2006.



1.

HEAD INJURIES: Lydia Long died after a fall in hospital

2.

MYSTERY: The inquest into his wife's death didn't give Peter Long many answers

∴

Aged 63, she had been admitted for a routine operation to remove gall stones and, being otherwise fit and well, there were calls for an investigation after her body was found on a wet floor with the towel rail ripped off the wall.

But last week, Lydia's husband was offered little closure as it was declared an "accident".

Many of the witnesses called could not remember details of the incident due to the time that had passed and, although reports had been written at the time, the hospital had lost the records.

Mr Long, 72, from Burnham on Crouch, still cannot claim his wife's life insurance policy until he receives the official death certificate.

"I am glad that we have finally got an answer but I don't know if I can say I am happy," he told the Chronicle.

"I know that her death was an "accident" but I believe that it was the fault of the hospital. My solicitor is looking further into the case with the hospital, to sue them."

Since 2008, the Long family had received several letters calling them to inquests at different courts, on different dates.

Each time, the hearing would be cancelled, apparently due to missing hospital records and a problem at the coroner's office, which suffered a backlog after the two Essex offices merged in 2008.

Lydia's son, David Long, 44, said: "It is a relief to have the inquest behind us but it has been a huge wait. It's ridiculous."

Mr Long's solicitor, Dominic Fairclough, added: "It has been very traumatic for the family and we are going to see if we can take things forward regarding the missing medical records as we do not really know what happened that day."

Peter Long said: "The day she died was such a shock, they called me at 9am when I was at work, as a part-time cleaner. By the time I got to the hospital, my boy was already, there crying his eyes out. I still see that in my dreams.

"Lydia was such a nice, cheerful person. She worked as a lollipop lady for many years in Margareting, where we lived before moving to Burnham. She was a great mum, to David and Wendy and a fantastic grandmother. She was called 'mummy two' by her grandchildren."

Coroner Tina Harrington said: "We accept that it has taken a long time for this case to be called to inquest", and repeatedly stressed this throughout the hearing.

Although Doctor Calder, who conducted the post-mortem, could not attend the inquest to give evidence, he provided the court with a written report saying Mrs Long died due to a head injury.

Ms Harrington said: "My verdict is that her death was an accident. I do not know what caused the fall and do not know how she sustained injuries from her fall."

An Essex County Council spokesman said: "The death of Lydia Long was referred to HM Coroner in 2006. As was stated during the inquest hearing, the original statements that were taken from the hospital staff at the time of the death had been irretrievably lost by the hospital and a further delay occurred as this situation was not handled as proactively as it could have been by the coroner's office between 2007 and 2009.

"The Coroners' Service is currently undertaking a comprehensive exercise to ensure that all older cases are heard at inquest within the next few months and new ways of working that have been introduced to ensure that cases referred more recently do not get delayed in the same way."

Broomfield Hospital failed to respond before the Chronicle went to press.

Delays by Coroner causing heartache to grieving families

In April, a grieving family revealed it was being taken to court because of unpaid funeral costs because of delays in the Essex Coroners' Service.

More than 14 months after Mike Tacey, 42, died of an overdose of painkillers, his sister Dee had not received a correct death certificate for her brother. Instead, the Chelmsford council worker received two certificates saying he was born in Iceland and then in North Island, when he was in fact born in Northern Ireland.

The delays meant the family was unable to access his pension or life insurance – and unable to pay his funeral bills of £3,400.

In March, relatives of a man who died following a botched hospital operation accused the coroners' service of a "cover-up" claiming they were offered the chance to speed up the process if they agreed that a full investigation would be dropped.

Three years and eight months after Simon Brind, of Witham, died, an inquest finally concluded.

Daughter Gemma Brind, 30, claimed they were approached by a coroner's officer, something that the coroner denied.

0
0

Like

 Tweet

 Share

 Share

[Report](#)

Ads by Google

Comments

Be the first to comment

4000 characters remaining

submit