

'I'm seeing a stream of similar cases'



High profile lawyer Sarah Harman PD1401276

Allan Dyer's family is being represented by one of the country's leading legal experts in medical negligence cases.

Sarah Harman, who fought for the families of victims of the Maidstone Hospital C-diff scandal in 2008, believes they have a strong claim.

She said: "The care of the elderly in hospitals is far below what they deserve. They go into hospital with a minor injury and never come out.

"I am seeing a steady stream of cases similar to Mr Dyer's across Kent. The standards of care are very poor indeed."

Ms Harman, whose sister is deputy Labour leader Harriet Harman, said it was to Darent Valley's credit that it has already acknowledged some errors.

However, she said: "When the NHS will not fully admit to its failings, making a claim for compensation is the only way to get changes made.

"We are not seeking a large amount of money - it is about settling an issue that has important repercussions for many other patients."

Hospital admits patient's care was 'unsatisfactory'

EXCLUSIVE

by Danny Boyle
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AN ELDERLY man who died after seeking treatment for a broken arm at Darent Valley Hospital was killed by poor care, his family claim.

A legal battle has now been launched by Joanne Page who is convinced her father, Allan Dyer, died because of a series of failings by medical staff.

The hospital admits Mr Dyer, from Dartford, received an unsatisfactory standard of care and has offered its "sincere apologies".

Now one of Britain's leading medical negligence lawyers is preparing to take a compensation claim to court.

Mrs Page, 45, said: "I'm absolutely convinced that Darent Valley Hospital killed my father. It was error after error that led to his undignified death."

She claims her 86-year-old father was fit and healthy before being taken to the Darent Wood Road hospital with a broken arm after a fall at his Heathlands Rise home on September 18 last year.

But within days on Beech ward the widower developed a severe chest infection and chronic pneumonia.

A month-long internal investigation found Mr Dyer, who was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease in 2006, should never have been admitted to a ward.

His family claim he was left in bed for a week, fed lying down despite swallowing problems and became dehydrated.

They say they were forced to care for Mr Dyer themselves - and even attended to other elderly patients.

Mr Dyer developed serious breathing difficulties and had to



Joanne Page with a photograph of her father while in hospital, shortly before he died

Picture: Nick Johnson PD1689739

undergo an emergency tracheostomy. He was later transferred to intensive care, where he died on November 21.

The cause of death was pneumonia. However, Mrs Page claims she was assured by medical staff just 45 minutes before her father died that he had overcome the condition.

The housewife, who lives with husband Danny, 45, and their 20-year-old daughter Louise in

Swaishland Road, Dartford, said: "My father is dead because of the poor care he received. If you don't look after an elderly patient properly there is only one place they're going to end up.

"One hospital executive told me she'd never seen so many mistakes made. They say they're now making changes, but it's too late."

A hospital spokesman said: "We

offer our sincere condolences to Mrs Page and her family on the sad loss of her father.

"We deeply regret and have apologised to Mrs Page that her father did not receive the quality of nursing care that he was entitled to expect and deserved.

"We have appointed a new sister to manage the ward who will ensure that staff learn from this experience."

'I'm absolutely convinced that Darent Valley Hospital killed my father'

Searching for something special

ON THE hunt for Easter treats are, from left, Ellisia Berry, Michael Webb and Hannah Baruch, who were among pupils aged four to seven hopping round the grounds of Langafel Primary, in Main Road, Longfield. Older children followed clues to find prizes during the Easter Eggstravaganza on Monday.

Picture: Simon Hildrew PD1691263



Police appeal after cyclist hurt in crash

POLICE are appealing for witnesses to a road crash in which a pensioner suffered serious injuries.

The 79-year-old cyclist was riding down the A20, Gorse Hill, between Farningham and West Kingsdown, when he came off his bicycle, and suffered a seri-

ous head injury, cuts and bruises. The man, from Hextable, was taken to a hospital in London by air ambulance following the crash between 1.30pm and 2pm on Sunday, March 7.

A Kent Police spokesman said he was still recovering.

Officers, who closed the road

near Braeside Doctor's Surgery for about two hours, are asking for anyone who may have seen the incident to come forward. Police have not said whether or not a vehicle was involved.

■ **Contact police on 01732 379217 or email appeals.westkent@kent.pnn.police.uk**

Four years for molester of children

A CONVICTED sex offender who went on to molest more children has been jailed for four years.

Andrew Innes, 46, of Alamein Gardens, Dartford, admitted five offences of indecent assault.

The court heard he was first convicted of a sexual offence in 1981 when he was aged 17.

On that occasion he committed gross indecency on a four-year-old.

He was given two years' probation, which was later substituted for a conditional discharge.

Passing sentence last Friday, Judge Martin Joy ordered that Innes be subject to an extended licence period of three years upon his release from prison.

The judge added: "I accept the assessment that you do pose a high risk of harm."

Innes denied a further offence of indecent assault and this was ordered to be left on the court file.

Innes must sign on the sex offenders' register once he is released from prison, and will also be subject to a Sexual Offences Prevention Order.

Tom Stern, defending, said Innes was born and raised in Dartford and had endured a "harrowing period of time" during his childhood.

"Whether that has left its mark one can only speculate," he told the court.

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