

STATEMENT FROM PROFESSOR MALCOLM HOOPER

I am dismayed by the YouTube attacks on Margaret Williams and wish to place on public record that to my certain knowledge they are both erroneous and defamatory. Those making these unfounded accusations are doing a great disservice to the whole ME community.

People have a right to know the facts. Margaret Williams does occasionally use and has published material using the pseudonym Julia Hamilton.

The exhibits to the witness statement of NICE's solicitor Stephen Hocking from Beachcroft LLP in relation to NICE's allegations about Julia Hamilton are also seriously erroneous.

Using the name Julia Hamilton, Margaret Williams did indeed contact NICE and the Legal Services Commission with a legitimate request for information that was in the public interest, but she did not say that she worked for either the LSC or for Leigh Day & Co. She did, however, say she was working with Leigh Day & Co, a fact confirmed by them on 9th February 2009 when Jamie Beagent wrote to her saying: "Your role and involvement....in the legal proceedings is perfectly proper".

The failure to redact this erroneous information before the Court was entirely the fault of the lawyers involved and was not due to Margaret Williams or any other advisors to the Claimants.

Erroneous information has now entered the public domain and subsequently been used to mount misconceived and unjustified attacks on Margaret Williams' privacy and character. Those making these attacks are ignorant of all the facts of the case and are acting maliciously.

The alleged misrepresentation of quotations from NICE's witness Professor Anthony Pinching as set out in Beagent's first witness statement (which attracted criticism from the Judge) lies with Beagent, not with Margaret Williams. Beagent chose not to heed the detailed quotations sent to him by Margaret Williams and made critical errors in his first witness statement of 8th December 2008. This was entirely Beagent's own fault.

To the profound concern of the Claimants and all their advisors, the Claimants' lawyers decided to ignore the 19 witness statements submitted at the last minute by NICE and the witness statement and exhibits of Stephen Hocking. The Claimants and their advisors urged their lawyers that it was

imperative to address the issues they contained but their barrister, Jeremy Hyam, advised against doing so.

At the 11th hour, NICE issued very serious threats against both Jamie Beagent and Jeremy Hyam to the extent that, on the first day of the hearing and, without any discussion whatsoever with the Claimants or their advisors, they decided to withdraw a large portion of the Claimants' evidence against NICE and to apologise to the Court and to NICE. The Claimants and their advisors believe this decision cost them the case which then had no hope of succeeding.

As a consequence, in April 2009 a substantial complaint was served upon both Jamie Beagent and Jeremy Hyam, which is currently before the Legal Complaints Service and the Bar Council Standards Board and is the subject of on-going action.

29th July 2009