

## **£2m payout over children disabled by vaccinations**

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk:80/news/story.jsp?story=717372>

By Sam McBride

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The Government has paid almost £2m to Ulster children left severely disabled by vaccines, despite claiming the routine jabs are safe, the Belfast Telegraph can today reveal.

The Government has compensated 25 children in Northern Ireland since the payments were introduced in 1979, while its relentless assertion has been the vaccination programme is safe.

In response to a freedom of information request the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) said details of which vaccines were responsible for disability were not held.

The original Vaccine Damage Payment of £10,000 was increased to £100,000 in 2000 and backdated payments were made to 24 of the Ulster children who had claimed before 2000.

One Northern Ireland family who believe their son died as a result of a vaccine said the 25 children who have been compensated are only a fraction of the children who had been affected.

Anne Coulter found her 15-year-old son Christopher dead in bed ten days after receiving the measles and rubella (MR) vaccine at school in 1994.

Christopher's heartbroken Hillsborough parents said they have fought a 12-year battle to discover the truth about why their son died.

"My requests for information about Christopher's death have been blocked at every turn by the Government," Mrs Coulter said.

"Christopher was an active, healthy boy who had enormous energy and was head chorister at St Anne's Cathedral," she explained.

Seven days before Christmas, she found her previously healthy son dead.

"It was terrible" no one expects to find their child dead, but the opposition we have faced from the Department of Health (DHSSPS) has been unbelievable.

"One of Christopher's classmates also took a seizure after being vaccinated with the same batch of vaccine and took three years to recover."

Christopher's father Harry said the family wanted a judicial review of the inquest because the pathologist has since admitted the vaccine issue should not have been excluded from his initial report.

"In his letter to the coroner, the pathologist failed to say Christopher received a vaccine before he died, and then another pathologist visited and told us the vaccine wasn't responsible," he said.

"We could not understand this because they never gave us any other explanation for why he died yet immediately ruled out the obvious---the MR vaccine.

"We got the our son's tissue blocks released and an English pathologist found the vaccine played a part in Christopher's death," he added.

A DHSSPS spokeswoman said: "For all vaccine-preventable diseases the risk of complications with the natural infections is much greater than the risk of a serious adverse reaction following the vaccine.

"Vaccines are designed to strengthen the immune system and protect against very serious diseases such as meningitis and measles. Uptake rates for childhood vaccines in Northern Ireland are very good and continue to increase."

The Vaccine Damage Payments Unit can be contacted on 017728 99944.