

Criminal Cases Review Commission 2 Referrals in 2021

2) CCRC Refer Colin Norris to the Court of Appeal

On 3 March 2008 Colin Norris was convicted, by majority, of murdering four women and attempting to murder another, by injecting them with insulin. All five women were elderly inpatients on orthopaedic wards where Mr Norris worked as a nurse. Following a detailed review of this complex and difficult case, the CCRC has decided to refer all five of Mr Norris's convictions to the Court of Appeal. Mrs Ethel Hall developed severe hypoglycaemia whilst in hospital and died on 11 December 2002. There is no dispute that she was murdered by the injection of insulin. An investigation concluded that over several months four other elderly female patients in the area had also developed severe unexplained hypoglycaemia and three of them had died shortly afterwards.

Following a 5 month trial in the Crown Court at Newcastle upon Tyne, Mr Norris was convicted of 4 counts of murder and a single count of attempted murder. He was sentenced to life imprisonment with a minimum term of 30 years. The case against him was wholly circumstantial and heavily reliant on expert opinion evidence. A total of 20 experts gave evidence at the trial on a number of complex medical and scientific issues. The prosecution said that spontaneous hypoglycaemia was extremely rare, and it was extraordinary to have a cluster of cases in one place in such a short space of time. They alleged that Mr Norris was present when or shortly before each of the patients became hypoglycaemic, and that his presence was the only factor common to all five cases. Mr Norris denied any wrongdoing and maintained that he had done nothing to induce hypoglycaemia in any of the patients.

Mr Norris appealed against his conviction but was turned down by the Court of Appeal in December 2009. He applied to the CCRC in October 2011. As part of its highly complex review, the CCRC considered new expert evidence presented by Mr Norris's representatives and instructed its own expert to provide a number of reports. The experts agree that the hypoglycaemia in the four patients other than Mrs Hall may be accounted for by natural causes. The new expert evidence has also highlighted several other relevant developments in the understanding of hypoglycaemia, including its prevalence in the elderly and frail, which cast further doubt on the expert opinion relied upon by the prosecution at trial. This new expert evidence explored recent developments in a complex area where scientific understanding is still developing.

As a result of the new expert evidence, the CCRC has concluded that there is a real possibility that the Court of Appeal will decide that that Mr Norris's conviction for the murder / attempted murder of one or more of the four patients is unsafe. As regards the murder of Mrs Hall, the CCRC considers that this conviction depends upon support from the other 4 cases and the prosecution's assertion that no-one other than Mr Norris could have been responsible. In light of the new expert evidence, the CCRC is satisfied that this assertion is now less secure and that, as a result, there is a real possibility that the Court of Appeal will quash this conviction too. In reaching this decision, the CCRC has been greatly assisted by the submissions put forward by Mr Norris's representatives throughout the review.

Mr Norris is represented by Messrs Birnberg Pierce, 14 Inverness Street, London, NW1 7HJ.

1) CCRC Refers Four More Post Office Horizon Cases - 20th January 2021

The referrals bring to 51 the number of cases to be sent for appeal so far on grounds related to the Horizon computer system. Two cases have been referred to the Court of Appeal and two to the Crown Court. The cases referred to the Court of Appeal are: Roger Allen, who pleaded guilty to theft at Norwich Crown Court on 7th April 2004 and was sentenced to six months' imprisonment¹. and Pamela Lock, who pleaded guilty to false accounting at Swansea Crown Court on 1st November 2001 and was sentenced to 80 hours of unpaid work and ordered to pay, £26,071.53 compensation and £500 costs.

The cases referred to the Crown Court (because the convictions arose in a magistrates court) are: Oyeteju Adedayo who pleaded guilty to false accounting at Medway Magistrates' Court on 19th January 2006 and was sentenced to 50 weeks' imprisonment suspended for 24 months with 12 months of supervision and 200 hours of unpaid work. and Parmod Kalia who pleaded guilty to theft at Bromley Magistrates' Court on 17th December 2001 and was sentenced to six months' imprisonment at Croydon Crown Court on 8th March 2002. Oyeteju Adedayo and Parmod Kalia are both represented by Hudgells Solicitors. Roger Allen and Pamela Lock are not represented at this stage.

All the CCRC referrals so far have been made on the basis of an abuse of process argument concerning issues with the Post Office's Horizon computer system which may have had an impact on the safety of the convictions. Then CCRC believes the argument gives rise to a real possibility that the appeal courts will quash these convictions. More details about the circumstances of the convictions and the reasons for the CCRC referrals are set out in our first Post Office referrals press release from from 26th March 2020 which can be seen here: [CCRC to refer 39 Post Office cases on abuse of process argument | Criminal Cases Review Commission](#).