



Father urges sick child reforms

A father who cared for his seriously ill daughter until her death at the age of 12 called today for reforms to the child protection process.

Malcolm Blair-Robinson questioned the role of "the State" after it intervened over the treatment of his daughter Francesca's complex and unique medical needs.

He criticised "overzealous" action by a hospital that called in social services and the police under the banner of child protection which he claimed forced him to agree to treatment he did not think was in Francesca's best interests.

Mr Blair-Robinson, 69, has now proposed a series of measures to improve the "flawed system" in the wake of her death which he plans to send to the Prime Minister and relevant Government departments.

His daughter was born with a series of medical problems in October 1995 and died of respiratory failure in November 2007.

Her half-Norwegian, half-American mother contracted chicken pox when she was pregnant and Mr Blair-Robinson said this led to Francesca developing the rare condition, Congenital Varicella Syndrome.

Francesca suffered a range of symptoms including severely impaired respiratory function, a dysfunctional digestive system, skeletal deformity, muscle wastage and various metabolic abnormalities.

Mr Blair-Robinson, who is divorced from Francesca's mother, claimed he disagreed with treatment plans proposed for Francesca in 2007 and warned against intensive drugs

therapy and vaccinations of a "more aggressive character than anything to which Francesca had previously been subjected".

But while he believed he was involved in an ongoing dialogue with staff at St Richard's Hospital in Chichester, he claims he was forced to comply after the Royal West Sussex NHS Trust went behind his back and invoked child protection procedures.

Francesca died at home five months later.