

Funding the Future

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The press conference on the case of Lucy Letby, hosted by David Davis MP yesterday, made clear that there are very good reasons to doubt the safety of any of her convictions for the murder of children at the hospital where she worked.

Those concerns have long been shared by my wife, who worked for some time in neonatology units before becoming a GP. She is qualified as a Member of the Royal College of Physicians with a speciality in children's medicine. She has never felt the evidence against Letby stacked up, and the case was more likely a cover-up. It is now clear that she is very far from alone.

But, it has to be noted, so determined is the cover-up that the government ordered an inquiry, chaired by Lady Justice Thirlwall, to examine the events leading up to the deaths at the Countess of Chester neonatal unit. As Thirlwall has made clear, her inquiry is not a review of the convictions, which she appears determined to uphold. So certain is her view that she has said that criticism of those convictions has created "an enormous amount of stress" for the victims' parents. That Letby might be servicing time for murders she never committed does not appear to be her concern.

I do not know the truth here. But I note that people with considerable expertise who have reviewed the cases could, between them, find no evidence for there being a single murder, as was explained at yesterday's press conference.

Because of the perversity of the UK legal system, that may not permit a review of Letby's case, because of mistakes by her original defence team of lawyers.

Meanwhile, the government is funding an inquiry at a considerable cost to work out how an event that might well have never happened can be prevented from happening again. It's hard to make up something so absurd.

There is very obviously reasonable doubt about the convictions in this case. The deaths may have been from natural causes. They may be the result of a lack of proper medical care. At the very least, a retrial is needed. If that cannot be safely undertaken, then a higher court will have to decide the matter. But what is very obvious is that the Thirlwall hearing should be put on hold. Justice must be seen to be done, first of all.