

**News Release**

**26 November 2012**

## **DNA released to establish dead soldier's paternity**

A battle to recognise a soldier killed in a Taliban bomb attack in March as the father of a five month old Warrington baby girl has finally been won.

Emma Hickman, 19, who was engaged to Private Daniel Wade, has been struggling to establish in law the right to name her fiancé as the father of little Lexie-Mai, who was born in June.

As they weren't married, she was denied the right to enter him as the father on her daughter's birth certificate and has had to fight to get the MoD to release a DNA sample of her dead fiancé so she can prove paternity.

Family law expert Jennifer Roulston, a partner at QualitySolicitors Forshaws Davies Ridgway in Warrington, has been helping to fight the battle on her behalf. And with the support of local MP David Mowat and the Prime Minister David Cameron, she is delighted the DNA sample has now been released.

Ms Roulston said: "We are very grateful for Mr Cameron's and Mr Mowat's support in rectifying this dreadful situation. It is appalling that Emma's trauma at losing her fiancé just before the birth of her daughter should be compounded by this legal wrangle to establish her fiancé's paternity.

"We are delighted Daniel's family has agreed to release the DNA sample and Daniel's paternity has at last been established. Emma is so relieved she can finally enter his name on her daughter's birth certificate."

Private Daniel Wade, of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, The Yorkshire Regiment, died with five comrades on the borders of Helmand Province in Afghanistan when his Warrior armoured fighting vehicle was blown up by a roadside bomb.

Emma is devastated by the lengths she has had to go to establish his paternity. And she has been stung by unkind comments on social media accusing her of only being



interested in the compensation. For her it has only ever been about the right to name Daniel as the father of her daughter.

“It has never ever been about the money,” she said. “It is about Lexie-Mai’s right to know who her father is. Dan was so looking forward to being a daddy. He used to carry her scan picture with him under his body armour when he went out on patrol. He helped me choose her name and was so proud he was going to be a father.”

Mr Mowat is now calling for the MoD to keep DNA samples of all soldiers sent to war zones as a matter of routine, so this type of heart-breaking case can be avoided in the future.

He said: “I’m delighted that this specific case has now been resolved, but the Army needs to rethink its approach to DNA otherwise there will be more Lexie-Mais in the future.

“With the best will in the world, it’s hard to tell a grieving family that they need to provide DNA samples either to prove paternity or, worse still, to identify remains.

“Although the Army does already have a voluntary scheme of this kind, I was encouraged by the Defence Minister’s recent answer that he was now looking at a compulsory scheme. Having a comprehensive database of DNA would allow these very difficult situations to be resolved quickly and with the minimum of fuss.”

For more information, contact Jennifer Roulston at QualitySolicitors Forshaws Davies Ridgway on 01925 604713 or email [Jennifer.roulston@fdrlaw.co.uk](mailto:Jennifer.roulston@fdrlaw.co.uk).  
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#### **EDITOR’S NOTES:**

##### **About QualitySolicitors Forshaws Davies Ridgway**

- FDR is a full service legal practice with offices in Warrington, Stockton Heath and Frodsham, divided into Quality Solicitors Forshaws Davies Ridgway and a separate FDR Commercial Department at 21 Bold Street, Warrington.
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- Mortgage Strategy Awards 2009 & 2010 ‘Best Conveyancer’ Runner Up
- Services include: Commercial Law, Conveyancing, Criminal, Family, Litigation, Wills & Probate.

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*On behalf of Quality Solicitors Forshaws Davies Ridgway*