

What can you do if you face an 'impossible' problem? CALL OUR UNION!

What can you do if you face a personal problem that seems impossible to solve? Steelman David Farrell (pictured below) who works in the continuous casting plant at Corus in Redcar had such a dilemma. One of his immediate family went into hospital for a routine operation but things went wrong in both the operating theatre and immediately after the initial hospital discharge. Complications resulted in internal injuries and led to a prolonged period in hospital and a life-threatening situation.

During the entire treatment and recovery period, the family felt a number of issues arose that weren't addressed correctly. David questioned the senior medical staff and challenged the hospital administration to ensure



that the appropriate resource was applied to the treatment of the family member. After the patient was finally discharged (15 months later) there were a lot of unexplained issues and a great feeling of disappointment that these hadn't been answered. What could David do?

'I felt I was banging my head against a brick wall,' he said. 'My family became frustrated because all we wanted was a detailed response to some searching questions.' Then David realised what he could do. He called Community and the union called in its team of first-rate medical negligence lawyers.

David said: 'The lawyers explained to me what could be done and what steps could be taken. They were brilliant and were a constant source of strength every step of the way.'

The outcome was a good one. David and his family received the investigation and answers they were seeking. The hospital reviewed a number of their practices and procedures. The NHS Trust hospital admitted liability and agreed to pay damages.

'I can't thank Community enough for all the support and legal expertise made available to me. It is something we will never forget.'

Legal services are just one part of a big benefits package available not only to members but to their close family, too. The package includes many other benefits and services which are detailed on page 30.

Legal services cover all members and their close family at work and at home in times of need. If an unexpected legal problem crops up like that which faced David Community understands you have enough worries than having to try and find the money to pay for legal advice. Hiring a QC, for instance, can run up thousands of pounds which adds unneeded stress.

Community has a nationwide network of solicitors on call to assist members and their families. Many of the legal services are free and others are offered at reduced rates. The free services include a 24 hour legal support for urgent criminal issues, employment advice and representation, personal injury advice and representation and will writing. But more than just providing legal advice Community's solicitors are there to support members through all the legal processes, helping to take the strain and ease the pressure.

The family of John Penhalagan, 44, who was tragically crushed to death at work, also discovered the support our union can give. Community stepped in to support John's widow and provide legal advice to ensure that the coroner's inquest investigated whether John's death at Celsa in Tremorfa, Cardiff, had been an accident or a result of culpable negligence on the part of the employer. The three-day inquest found the death to be accidental but it criticized the company for a lax attitude towards refreshing basic health and safety procedures.

Solicitor Michael Imperato of Russell Jones and Walker welcomed the verdict and continued to pursue Celsa through a civil claim. He said 'Celsa have already admitted civil liability, and while money can't replace Mr Penhalagan as a loving husband and father of two children we will now be working to ensure the family's financial security.'