

## Sally Mays inquest: Nurse should have spotted 'red flag' hours before patient's death

By [Hull Daily Mail](#) | Posted: October 22, 2015

By Allison Coggan



TRAGIC LOSS: Sally Mays, 22, was found dead at her west Hull flat.

A MENTAL health nurse was accused of having an "intolerant attitude" when he refused to admit a woman to a psychiatric unit hours before she killed herself.

Paddy McKee, a nurse with Humber Foundation Trust for 19 years, denied having a "predetermined view" before carrying out a gate-keeping assessment of Sally Mays with fellow nurse Gemma Pearson at Miranda House in Hull.

However, he admitted failing to acknowledge a change in Sally's pattern of self-harming, which should have resulted in an hospital stay.

Sally, 22, was found dead at her west Hull flat on Friday, July 24, 2014, about two hours after Mr McKee and Ms Pearson refused to admit her following an assessment lasting 14 to 20 minutes.

Giving evidence at Hull Coroner's Court, Mr McKee, who worked for the trust's crisis team, described Sally as "calm, rational and engaging", but said she could not demonstrate why she needed to be in hospital.

The inquest was told that when Sally learned she would not be admitted to hospital, she started banging her head on a wall, attempted to strangle herself and declared her intention to kill herself.

However, Mr McKee said Sally was "very much in control".

Bridget Dolan, representing Sally's parents, twice invited Mr McKee to apologise to Sally's family for his "failings and shortcomings in Sally's care".

Mr McKee replied: "I am sorry that Sally is dead."

Ms Dolan said: "Do you accept you failed to provide Sally with basic psychiatric care and that the quality of assessment was insufficient?" Mr McKee replied: "No."

He also denied his assessment was "slipshod and perfunctory", saying: "I felt Sally's problems were more chronic than acute."

But he admitted he "forgot" information provided by Sally's community psychiatric nurse Laura Elliot that showed Sally had changed the way she self-harmed that day, described as a "red flag" of "fundamental importance".

Ms Dolan said: "It would certainly have shown her risk was increasing. It would have mandated her admission."

"Yes," Mr McKee replied.

He also accepted information passed on by police, that Sally had expressed her intention to kill herself as soon as she got home, should have prompted him to reconsider.

Asked about his comment that Sally should be allowed to fall unconscious after she tried to strangle herself at Miranda House, Mr McKee said he was "giving Sally something to think about". He said: "I was relaying the message that you are in control."

Sally's brother Ben asked if trust staff allowed patients using ligatures to fall unconscious and Mr McKee said he had been told of one occasion when a patient using a ligature had been told by a member of staff: "You will faint, that is all that will happen."

As part of his questioning, Mr Mays referred to the values of the NHS and nursing code of conduct in his treatment of Sally.

He asked: "Did you treat Sally with dignity and respect?"

Mr McKee replied: "Yes."

The inquest heard Mr McKee return to duty in September last year following Sally's death, but has been on sick leave since February.

Now entering its seventh day, the inquest continues.