

Claire Quinn by her personal representative and mother Geraldine Quinn v Taxiline Newry Ltd and others

Disability discrimination case that settled in the county court on 22 February 2017

Summary

Clare Quinn, now deceased, was a 26 year old female who had Cystic Fibrosis. Due to limited lung capacity she required oxygen 24 hours per day and the use of an oxygen cylinder at all times. She had limited mobility.

On Saturday 23 August 2014, when on a night out in Newry, she rang the Defendant company to request a taxi but was told that she could not be picked up from the bar she was in, because of a one way system, and that she would have to come to the taxi office. Ms. Quinn said that she informed the taxi company that she was on oxygen and could not walk so far. She says she was told that they didn't make exceptions and that she would have to come to the office.

It took her some 35 minutes to get to the taxi office as she had to continually stop and start and when she arrived she could barely stand and was doubled over. Ms. Quinn asked for a seat but was told that the office was closed and she should join the queue, which was lengthy. A man in the queue expressed concern and said that she did not look well. When his name was called he gave the Plaintiff his taxi.

Due to the incident Ms. Quinn spent the night on her breathing ventilator to get her oxygen levels back up and says she had to attend the hospital as a consequence. A letter of complaint was sent to the Defendant company but no response was received.

On settlement of the case, the company acknowledged that it was under a duty to make reasonable adjustments to enable the Plaintiff to access their taxi service without unreasonable difficulty in accordance with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, as amended and apologised for the injury to feelings, upset and distress suffered by the Plaintiff as a result of the matters giving rise to this claim.

It undertook to liaise with the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland to review its policies, practices and procedures in relation to the provision of its service to customers to ensure that they are effective and conform to the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, as amended. It agreed to implement any reasonable recommendations that the Commission may make within an agreed timescale. It affirmed its commitment to the principle of equality of opportunity and to ensuring that its practices, policies and procedures in the delivery of its services comply in all respects with its obligations under national and European Equality law, including the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, as amended and the relevant Codes of Practice and Guidance.

The Defendant's agreed to pay £600 to the charity of the choice of the Plaintiff's personal representative.