

**THE LAMPARD INQUIRY**

**BEFORE BARONESS KATE LAMPARD CBE**

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**COMMEMORATIVE AND IMPACT EVIDENCE OF MRS JOYCE NSILU**

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1. I am the mother of Edwige Nsilu, she was 20 years old when she died on 5 February 2020. It is important to me and my family to share with you what Edwige was like as a person and not just what happened to her before she died.
2. Edwige was born on 29 October 1999. My husband and I have seven children and Edwige was our third child. Edwige has two older brothers and four younger brothers and sisters.
3. My husband, Flavien Nsilu, and I are from the Democratic Republic of Congo. Edwige was born and raised in London. She was raised speaking our native language of Congolese Lingala at home. Sadly she lost the ability to speak Lingala after she was removed from the family home by social services at the age of 14. Flavien does not speak English and so this really impacted her ability to communicate with him. This was very hard for Edwige as she was always particularly close with her Dad growing up.
4. Edwige was very close to her family. She was the older sister to her younger sisters and brother. Whenever she called home she would always ask about the family, including the extended family. She became very anxious for the welfare of her younger sister Docas in 2019 and 2020, who was undergoing treatment for her sickle cell disease at the time. When we were shown her bedroom in St Andrews after she died, we saw she had photos printed out of all her family on her wall, including all of her siblings and cousins.
5. Edwige had a strong affinity to her Congolese background and African culture. She had never visited Congo but she always talked about visiting when she was released from hospital. When we used to visit her in hospital, she frequently asked us to bring her African food. She also requested that I make her an African-style dress. She wore this dress in photographs that we saw in her room at St Andrews and she wore it to visit her family at Christmas in 2019. Edwige regularly expressed a wish to visit Congo one day.

6. Edwige was a devoted Christian, as are we all in our family. When we used to speak to Edwige on the phone she would often tell us how much she missed the church and she was always asking us to pray for her.
7. Edwige was loving, warm, nurturing, gorgeous and strong. We called her the mother of all children because she had a deep love for every single person. Edwige was such a blessing to our family, and I know that one day, with God 's grace, we will see her again.
8. Edwige will always be our daughter, big sister, and aunt. She never got to meet her nieces and nephews but we will always proudly tell them and future generations of who she was.
9. We miss her dearly and we are tormented knowing things could have been different, and Edwige's death could have been prevented. We are still recovering from the inquest into her death which only finished last year. The jury believed Edwige's death had been contributed to by neglect and several failures by the hospital and staff who were supposed to keep her safe. I strongly believe that my daughter experienced mistreatment because she was black and because of racism.
10. It is so hard to go over what happened, how and why Edwige died, reliving the investigations and uncertainty after she died. But we have committed ourselves to the Inquiry because we still have questions unanswered, concerns that don't feel resolved, and we still hope for changes for all those under the care of Essex mental health services and their families. We want health services and providers to be open and transparent, not to keep secrets, and to communicate with the parents and families of patients.

Signed: [personal/sensitive]

**Joyce Nsilu**

Date: 01/11/2024