

£750,000 award for mother left in coma by drug

A MOTHER of three left in a coma-like state after being given a labour-inducing drug has been awarded £750,000 interim damages, writes James Fielding.

Nicola Crelling, 35, is so severely brain damaged she cannot walk, talk or do anything for herself.

She was given 2,000 micrograms of misoprostol, 32 times the normal dose, after her fourth son died in her womb at seven months.

Medics at West Cumberland Hospital in Whitehaven, Cumbria, administered the drug, normally used to treat gastric ulcers, to induce labour and retrieve the foetus.

Within hours Mrs Crelling suffered a ruptured uterus and a heart attack as fluid from her womb entered her bloodstream and flooded her brain, starving it of oxygen.

Last Tuesday a High Court judge in Preston, Lancashire, approved interim damages of £750,000 after hearing the NHS trust which runs the hospital had admitted it was medically negligent.

The final award for Mrs Crelling's mistreatment in August 2004 is expected to run into several millions.