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Woman who killed baby spared jail

A mother has walked free from court after admitting killing her baby daughter through gross negligence.

Fiona Milson, 33, of Malton, was given a two year rehabilitation order by Leeds Crown Court after earlier pleading guilty to manslaughter.

Eighteen-month-old Sadie died after she ingested a teaspoon of the heroin substitute methadone from a bottle.

Judge Norman Jones told Milson: "It's going to hang over your head to the day you die."

The court heard how Milson, a recovering drug addict, was left with her daughter at her grandmother's house where she had been living at the time of the incident on 10 March.

“ No matter how long I'm sent to prison for, I will be serving a life sentence in my head ”

Fiona Milson

She put the child to bed not knowing anything was wrong until the morning when she went to wake her.

The court heard the baby was "extremely cold and appeared dead".

In a letter read out to the court, Milson said she would never be able to forgive herself for letting her daughter come into contact with her prescribed medication.

"I know I'm responsible for her death. I will always blame myself, torture myself.

"No matter how long I'm sent to prison for, I will be serving a life sentence in my head."

Prosecutor Nicholas Campbell told the court that Sadie's birth was the catalyst for Milson to start putting her life in order again.

Assistance needed

She had enrolled with the Compass clinic in York for support but her visits had become less frequent from October 2003.

The methadone had been stored in a sports bottle which had a child-resistant but not child-proof top.

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In police interviews Milson said she thought her daughter would be safe as she kept it on the table and out of reach of the toddler.

George Marson QC, defending Milson, said: "The tragedy of this case does not require further punishment, it does require further assistance.

"She was not a selfish, uncaring mother. She has lost the person most precious to her."

Judge Jones QC said the offence was at the "bottom of the scale of gross negligence."

The court heard that Milson, who is pregnant again, may not be allowed to keep her unborn child.

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