

£2m claim for a back injury 'lifting baby'

A NURSERY worker is claiming £2million for a back injury she says was caused by lifting a baby into a cot.

Aileen Cooper blames a defective bed for spinal damage that left her in a wheelchair, the High Court heard.

The 45-year-old said she lifted a seven-month-old baby into a cot with a damaged drop-down side, which was secured upright with plastic ties, when she pulled her back.

She twisted 'to comfort the child with my arm over the side of the cot' when she felt a crack.

Yesterday, Daniel Lawson, for Mrs Cooper, told the court she was 'severely disabled' and could not enjoy caravanning or cycling with her family.

The incident happened at the Rothamsted Little Stars Nursery, in Harpenden, Hertfordshire, in 2009.

Mrs Cooper, from Luton, said she was immediately 'heavy and tingly', with pain setting into her back later.

She was diagnosed with a prolapsed

by **JOEL TAYLOR**

disc, which the court heard led to cauda equina syndrome, a condition which reduces movement in the lower body.

However, Michael Lemmy, for the nursery owner, Bright Horizons, said a successful claim would be 'almost like a win on the National Lottery'.

He insisted there was 'no real risk of injury involved in lifting babies' and the company, named as one of the top 50 employers in Europe, had followed its obligations.

Both sides produced medical experts to support their case.

Spinal surgeon Firas Jamil said Mrs Cooper's injuries were consistent with straining her back over the cot.

But consultant John Webb said she had pre-existing back problems and 'lifting a baby into a cot is not a very stressful activity'.

Judge David Pittaway QC reserved his decision until a later date.