

Hampshire Constabulary. Operation Rochester – more families informed

Hampshire Constabulary detectives from Operation Rochester investigating the deaths of 90 elderly patients at Gosport War Memorial Hospital before 2002, have now updated the families of 62 of the 90 cases under investigation.

During the course of this week 28 families have been notified in writing by Hampshire Constabulary that there is no evidence of criminal culpability in respect of their individual cases. Neither is there any evidence of criminal culpability in respect of the 34 families already notified.

Investigations are continuing into the deaths of 28 elderly patients at the hospital. A team of clinical experts is continuing to review and assess the cases to establish whether or not there is any criminal culpability in respect of the deaths.

Detective Superintendent David Williams said: “We are committed to fully investigating all of the complaints made to us and have received considerable co-operation from the Fareham and Gosport Healthcare Trust in facilitating interviews with staff.”

“We have engaged in a process which will enable issues to be considered by the Crown Prosecution Service as early as possible. The nature of the investigation is such that it has not been possible to fix timescales but we anticipate that a substantial amount of the priority work will have been completed this year”.

The investigation team continues its close liaison with family group members, the CPS, the NHS and other regulatory bodies.

Notes for editors.

1. Operation Rochester is an investigation into a number of deaths at Gosport War Memorial Hospital before 2002.
2. Relatives who made complaints to Hampshire Constabulary have been kept informed with regular letters and a newsletter updating them on the progress of the inquiry.
3. Each case referred to Hampshire Constabulary has been examined by a panel of eminent national experts in the fields of palliative care, geriatric care, general practice, nursing and forensic toxicology in association with the case investigation officers.
 - a. That investigation showed that in a number of the cases they were content that the treatment that the patient received while at the hospital was appropriate and did not cause them concern.
 - b. It also showed there were a number of cases needing further examination of the circumstances of the death before any formal conclusion could be reached. The vast majority of work has been completed around those cases, which have now been referred to other regulatory bodies.

4. A medical lawyer quality assured those decisions and conclusions before any relatives were approached with the details of their cases.
5. The investigation team has liaised closely with the health authorities the Nursing & Midwifery Council and the General Medical Council throughout this investigation and continue to do so.

End

1220 hrs 25.11.2004

Dave WILLIAMS. Det Supt.