

Appendix C
Letters from Portsmouth Healthcare NHS Trust
answering complaints from Mrs Lack.

Mrs. L. Lack,

MM/BM/YJM

Code A

22nd September, 1998

4378

Dear Mrs. Lack,

I am writing further to my letter of 25th August, 1998 now that I have received the report from Mrs. Hutchings, who has been investigating all the matters you raised concerning the care provided for your mother, Mrs. G. Richards, prior to her death on Friday, 21st August, 1998.

I should like to reiterate how very sorry I am that your grief has been compounded by so many concerns, but that you for having taken the trouble to write, as this has resulted in a very thorough investigation, and given us the chance to explain and/or apologise for the problems you identified. It has also meant that staff have reviewed procedures and improvements are being implemented as a result.

I should like to respond to each of the points you made, using the numbering system from your notes.

1. At what time did Mrs. Richards fall?
She fell at 1330 on Thursday, 13th August, 1998 although there was no witness to the fall.
2. Who attended her?
She was attended by Staff Nurse Jenny Brewer and Health Care Support Worker Cook.
3. Who moved her and how?
Both members of staff did, using a hoist.

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4. After the fall

Your mother had been given medication prescribed by Dr. Barton, who was present on the ward just after her fall. I understand that it was not your wish for your mother to be given stronger medication because it made her drowsy.

5. Why was there such a delay in dealing with the consequences of the fall?

With the benefit of hindsight it is possible to assume that your mother's dislocation could have been identified much earlier and we can now only apologise for that delay if that was the case. It is notoriously difficult to establish degrees of pain or discomfort in dementia sufferers, but staff now recognise that more attention should have been paid to your mother's signs of discomfort, and your own expressed concerns about that.

6. Why no x-ray? Why no transfer?

These delays were a direct result of the failure to identify a problem earlier in the day - because the x-ray department at Gosport War Memorial Hospital only operates from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. I understand that you did appreciate this when it was discussed with you on the Thursday evening, and agreed with the advice that it would be best to defer a transfer to Haslar until an x-ray based diagnosis had been made. The transfer to Haslar was organised as soon as possible after the situation had been confirmed by x-ray, on the morning of Friday, 14th August, 1998. It is a matter of great regret that this delay occurred, and we accept and apologise for the fact that the standard of care fell below that which we aim to provide.

7. Why when she was returned to bed from the ambulance was her position not checked?

When your mother arrived on the ward two health care support workers saw her into bed and then went to inform Staff Nurse Couchman that your mother had arrived. They had realised there was a problem and that professional advice was needed. Staff Nurse Couchman came and checked her position, and I believe you assisted her in straightening your mother's leg and placing a pillow between her legs.

8. (a) How was she brought from Haslar?

She was brought by an ambulance with two crew.

(b) Was there an escort/anyone in the back with her?

There was no nurse escort - this would have been arranged by Haslar had it been thought necessary.

(c) When did she start to show pain and what caused it?

The ambulance crew commented that she showed signs of being in pain as she was put into the ambulance. The cause of the pain has not been specifically identified.

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(d) Why was my request to see the x-rays denied?

The x-rays were seen in the x-ray department by the doctor and the consultant radiologist. The decision to keep x-rays in the department and not to send them to the ward rests with the consultant radiologist, not the ward staff, and your request may not have been relayed to the department.

(e) Decision to do nothing but provide pain relief?

Dr., Barton felt that the family had been involved at this stage as she discussed the situation fully with you. She made sure you were aware that the surgical intervention necessary for the haematoma would have required a general anaesthetic and clearly your mother was not well enough for such a procedure to be undertaken. Therefore, the priority, and only realistic option, was to keep her pain-free and allow her to die peacefully, with dignity.

9. Clothing sent for marking despite being named already

As a result of previous problems the ward have adopted the practice of marking all patients clothing with the ward name - a procedure designed to help, which on this occasion, did the absolute opposite. The laundry marker at Gosport War Memorial Hospital had broken down, so your mother's clothes were sent to St. Mary's Hospital and meanwhile she was given hospital clothing. In attempting to meet your completely reasonable request for her own clothes to be returned, a taxi was authorised which in the event brought the clothes back - still only bearing your mother's name. Whilst, as you say, this was a trivial problem on the scale of the real issues, it was a quite ridiculous consequence of a well-intentioned policy which served to cause unlooked for stress. The process is being reviewed as a result of your complaint.

All the staff concerned with the care of your mother were deeply saddened at her experience, and sincere apologies are proffered to you and your sister for the problems which occurred, and the failure of the service to meet your very reasonable expectations. The only constructive aspect I can identify is that lessons have been learned and the experience will benefit future patients, although I fully appreciate that such benefits have little relevance to yourselves.

You may be aware that your sister, Mrs. McKenzie, has telephoned Mrs. Hutchings as she wishes to see this correspondence. I am writing to her to confirm that it is personal to you, although, of course, I hope that you will feel able to share it with her. If you are unable to do this then she will need to raise a complaint of her own.

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Should you wish to pursue the matter further my secretary would be very happy to arrange a meeting with Mrs. Barbara Robinson, Hospital Manager, at your convenience and I would be grateful if you could contact her on 01705 Code A within one month should you wish this.

Thank you once again for writing so comprehensively of your concerns.

Yours sincerely,

Max Millett
Chief Executive

Silent copy to: Mrs. B. Robinson
Mr. W. Hooper

HAMPSHIRE CONSTABULARY - MESSAGE FORM

From/To: DC Batesworth
Address:
Tel. No.:

Section	EG
Date/Time	2709
Time Incident Reported	
SOURCE	
Telephone	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
399	
Alarm	
Patrol	
Station Counter	
Beat	

Message and Action Taken: C.O.F. (If applicable)

Main, 'EG' SDO was contacted by phone by a Mrs Gillian McKenzie (home address refused) on tel' No' 01323-520245 stating she wished to report/allege that her mother had been unlawfully killed whilst in Gosport War Memorial Hospital recently. At that point Mrs McKenzie refused/declined all other details & insisted she spoke to The Head of Gosport CID!! As duty DC for the w/end I contacted her, she imparted the following:-

Incident Map Ref.	
RESPONSE	
Immediate	<input type="checkbox"/>
Time Sent	
Time Resumed	
Delayed	
Scheduled	
Telephone	

Her mother Gladys Mable RICHARDS
b. 21/4/08.

Incident Class	
RESOURCE TYPE	No. of Resources
Foot Cycle	
Area Car	
Sub. Div. Van	
C.I.D.	
Traffic	
Supervisory Officer	
No Deployment	

Had a fall at home in L-O-S & was admitted to Haslar Hospital where she had an operation for a dislocated hip she stayed at Haslar for 10 days until transfer to the Gosport War Memorial Hospital. On arrival at G.W.M Hosp her mother fell again & although not treated for this until the following day she eventually went back to Haslar where her hip (which had again dislocated) was manipulated back into place.

Sent by H.C.	
RESULT	
Arrest	
Offence Record	
C.O.F.	
False Call	
Advice/Held	
A.S.N.T.	
N.F.A.	
Officer Dealing	

Her mother was again transferred to the G.W.M. Hospital & given diamorphine for pain killing reasons. She subsequently had a haematoma(?) develop. Her mother was apparently not examined on her arrival back at G.W.M. Hosp. until her death on Friday 21/8/98. The reason given for her death was pneumonia.

For INFO of/ ACTION by *	
Initials	
Date	28/8/98

Mrs McKenzie's sister Lesley LACK → PTO

INCOMPLETE
Not to be removed
until Enquiry cleared
& completed

of 3 Hunter Close, GG (on 421909) who is a nurse of 43 yrs. experience questioned the cause of death & was told that if she was not happy then it would lead to an inquest & P.M. for her mum. To save mother etc from this she accepted the decision reason given for her mothers death.

Subsequently Mrs McKenzie & her sister sought an investigation into their mothers treatment & the events etc leading to the eventual death. They have now received copies of the report from the Chief Executive, Max Missett of Portsmouth Healthcare National Health Trust 9/o St. James Hospital, Portsmouth. In this the Hospital apparently admit a degree of liability, but there are apparently references to conversations that Mrs McKenzie states did not take place & she feels a coverup is being done by the N.H.S.

I have advised her that on the face of what she has told me the facts etc appear if anything to fall short of unlawful killing but she may have some form of case for negligence & to that end referred her to the General Medical Council.

She appears on the 'phone to be "copus vertus" (normal) but obviously we have only her word with regards to the ins & outs of the incidents & what she claims to be in this report.

She claims her sister who lives locally has not come forward etc herself because of the fact she agreed to sign/accept what was put on the death certificate & now thinks she's in trouble for doing this.

Mrs McKenzie contacted me today 28/9 & told me she feels it necessary she be interviewed by us re: her claim & also has written to the Chief Constable etc.

I have left it that I would take advice & make some prelim. enqs. & then someone will get back to her over to you.

Mrs. L. Lack,

MM/YJM

Code A

25th September, 1998

Code A

Dear Mrs. Lack,

Further to your telephone conversations with my secretary I write to confirm that arrangements have been made for you and your sister, Mrs. McKenzie, to meet with Mrs. Barbara Robinson, Hospital Manager, at 2.30 p.m. on Thursday, 29th October, 1998 at Gosport War Memorial Hospital.

As also discussed I have sent a copy of my letter to you dated 22nd September, 1998 to Mrs. McKenzie.

Yours sincerely,

Code A

Max Millett
Chief Executive

Copy to: Mrs. G. McKenzie
Mrs. B. Robinson

*Meeting cancelled 29th by telephone
G.M. McKenzie*

PORTSMOUTH
HealthCare
NHS
TRUST

Our ref
MM/BM/YJM

Your ref

Date
22nd September, 1998

Ext
Code A

Mrs. G. McKenzie,

Code A

Dear Mrs. McKenzie,

I understand that you have made enquiries about receiving copies of the correspondence between Portsmouth HealthCare Trust and your sister, Mrs. Lack, about your late mother's care at Gosport War Memorial Hospital.

This correspondence is personal to your sister and I am not, therefore, in a position to copy it to you. However, in my letter of today to her I have advised her of your request, and expressed the hope that she will feel able to share it with you.

Failing that, the only option would be for you to raise your own complaint directly with the Trust.

I am very sorry that your grief at this very difficult time has been compounded by these concerns.

Yours sincerely, **Code A**

Code A

Max Millett
Chief Executive

PORTSMOUTH HEALTHCARE NHS TRUST CENTRAL OFFICE

St James' Hospital
Locksway Road, Portsmouth, Hants PO4 8LD
Tel: 01705 822444 Fax: 01705 293437