

## **Gosport investigation**

### **Notes for people being interviewed by the CHI team**

These notes are being sent to you with a letter asking you to attend a meeting with the Gosport investigation CHI team. The notes try to answer some of the most common questions people ask about CHI and why there is an investigation.

#### **What is the Commission for Health Improvement (CHI)?**

CHI was established on 1 April 2000, reporting directly to the Secretary of State for Health in England and the National Assembly in Wales. It has been set up to advise the NHS on improving the quality of patient care. CHI has four main functions:

- Reviewing clinical governance arrangements in the NHS. Clinical governance is a framework through which NHS organisations are accountable for continuously improving the quality of their services. CHI will review these arrangements in every Trust and Health Authority (SHA) in England and Wales over the next four years.
- Conducting investigations into serious service failures.
- Monitoring and reviewing the implementation of patient care standards as agreed through National Service Frameworks.
- Providing information for the development of best practice and disseminating clinical governance principles.

#### **What is the team investigating?**

In summary, CHI is looking at the quality of patient care for older people at the Gosport War Memorial Hospital. CHI will focus on continuing and rehabilitative care for inpatients.

The team will be looking at whether, since 1998, the systems the trust has in place to ensure good quality care have failed. CHI will look particularly at:

- Staffing, training and accountability arrangements.
- Arrangements for the administration of drugs.
- The guidelines and practices followed to deliver good quality care.
- How the trust communicates with patients and their relatives and carers, in particular towards the end of life.
- How lessons from previous complaints have been learnt and implemented.

The terms of reference should be enclosed with your letter for interview. Information is also posted on our website ([www.chi.nhs.uk](http://www.chi.nhs.uk)).

**How will the investigating team work?**

The investigating team will include a senior doctor, a senior nurse, a senior NHS manager, a lay representative and two investigation managers. CHI employs the investigation managers, but other team members are drawn from the NHS and community outside of the Portsmouth area.

During the investigation the CHI team will arrange to meet medical, nursing and other staff to discuss patient services. They will have relevant background information about these services beforehand, for example, professional standards and information produced for patients.

CHI has the power to require NHS staff (including those working in general practice) to attend interviews but CHI would rather meet people on a voluntary basis and consult them about what can be learned for the future. Interviewees will not be asked about any allegations of potential negligence or individual conduct in the events that triggered the investigation. Thus they should not feel their personal position is jeopardised by meeting CHI. Our starting point is to look at systems to support the provision of high quality patient care.

There will also be stakeholder meetings where people not involved in the formal investigation may ask to meet the team. By "stakeholder" we mean anyone living or working in the area (including NHS staff and patients).

**Can I bring someone with me?**

Although interviews are conducted as informally as possible, they may cause anxiety. You are welcome to have someone with you. This might be a friend, or a member of a trade union or professional organisation, or a colleague. You are not allowed to have legal representation at the meeting. There is no requirement to bring someone with you, but if you do, that person must understand they cannot answer questions on your behalf and that the investigation is in private. They should not therefore disclose what happens during the interview to any one else. You should not bring someone with you who will be interviewed as part of the investigation.

**What will happen during the interview?**

Two or three members of the CHI team usually meet each interviewee. They will have specific questions to ask, but you will also have an opportunity to add anything you think is relevant. During the meeting, interviewees will have time to pause and reflect on the questions asked and on their answers.

**Confidentiality**

Although statements will not be taken in the form of a word for word record, it will be necessary to take notes of the key points during the interview. Interviews are not recorded. The aim will be to treat information provided in a confidential way, but if we need to quote specific information, we will check the accuracy of that information with you before it is included in the report.

In certain circumstances, CHI may disclose or be required to disclose confidential information (including that contained in notes made during interviews) to other organisations, such as the relevant professional body or the police, in relation to the matters which CHI is investigating.

**How is the investigation reported?**

A written report will be made to the Secretary of State for Health. It will be made available to you and other interviewees, and others on request. It will also be published on CHI's website [www.chi.nhs.uk](http://www.chi.nhs.uk)

**Further information?**

If arrangements for your interview were made through someone at Portsmouth Healthcare NHS Trust, please contact that person in the first place. Additional information can be obtained from the CHI Investigation Manager, Julie Miller 020 7448 9323.

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