

**Ms Karen Woods
Office of the Complaints Convener
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166 Fareham Road
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PO13 0FH**

Comp/007/2002

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PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

Code A

Dear **Code A**

Thank you for your recent letter requesting that independent review panels be established to investigate your two recent complaints – one against Fareham and Gosport Primary Care Trust in respect of Gosport War Memorial Hospital and also your complaint against Dr Grocock. Please accept my apologies for the inordinate delay which has occurred since you wrote to the Primary Care Trust in January.

As this process will be new to you, I would like to take this opportunity to explain to you what will happen and review the sequence of events which you may anticipate.

As the Convener of complaints for Fareham and Gosport Primary Care Trust, it is my role to review the information regarding the circumstances which led to your complaints and to respond to you with a decision regarding the establishment of an Independent Review Panel. If there seem to be sufficient indications that an Independent Review Panel would be productive, and could assist in the resolution of your complaints, then you will be informed and a panel arranged. Although a careful and considered review of the appropriateness of an Independent Review will occur, it is important for you to understand that whilst you have a right to request an Independent Review panel, it is not the same as a right to proceed automatically to the Independent Review Panel stage.

In addition to myself, a lay representative (a member of the public, who is unconnected to the Primary Care Trust and has been selected by the NHS Executive) will also review the information surrounding your complaints and recommend on the appropriateness of convening a panel. Lay representatives have received training in their role. This lay representative will also be appointed to be the chairman of your panel, should it be decided that this is the appropriate next step.

Should an Independent Review Panel seem to be the appropriate way forward, the issues which the panel will investigate (the terms of reference) will be set out clearly and included in my response regarding the establishment of a panel. There may also be issues which will not be reviewed, and these will also be identified. Only those issues included in the terms of reference can be considered by the panel.

The panel cannot consider legal or disciplinary matters. If you have any intention of seeking a legal remedy, it would not be possible to convene a panel, and it would be appreciated if you could let us know.

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If it appears that your complaints have been properly investigated by the practitioner concerned and that you have received an adequate response and a full and appropriate explanation and that there are no further practical actions an independent panel could provide, then such a panel will not be established. You will however, receive a full explanation from me explaining why that is the case. Regardless of the outcome you will be kept informed. Should you still feel dissatisfied, you have the right to contact the Ombudsman and I will provide you with further details of how to do this at the appropriate time.

Should a panel be convened, it will consist of a minimum of the independent lay chairman, the convener, and a third lay panel member, also appointed by the NHS Executive. If there are clinical elements to your complaints there will also be two clinical assessors, who will be either consultant clinicians (in respect of your complaint regarding Gosport War Memorial Hospital) or GPs (in respect of your complaint against Dr Grocock), all of whom practice outside of this Primary Care Trust area and who will advise the panel.

If a panel is established, a report will be given to you, and a copy sent to each person named in the complaints, all the persons interviewed by the panel, any clinical assessors involved in your case, and the Chairman and Chief Executive of the Primary Care Trust.

I hope that this information will assist you to understand the process.

Please be assured that your complaints will be considered separately and with the utmost care, and that you will be kept informed of the process.

Yours sincerely

Ms Karen Woods
Convener