

Information for NHS staff

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Public statement by Hampshire and Isle of Wight Health Authority regarding Gosport War Memorial Hospital

The care and treatment of patients at the Gosport War Memorial Hospital has been the subject of an investigation by the Commission for Health Improvement (CHI), ongoing investigation by the Hampshire Constabulary and proceedings of the appropriate professional regulatory bodies. Last week, the Government's Chief Medical Officer commissioned a clinical audit of the service concerned to be undertaken by acknowledged national expert Professor Richard Baker.

Additional information relevant to these matters has recently come to light and this information has been handed to Hampshire Constabulary and the appropriate professional regulatory bodies. This information includes internal documents from 1991 highlighting concerns about prescribing practices at Gosport War Memorial Hospital.

We are committed to ensuring the quality and safety of local NHS services, and recognise that this information may raise concerns for people about their inpatient care or that of their relatives at the Gosport War Memorial Hospital. People who have not previously come forward will be able to ring an information line so that we can follow up their concerns.

We are also committed to ensuring that all appropriate action is taken in relation to these matters, and this is likely to include looking at the management decisions taken at the hospital. Given the involvement in these decisions of Ian Piper, Chief Executive of Fareham and Gosport Primary Care Trust, and Tony Horne, Chief Executive of East Hampshire Primary Care Trust, it has been agreed that they will be temporarily redeployed to other duties. This will ensure that the ongoing investigation is, and is seen to be, fully independent and able to command the trust of local people.

It is important to note that whilst the CHI investigation had some serious concerns about services in the past it concluded that policies and procedures are now in place to ensure safe standards of care at the hospital. However, to further reassure local people we have asked an experienced senior nurse from outside the area, working alongside the PCT, to oversee and review patient care at Gosport War Memorial Hospital over the next few months.

Gareth Cruddace, Chief Executive