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# MP supports calls for inquiry into hospital deaths

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FAMILIES have welcomed a call by an MP for a public inquiry into elderly patients deaths at Gosport War Memorial Hospital.

Lib Dem Shadow Health MP Norman Lamb has tabled an Early Day Motion calling for a Harold Shipman-style independent public inquiry into the 90 patients who he says died 'in extraordinary and unexplained circumstances'.

It comes as the General Medical Council considers whether Dr Jane Barton - who was clinical assistant on Dryad and Daedalus wards where the patients died between 1990 and 2001

## Demand for 'Shipman-style' probe over Gosport War Memorial deaths

- is guilty of serious professional misconduct.

Mr Lamb said: 'Only a public examination with equivalent powers to the Shipman inquiry could satisfactorily consider the complex nature of the multiple deaths and satisfy the public interest in learning lessons about safety in such cases.'

Iain Wilson's 74-year-old dad Robert died on Dryad ward in October 1998.

He said: 'It's refreshing to find someone who actually listens to us. I'm pleased Norman Lamb is on board and helping us push for

answers. The only way all the bodies concerned can be made to answer is by way of a full public inquiry on the scale of the one for Harold Shipman.'

Gillian Mackenzie sparked police action when she complained following the death of 91-year-old mum Gladys Richards at Gosport War Memorial Hospital in 1998.

But after three investigations and a Crown Prosecution Service probe into 92 deaths no charges were brought.

Dr Barton resigned from her post at the Gosport War

Memorial in 2002.

A panel, which spent 10 weeks examining the GP's conduct relating to 12 elderly patient deaths at the hospital, reconvened last Monday to decide whether her fitness to practise is impaired.

Last August it heard how doses of painkillers and sedatives she prescribed to patients were 'inappropriate, potentially hazardous and not in patients' best interests'.

Last week, 184 testimonials supporting the GP were presented to the General Medical Council.

If Dr Barton - who denies the charge - is found guilty she could be banned from practising.

The panel is expected to reach a decision on her fitness to practise this week.

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