

News

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30p

Kawaguchi here at last
BACK PAGE



The News TODAY

Watchdog probe at War Memorial

A GOVERNMENT health watchdog has launched an investigation into a Gosport hospital following a police probe into an alleged case of unlawful killing.

The Commission of Health Improvement will look at the care of elderly people at Gosport War Memorial Hospital after the death of 91-year-old Gladys Richards. A police probe into the allegations concluded there was no case.

FULL STORY • Page 3

Slip road horror

HEALTH: Government watchdog starts investigation after case of unlawful killing is dropped

Hospital at centre of probe into patient care

by Rebecca Ellinor and Cori Mitchell
The News

A GOVERNMENT health watchdog has launched an investigation into the care of elderly people at a Gosport hospital.

Officials from the Commission for Health Improvement will start the probe at Gosport War Memorial Hospital in the wake of a six-month police investigation.

As exclusively revealed by *The News*, the hospital was at the centre of an allegation of the unlawful killing of an elderly patient.

Gladys Richards, 91, from Lee-on-the-Solent, died at the hospital in 1998 but her daughter Gillian Mackenzie was not satisfied by the standard of care her mother received.

After the Crown Prosecution Service spent six months scrutinising a file prepared by detectives into Mrs Richards' death, the case was dropped.

Now, following the publicity surrounding the case, the government watchdog, attached to the Department of Health, will investigate the hospital.

Today Mrs Mackenzie, from East Sussex, said she was happy with the news.

'If there is an investigation under way then my general reaction is "about time too". I am glad that they are looking into this more but I am still convinced that this should be put before a judge and jury.'

Mrs Mackenzie received a letter from the chief executive of Portsmouth HealthCare NHS Trust today saying a review was being set up by the CHI.

But Gosport MP Peter Vigers defended the hospital. He said: 'In the many years that I have been member of Parliament for Gosport I have had nothing but praise for Gosport War Memorial hospital.'

'I have never heard a single word of criticism against it. It is well run and well liked by the people of Gosport and surrounding areas.'

The commission will not re-



Gosport War Memorial Hospital, where Government Health Watchdogs are investigating the care of elderly patients

open any criminal inquiry but will investigate standard of care at the hospital.

In particular, it will look at arrangements for the administering of drugs, responsibility of patient care and the transfer of patients between the war memorial hospital and other hospitals.

The review will last about 24 weeks and will involve a week-long visit to the hospital by a team of inspectors. The public will be invited to make comments on the inquiry.



The News' exclusive story

Looking for evidence

AN investigation was launched this year following a complaint from Gladys Richards' family.

Detectives interviewed a number of medical staff before sending a file to the Crown Prosecution Service.

Lawyers looked to

see if there was enough evidence to bring a prosecution for unlawful killing. It was understood the investigation concentrated on the use of the pain-killing drug diamorphine.

In July, CPS lawyers decided there should be no prosecution.

