

HEALTH: Nurse tells conference about night of 'living hell' in casualty department at Queen Alexandra Hospital

Corpses on trolleys and patient treated on floor

by Andrew Levy
The News

A NURSE has revealed the 'living hell' in his casualty department, with bodies abandoned on trolleys as staff battled to cope with 30 patients waiting for beds.

Charge nurse Mike Hayward said four corpses were left on trolleys in a side room and a man had to be revived on the ward floor because staff at Queen Alexandra Hospital, Cosham, had run out of beds.

And today the hospital admitted: 'It could happen again.'

Mr Hayward, 36, described the night earlier this year as a 'living hell' and said it was the worst night of his eight-year career.

He told the Royal College of Nursing's annual conference he had witnessed 'shocking' standards of care.

He recalled one day in February this year when the A&E department was so busy four dead bodies were left on trolleys in a side room. He said the unit was like 'a war zone'.

'That day I witnessed the most shocking example of sub-standard care I have ever seen in my nursing career and I'm ashamed,' he said.

'These were total strangers left lying next to each other without dignity and respect.'

He said the team was fully staffed

Nightmare in casualty 'could happen again' says hospital



Casualty at QA Hospital, Cosham

THE nightmare day in A & E described by a charge nurse from Queen Alexandra hospital might have been rare - but it could happen again.

Queen Alexandra Hospital spokeswoman Pat Forsyth said the hospital's new medical assessment unit could stop more people waiting for beds but she said it could not solve the problem.

The unit is for quick diagnosis of certain conditions, some of which

will not need admission to hospital meaning those patients will not be waiting for a bed.

The hospital could not confirm Mike Hayward's account of his horror day because he could not be sure of the dates, but Mrs Forsyth admitted four bodies had been left on trolleys until staff had time to fill out the paperwork for them.

She said they were not there for long and were left in a locked room and were not on public display.

that day and was highly professional but the lack of beds in the hospital meant they hit crisis point. He also spoke of resuscitating a heroin addict on the floor of a corridor because of lack of space.

Mr Hayward said he was not blaming management in Portsmouth but the state of the NHS as a whole. He was speaking in support of a resolution calling for a more strategic approach in determining the future of A&E departments.

Although he welcomed the chancellor's announcement of major investment in the NHS last week, he warned health secretary Alan Milburn: 'The honeymoon is over, the clock is ticking. Stop Third World care in our NHS now.'

Pat Forsyth, a spokeswoman for the Cosham hospital, admitted the nightmare could happen again. She said: 'The problem is the pure pressure on the system, having a large number of admissions and a lack of available beds. There is also a growing demand on the hospital service because of an ageing population and more expectation from patients.'

Mr Hayward told *The News* today the situation at the QA had improved.

'I think all emergency nurses are frustrated by the conditions they are working in. In Portsmouth they are actually getting better, but still we are having to deal with numerous pressures. We need to invest now in more hospital beds and the nursing staff to go with it. There are plenty of

nurses out there but they are choosing not to work for the NHS.

'Mr Milburn needs to make nursing much more attractive.'

Mike Hancock, Liberal Democrat MP for Portsmouth South, said: 'What he has described is an obscenity and a disgrace. The government must now accept that Portsmouth is a special case and pump much more money into our hospitals.'

Portsmouth North Labour MP Syd Rapson said: 'I know that since those bad days back in the winter things have changed. I'm optimistic that when a new chief executive is appointed to the hospital trusts the hospitals will move forward.'

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Man may be charged with vice girl's murder

by Cato Pedder
The News

DETECTIVES investigating the murder of Norwich prostitute Hayley Curtis are to ask the Crown Prosecution service if they have enough evidence to take a case to court.

The news comes after officers working on the case went to Ireland to interview their prime suspect.

For two days officers grilled Philip Stanley in an Irish jail where he is being held on an unrelated rape charge.

Detective Chief Inspector Martin Jelley said: 'We had a long series of interviews with Philip Stanley in which he gave an account of his movements and his knowledge of Hayley.'

He said officers were no longer looking to interview anyone else in connection with Hayley's death. Hayley vanished from the streets of Norwich in October last year and her body was found dumped next to the A3 at Petersfield on January 4 this year.

Originally Stanley agreed to talk to the police because he said he wanted to clear his name.



Hayley Curtis

Police face probe over deaths in hospital

POLICE could face five formal complaints over the way they investigated the deaths of elderly patients at a Gosport hospital.

And at least one case has been now been referred to the General Medical Council for a separate inquiry.

The latest revelations surrounding Gosport War Memorial Hospital - first revealed in *The News* a year ago - came as a family revealed why they had made fresh complaints over one of nine deaths investigated by police.

Relatives of Alice Wilkins, 82, who was transferred to the hospital from the Queen Alexandra in Cosham to recuperate after a urine infection, said they had sent a file about her treatment in the War Memorial to the GMC.

Mrs Wilkins' daughter Marilyn Jackson, 51, and granddaughter Emily Yeats, 25, have also asked Hampshire chief constable Paul Kernaghan to explain



Marilyn Jackson, right, with her daughter Emily Yeats

PICTURE: MALCOLM WELLS 022081-1

why police did not study their case more fully.

Mrs Jackson said: 'After we got in touch with police they didn't interview us to find out what we were alleging. They relied on medical notes then told us they were not taking it any further.'

Gillian Mackenzie, daughter of Lee-on-the-Solent pensioner Gladys Richards who died at the hospital, plans to make a formal complaint to police and

The News understands another three families of patients whose deaths were highlighted to police last year are doing the same.

Miss Yeats, a Portsmouth student, said her family's main worries were overdoses of diamorphine given to Mrs Wilkie; DNR, which stands for do not resuscitate being written on her notes, and the family not being allowed to see experts' reports on the case.

Hampshire police, who are investigating Mrs Wilkie's family's complaint, said that after very careful consideration it was decided it would not be appropriate to widen the investigation into her death and others.

Police spokesman Kevin Briscoe said: 'We have fully explained in personal meetings our decisions about Gosport War Memorial Hospital with those people who had contacted us.'

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