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**HEALTH:** Doctor being scrutinised by General Medical Council returns to work at surgery

# Colleagues support GP



by Rebecca Ellinor  
Health reporter

**A DOCTOR being investigated for her conduct while employed at a Gosport community hospital is back at work.**

Dr Jane Barton, who works as a GP at The Surgery, Forton Road, Gosport, was on sick leave when the General Medical Council (GMC), which regulates doctors, said it was looking into her past conduct.

Dr Barton was in day-to-day charge of medical care at Gosport War Memorial Hospital until she left in July 2000.

It is the way she performed her duties there that is now being scrutinised by the GMC, which received complaints about her from relatives of some elderly patients she treated.

But *The News* understands the GMC, which has only ever formally confirmed it is 'aware' of Dr Barton, has decided she is not a danger to patients and is fit to continue working.

The GMC refused to verify it was happy for Dr Barton to continue to work while she waited for a date for a possible conduct committee hearing - where peers will decide if she should have her doctor status revoked.

However, Adrian Osborne, from Hampshire's strategic health authority, which oversees doctors in our communities, said it was content to allow her to continue to practice.

**Colleagues and patients have voiced their backing for Dr Jane Barton**

## No criminal charges have been brought

AN INVESTIGATION by health watchdog the Commission for Health Improvement, published earlier this year, revealed the use of pain relief at Gosport War Memorial Hospital was excessive and regularly put patients at risk.

Dr Jane Barton was the clinical assistant at the hospital in 1998 when a number of elderly patients - who had gone to the hospital for rehabilitation - died.

She is now being investigated by her peers at the General Medical Council, who will decide if they think she has done anything wrong.

There is no suggestion that Dr Barton or any of the other staff who



Gosport War Memorial Hospital

worked on the wards of the community hospital, who are also being investigated by regulatory bodies, deliberately caused harm to any patient and no criminal charges have been brought against anyone.

He said: 'The GMC is the statutory body that considers the performance of doctors and advises the NHS if it thinks there are circumstances in which they believe a doctor is unfit to practice.'

'The GMC has not advised the strategic health authority of any grounds on which they believe it would be appropriate to prevent Dr Barton from working in general practice. On this basis, we believe it appropriate for her to continue.'

Dr Barton's colleagues and patients have backed her too.

Doctors Knapman, Beasley, Peters, Brigg and Brook, who work at the

same practice, said: 'Having known Dr Barton's high professional standards over many years, we have no doubt about her abilities and this view is shared by her colleagues in other Gosport practices.'

'Numerous patients have also contacted the surgery to express their unreserved support for Dr Barton.'

One patient, Mona Ballard, of South Street, Gosport, has been under Dr Barton's care for the past decade and sees her every two months.

She said: 'Dr Jane Barton is the most caring and conscientious doctor that I have ever had in my 81 years.'

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