

Sensitivity, reassurance and a proper explanation are needed over deaths

Two differing sentiments stand out in the welter of comments today on disquiet surrounding the progress – or lack of it – of police investigations into the deaths of scores of elderly people at Gosport War Memorial Hospital.

The first is from the police officer in charge of the inquiry. 'The families must be confident that there has been a thorough investigation,' he says.

The other is a woman whose mother

died at the hospital five years ago. 'I have very little confidence in what is going on at present,' she says.

Therein lies a gulf that must be bridged – and the driving force for that should logically be the police. Of course, an inquiry into the deaths of more than 60 people will have to be laboriously painstaking. It cannot, it must not, be rushed.

The News COMMENT

As senior officers point out, it draws in experts who cannot shelve everything else at the drop of a hat to give immediate opinion on potential evidence

presented by police investigators.

But a need for sensitivity is writ large here. Police are dealing with relatives who have lost loved ones and are desperately seeking answers. The fact is

that, in this case, the inquiry is following an earlier unsuccessful probe, the efficiency of which is now subject to official investigation.

No-one has voiced to *The News* any fear that antagonism over that might have led to a strain in relations between police and families. But the time is ripe for senior officers to offer reassurance and an explanation acceptable to relatives who seek only the full truth about what happened to a loved one.