



HAMPSHIRE CONSTABULARY

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21st February 2003

Ms L. Richards

Code A

Dear Ms Richards

Re: Press Release 17th February 2003 Hampshire and Isle of Wight Strategic Health Authority (SHA)

I am writing in connection with the above press release.

Both Ann Alexander and DC **Code A** have brought to my attention the fact that some of you were caused distress by this press release. That I can fully understand. You will be aware by now that officers attached to Operation Rochester team are committed to both the investigation and working with you. We have gone to some considerable lengths - and rightly so - to provide you with reassurance as to that commitment. Those of you who were able to attend the recent meeting at the Solent Hotel would have heard what Detective Chief Superintendent Watts said in respect of this matter.

I can reassure you all that any press release made by the police will take into account the family groups both in terms of its content and timing of release. In all normal circumstances we would ensure that you would be contacted in advance when any significant news was being released, either by **Code A** or Alexander Harris. That is our policy.

The difference on this occasion was that this press release was not made by the police but by the Strategic Health Authority (SHA). As you know, the SHA is a completely independent entity to the police. The content and timing of this release was arrived at by them, not us.

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In respect of the issues raised within that press release. It is our view that the police investigation must take precedence over all other enquiries. That view has been widely accepted by the other independent agencies. It also coincides with the poll conducted by Alexander Harris where the greatest majority of you wanted a police investigation to take primacy. In addition, we are satisfied that the decisions made by the SHA do not compromise our investigation in any way.

I hope this letter has explained the situation to you. Should you require any further information please do not hesitate to get in contact either via DC Code A or Alexander Harris.

Yours sincerely *N*

Code A

Nigel Niven

Detective Inspector

Major Crime Investigation Team