

TO1023559

9<sup>th</sup> June 2003

Mrs Majorie Bullbeck

**Code A****Code A**

Dear Mrs Bullbeck

I would like to apologise that you have not received an earlier response to your letter to the Secretary of State for Health regarding Gosport War Memorial Hospital, as you probably know the situation has been in flux, but I would now like to let you know the latest position.

As you may know, a number of agencies are involved in inquiries into allegations that patients have been over-prescribed medicines at the hospital. The Commission for Health Improvement has already undertaken one investigation and is satisfied that the Trust now has adequate policies governing the prescription of medicines in order to ensure proper patient care. The Commission has, however, recently been asked to undertake a further investigation at the hospital, building on its earlier work but taking into account new information that has come to light about concerns that were raised in the early 1990s.

Professor Richard Baker has been asked by the Chief Medical Officer to conduct a clinical audit of patient mortality at the hospital and the Strategic Health Authority is conducting its own internal investigation into the role played by management. Further, the General Medical Council is conducting its own investigation and the police are also considering further complaints about the treatment of patients in the 1990s.

The police, on the advice of the Crown Prosecution Service, have recently raised with us concerns about the possible impact these various inquiries may have on their criminal investigation. These concerns centre on the possibility of evidence being compromised, particularly where witnesses are being interviewed by health agencies before they are seen by the police. In the light of these concerns the Department has agreed that the CHI investigation and the StHA internal investigation should be put on hold until the police have concluded their inquiries.

Yours sincerely

**Code A**

Code A

**DSHC South**