



**Alexander
Harris**

solicitors

Mr Charles Farthing

Code A

Our ref: CLA/LE/31831/1/9900

Your ref:

Please ask for:

Direct dial:

LISA ELKIN

Code A

3 December 2002

Dear Mr Farthing

Thank you for returning your signed statement and consent forms, I have enclosed a copy for your records.

If you have any further questions please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Code A

**LISA ELKIN
ALEXANDER HARRIS**

Code A

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Jo Masters LL.B (Hons), Chris Binns LL.B (Hons), *Sue Taylor, *Debbie Murphy RGN, RM, Dip N, *Kirsty R Richards, *Kirsten Limb B.Sc (Hons). *(not a practising solicitor)

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PR

IN THE MATTER OF GOSPORT WAR MEMORIAL HOSPITAL**STATEMENT OF CHARLES FARTHING****PART ONE**

NAME: Charles Rodney Stewart Farthing

DATE OF BIRTH: Code A

RELATIONSHIP TO THE DECEASED: Stepson

NAME OF DECEASED: Arthur Denis Brian Cunningham

LAST ADDRESS OF THE DECEASED:

Code A

DATE OF BIRTH OF DECEASED: Code A

DATE OF DEATH: 28/9/98

A: Formal details

1. I am Charles Rodney Stewart Farthing and my date of birth is Code A. I am the stepson of Mr Arthur Cunningham. I make this statement regarding the treatment he received prior to his death at the Gosport War Memorial Hospital.

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B: Admission to Gosport War Memorial Hospital

2. My stepfather was admitted to the Gosport War Memorial Hospital on 21/9/98, from Thalassa Nursing Home. He was admitted with severe bedsores so that the hospital could deal with this. The week before his death I had the clear impression that he was to be disposed of, with no attempt made to rectify his illness.
3. My stepfather was admitted to the Dryad Ward under the care of Dr Lord.

C: Immediate action post death

4. I requested a post mortem examination following my stepfather's death as the death certificate I picked up from the Gosport War Memorial Hospital certified the cause of death as bronchial pneumonia. I was not aware he was suffering from such a condition.
5. The post mortem confirmed the cause of death as bronchial pneumonia.

D: Chronology of Complaints

6. I first complained about the treatment my stepfather had received at the nursing home that led to his bedsores. I contacted the Inspector of Nursing Homes by telephone on 23/9/98 and spoke to Jackie Tarrant. She requested that I put my

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complaint in writing, which I did on the same day. She acknowledged that complaint on 28/9/98.

7. I received a full response from the Portsmouth and South East Hampshire Health Authority regarding the treatment at the Nursing Home on 23/11/98. This was a very non-committal letter and did not really answer my concerns.
8. Following the death of my stepfather, I complained to the Chief Executive of the Portsmouth Health Care Trust on 2/10/98 regarding the treatment at the War Memorial Hospital. A copy of this letter was also sent to the Health Service Commissioner. The Commission acknowledged my letter on 14/10/98 and the Health Care Trust on 6/10/98.
9. A full response to my complaint to the Health Care Trust was dated 11/11/98 in a letter from Max Millet, the Chief Executive. This letter said nothing of substance and although there was an apology contained within it, none of my concerns were dealt with.
10. I first spoke to the police in October 1998, when I attended at Gosport Police Station. They told me that the matter would be looked into, but I heard nothing further.

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11. I contacted the police again after I had seen reports in the media regarding other deaths at the hospital. I recall discussing the matter with Detective Sergeant Sackman, who was based at Cosham Police Station HQ . He told me that the matter was being looked into but that I never had any further details from him until this year.
12. I received a letter from Detective Superintendent John James dated 13/2/02. This merely informed me that the matter would be going no further but that he had contacted several other agencies.
13. Ian Piper, the then Chief Executive of the Fareham and Gosport NHS Primary Care Trust contacted me by letter dated 10/5/202. In that letter he suggested I meet with him and Lucy Docherty regarding my step fathers death and my concerns. I did so and the meeting took place on 27/06/02. That was a helpful meeting for me and I went through all I could recall. Although both Mr Piper and Ms Docherty were sympathetic they informed me there was nothing further they could do.
14. I contacted the professional standards department of the police at the Hampshire Police headquarters in Winchester by letter on 28/6/02, which expressed my dissatisfaction of the police investigation. This letter was acknowledged on 4/7/02.

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15. At the same time I also contacted the GMC regarding Dr Barton, this letter was acknowledged on 1/7/02.
16. On the 1/8/02 I contacted Mr Ian Piper regarding the CHI report, which had been published. I acknowledged that the hospital was probably, at that time, well supervised and safe, however I was concerned that once the pressure was off the hospital would merely resort to their previous practices.
17. I have received a response from the police regarding my complaint from Deputy Chief Constable Readhead at Hampshire Police Headquarters in Winchester dated 20/8/02. This informed me that the matter would be submitted to the CPS for consideration.
18. I have also been informed by the GMC that Dr Barton will be going before the Professional Conduct Committee.
19. I have received correspondence from DCC Readhead regarding the meeting that was held with the members of the group relating to the police complaint, although I wasn't informed about the meeting, which I was very angry about.

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E: Main Concerns

20. I feel that my stepfather was put into hospital to be 'put-down' in a premeditated fashion and that the police have washed there hands of the situation without any sort of proper investigation.
21. I would like to see all the individuals, at the very least; sacked and if possible prosecuted for the actions they took. Someone should take responsibility for the things that went on.
22. A proper investigation should have taken place into events and the relatives should have been involved in that investigation. It seems to me that a unilateral decision was made not to take the matter further without any actual consideration of what had happened.

F: Further potential witnesses

23. There are no further witnesses to these events. *(apart from my wife, Mrs AE Farthing, who is unwilling to become involved).*

I believe that the facts stated in this witness statement are true.

Signed

Code A

Mr Charles Farthing

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Dated 30 NW 02.