

# Memorandum

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## General Medical Council

Regulating doctors  
Ensuring good medical practice

### Items for discussion:

#### **Dr Jane Barton and GMC fitness to practise procedures**

The media team is receiving considerable interest in Dr Barton's case from the press and has highlighted some areas for comment further to the enquiries received.

There has been some criticism from journalists who do not feel that they are being given sufficient information, or who are frustrated that information they receive from families involved in the cases cannot be confirmed by the GMC.

See quotes from The Independent on Sunday, 17 May 2009:

*Several families are threatening to boycott the proceedings in a vote of no confidence after the GMC refused to allow them legal representation...*

*(Norman) Lamb added his voice to the mounting condemnation of the GMC, which stands accused of failing to deal properly and promptly with serious complaints of professional misconduct against Dr Barton....*

*The GMC ...hearing comes seven years after the GMC was first warned about the deaths of elderly patients under her care. Relatives are angry that the GMC allowed Dr Barton to continue working unrestricted as a GP until last July.*

The media team, would like to be able to offer direct and straightforward responses to the following questions:

- The GMC first received information relating to concerns about Dr Barton's practice in 2001. Why has the GMC taken so long to open the doctor's case?
- Was Dr Barton brought before the interim orders panel prior to 2008? If so, why was her practice only restricted then? (*nb Dr Barton was brought before the IOP 4 times prior to her 2008 IOP*)
- Was the information sent to the GMC by the CPS lacking/of insufficient quality to be useful?

- What is the GMC doing in relation to the Gladys Richards case? Why is the GMC not awaiting the inquest of Gladys Richards before commencing with its hearing into Dr Barton?
- Why is the GMC not taking forward all of the cases which have been put forward in relation to Gosport? (*nb is the press office able to say anything about picking the strongest/most relevant cases to fitness to practise*)
- Families of those involved in this case – in particular those whose cases are not being taken forward by the GMC and who are feeling aggrieved - are not being kept up to date by the GMC. Why is this?