

**Other Document Form**

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**Code A**

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## HAMPSHIRE CONSTABULARY

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30<sup>th</sup> September 2004

### Code A

I write with regard to your late friend, John Ritchie. As you are aware we have been investigating the circumstances surrounding the death of Mr Ritchie and other patients at the Gosport War Memorial Hospital.

In order to effectively conduct this investigation, we gathered together a team of medical experts to assist us in the analysis of the medical records in respect of certain deceased patients. This team was led by Professor Forrest and the team members were experts in the fields of Toxicology, General Medicine, Palliative care, Geriatrics and Nursing.

Having considered the medical records, the team were able to place the patient care into 3 categories. The first category related to patients who's treatment was considered to be acceptable. The second category related to patient's care whose treatment warranted further investigation. The third category related to cases that provoked specific concerns and required further work to be conducted to understand the significance of these concerns and, in particular, analyse whether these concerns would amount to evidence of unlawful criminal activity.

When I wrote to you on the 11<sup>th</sup> February 2004, I informed you that this case fell into the second category. The reasons why cases fell within this category were numerous. The specific reason in relation to Mr Ritchie, was because of the lack of medical records being available for the Clinical team to evaluate. In simple terms, we were not able to say at that point that the treatment provided to Mr Ritchie was acceptable or otherwise and, consequently, needed further work to be conducted.

This further work involved attempting to locate any other medical records relating to Mr Ritchie, having taken advice from the Clinical team and others as to where any missing records may potentially be located. We were regrettably not able to locate any other medical records. We submitted again the medical records that we did possess, together with the concerns generated by friends and family members, to our independent medical lawyer.

Despite this further analysis, due to the insufficiency of material, it was not possible to reach any conclusions as to the appropriateness of treatment received by Mr Ritchie.

It is, therefore, with regret that I have to inform you that, in the absence of additional information coming forward indicating unlawful criminal conduct, we are unable to pursue any further enquiries in respect of the treatment received by Mr Ritchie at the Gosport War Memorial Hospital.

As you may be aware, our purpose in investigating these matters is twofold. Firstly, to seek to ascertain whether any unlawful criminal activity has taken place in respect of the patient deaths at Gosport War Memorial Hospital. Secondly, to investigate the circumstances surrounding these deaths on behalf of Her Majesty's Coroner. It is our intention to update the Coroner of the details of the investigation into the death of Mr Ritchie.

In addition, we intend to inform both the General Medical Council and the Nursing and Midwifery Council of the circumstances of this case for their consideration. In doing so, we would propose to supply them with any concerns regarding the treatment of Mr Ritchie raised by friends and family members.

If in the mean time I can be of any assistance, please do not hesitate to contact us at the above address or by contacting our Family Liaison Officer, DC Code A

Yours sincerely

**Nigel Niven**  
**T/Detective Chief Inspector**  
**Operation Rochester**