

Other Document Form

Number

137

Title EMAIL FROM MR WATTS TO DI NIVEN RE MEDIA & FAMILIES
(Include source and any document number if relevant)

Receivers instructions urgent action Yes No

Document registered/indexed as indicated

No(s) of actions raised

Statement readers instructions

Indexed as indicated

No(s) of actions raised

Examined - further action to be taken

Further action no(s)

When satisfied all actions raised Office Manager to endorse other Document Master Number Form

Receiver	
Code A	
	0
	Indexer

Code A

From: Niven, Nigel
Sent: 06 January 2004 09:39
To: Code A
Subject: FW: Rochester - Media & Families

-----Original Message-----

From: Watts, Steve
Sent: 05 January 2004 16:12
To: Niven, Nigel
Cc: [redacted], Smith, Colin F [ACC SO]; Readhead, Ian
Subject: Rochester - Media & Families

Nigel,

I received a call today from Portsmouth News reporter Nick Brooks (02392 622132).

He has contact with various members of the OP Rochester Families. He indicates that growing numbers are raising concerns re 3 issues;

1. Why witness statements have not been recorded from all families. - I have indicated to him that witness statements will be recorded when it is necessary to secure evidence, all information that is available has been taken from family members. They have now all been given the opportunity to verify that information and to add to it if necessary. Witness statements will be recorded if required for evidential purposes. A witness statement is only one way of recording information.
2. There are concerns that the DVD's containing medical records reviewed by the Clinical Team have not contained the notes from feeder hospitals such as Haslar. - I have told him that where they are available all feeder notes have been provided to the experts and have been included in the review.
3. There are concerns that a civil solicitor has been used to review the notes. - I informed him that the rationale for this has been discussed with the families and that it accords with best practice.
4. That the patients have been categorized into three categories (his description of the categories was accurate), families are concerned about the time being taken to tell them which category their loved one falls into. - I did not confirm the categorisation issue, but said that we wanted to be absolutely sure before we gave any sort of conclusion to family members regarding their loved ones, and that we would do that as soon as is possible.

I went on to tell him that it is our highest priority to keep the families informed, and that we meet regularly with them individually and in groups, and through a Solicitor representing many of them. We also issue a regular newsletter to each family member. In each of those methods we seek to keep the families updated with the progress of the enquiry and our rationale for proceeding in a particular way.

I said to him that if any of the people he had spoken to wished him to supply their names to us, then we would be happy to speak to them again.

I gave him my mobile number and that of yourself so that he can make direct contact in future & avoid Chinese whispers.

Please;

1. print this off & retain as unused as a record of this communication with the press (conducted within 2 minutes of this message being commenced).
2. Prepare a further newsletter which specifically addresses the above points, reinforcing the relevant rationales and arrange distribution to family members.
3. In the newsletter please also indicate the preferred method of communication that has been expressed and give people the opportunity to contact us if their view changes. This will give us additional security that we have complied with each person's wishes when we do come to inform them of the category.

Thanks - look forward to our meetings with CPS et al on 13th Jan. Contact me prior as it would be helpful to travel up to London together.