

Nina Lakhani

The Government will this week come under further pressure to hold a public inquiry into the unexplained deaths of elderly patients at Gosport War Memorial Hospital in the 1990s as relatives and lawyers meet with Norman Lamb, the Lib Dem health spokesman.

Failures by the police, CPS, NHS, and health regulators can only be exposed and lessons learnt if there is an open and transparent inquiry, according to Mr Lamb.

Relatives have spent years trying to access key reports about hundreds of deaths at the Hampshire community hospital which they believe may hold the key into what happened when Dr Jane Barton worked in the hospital between 1989 and 2000.

Officers are currently re-investigating at least 12 deaths which occurred between 1996 and 1998 after they received transcripts from the eight week disciplinary hearing for Dr Jane Barton - the doctor at the heart of the allegations.

Nurses involved in the care of patients at the Hampshire hospital also gave evidence under oath but no separate investigation has been carried out by the Nursing and Midwifery Council - nine years after the cases was first referred by the police.

The IoS has unconfirmed reports that Hampshire Police are concentrating on whether Dr Barton has committed perjury.

Campaigners believe previous police inquiries were inadequate as many of the relatives have never been interviewed.

Two complaints about inadequate investigations were upheld by the police watchdog in 2001.

Reports by Professor Robert Forrest - an eminent toxicologist who categorised 13 out of 92 deaths as of 'serious concern' and Professor Richard Baker - who conducted an audit into the death rate - have never been seen. Both professors were involved in the Shipman inquiry which the government was forced to conduct by a High Court ruling. A number of medical experts were commissioned by the police in previous inquiries but it is not clear which were then passed to the CPS who

, on Tuesday and call on ministers to re-consider its previous decision to authorise only 11 inquests, despite petitions by the coroner to hold an independent inquiry.

Gillian McKenzie, 71, triggered the first police investigation after her mother, Gladys Richards, 91, died after being given large doses of pain killers and sedatives through a syringe driver. The Police Complaints Authority upheld

August 1998 -

Initial inquiries by Hampshire Police = Gosport CID, and Basingstoke - Oct 1998 - Feb 1999 - two complaints were upheld by PCA - formal statements, medical notes not seen - failed to investigate properly - independent medical opinion - turned out to be Dr Lord.

Third from October 1999 till December 2000 - CPS in London - March 2001 PCA upheld first two complaints. June 2001 - insufficient evidence - then people started COMING FORWARD after press in April. Between June 2001 and February 2002 - more than 10 cases went to police - John James - he held a meeting with relatives and said no case to answer. April 2002 - Gillian met with families - wrote to police, NMC, GMC, Government - July 2002 - CHI published their report. 11 September 2002 - Ian Reedhead deputy Chief Constable - told he would not investigate further Williams' investigation - 2003 and 2006 - investigation instigated by Sir Liam and Alan Milburn

Hundreds of death certificates signed by Dr Barton

Is incensed that

December 2006 - 10 cases went to CPS - made decision not to prosecute - after Christmas - no Gillian - inquests agreed by MoJ - apart from Gillian - passed to Horsley - he backed application for funding due to exceptional circumstances - GMC - Cunningham, Eva Page, Robert Wilson, Wilkie and Richards - GMC date in 2002 - delayed because of the inquest -

But Gillian's inquest still no date, no meeting with the CPS,

Which statements from Hassler were sent to the GMC? Why have some of the relatives never been interviewed?
Jonathan Carter - journalist - nurse contacted him - 2001 - she then went to police in 2002 - then announced that Robert Forrest and Professor Baker - involved.

Inspector David Growcott