



# Home Office

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DCU

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Mrs M Jackson

**Code A**

Our Ref   
Your Ref  
Date 23 April 2002

Dear Mrs Jackson

Thank you for your letter of 11 April 2002 to the Home Secretary concerning your problems investigating your Mother's death in Gosport War Memorial Hospital and your feeling of inaction by Gosport Police Service. Please accept my condolences for your Mother's death. Your letter has been passed to the Home Office for reply and I apologise that it has not been possible to do so sooner.

I should begin by explaining that the actions and decisions taken by police officers in the course of their duties are operational matters and, as such, are the responsibility of the chief officer of the force concerned. Under the procedures laid down by Parliament, the Home Secretary has no statutory powers to investigate complaints against police officers. Neither can Ministers act as an avenue of appeal against decisions, which are taken by either the chief officer or the Police Complaints Authority.

As you may be aware it is open to anyone to make a complaint, if they consider that they have been dealt with improperly by the police. There are complaints and discipline procedures laid down under Part IV of the Police Act 1996 to ensure that police officers are fully answerable for their actions. The Act places the responsibility for recording and investigating complaints of misconduct, including determining whether a matter should be recorded as a formal complaint under the terms of the Act, with the chief officer concerned.

There are several ways in which you can make a complaint, though I understand that you may already have tried most of these options:

- You can write a full account to the Chief Constable concerned;
- Write direct to the Police Complaints Authority, 10 Great George Street, London, SW1 3AE;

- You can contact your solicitor or your Member of Parliament or;
  - Get someone else to put forward your complaint e.g. Citizens Advice Bureau, friend or neighbour, as long as they have a letter from you authorising them to do so.
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I regret that I am unable to give you a more positive reply. I nevertheless attach a copy of the leaflet from the Police Complaints Authority (PCA) outlining the complaint procedure that I hope that you will find useful.

Yours sincerely

**Code A**