

Fareham and Gosport 

Primary Care Trust

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Ref IP/jkf **Code A**

Miss E Yeats

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5 August 2002

Dear Miss Yeats

Thank you for your letter to me dated July 17, which I received on July 30.

The last few years have been extremely distressing for all the families who have raised concerns regarding the care provided at Gosport Hospital in the late 1990's. This is one of the key messages I tried to get across at the Chi press briefing and at the meetings I have had with families over the last few months.

I am sorry to hear that you feel my actions at the Chi press conference were unacceptable. The publication of the Chi report has been taken extremely seriously by the Primary Care Trust and all PCT staff who attended the media briefing were very aware of this and there was no intention to cause upset or hurt to the families. I know that any member of staff who attended the briefing would be devastated if they believed they caused you further distress. I apologise for any unintentional upset, which has been caused to you or your family.

Given the open way in which the PCT has tried to manage the Chi report it was very important that all the families were invited to the Chi media briefing so that if you wanted to you were able to speak first hand to the media and to us about the Report. I am sorry if the impression was given that we would be able to answer specific questions concerning individual cases in public. I believe that it would have been inappropriate and in breach of patient confidentiality to do this but understand your frustration if you believed that this was the offer made. Following the briefing Lucy Docherty, Ian Reid and I did speak to almost all of the families on a one-to-one basis.

I have always been honest in my communications with the media and the families. In relation to the Police investigations and the decision of the Crown Prosecution Service the words I used at the media briefing that, "The CPS has consistently advised that there are no grounds for prosecution" were taken from the police media statement issued on July 3rd, a copy of which is enclosed.

I am aware that many of the families have made formal complaints against the police regarding their investigation and I, like you, await the outcome of these complaints. I believe it would be inappropriate for the Primary Care Trust to take any action until the Police investigation of the complaints is completed. I understand from recent media reports that this will be in the next few weeks.

You are correct in saying that individual clinicians are accountable for their actions in line with their professional code of conduct and that the Trust's overriding concern is patient safety and the current clinical practice of clinicians. As you are aware the professional bodies for doctors

and nurses are reviewing individual cases and the outcomes of these are awaited. The PCT will then take any further necessary action.

Following your meeting with Lucy at the media conference, where your request for an independent review of your grandmothers medical notes was agreed, I have been informed that your mother was telephoned soon after by Ann Turner, PCT Complaints Manager to discuss how best to arrange this. The doctor who will undertake this review has been away on leave for most of July but has recently returned and Ann Turner will be in contact with your mother again to arrange for the meeting to take place at a convenient time and place for your family. Hopefully this review will help answer some of your questions.

One of the lessons we have learnt has been the need to offer families an early review of medical notes so that families have an opportunity to ask questions and get answers at an early stage.

Since my appointment as Chief Executive of Fareham and Gosport Primary Care Trust in April 2002 I have been working to support patients, carers and staff in as open a way as I can, ensuring that lessons are learned and that care is continuously improved. This is not always an easy task, or one I can get right to everyone's satisfaction, but one I try my hardest to achieve.

Thank you again for your letter and if there is anything else you would like to discuss with me then please contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Code A

Ian Piper
Chief Executive

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MEDIA SERVICES

GOSPORT WAR MEMORIAL HOSPITAL POLICE WELCOME REPORT

Hampshire Constabulary welcomes the Commission for Health Improvement's report, which has concentrated on the policies and procedures at Gosport War Memorial Hospital.

The police investigation was carried out to identify and focus on any potential criminal activity. The Crown Prosecution Service has consistently advised that there are no grounds for prosecution.

The Commission's report hopefully reassures concerned relatives that this matter has been examined, and key recommendations made.

The constabulary continues to actively review this complex investigation, in the context of complaints against police made by relatives and will act accordingly on any findings from that process.

This case concentrates on issues of major significance, and has potential ramifications for many agencies.

It must be seen against the backdrop of care for the elderly being provided with transparency and accountability to best health practice and the law.

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