

**BY FIRST CLASS POST**

Mrs Lesley Richards

RF/CLA/31243/1/9516

**Code A**

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21 February 2003

Dear Lesley

**Gosport War Memorial Hospital**

I understand from a number of telephone calls and e-mails that there have been general concerns arising among many of the families.

I appreciate that you have been concerned about the situation which developed earlier this week, when the Health Authority issued the press release detailing the re-instatement of the Chief Executives, before informing the families. This was understandably distressing, and it is for this reason that I have contacted in writing, the Health Authority and the Police to ask them to ensure that the families have advance warning of any future information such as this.

Both Nigel Niven and Owen Kenny are unavailable at present, so we await their response. However, I am of the view that it is the responsibility of the Health Authority to ensure that you are kept in touch with issues concerning the Trust.

It is for reasons such as this that we recommended you establish a formal committee, nominating a spokesman who can respond officially, if necessary with advice from us, when something like this happens. This does not contradict our advice against speaking to each other about the facts of your case – the purpose of the committee would be to be able to deal appropriately with the **process** of the investigations, and to retain a more pro-active hand where appropriate in its developments.

As you can appreciate we find it difficult to deal appropriately with numerous daily telephone calls when something unexpected occurs which, in fact, deal with the same issues. As an example, if we could deal with one spokesperson, I feel our team would be able to offer you more support as a group. I would be pleased to discuss this further with you.

I understand that some of you may have surprised to see so many people present at the meeting last week. The additional people that you may not have seen before were members of the public, all of whom had lost a relative at the War Memorial Hospital. They had all been in touch directly with the police or had been put in touch with the police by the Health Authority. It was the idea of the police to invite these relatives, given that they were to be making a presentation at the meeting, and they wanted to ensure that all of the families received the same information.

If you would like to have a further meeting, amongst the original cohort of relatives, to discuss how you would like to set up a steering committee, I would be more than happy to organise this.

Yours sincerely

**ANN ALEXANDER  
ALEXANDER HARRIS**

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