

**Alexander Harris - Solicitors****Gosport War Memorial Hospital Action Group  
Press Statement 4<sup>th</sup> November 2002**

At a meeting held last night in Fareham Hampshire, over 50 representatives of 27 families expressed overwhelming support for there to be a proper investigation and inquiry into events at The Gosport War Memorial Hospital.

All but one of those present had lost a loved one taken unexpectedly and suddenly ill while undergoing rehabilitation or other treatment in one of three wards at the local hospital. Many of these had died after being given diamorphine for relief of alleged pain. A number of those who died were only a short time earlier on the road to recovery and expected to be soon well enough to be discharged home. One man present who had survived the experience had been transferred to another hospital from Gosport War Memorial Hospital and had to be treated for the effects of diamorphine before recovering sufficient to be discharged. Other families spoke of neglect on the wards concerned which had resulted in unexpected deaths over a ten year period.

Numerous relatives had subsequently made complaints to police, the General Medical Council, Nursing & Midwifery Council, Hospital Trust and Health Authority. In several cases early complaints to the police had met with little or no satisfactory response.

In recent weeks further complaints have been made by relatives to Hampshire Constabulary who have reopened their enquiries apparently after receipt of certain previously unseen documents from the hospital. Last night the relatives welcomed the renewed investigations by the police although most had not been told precisely what new evidence has come to light or why it was not previously made available to the police.

Other relatives who had complained to the GMC about the medical staff involved complained of a lack of progress with their complaints. An audit being undertaken of outcomes at the hospital at the request of the Chief Medical Officer is not expected to report until next year.

Families heard from Ann Alexander, managing partner of Alexander Harris, Solicitors who spoke at the meeting, who said that in previous cases there had been a lack of co-ordination between the various agencies involved.

The families hoped that a proper investigation and inquiry would at last be undertaken to look into the numerous concerns expressed and that where appropriate there would be accountability for any individual or system failures that might have occurred.

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