

Text for letter to Richards complainants (Mrs Gillian McKenzie and Mrs Lesley Richards)

I am the NMC's Director of Fitness to Practise, and I write to inform you of the NMC's current position in respect of the Gosport War Memorial Hospital.

I am sorry that you have not received any direct correspondence from the NMC for some time. As I am sure you will appreciate, the NMC has had to wait firstly for the outcome of the police investigations, and then the coroner's inquest, before taking any further steps of its own.

We have now reached the stage where we will be inviting the Preliminary Proceedings Committee to consider what further steps to take, if any, following those inquiries.

Prior to that, we have conducted an extensive review of our records to establish the status of complaints that have been made to us. During the course of that review, it has come to light that the information you have been given by the NMC has not been complete and may have been misleading.

In September 2000, the NMC received information from Hampshire Police relating to the standard of care given to your mother, Mrs Gladys Richards, at Gosport War Memorial Hospital.

On 18 September 2001, the NMC's Preliminary Proceedings Committee ("PPC") considered documents provided by the police and the Portsmouth Healthcare NHS Trust which related to your mother's care. Having considered those documents, the Preliminary Proceedings Committee decided not to investigate further the conduct of any registered nurse. Accordingly, the case in respect of your mother was closed. From our records, it does not appear that you were informed of this at the time, and I apologise for that.

Further complaints concerning nurses from the Gosport War Memorial Hospital were considered by the PPC in August 2002. The PPC decided to adjourn its consideration pending ongoing police enquiries.

You were sent a letter dated 27 September 2002 informing you of the PPC's decision, a copy of which I enclose. I am concerned that this letter may have given you the incorrect impression that the NMC was still considering issues arising from your mother's case. I am sorry if that was the impression you received.

The NMC's procedures have changed radically since 2002, and I am confident that an error of this sort will not be repeated (perhaps include something here about the NMC's commitment to stakeholder engagement, etc).

Please accept my apologies for any distress that this matter causes.