

RESTRICTED

Form MG11(T)

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WITNESS STATEMENT

(CJ Act 1967, s.9; MC Act 1980, ss.5A(3) (a) and 5B; MC Rules 1981, r.70)

Statement of: BARNES, STEPHEN ROBERT

Age if under 18: OVER 18 (if over 18 insert 'over 18') Occupation: RCN OFFICER

This statement (consisting of page(s) each signed by me) is true to the best of my knowledge and belief and I make it knowing that, if it is tendered in evidence, I shall be liable to prosecution if I have wilfully stated anything which I know to be false or do not believe to be true.

Signed: Steve BARNES

Date: 13/01/2003

I am Stephen Robert BARNES and I reside at the address as given.

I am presently employed by the Royal College of Nursing as a RCN Officer for the Portsmouth area, based at the RCN Offices, 8 Southgate Street, Winchester .

I am also a fully qualified psychiatric Nurse having qualified in Oxford in 1974 at Littlemore and Warneford Hospital where I worked as a staff nurse.

I then qualified as a charge nurse and worked in the inpatients department at the same hospital for two years before becoming a community psychiatric nurse, during which time I served approximately 1 year as a full time convenor at Oxford for the Royal College of Nursing.

In 1981 I joined the Royal College of Nursing (RCN) as a fully paid member of staff at High Wycombe serving Oxfordshire and Northwest Thames, where I remained until 1984/1985, when I moved to the Winchester office to cover the Winchester area where I currently remain, but now consistently covering the Portsmouth area.

Also covering the Portsmouth and surrounding areas is Keith MURRAY , who now works as a full time convenor. Keith is employed by the Portsmouth Hospital NHS Trust .

Part of my job is to support Keith MURRAY and other local RCN representatives and if there is a major issue on the go which Keith MURRAY was aware of, then he and I would discuss the

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issue by telephone as well as face to face so that we were both aware of what was happening in the area.

I am uncertain as to when I was first made aware of concerns being shown by members of the Royal College of Nursing (RCN) working at Gosport War Memorial Hospital , but from my recollection I believe that this was sometime during the year of 1991.

I no longer have records covering this period as it is RCN policy to destroy documents after a period of 6 years has elapsed.

I have now been shown by DC **Code A**, correspondence bearing item reference JEP/GWMH/1/COPY 2 in order to refresh my memory and I can see from them that I indeed had contact with the hospital by letter, which is dated 22nd November 1991 (22/11/1991).

I had been aware at that time, that there had been some concerns about over prescribing of medication, in particular Diamorphine, but my understanding was that it had been agreed that the hospital would create a policy and or other guidance in relation to this issue.

The management was to make this policy, not as the result of individual complaints, but because of the concerns shown by members of the Royal College of Nursing (RCN) and that it should be clear guidance so that everyone should know of the administration of these medications.

Again from memory Keith MURRAY raised with me his concerns about a memorandum which had been sent by Isobel EVANS , the Patient Care Manager at the Hospital, to trained staff at Redcliffe Annex asking them to identify patients who had been given Diamorphine and for whom they had shown concerns about the administration of the medication.

I have now seen a copy of this memorandum amongst the correspondence JEP/GWMH/1/COPY 2 and can now see that it is dated the 7th November 1991 (07/11/1991) and signed by Isobel EVANS.

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Having had a discussion with management and it being agreed with the Royal College of Nursing members that a policy would be produced, this memorandum asking for names of patients, was in my opinion back tracking and against the earlier agreement.

My concerns at this time was that if staff had given their names, that this could turn into a witch hunt and set people up against each other.

I was also aware of a report by Geraldine WHITNEY, a community tutor at the time, which had already identified some specific concerns in relation to the prescribing of Diamorphine via a syringe driver.

Geraldine WHITNEY is a very experienced nurse and her report carried a great deal of credibility and it is clear that she recognised the problem together with the management but again nothing was done by them.

Again reviewing the correspondence marked JEP/GWMH/1/COPY 2 I now see that this report by Geraldine WHITNEY is dated the 31st December 1991 (31/12/1991).

As previously stated I had a discussion about this matter with Keith MURRAY, as a result of which I raised the letter dated the 22nd November 1991 (22/11/1991) which I sent to Isobel EVANS, the Patient Care Manager at the Hospital.

I am unable to say from memory if I received a reply from Isobel EVANS, but again looking at the correspondence JEP/GWMH/1/COPY 2, I now see a copy of a letter dated 10th December 1991 (10/12/1991) sent by Keith MURRAY to Isobel EVANS in which he refers in it to her letter to me dated 5th December 1991 (05/12/1991).

However again without seeing that letter I cannot comment upon it, but believe that we would have had a discussion about it as I see that a copy of his letter was also sent to me.

The basis of my letter dated 22nd November 1991 (22/11/1991) was that if the policy was not

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formulated out then action would be taken through the grievance procedure.

I am aware that Keith MURRAY took this matter further to other senior managers, including Chris WEST, the District General Manager, but I have no recollection of the final outcome and can only assume that the matter had been resolved or indeed the Royal College of Nursing (RCN) members had ceased to raise the matter further.

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