

November 8, 2005

PRESS STATEMENT

Netcare UK

Portsmouth Hospitals NHS Trust has received a report of an investigation into hip replacement operations carried out in Hampshire by an independent sector provider.

The investigation was commissioned by Hampshire and the Isle of Wight Strategic Health Authority, following problems with hip replacement surgery. Portsmouth Hospitals contracted this company to perform 1000 orthopaedic operations on behalf of its own hospitals and those in Frimley Park and Plymouth, between October 2003 and March 2004. All three hospitals have links with the armed forces, and their orthopaedics teams had been severely depleted when reservists were called up in preparation for the Gulf War.

Key findings of the report are:

- for the overwhelming majority of patients the contract between the NHS and Netcare UK worked well.
- Guidance for similar contracts in the future have been noted with relation to recruitment, contract management, theatre scheduling and clinical governance.
- Work in the future should recognise and address professional differences that exist between overseas healthcare teams and those prevalent in the NHS.

The patients identified as having problems have been offered any treatment that becomes necessary, in a hospital of their choice – either NHS or private facility, conveniently located for them. Some revision operations have already been carried out. Portsmouth Hospitals has worked in partnership with Netcare UK to make the arrangements.

Immediately the problems became apparent Portsmouth Hospitals and Netcare UK acted quickly to safeguard other patients.

Portsmouth Hospitals Medical Director, Graeme Zaki said, “The Trust has accepted the findings of the report and we have already carried out the recommendations to safeguard patients.”

Dr Simon Tanner, Medical Director of Hampshire and Isle of Wight Strategic Health Authority, said: “The action which followed discovery of the problems was swift by Portsmouth Hospitals NHS Trust and Netcare UK but the Strategic Health Authority needed to protect the interests of future patients and commissioned an investigation to find out exactly what went wrong and how to avoid any recurrence”

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