

Mr R Bishop
Chief Executive

Management Centre
St Mary's Hospital
Milton Road
PORTSMOUTH
PO3 6AD

Code A

PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL

2 November 1998

Code A

Our ref: RB/KLM/NLW/Code A 1235/98
(Please quote our ref on all correspondence)

Dear **Code A**

Further to our previous correspondence, I have now received a report from the nurse in charge of F3 Ward, Sister Moody. She has discussed your letter of complaint with her nursing staff, who were very sorry that you feel there were omissions in your late **Code A**. Sister Moody was particularly saddened to read your letter, as she felt that time had been spent by staff to ensure that your views and worries were listened to at the time, and were acted upon accordingly. Indeed the nursing staff on F3 Ward were acutely aware of **Code A** poor condition, and of the anxieties of **Code A** family.

However, by way of background, I understand **Code A** was admitted with abdominal pain, chronic constipation and vomiting. **Code A** was prescribed anti-sickness medication, pain killers and aperients whilst undergoing investigation. Sadly on the 4 August 1998, **Code A** was given the diagnosis of primary lung tumour, and was referred to the Oncology Specialist Team, including the Macmillan Nursing Team. **Code A** expressed a wish that **Code A** family should not be told of the diagnosis until **Code A** felt ready for **Code A** relatives to know, and I believe your family were informed by the Senior House Officer the following day.

You mention that your **Code A** morphine tablets were left at **Code A** bedside on one occasion. This clearly should not have happened as our procedures require the nursing staff to ensure that controlled drugs are actually taken by the patient, and I apologise if there was an omission in this respect.

It is indeed extremely unfortunate that **Code A** developed pressure sores. While **Code A** was on F3 Ward **Code A** had a poor appetite, was eating little and was at significant risk of developing pressure sores because of the nature of **Code A** illness. A pressure relieving mattress was ordered by our Specialist Tissue Viability Nurse in order to try and minimise the damage. In addition, a special mattress was also ordered for **Code A** discharge, the District Nursing service was

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informed that **Code A** was being discharged, and they were made aware of the actual and potential problems **Code A** was experiencing, and I cannot, therefore, explain why they would have been unaware of **Code A** discharge.

I was very sorry to read your description of the nursing care received by **Code A** **Code A** during the night hours. Sister Moody informs me that, because of the diagnosis of primary lung tumour, your **Code A** suffered nocturnal hypoxia and confusion. This would cause **Code A** to cry out loudly during the night, which is understandably distressing for relatives. I would like to reiterate the assurance that senior nursing staff gave members of your family at the time, that **Code A** was shouting because of **Code A** confusional state, rather than being left unattended. I am extremely sorry that this is the perception you gained, and also apologise for the actions of the nurse who you describe as telling your **Code A** **Code A** could "manage by **Code A** on the commode. I would agree that such a comment is unacceptable, but would assure you that all the ward staff are aware of your letter and I am sure they will use your comments constructively for the future.

I sincerely hope that the above letter has gone some way to reassuring you that staff were aware of **Code A** individual needs and of **Code A** condition. Although F3 Ward is a busy Acute Medical Ward, I am assured that staff did their utmost to look after **Code A** to the best of their ability and they are only sorry that you do not feel they achieved a high standard of care.

I enclose a copy of a Trust leaflet which gives a summary of the entire NHS Complaints Procedure. If you have any outstanding comments or questions about this letter, please do let me know so that we can consider the best way forward.

Yours sincerely

Code A**CHIEF EXECUTIVE****enc.****sc: Code A**