

**Gosport Independent Panel**  
**Family Briefing Meeting 9th December 2014**  
**Note of meeting**

Hornet Services Sailing Club, Haslar Road, Gosport, Hants

Present: Family members; members of the Gosport Independent Panel (Bishop James Jones, Christine Gifford, David Henke, Duncan Jarrett and Dr Colin Currie) and Secretariat (Louise Dominian, Code A Judy Joslin and Code A)

1. The Bishop welcomed everybody to the meeting and explained that this was a significant moment. Norman Lamb Minister of State for Care and Support, Department of Health had just laid a Written Ministerial Statement before Parliament which set out the Terms of Reference for the Panel and announced the new Panel members and he wanted families to hear the news first. Families, Panel members and the Secretariat stood in silence to remember the relatives of family members.

Written Ministerial Statement

2. The Written Ministerial Statement was read out by the Bishop. The Panel and the Secretariat were very aware that this was a significant milestone in the families' journey. The task for the Panel would be to:-
  - **Access** all documents across all organisations.
  - **Analyse** the documentation with the particular skills which Panel Members brought.
  - Write a report that would **add** to public understanding.
3. The Bishop acknowledged that this would take some considerable time. The Written Ministerial Statement gave an indicative end date of 2017. The work was likely to take between 2 and 3 years but timings would not be clear until the work was further advanced.
4. The Panel was funded by the Department of Health but was independent. Panel Members had been specifically chosen for their independent thought and the skills and experience they brought to the Panel's work. When the report was completed, it would be seen by the families first so they could be sure that it had not been altered in any way. The Bishop reiterated the point that information would not be released piecemeal as partial information could distort the story and reduce the impact of the findings.

### Terms of Reference

5. The Terms of Reference as laid before Parliament were read out in full by the Bishop. These had been informed by families' views but not defined by them.
6. The Terms of Reference reflected a number of themes and issues which had arisen from earlier consultation with some of the families:-
  - Both the initial care and treatment of family members at the Gosport War Memorial had been included to reflect concerns with the experience of patients on the ward.
  - The Terms of Reference were drawn very wide to include all investigations and complaints into the events at Gosport and the issues raised by families about how those investigations related to each other.
  - Cases where relatives had been treated but did not die in Gosport War Memorial Hospital are included.
  - Start/end dates are not included. This allows for information before and after the period of time identified in the Baker report to be covered so that any significant changes that occurred in the hospital can be identified.
7. Following the meeting with families in October, the Terms of Reference had been further amended to include the establishment of an on-line archive of Gosport documentation including a catalogue of all relevant information and a commentary on any information withheld for the benefit of the families or on legal or other grounds.
8. The Bishop invited comments and questions on the Written Ministerial Statement and Terms of Reference. In discussion, the following points were made:-
  - The Panel noted the concern raised that, in the introduction to the Terms of Reference a quote from the Baker report was used which included the wording "it cannot be ruled out that a small number of these would otherwise have been eventually discharged from hospital alive" and with which there was disagreement about the numbers affected. The Bishop recorded the objection and provided reassurance that the inclusion of the quote from a previous investigation will not restrict or guide the Panel's work. The concern raised about the number of patients affected will be an area for further investigation by the Panel.
  - It was noted that following the initial 10 inquests a further inquest had been granted which meant 11 inquests were carried out in total.

### New Panel Members

9. Panel Members introduced themselves:-

#### ***Duncan Jarrett***

A former Scotland Yard Commander with over 35 years investigative experience including advising Governments on the successful investigation and eventual destruction of terrorist groups. He had been Director of UK National Hostage Negotiator's training course and lectures on the psychology of influence. He will bring all this experience to his work with the Panel.

***Christine Gifford***

Her specialism is access to information with a background in knocking down the culture of secrecy and she has been a member of the Advisory Council on National Records and Archives, which advises the Government on the disclosure of highly sensitive information. She had been a member of the Hillsborough Independent Panel where she led on access to and disclosure of information. She expected all information in relation to the Panel's work to be disclosed to the Panel.

***Colin Currie***

He had worked for 30 years in Geriatric Medicine, working in acute care and respite care in a number of roles. He had served as a Clinical Director responsible for the care of elderly beds. He had an interest in clinical management and clinical governance. He had been a Special Advisor in No.10 policy unit, where he had worked to promote the concept of integration of health and social care for older people. He also had an interest in hip fracture, audit and care and would bring all this experience to the Panel's work.

***David Henke***

He was a journalist with over 40 years' experience. He had started his career with regional newspapers moving to national papers, had been the Westminster correspondent for the Guardian and was now freelance. Over his career he had been involved in a number of long detailed investigations. He had found that it was important to build up information bit by bit and this was how he would approach his work with the Panel.

10. A further Panel member Bill Kirkup, would be appointed from January. He has been a member of the Hillsborough Independent Panel and is currently the Chair of the investigation into maternal and neonatal deaths at Morecambe Bay Hospital. This work is due to finish shortly.
11. The Bishop explained that there would be further Panel members appointed. A Panel member with prescribing /pharmacological expertise was still needed and he was also considering how the patients' voice and nursing representation could be included.

**Information Management**

12. Christine Gifford set out the current position on obtaining documentary evidence from organisations for the Panel. There had originally been 50 organisations identified who may have relevant documents. This number had now risen to 82 and was expected to eventually exceed 100. Work was already underway and meetings with many key organisations had already taken place.
13. It was important that all family information was available to the panel. This would help build up a full picture and allow the Panel to identify where it needed to find further evidence. Judy Joslin and Andrew Gazzard were working with families on the

collection of their material. This would be done on an individual family by family basis.

14. The Secretariat was in the final stages of procuring a system that would receive information in digital form. Although there would be some electronic information available, most of it would be in hard copy. All information received would therefore be catalogued, copies taken, put into electronic form and originals given back to individuals. It would take a few months to digitalise and catalogue information.
15. As access was obtained to information, Panel colleagues, in conjunction with the team working with them, would start to build up a picture, which would help identify further organisations and individuals. This was an incredibly complex process and would take time. The first information would be available to the Panel from March/April 2015. This process would continue as long as information was being received.
16. The Bishop invited comments and questions. In discussion, the following points were made:-
  - Funding for the Independent Panel was clarified. The Secretariat received overall funding from the Department of Health. The Panel itself was funded from the Secretariat's budget. Decisions about allocating funding were taken by the Panel and the Secretariat.
  - The system used for documentation would be a standalone system that was completely secure.
  - The Bishop explained that a Register of Interests would be established. Panel members would be expected to declare at meetings if there were any conflicts of interest at Panel meetings and step down from discussion, if necessary.
  - All organisations had received letters asking them to preserve any relevant documentation. Retention policies for documentation did vary between organisations, and, while all major documents should have been retained, notes can be weeded and destroyed. It was inevitable that some documentation will have been destroyed but it was possible that this would be found in other places. This reinforced the importance of making all information available to the Panel.
  - Following discussion of the emerging timeline of events, it was acknowledged that in addition to events at the Department of Health, events at the Ministry of Justice and the Home Office will also need to be included.
  - The Panel intended to be the voice of those who had concerns and were no longer able to participate and those who did not have family members to raise concerns,

#### Any other business

17. The Bishop passed on a request from media organisations for families to come forward if they wanted to talk to the press.

Judy Joslin  
Family Officer  
9 December 2015