

Written Ministerial Statement

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Tuesday 9th December 2014

Gosport Independent Panel: Terms of Reference and other Expert Panel Members

The Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Department of Health (Norman Lamb):

On 10 July, I announced the establishment of the Gosport Independent Panel, chaired by Bishop James Jones, set up to review documentary evidence held across a range of organisations concerning the initial care of families' relatives and the subsequent investigations into their deaths in Gosport War Memorial Hospital.

Since then, the Bishop has begun working with affected families to ensure their views are taken into account in shaping the Terms of Reference.

I can now announce the Gosport Independent Panel's agreed Terms of Reference; and the appointment of four further members of the Panel.

In summary, the remit of the Gosport Independent Panel will be to:

- Consult with the families of the deceased and of those treated to ensure that the views of those affected are taken into consideration;
- Obtain, examine and analyse documentation from all relevant organisations and individuals (governmental and non-governmental).
- Produce a report which will provide an overview of the information reviewed by the Panel and will illustrate how the information disclosed adds to public understanding of these events and their aftermath.

The four additional Panel members I have appointed are:

- Dr Bill Kirkup, CBE, former member of the Hillsborough Independent Panel and currently the chair of an independent investigation into neonatal and maternal deaths

at Morecambe Bay Hospital. Dr Kirkup will finish this work before taking up his place on the Gosport Panel substantively.

- Dr Colin Currie, as a geriatrician, has wide experience in the care of older people in acute, rehabilitation and respite settings; and also has expertise in clinical governance, hip fracture care, and policy on the integration of health and social care.
- David Hencke is an investigative journalist and writer.
- Duncan Jarrett, OBE, is a former Scotland Yard Commander and an experienced mediator.

Christine Gifford is a recognised expert in the field of access to information. She joined the Panel in July, and has started work to ensure maximum possible disclosure of the documentary evidence to the Panel.

I am making these appointments in view of the skill set required for the Panel's work. The new Panel members are experts in their respective fields and I am grateful to each of them for agreeing to take on this task. Other Panel members may be appointed at a later date. I will announce any future appointments through a press release.

This announcement marks the beginning of very important work for the Independent Panel members, relevant organisations and individuals in addressing the concerns and questions raised by family members over the years.

The review by the Independent Panel is expected to complete by the end of 2017. The Secretary of State for Health will make arrangements for publication of the final report to Parliament.

A copy of the detailed Terms of Reference has been placed in the Libraries of both Houses. Copies are available to hon. Members from the Vote Office and to noble Lords from the Printed Paper Office.