

Gosport Independent Panel
Family Liaison Meeting 27 October 2015
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, Duncan Jarrett, David Hencke, Dr Colin Currie, Professor Jim Smith, and Kate Blackwell) and Secretariat (Louise Dominian, Judy Joslin, Melanie Peffer, Code A)

Code A

Introductions

1. The Bishop welcomed everybody to the meeting. The Bishop introduced himself and explained that while Bishop of Liverpool, he had been the Chair of the Hillsborough Independent Panel. He had subsequently been asked by the Secretary of State for Health to Chair the Gosport Independent Panel. This was the fifth meeting the Panel had held with families since it had been set up and was the largest meeting to date.
2. The work of the Panel and its Terms of Reference had been widely publicised through the media over the summer. As a result, a number of families had contacted the Panel and we are now in contact with well over 80 families. The Bishop thanked the new families for attending the meeting. He said that he understood that there were many reasons for coming forward and that everyone's story was different. No one in the Panel or the Secretariat took families involvement for granted; the one common theme for families was concern for how their loved ones were cared for. He acknowledged that this might be painful to relive. The Bishop also paid tribute to those families he had met at the very beginning of the process and to the persistence of these families in raising their concerns which had led to the Minister deciding to set up the Gosport Independent Panel.
3. The Bishop reviewed the history of the Panel for the benefit of new families. The Panel's first task had been to consult with families. It had been clear from his experience as Chair of the Hillsborough Independent Panel that this was a very important stage. The Gosport Independent Panel's Terms of Reference put the families at the centre of the Panel's work. The Panel's regular meetings with families were an opportunity for families to ask questions. If families thought of questions following a meeting, they could raise them immediately with a member of the Family Team, contact the Family Team outside of the meeting or bring their questions to the next meeting.
4. The Bishop explained that the Panel will interrogate documents not people. They will access all documents across all organisations, analyse the documentation and write a report that adds to public understanding. Although the Panel was paid for by the Department of Health, it has its own budget and is independent from both the Department of Health and Ministers. The Panel is also independent from families and needs to go where the documents lead it. Although families have questions, the Panel

may find issues in documents that also needed investigating. The Panel will listen to families and register their concerns but they will not release information to families along the way. Firstly this is because the Panel does not want any specific information to distort the narrative and gain an importance which might outweigh its actual value. Secondly releasing information on a piecemeal basis could detract from the impact of the final report. The report will be written based on the Panel's analysis of documentation received from families and stakeholders. Families will see the report first to ensure that they know it has not been changed when it is put into the public domain. Once it has been read by families, the report will be presented to the Secretary of State for Health and laid in Parliament.

Panel Members Introduction

5. Following the announcement of the Panel, the Panel had met and listened to families and these discussions had been taken into account when drawing up the Terms of Reference. The Bishop said he had recruited Panel Members with the right expertise to deliver the Terms of Reference.

Christine Gifford

6. The Bishop introduced Christine Gifford who had worked with him on the Hillsborough Independent Panel and was leading on the Panel's access to material.
7. Christine's expertise is in Information Management. She had been involved in drafting the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and has considerable experience in accessing information in challenging circumstances. She was the lead on access to information and disclosure on the Hillsborough Independent Panel which had broken new ground.
8. Christine explained the basic principles for the Panel's work. The Panel will approach any organisation that it thought might have been involved in the care of families' loved ones, were part of the organisational management and any other organisation or individual professionals who might hold relevant material. To date, 99 organisations or individuals have been asked for material on an un-redacted basis. Organisations have been told that the Panel expects to see all material and that redaction is unacceptable. There will be further discussions on what goes in the public domain but the Panel is determined that families will see the full picture.
9. Christine said that material held by families is also important and many families had already provided the Panel with the material they held. If families hold material then they should contact the Family Team to discuss access. It does not matter if material is not in any order or if it is copies of material held by other organisations. What is important is that the Panel has access to all material. This will ensure that the Panel receives all relevant documents and it will allow the Panel to compare with documents from elsewhere and ensure that the Panel sees all annotations.
10. Christine emphasised that the Panel was making significant progress accessing documents and ensuring this material was available to the Review Team.

Professor Jim Smith

11. The Bishop introduced Jim Smith explaining that he had been appointed for his prescribing expertise.
12. Jim explained that he is a pharmacist who had worked at a senior level in NHS Regional Management and had worked for the Department of Health where he had been Chief Pharmacist for England. He had over 30 years' experience in the development and implementation of pharmacy, prescribing and medicine strategies including patient safety. He had been involved in the Shipman inquiry and the work on controlled drugs that followed. He had also led on work for the World Health Organisation.
13. Jim had been aware of the events at Gosport War Memorial Hospital but had no previous involvement in the events there. He brought all his pharmaceutical experience on quality, professional regulation and his determination to find the truth to the work of the Panel.

Dr Colin Currie

14. The Bishop introduced Colin Currie, explaining that he had been appointed to the Panel because of his extensive experience in geriatric care.
15. Colin said that he had been involved in the care of older people as a consultant geriatrician for 30 years, looking after patients in rehabilitation, respite, continuing, and palliative care, and in acute orthopaedic wards. He had led initiatives in developing standards for the care of older people, and in inspecting services for them; and in developing and auditing standards in hip fracture care.
16. He had reviewed unresolved serious complaints in NHS Scotland, and had served as Clinical Director and Medical Director of an NHS Trust: posts which involved deep involvement in clinical governance. As a special adviser in the No.10 Policy Unit from 2008-2010, he had carried out research and policy development on the integration of health and social care services for older people.
17. Already he had found that participating in the challenging, interesting and important work of Gosport Independent Panel was a great privilege. He hoped his experience would contribute to the Panel's work in addressing the families' concerns, and to bringing about a much more detailed understanding of the events at the Gosport War Memorial Hospital.

David Hencke

18. The Bishop introduced David Hencke explaining that he had been appointed for his media and investigative experience.
19. David said that he is an investigative journalist who had worked on the Guardian for over 30 years. For the past 20 years he had been based in Parliament where he had been involved in a number of long and detailed investigations including 'cash for questions'. He wanted to bring his skills as a journalist to the investigation, and he pledged to find out for the families what had happened at Gosport War Memorial Hospital. He commented that the Panel had access to a wealth of expertise to help understand the events.

Duncan Jarrett

20. The Bishop introduced Duncan Jarrett and explained that the Terms of Reference covered all investigations relating to complaints made to and concerns raised with all other relevant organisations and individuals. This included the police investigations and he had

therefore needed someone with wide experience of both police and regulatory investigations.

21. Duncan explained that he had been in the Metropolitan Police for 40 years and had specialised in Counter Terrorism. He said that Christine had explained in more detail about the access stage to the Panel's work. This access work led to the analysis and investigative stage of the work on which Duncan was leading.
22. All documents are being added to a large database and investigated using a comparative analysis document which will pull all the relevant material together. Duncan said that his team has skills in both thematic and crime analysis and the best of these approaches will be applied to the investigation and all links will be investigated.
23. Duncan emphasised that questions that families had about the care and treatment of their relatives and what happened afterwards were crucially important and would help drive the investigation. Duncan said that the Panel's work needed to be better than has happened in the past. The Panel needed to take the 'Best Bits' from the past and put them together with their work to find out what has happened in Gosport.

Kate Blackwell

24. The Bishop introduced Kate Blackwell and explained that if while investigating and interrogating the documents, information was discovered which indicated any criminal activity this information will have to be passed to the judicial authorities. He had therefore needed someone with judicial expertise on the Panel.
25. Kate said that she is a QC specialising in criminal law, inquests and regulatory law. She is also a part time Crown Court judge. She has some experience of this type of Panel (she had some involvement in the Daniel Morgan Independent Panel which was reviewing the police handling of a murder investigation) and had very practical experience of criminal cases and investigations. She was a Junior Counsel in the Harold Shipman prosecution and also has some experience of the General Medical Council.
26. Kate said that there had been a number of investigations but there had been no criminal prosecutions. She said she intended to look back at all the information collated, the extent of the analysis undertaken, how conclusions were formed and the action taken. She will look at issues from all possible perspectives and draw conclusions.

Deborah Sturdy and Dr Bill Kirkup

27. The Bishop explained that there were two further Panel Members who had not been able to attend the family meeting. Deborah Sturdy, who brought a wealth of nursing experience of older people to the Panel, was ill and also missing was Dr Bill Kirkup who had worked with the Bishop on the Hillsborough Independent Panel.

Louise Dominian

28. The Bishop introduced Louise Dominian, Secretary to the Panel.
29. Louise explained that she had been working with the Bishop since the Panel was announced in July 2014. She had recruited a team of people to the Secretariat. It is the role of the Secretariat to carry out the work requested by the Panel.

Question and Answers

30. The Bishop invited comments and questions. In discussion, the following points were made:-

- In response to a question on whether any forthcoming changes to the Freedom of Information Act will impact on the Panel's work, it was explained that, although the Act was under review, any changes had still to be agreed and the Panel hope to have acquired all the relevant information long before any possible future changes to the Act took effect.
- In response to a query regarding scope, it was confirmed that the Panel will go as far back as the evidence takes it.
- The task facing the Panel was an extraordinarily complex one. It will not be just looking at documents, but the connections between documents, annotations and any differences between documents. The Panel will leave no stone unturned and will work diligently.
- Material received from families is still being processed and return will be discussed individually with families.
- In response to comments about the emphasis on documentary evidence it was noted that data came in a variety of different forms, it was not just formal documents but included informal notes of conversations and emails.
- In response to a comment regarding contradictory notes in care plan records, it was noted that the Panel will be looking at what had happened in terms of medication administration.
- It was emphasised that the Panel expected to see all relevant material; this included the evidence presented to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS).

31. The Panel noted the following comments from Family Members:-

- The care and treatment of families' relatives was not confined to one doctor.
- A question was raised about whether Local Authorities had demonstrated a duty of care and whether affordability of care was a factor in care decisions.

Any Other Business

32. There was no other business.