

From Ann Keen MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State



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Dear Peter

Thank you for your letter of 23 April in which you ask me to call a public inquiry into events at Gosport War Memorial Hospital in the late 1990s.

You refer to an earlier letter I sent to Mark Hoban MP in which I said that we would await the outcome of the inquests and then assess if there remain matters requiring further resolution. As you know, the inquest concluded that in three cases patients were wrongly prescribed excessive doses of diamorphine which hastened their deaths. Two other patients who died were also prescribed drugs which contributed to their deaths, but the jury found that the prescribing was appropriate for their conditions. The jury also found that in the other five cases investigated the deaths were not caused by the drugs the patients were taking.

I now understand that the General Medical Council (GMC) started hearing Dr Barton's case on 8 June, and that the hearing is likely to last several weeks. It would be inappropriate for me to decide about any possible further action, such as a public inquiry, until we know the outcome of the GMC hearing.

I am sorry I cannot give you a more helpful reply at this stage. I should point out that Mark Hoban has also raised this issue with me, and I have replied to him in similar terms.

Yours

Code A

ANN KEEN