

Gladys Richards' inquest – April 2013

Chief Quality Officer at NHS Fareham & Gosport Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), Julia Barton, said: "The NHS has fully supported the coroner's inquests into deaths at Gosport War Memorial Hospital in the late 1990s.

"On behalf of the NHS I would like to take this opportunity to extend our sympathies to the family of Mrs Gladys Richards and apologise to Mrs Richards' family for any treatment or care which the coroner found contributed to her death in 1998. Note: this paragraph will depend on the verdict itself.

"We will fully review the implications of today's verdict, delivered after a lengthy and thorough inquest into the circumstances of Mrs Richards' death nearly 15 years ago and take all necessary action.

"Since the late 1990s much has changed at Gosport war memorial Hospital. The systems and policies in place have undergone a complete overhaul, in line with developments in modern clinical practice and the building itself has benefitted from £16.5million of modernisation.

"After concerns about clinical practice at Gosport War Memorial Hospital were raised in the late 1990s the Commission for Health Improvement (CHI - the health regulator at the time) conducted a detailed review of practices at the hospital. CHI found that by the time investigation in 2002 the regulator was satisfied that GWMH had adequate policies and guidelines in place governing the prescription and administration of pain relieving medicines to older patients and that these policies and procedures were being adhered to. This remains the case and there have been no incidents subsequently which have required external investigation by CHI or its successor the Healthcare Commission or the Police.

"Policies and procedures at the Hospital are reviewed regularly and staff receive mandatory training every year.

“The Patient Environment Action Team inspection in 2012 rated the Hospital as excellent on cleanliness, excellent for food and excellent for privacy and dignity. Patient experience surveys are conducted regularly and feedback is very positive, with comments including ‘privacy and dignity is well respected’ and ‘cleanliness impeccable’.

“NHS Fareham & Gosport CCG took over responsibility for commissioning healthcare for residents of the two towns on 1 April this year. It will ensure that it receives accurate and timely information about the performance of its providers, and is continuing the regular monitoring of the quality of care that patients receive at the hospital, together with quality review meetings with the Trusts whose staff provide that care.

“The hospital also has a robust concerns and complaints procedure in place, which is readily accessible by patients and their families.

“I can reassure people that the issues highlighted by this inquest, and those held in 2009, have been fully addressed.”