

 Code A
05/04/2001 17:02


Sent by:

To:

cc:

Code A

Subject: SUI: PORTSMOUTH HEALTHCARE NHS TRUST - SUSPICIOUS DEATHS

 **RESTRICTED - Investigation**



SUI suspicious deaths 5 Apr 2001.d

Restricted - investigation**Code A** APS,PS(H)

From:

Date:

Copy:

Code A**SUI: PORTSMOUTH HEALTHCARE NHS TRUST – SUSPICIOUS DEATHS OF PATIENTS****Issue**

1. The purpose of this minute is to inform PS(H) of stories in The Portsmouth News highlighting a police investigation in to the death of a patient at the Gosport War Memorial Hospital in 1998.
2. Subsequent to the initial story, Portsmouth News has identified two further cases that are expected to be referred to the local police.

Background*Richards case*

3. The local police carried out an investigation in to the death of Mrs Gladys Richards who died at the hospital in 1998. In August 1998 the Trust received a complaint from Mrs Richard's family about the care she received. The complaint concerned the administration of diamorphine - the family believed Mrs Richards was given excessive dosages. As well as receiving treatment at Gosport, Mrs Richards also received care at Royal Hospital Haslar. The complaint was fully investigated by the Trust and no evidence of inappropriate care was found.
4. In the Autumn of 1998 one of Mrs Richard's daughters alleged that her mother had been unlawfully killed. A police investigation followed and the papers on the case are currently with the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS). The Trust co-operated fully with the investigation, as have staff at Haslar.

Restricted - investigation

Additional cases

5. Following publicity on this case, Portsmouth News has also been talking to the Trust about allegations from the family of a second patient. This case was also the subject of a complaint to the Trust. The complaint was subsequently referred to the Health Ombudsman and was not upheld.

6. The family in this case is planning to present a dossier to Gosport police today (5th April), asking them to investigate a possible unlawful killing. This information was presented to the Trust on 4th April by Portsmouth News, not the patient's family. It is now expected that the News will publish the follow-up story tomorrow (6th April).

7. Portsmouth News also claims to have identified a third case. This case was not the subject of a complaint to the Trust but, again, it is expected that the police will be approached.

NOT IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN

8. There are factors common to all three cases. The consultant was the same, as was the clinical assistant who is a local GP. However, all three cases followed a similar route from Haslar to Gosport, which could have influenced which clinical staff were involved. At this time there is no evidence to suggest that this is a factor in any of the cases nor has one clinician has been identified by Portsmouth News.

Local Media interest

9. In the course of the police investigation in the Richards case a number of other deaths were examined but Mrs Richard's is the only case currently under investigation. A Portsmouth News journalist was informed of this by the family, which was unhappy about the length of time the police had taken with the investigation. The journalist erroneously picked up a story that the police were checking 500 other deaths at the hospital. Although the police have told both the Trust and the journalist that this is not the case, it is understood that the News is still likely to run the story before a decision is made by the CPS.

Trust action

Richards Case

10. In the Richards case the Trust has taken the following lines:

- The Trust takes the safety of its patients very seriously.
- The initial complaint regarding Mrs Richard's treatment was investigated and no evidence of inappropriate care was found.

Restricted - investigation

- The Trust is aware of the police investigation at Gosport War Memorial Hospital and has co-operated fully. This is the only case at Gosport War Memorial Hospital being investigated by the police.
- The Trust is awaiting the decision of the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and is unable to comment further on the issues whilst the case is with the CPS.

Second allegation

11. On the second allegation the Trust has responded to the Portsmouth News by acknowledging that a complaint had been investigated by the Trust, that the Trust had co-operated fully with the Health Ombudsman's investigation and that the Ombudsman had not upheld the complaint.

12. The Trust has also said that it will fully co-operate with any police investigations in to this or other case.

Conclusion

13. Although there are factors common to the three cases mentioned, there is not sufficient evidence, at this time, to suggest that these deaths are linked or are the result of foulplay.

14. I will ensure you are kept up to date with any developments.

SERO Lines to take

- **The case of Mrs Richards is currently being considered by the Crown Prosecution Service, therefore it would be inappropriate to comment at this time. It would also not be appropriate to comment on any cases that are the subject of a police investigation.**
- **It is understood that the police are not investigating a large number of cases as suggested by The Portsmouth News.**

Code A

Rm C100 EBT

Code A

Code A
05/04/2001 13:34

Sent by:

Code A

To:

CC:

Subject: Portsmouth SUI follow-up: alleged further case at Gosport

Forwarded by Code A on 05/04/2001 13:28

Code A
05/04/2001 11:10

Sent by:

To:

Code A

CC:

Subject: Portsmouth SUI follow-up: alleged further case at Gosport

The Portsmouth News have been talking to Portsmouth Healthcare Trust about contact from the family of a second patient. This follows a complaint to the Trust, subsequently referred to the Ombudsman, which was not upheld.

The family are planning to present a 'dossier' of the case to Gosport police on 5 April, asking them to investigate a possible unlawful killing. This information was presented to the Trust by the News on 4 April, not the family. It is now expected that the News will publish the follow-up story on Friday, 6 April.

Following is the Trust's internal briefing and line to take.

CONFIDENTIAL

Anticipated Further Media Attention

Following the recent media coverage regarding patient GR at Gosport War Memorial Hospital, as anticipated, another complainant, Mr Wilson, has contacted the Evening News.

The Evening News plan to run a story based on Mr Wilson's experience on Thursday April 5 2001.

Mr Wilson complained to the Trust about the care provided to his relative, Mrs P, who died at Gosport War Memorial Hospital in 1998. The complaint was investigated internally but Mr Wilson was unhappy with the investigation and referred his complaint to the Health Service Ombudsman. In his recent report, the Ombudsman concludes that *"I have not found evidence of unsatisfactory medical or nursing care and I am satisfied that Mrs P was not given excessive doses of morphine. I do not uphold the complaint"*.

The only criticism of the Trust made by the Ombudsman was for an error relating to the microfilming of some nursing records, for example fluid charts. This was identified and acknowledged by the Trust during the initial investigation and an apology given to Mr Wilson. The Trust has amended its microfilming policy following this complaint.



It appears that Mr Wilson will go to Gosport Police Station on Thursday morning and request the Police investigate his complaint as another unlawful killing.

The Trust's response to the Evening News has been:

1. To acknowledge that Mr Wilson's complaint has been investigated by the Trust and the Ombudsman.
2. The Trust has co-operated fully with the Ombudsman's investigation.
3. The Ombudsman has **not** upheld Mr Wilson's complaint.
4. The Trust identified and apologised to Mr Wilson for the error in microfilming medical records.

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5. The vast majority of the medical records were available for the Ombudsman to examine.
6. The Ombudsman's report makes clear that *"although incomplete, the records provide evidence of nurses having systematically assessed Mrs P's needs, formulated a care plan and delivered that care"*.
7. The Trust has amended its microfilming policy following this complaint.
8. If the Police wish to pursue an investigation into Mr Wilson's allegations, the Trust will co-operate fully with them.

  Code A
05/04/2001 13:32



Sent by:

Code A

To:
CC:

Subject: SUI "suspicious deaths" at Portsmouth Hospital

Forwarded by Code A on 05/04/2001 13:26

  Code A
05/04/2001 10:13



Sent by:

Code A

To:
CC:

Subject: SUI "suspicious deaths" at Portsmouth Hospital

Forwarded by Code A on 05/04/2001 10:06

  Code A
03/04/2001 16:34



Sent by:

Code A

To:
CC:

Subject: SUI "suspicious deaths" at Portsmouth Hospital

Forwarded by Nick Yee/SERO/DON/GB on 03/04/2001 16:28

  Code A
03/04/2001 15:11

Sent by:

To:
Code A
CC:

Subject: SUI "suspicious deaths" at Portsmouth Hospital

The Portsmouth News has a front page splash claiming a police probe into suspicious deaths at Gosport War Memorial Hospital. This is generating national media interest.

Gladys RICHARDS - local police are investigating the 'suspicious' death of this pt. at Gosport War Memorial Hospital. Lesley Humphrey, Portsmouth Healthcare Trust Quality/Complaints manager has been coordinating this one with the police as the investigation arose from relatives pursuing a complaint against the Trust. She received some care at Haslar and some at GWMH.

The police investigation has been ongoing for a while and they have submitted a report to the CPS - trust have cooperated fully and voluntarily with the police investigation, as have staff at Haslar. In the course of the investigation a number of other deaths have been checked but only this one is under investigation - no similar complaints have been made to police. HOWEVER:

A local news journalist has picked up the story from the family, , who are unhappy about the length of time the police have taken with the enquiry. From somewhere, he has erroneously picked up that the police were checking 500 other deaths at the hospital. Although the police have told us this is not the case, and him too, he is still planning to run the story before a verdict from the CPS. His speculative stance may return if the CPS decide there is a case to answer. There appears to be one doctor at the centre of the case.

Trust line to take follows:

MEDIA INTEREST

It is likely that the News will run a story in the next few days relating to GR who was a patient at Gosport War Memorial hospital. A complaint regarding GR's case was received and investigated by the Trust in August 1998, and no evidence of inappropriate care was identified.

In the Autumn of 1998 one of GR's daughters claimed that GR was unlawfully killed. The case has been investigated by the police and the papers are with the Crown Prosecution Service, who will decide whether or not a case should be brought.

The position taken by the Trust will be:-

1. The Trust investigated the initial complaint regarding GR's care, and found no evidence of inappropriate care
2. We are aware of the police investigation at Gosport War Memorial Hospital
3. The Trust has co-operated fully with the police
4. This is the only case at Gosport War Memorial Hospital being investigated by the police

5. We are waiting for the decision of the Crown Prosecution Service
6. We are unable to comment further on the issues whilst these are with the Crown Prosecution Service.
7. The Trust takes the safety of it's patients very seriously.

Logged as SUI 82/2001.