

INVESTIGATION: Police interview more relatives over War Memorial Hospital care

More families voice worries after deaths

by Jonathan Carter
The News

DETECTIVES are poised to interview more families amid concerns at the treatment of elderly patients in a community hospital.

The relatives of three pensioners approached police after *The News* revealed senior officers had investigated the alleged unlawful killing of a 91-year-old woman at Gosport War Memorial Hospital.

But today it emerged a further three people have now raised issues over the care of loved ones.

Hampshire police spokeswoman Pauline Davey confirmed: 'We have had calls from six people now, who have voiced concerns to us.'

'We will be going to see those people to try to clarify what their concerns are.'

The development came as

Ombudsman rejected complaints on drugs

AMONG the six people to voice concerns to police over the standard of care at the hospital is Mike Wilson, of Hammond Court, Gosport.

The 64-year-old was due to be interviewed by detectives after claiming his mother Edna Purnell, 91, fell into a

'trance-like' state before she died at the War Memorial Hospital in December 1998.

Mrs Purnell had been transferred to the hospital after a hip op at Gosport's Royal Hospital Haslar.

In a protest to the health service ombudsman, Mr

Wilson claimed that his mother did not receive reasonable medical and nursing care and that she was given 'excessive' doses of diamorphine.

But in a report the ombudsman rejected both complaints.

the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) continues to study a file on the circumstances surrounding the death of the 91-year-old patient, who had lived at Lee-on-the-Solent.

CPS lawyers are deciding whether there is sufficient evidence to bring a prosecution for alleged unlawful killing.

The police probe was prompted by a complaint from the elderly woman's family over the standard of care she received at the hospital in the days up to her

death there in August 1998.

It is understood the new police inquiries involve concerns voiced by relatives about overdoses of the pain-killing drug diamorphine, which were allegedly given to the elderly patients.

Officers have interviewed a number of medical personnel at the Gosport War Memorial in connection with the initial inquiry, although none was quizzed under arrest or under caution.

Ms Davey said: 'It remains the case that we have only received one complaint

and that everyone who has been questioned has done so voluntarily.'

The hospital is run by Portsmouth HealthCare (NHS) Trust. Its operations director Ian Piper earlier told *The News* the trust had carried out a full internal inquiry into a complaint over the standard of care of the 91-year-old patient.

He confirmed: 'No member of staff has been disciplined as a result.'

Mr Piper urged anyone with concerns to contact the hospital to discuss fears.

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We strive to ensure all the news we report is fair and accurate. However, if you have a complaint, please write to the editor. All complaints will be answered.

Springfield wins battle of the web

by Steven Vaughan
Education reporter

WHIZZKIDS from Springfield Secondary School, Drayton, scooped top prize in a website competition.

Eleven other schools also competed in the contest to design and create an internet site.

Now their site will be placed on-line to allow other young people to benefit from the advice and information it offers.

The challenge was run by the Portsmouth and South-East Hampshire Education Business Partnership, with IBM.



Winning smiles from Springfield pupils and teacher Simon Marsden

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Major search launched after boy goes missing

by Jonathan Carter
The News

A MAJOR search was launched today after a 13-year-old schoolboy ran away from home following an argument with his parents.

Teenager Joseph Williams last night told a friend he was planning to go to the Isle of Wight after the row with his mum and dad at their home at the army base on Thorney Island.

At first police feared he may have tried to cross the Solent in a small boat. Just hours after he went missing a red dinghy with an outboard motor was stolen from Emsworth Harbour.

The theft was only a few miles from the home of 47 Regiment Royal Artillery where Joseph's father Stephen is a corporal.

Early today the Sussex police helicopter was scrambled to search for Joseph, known as Joe, and the missing inflatable boat. The helicopter - equipped with thermal imaging cameras - was joined by an MoD police launch from Portsmouth naval base which was scouring the Solent.

There was no sign of the craft by 10am today.

But police are also following up reports that Joseph boarded a train at Emsworth instead.

Detective Sergeant Gardy Mackay, of MoD police CID in Portsmouth, said: 'After a disagreement with his parents, Joseph went out to play last night. When he failed to return, his mum and dad reported him missing.'

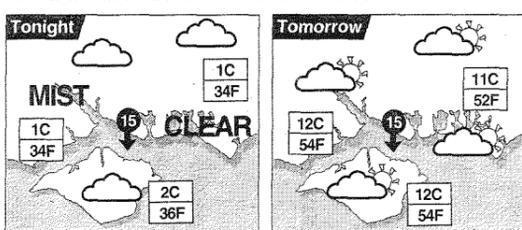
'We spoke to one of Joseph's pals who saw him at 7.30pm. Joseph had said he was going to the Isle of Wight - and that was the last time he was seen.'

Det Sgt Mackay, the officer co-ordinating the search, said: 'His parents are obviously anxious that their son is found. They have spent an uneasy night awaiting news.'

MoD officers said Joseph did not have any money. He was wearing a dark fleece jacket, tracksuit bottoms and trainers.

An incident room was being set up on (023) 9272 2707.

SOUTH COAST WEATHER



A dry night with clearing skies will lead to some mist patches developing in sheltered spots. Cold with a frost in places. Min 0C (32F).

It should be dry in most places with plenty of sunshine but it will feel chilly again in moderate northerly winds. Max 12C (54F).

Statistics

Southsea (24 hours to 5pm)	
Min temp	.....3C (37F)
Max temp	.....11C (52F)
Rainfall	.....0.00 ins.
Sunshine	.....8.0 hrs.

Light times

Portsmouth	8.05pm to 6.01am
Sun rises	.....6.01am
Sun sets	.....8.06pm
Moon rises	.....5.03am
Moon sets	.....3.21pm

CLICK www.portsmouth.co.uk for full marine forecast. Click on NEWS

Three-day outlook

Friday	Saturday	Sunday
12C (54F)	11C (52F)	12C (54F)

At sea

Sailing forecast
The winds will be northerly, force 4 or 5. It will be generally fair with the seas mainly slight inshore. Visibility will be good.

Channel crossings: Moderate.

High and low tides tomorrow

Portsmouth	1.57am (1.7m), 8.44am (3.7m), 2.12pm (1.5m), 9.17pm (4.0m)
Chichester	1.58am (1.8m), 8.55am (3.8m), 2.15pm (1.6m), 9.30pm (4.1m)
Warsash	1.38am (1.9m), 8.30am (3.8m), 2.02pm (1.7m), 9.08pm (3.9m)

World temperatures

	°C	°F
Algarve	.....Fair	.....20 68
Amsterdam	.....Fair	.....8 46
Bordeaux	.....Fair	.....13 55
Brussels	.....Fair	.....7 45
Corfu	.....Sunny	.....18 64
Costa del Sol	.....Fair	.....24 75
Cyprus	.....Sunny	.....21 70
Geneva	.....Sunny	.....11 52
Hong Kong	.....Cloudy	.....27 81
Jersey	.....Fair	.....11 52
Los Angeles	.....Sunny	.....25 77
Majorca	.....Sunny	.....21 70
Miami	.....Sunny	.....29 84
New York	.....Cloudy	.....9 48
Nice	.....Sunny	.....16 61
Paris	.....Rain	.....7 45
Rome	.....Sunny	.....15 59
SydneySunny28 82
TenerifeFair23 73
TokyoFair21 70
VeniceSunny14 57

WEATHERCALL

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(For a detailed forecast for Hampshire, Isle of Wight, and Dorset)

09068 500938
(for a detailed forecast for Sussex, Surrey and Kent)

All calls charged at 60p per minute.



THE WE CAN DO IT FACTFILE

The timbers which make up the Chesapeake Mill at Wickham, were bought for £3,450 at a Portsmouth auction in 1819.

Portsmouth teachers presented the Pageant of Portsmouth in 1923 at Southsea Castle. It depicted significant events spanning 1,500 years of the city's history.

If you want to help out with the We Can Do It campaign, contact Chris Owen on 023 9262 2161 or e-mail him at chris.owen@the-news.co.uk. To reach us on the internet go to www.portsmouth.co.uk and click on the sun.