



PETER VIGGERS MP

House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA

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Working for the constituency of Gosport



30th March 2004

Ms Lucy Docherty
Fareham and Gosport PCT
Unit 180, Fareham Reach
166 Fareham Road
Gosport
Hampshire, PO13 0FH

Dear Lucy

I mentioned that I had raised the issue of the enquiries into the Gosport War Memorial Hospital with the Minister, and you may be interested to see a copy of my original letter and the Minister's reply.

Yours sincerely,

Code A

From the Minister of State
Rosie Winterton MP



Richmond House
79 Whitehall
London
SW1A 2NS
Tel: 020 7210 3000

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Peter Viggers MP

On Ask,

20th March 2004

Thank you for your letter of 13 February to John Reid regarding the time limits for medical enquiries and the ongoing investigation into deaths at Gosport War Memorial Hospital. Your letter has been passed to me as the Minister responsible for health services in the south of England.

You refer to a recent announcement by the Department that all medical enquiries should be completed within two months.

I believe that you are referring to a time limit set out in the draft regulations on the reformed NHS complaints procedure that were published on 17 December last year for consultation. The time limit (40 working days) is one for the new Commission for Healthcare Audit and Inspection (CHAI) to complete the report of its investigation of a complaint. CHAI has also published a consultation document on its proposals for the handling of complaints, which talks about completing the report of an investigation within two months of the request for independent review. I should point out that this proposed time limit is not one for completing the whole complaints process, which will, of course, include an attempt to resolve matters locally first (local resolution).

The draft regulations also deal with the time limit for responding to a complaint at local resolution. However, as I mentioned, this is currently subject to consultation and so the time limits are not yet fixed. The intention is to implement the reformed complaints procedure from 1 June this year. Further information about the proposals and the CHAI consultation document are available at www.chai.org.uk/views.

Turning to the concerns you have raised about the investigations into deaths at Gosport War Memorial Hospital. As you are aware, there is an ongoing police inquiry into the past care and treatment of patients at the Hospital and it is not appropriate for me to comment on this. However, I am assured that the NHS in Hampshire and the Isle of White has co-operated fully with Hampshire Constabulary during the investigation and will continue to do so.



I also understand that the Hampshire police are keeping the families fully informed of how their investigation is going at every stage.

I hope this addresses the points you have raised.

Yours sincerely,

Code A

ROSIE WINTERTON

13th February 2004

Rt Hon John Reid, MP
Minister of State for Health
Department of Health
Richmond House
79 Whitehall
London SW1A 2NS

IDS



Dear Mr Reid

The Department of Health recently announced that it was aiming to ensure that all medical enquiries should be completed within two months.

Following allegations by a woman about the death of her mother at the Gosport War Memorial Hospital, there have been various enquiries which have expanded with the passage of time. The Hospital faces continuing enquiries which are inevitably having a serious effect on morale.

May I please ask how your new proposal to limit the term of enquiries can be reconciled with the situation at Gosport War Memorial Hospital, and when may we expect to have a conclusion of this matter?

Yours sincerely

dictated by Peter Viggers, MP
and signed in his absence