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189

Title Letter WOODFORD - MCA MURKIN 2/15/01 re beer
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HAMPSHIRE Constabulary

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21 May 2001

Ms L McAnulty
 Director of Professional Conduct
 United Kingdom Central Council for Nursing, Midwifery
 and Health Visiting
 23 Portland Place
 London
 W1N 4JT

copy: DCI R Burt
 Headquarters CID

Operation Rochester

Fratton Police Station

Dear Ms McAnulty

PHILIP JAMES BEED

Thank you for your letter of 15 May 2001. I have discussed this matter with Detective Chief Inspector Burt and hope that this reply deals with the various points you have raised.

I note that UKCC did not treat the letter of 18 September 2000 from Detective Chief Inspector Burt as a formal complaint. As I am sure you will appreciate, we have our own system of investigating complaints when they are alleged against police officers and support staff under the direction and control of the Chief Constable. If your system is similar to that used in police forces, I assume a complaint can be generated from within the organisation rather than externally only.

For the avoidance of any doubt, the Hampshire Constabulary do not feel that they have the locus to complain against Philip James Beed. Apart from an "internal" complaint to which I have already referred, the locus to ask for a formal investigation I would assume is more likely to come from family members of patients, other members of the hospital staff or from the Portsmouth Healthcare (NHS) Trust who administer the Gosport War Memorial Hospital. However, Detective Chief Inspector Burt has already told you that the Hampshire Constabulary are currently conducting an investigation based on an allegation that an elderly woman was unlawfully killed during 1998 whilst being treated as an in-patient at the hospital in question. This will inevitably be a complex and time consuming enquiry which continues to develop. Our task is clearly to investigate crime and apprehend possible offenders. The decision to prosecute is vested in the Crown Prosecution Service under the Prosecution of Offences Act 1985. I can say that papers have been forwarded to the CPS but it would be wholly inappropriate to comment as to the prospect of any possible charges and what they will be.

Like the UKCC, we are very much aware of the decision in Woolgar but equally mindful of other decisions about the inappropriateness of releasing information which is not yet in the public domain. We will therefore continue to pass on information to the UKCC and, equally so, the General Medical Council. You might like to consider making a specific request for any documents which would assist you to decide upon a course of action. It would seem that statements from the daughters of the late Gladys Richards together with the hospital notes of the deceased could be released to you as they have been disclosed to Mr Beed.

It would be useful for you to confirm whether, in the absence of a complaint, the UKCC will not take this matter any further. We clearly need to keep one another fully informed and in the picture.

Yours sincerely

M N Woodford
Force Solicitor