

From Ann Keen MP
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Dear Mark

Thank you for your letter of 3 December to Jack Straw enclosing correspondence from your constituent [redacted] Code A

[redacted] Code A about an inquiry into the death of his stepfather. Your letter has been passed to the Department of Health and I am replying as the Minister responsible for this policy area.

In August 2007, following the coroner's report to the Secretary of State for Justice under section 15 of the Coroners Act 1988, a meeting was held between the coroner and representatives of Hampshire County Council, Hampshire Constabulary, the Ministry of Justice and the Department of Health to discuss a number of issues surrounding the deaths of patients at Gosport War Memorial Hospital. It is our view, as expressed at that meeting, that, given the number and variety of investigations and inquiries that have already taken place, combined with the powers that the Coroner has to fully investigate all the issues surrounding the deaths, a further investigation now is likely simply to duplicate the work in hand and that already undertaken by, among others the police, the Health authorities, the Nursing and Midwifery Council, the General Medical Council and the Healthcare Commission.

We intend to await the outcome of the Inquests and then assess if there remain matters outstanding which require further resolution.

I fully appreciate that this is not a reply that your constituent will agree with, but I hope you will appreciate why we believe a full public inquiry now is not an appropriate way to proceed.

I hope this reply is helpful.

Ann Keen

Code A

ANN KEEN