

# Hampshire and Isle of Wight

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Your Ref: Op Rochester

04 February 2003

Mr Steve Watts  
Detective Chief Superintendent  
Head of CID  
Hampshire Constabulary  
Police headquarters  
West Hill  
Winchester  
Hampshire SO22 5DB

*Not sent.  
TS.*

Dear Steve

## **Gosport War Memorial Hospital**

On the 4 January 2003 we met with Sir Liam Donaldson to discuss developments in our respective investigations into events in Gosport War Memorial Hospital. At that meeting you informed the Chief Medical Officer and myself that you had sought legal advice on the appropriateness of NHS investigations running in parallel to the Police investigation into Gosport War Memorial Hospital – Operation Rochester. The advice you had received from Legal Counsel was that there was a risk associated with the NHS conducting parallel investigations, hence your advice to the Chief Medical Officer, the Strategic Health Authority and the Commission for Health Improvement that we would be well advised should suspend our respective investigations until the Police investigation had concluded.

Whilst I understand that you are still awaiting written confirmation of this advice from Legal Counsel, I did want to take this opportunity to stress how important it is that we receive this confirmation as soon as possible, as the NHS is unable to confirm to staff, the public and local politicians the status of its investigations.

At the 4 January 2003 meeting you also confirmed that you were content for the Chief Executive of Gosport and Fareham Primary Care Trust (Mr Ian Piper) and the Chief Executive of East Hampshire Primary Care Trust (Mr Tony Horne) to resume their former roles. Both Primary Care Trusts have met formally to consider the position of their Chief Executives and have agreed that they would offer the Chief Executives the opportunity to return, provided:

- they agree that they do not discuss the case with any individual that they know or believe to be involved in the investigation;
- they agree that they do not involve themselves in the Primary Care Trust's management of, or response to the investigation.

Chairman: Peter Bingham  
Chief Executive: Gareth Cruddace

- the Primary Care Trusts receive written confirmation that the Police are content for the Chief Executives to return, with the above safeguards in place.

In the light of this requirement, I would be very grateful if you could confirm that you are content for the two individuals to resume their normal posts, albeit with the safeguards identified above in place.

I would be very grateful for your swift consideration of this matter

Yours sincerely

Gareth Cruddace  
Chief Executive