

From the Chief Medical Officer, Sir Liam Donaldson



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30<sup>th</sup> January 2003

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**IN CONFIDENCE**

Mr Gareth Cruddace  
Chief Executive  
Hampshire & Isle of Wight Strategic Health Authority  
Oakley Road  
Southampton SO16 4GX

Dear Gareth

**GOSPORT WAR MEMORIAL HOSPITAL INVESTIGATION**

The Directorate of Health and Social Care (South) wrote to Lord Hunt on 24 January 2003 informing him of the decision of the Strategic Health Authority (with the agreement of the Primary Care Trusts involved) to reinstate the two NHS managers who have been redeployed pending investigations into the concerns about standards of care at Gosport War Memorial Hospital.

The original decision to redeploy them had been made when it came to light that they had been in senior positions in the early 1990s when complaints made by nursing staff about similar concerns to those that had surfaced more recently.

Scrutiny of their particular role at that time, and the local NHS management procedures used more generally, was to have been undertaken by a Strategic Health Authority investigation and a second investigation by the Commission for Health Improvement.

It was clear at the meeting of 13 January 2003 that these two investigations cannot proceed for the foreseeable future because the police have said that it could interfere with their own investigation.

Clearly this introduces the prospect of substantial delay and an inability to resolve the position of the two managers in the short-term.

Your decision to reinstate them to their previous posts acknowledges the inevitability of the delay and your view that it is unfair (and possibly in breach of employment law) to continue to deny them reinstatement in the absence of information.

I have discussed the matter with Lord Hunt. Clearly this is a decision for your Authority and the Primary Care Trust as the statutory NHS bodies.

*From the Chief Medical Officer, Sir Liam Donaldson*



We do have concerns, however, about the course of action to be taken and would ask you to assure yourselves that this is the most appropriate action bearing in mind all the circumstances.

We would ask you particularly to consider the question of public confidence in local services and especially to reflect on whether your decision would be seen publicly to have had integrity in the event that at the end of the police investigation a prima facie case for wrong-doing were established.

I am copying this letter to Ruth Carnall.

Yours sincerely

**Code A**

**SIR LIAM DONALDSON  
CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER**