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Hampshire and Isle of Wight  
Health Authority



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Code A

17 September 2002

Dr. Jane Barton

Code A

Dear Dr. Barton

Thank you for attending the meeting with me and representatives of Fareham and Gosport PCT last Friday.

I know that you were convalescing from surgery earlier in the week and hope that you are making satisfactory progress. It was helpful to have present David Morgan from the Medical Defence Union and Bob Button from the Local Medical Committee. I believe that we had a useful exchange of views.

We discussed the new situation that has arisen following:

1. the decision of the General Medical Council to refer you to the Professional Conduct Committee
2. the decision of the Chief Medical Officer (CMO) to commission an independent clinical audit of deaths

We then discussed the media attention that has arisen from these developments.

I informed you of the advice from the CMO, that the voluntary agreement on the restriction of opiate and benzodiazepine prescribing, which was in force until 26<sup>th</sup> March 2002, should be re-introduced. I acknowledged that you were not subject to any external restriction on your practice, although the General Medical Council could still refer your case to the Interim Orders Committee, where all the relevant circumstances would be taken into account.

I also raised with you and your advisers the issue of your ability to provide high quality general medical services to your patients during a time of possible intense media scrutiny and pressure. I felt that you, the Health Authority, and the Primary Care Trust all have a clear duty to satisfy themselves on this point.

You were able to confer privately with your advisers and they confirmed to me that you were at present on sick leave and that it would be inappropriate for you to give attention to these issues at this time. I understand that you have been signed off for another week and that a decision will be made by your personal medical attendant about your return to work at the end of that period.

Chair: Peter Bingham  
Chief Executive: Gareth Cruddace

I agreed that further discussion of these issues will need to wait until you are recovered from your recent surgery. I would like to make it clear that it is essential that these points are covered before any return to work. I would therefore be grateful if you, or your adviser could give me early notice of your intended start date, before when I will ensure that a further meeting is arranged.

Please contact me if you have any queries about the content of this letter. I would be grateful if you, or your adviser could confirm that you are in agreement with the position that I have outlined in this letter.

Yours sincerely

Dr. Simon Tanner  
**Director of Public Health/Medical Director**

Copy to:

Ian Piper, Chief Executive, Fareham and Gosport Primary Care Trust  
Gareth Cruddace, Chief Executive, Hampshire & Isle of Wight Health Authority  
Bob Button, Chief Executive, Local Medical Committee ✓