



8th June 2010

Joint media statement

NHS Yorkshire and the Humber Airedale independent inquiry report:

The findings of an independent inquiry report, published today, show that it was unlikely that Sister Anne Grigg-Booth, a night nurse practitioner at Airedale NHS Trust, “deliberately set out to harm patients”.

The report into incidents that took place between 2000 and 2002, which were the subject of criminal charges against Anne Grigg-Booth, states that she “was not a Beverley Allitt or Colin Norris in that her actions were almost entirely open”.

In 2004 Sister Anne Grigg-Booth was charged with three offences of murder, one offence of attempted murder and 13 offences of administering noxious substances with the intention of causing harm. She died in 2005, the year before her trial was due to take place.

NHS Yorkshire and the Humber commissioned an independent inquiry in 2009 which covered establishing the facts in each of the 17 cases and reviewing previous and current systems and processes.

The independent inquiry team found that the events investigated “occurred as a result of a combination of individual and systems failure”.

The report states it was clear that “very significant improvements have resulted from the enormous efforts by the Trust board and staff at every level, especially since 2005”.

It also says that current systems and processes at the Trust are in line with current NHS policies, guidance, best practice and professional standards.

Bridget Fletcher, chief nurse at Airedale NHS Foundation Trust, said: “We would like to offer our sincere condolences to all those affected by these events. We hope that this final stage of the process has now fully explained the details concerning each patient, as well as the actions of Sister Grigg Booth, other staff and the Trust at the time of the events, eight years ago.

“We are sorry for any additional distress that was caused at what was already an anxious time for relatives, having lost a family member, due to any delays in the investigation or inquiry process.

“As outlined in the report, the Trust has made significant improvements, particularly since 2005, thanks to the enormous efforts by the Trust board and

staff at every level and we would like to reassure both patients and the local community that patient safety is, and always will be, our highest priority.”

Professor Sue Proctor, chief nurse at NHS Yorkshire and the Humber, said: “Our thoughts are with the patients and families who were affected at this time. The Strategic Health Authority welcomes the findings of this inquiry as it will further strengthen systems and processes to protect patients in Airedale, across the region and nationally.

“We are committed to acting on the recommendations swiftly and will ensure that the lessons learned are shared across the wider NHS.”

Director of nursing at NHS Bradford and Airedale, Jo Coombs, said: “I would like to extend my sympathies to everyone touched by these incidents.

“As the organisation in Bradford and Airedale responsible for buying health services in the area, I would like to reassure people that we have robust systems in place to make sure our local health services are of the highest quality, meet patients’ needs and are regularly monitored to ensure all the required safety standards are met.

“The trust has undergone enormous change for the better since these incidents occurred. However, we have all learned, and will continue to learn, lessons following these incidents.”

ENDS