

The Rt Hon Alan Johnson MP
Secretary of State for Health
Department of Health
Richmond House
79 Whitehall
London SW1A 2NS

24 March 2009

Dear Mr Johnson

Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust

As I am sure you are aware, Action against Medical Accidents (AvMA) is the patients' charity which champions the cause of patient safety and justice for people affected by medical accidents. We were as saddened and appalled as you were by what happened at Mid Staffordshire. We, like many others, feel that a public inquiry is required to get to the bottom of how this was allowed to happen in spite of existing systems for monitoring and regulating quality and patient safety in the NHS and the existence of bodies such as the Healthcare Commission and Monitor. The Healthcare Commission report does not cover this ground. The public will need to be assured that the new system would prevent a recurrence of what we have seen at Staffordshire and Maidstone.

We are grateful for the offer you made in at least one national television broadcast for patients/families to obtain an independent review of medical records if they have concerns. We anticipate a large uptake of this offer and calls to our Helpline in connection with it. It would be very helpful if we could have details of how this will work in order that we can advise appropriately and we would also like to offer our considerable experience in advising how to manage this process.

I look forward to hearing from you or your officials shortly.

Yours sincerely

Peter Walsh

Peter Walsh
Chief Executive