



**PRESS RELEASE**

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**MID STAFFORDSHIRE NHS TRUST INQUIRY FAILS TO  
ADDRESS THE KEY QUESTIONS:  
PRESSURE MOUNTS FOR A FULL PUBLIC INQUIRY**

Reacting to the release of the Inquiry's report, the patient safety charity Action against Medical Accidents (AvMA) is calling once again on the Secretary of State Andy Burnham MP to convene a full public inquiry into how the situation at Mid Stafford NHS Trust was allowed to arise. Whilst welcoming the work of the inquiry within the very limited terms of reference imposed by the Secretary of State, the charity maintains that a public inquiry, as provided for by the Inquiries Act 2005, is needed to get to the bottom of the wider systemic failures, including the role played by the Department of Health itself; the Healthcare Commission; Monitor and West Midlands Strategic Health Authority. Robert Francis QC, the chair of the Inquiry, himself recommends that these issues are investigated, potentially through a public inquiry, but makes the mistake of leaving the Department of Health itself out of the list of bodies to be investigated. Such an inquiry could also examine the way that targets required for achieving 'NHS Foundation Trust' status, can mitigate against patient safety if not managed appropriately. The terms of reference of this inquiry were constrained to looking at events at the trust itself.

AvMA Chief Executive, Peter Walsh said:

"Whilst the report is a graphic reminder of just how terrible things were at Stafford, it does nothing to assure people around the country that the systems that are meant to prevent these situations arising are fit for purpose, or would prevent a 'Stafford' happening in their own local hospital. The continued refusal to convene a full public inquiry despite demands from ourselves, other patients' groups and members of all political parties can only further damage public confidence. We call on Andy Burnham to call a full public inquiry now. Anything less suggests that Mr Burnham is seeking to cover up failings in his own systems."

AvMA has been working with local patients' group Cure the NHS since the news of the scandal broke and has been providing specialist casework support to individual families who have been subject to the 'independent case note reviews' at Stafford and which fed into the inquiry. The charity also provides support to thousands of people each year from all over the country

who have been affected by patient safety incidents. Just last week, AvMA published its own research which showed that many NHS trusts were not complying with patient safety alerts issued by the National Patient Safety Agency and the absence of a central system for monitoring and intervening where there is non-compliance. The charity concluded that ‘this is the kind of complacency that could allow another Stafford to happen.’

ENDS