

AMIN ABDULLAH INDEPENDENT INQUIRY REPORT

Press Release by Terence Skitmore, partner of Amin Abdullah

Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust has announced the publication of the report of an Independent Inquiry into the way its disciplinary procedures were used against the award-winning nurse Amin Abdullah, who was driven to despair, and ultimately suicide, when he became the victim of what he saw as an unfair and discriminatory NHS disciplinary process, effectively in his eyes a 'kangaroo court'.

Mr Abdullah took his own life in February 2016 by setting himself on fire outside Kensington Palace, just days before he was due to appear at a Trust appeal hearing. The Inquiry was carried out by the independent investigation firm Verita.

Amin Abdullah's partner, Terry Skitmore says: **"As Amin Abdullah's partner, I welcome the report of the Independent Inquiry into Amin's treatment by Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust and the fact that the Inquiry has highlighted flaws and failures in the system that are easily exploited by unscrupulous managers. Flaws and failures that are probably endemic across the NHS. I also appreciate and welcome the apology I have received from Imperial NHS Trust, and I look forward to seeing their promised improvements being implemented in the coming months.**

I would like to thank the team at Verita for the work they have put into producing this report. I would like to thank my fellow members of the Stakeholder Panel who have worked so hard over the past year to bring this Inquiry to a successful conclusion. I would like to thank Philip Dunne MP for meeting me when he was Health Minister and seeing the clear need for such an inquiry. I would also like to especially thank Norman Lamb MP who took up this case and saw the blatant injustice that had occurred and the deep flaws in the NHS, with repeated warnings ignored over the years.

I hope that the Inquiry report will lead to meaningful changes in the wider NHS, so that what happened to Amin can never again happen to anyone in the NHS workforce.

In his 2015 Freedom to Speak Up Report, Sir Robert Francis documented how kangaroo courts were being used in the NHS to victimize NHS staff and ruin their lives. Sadly, no relevant actions to prevent such kangaroo courts followed on from that report. On March 9, 2016, the then Health Secretary Jeremy Hunt made a statement in the House of Commons – that a 'change in culture must also extend to Trust disciplinary procedures' – but again no actions resulted from his statement, and sadly for Amin, this was just far too little, and far too late.

I hope that leaders in the NHS, such as Matthew Hancock and Simon Stevens, will now take action to prevent more tragedies such as that of Amin happening in the future. I hope they will also take action so that when concerns are raised, people listen and take heed. It seems that there has been not only a flawed culture in the NHS, but also a flawed culture in certain NHS bodies.

What I am seeking is –

- **The persons responsible for Amin's treatment to be held accountable.**
- **Apologies from the Department of Health & Social Care, NHS England, the CQC, NHS Employers and NHS Improvement – if they had not refused to act on repeated concerns made over the years since at least 2010, Amin would still be alive today. Apologies in themselves are meaningless unless accompanied by actions, and these bodies should critically reflect on their behaviour over the years to see what lessons can be learned for the future.**
- **Independent Inquiries into similar cases of injustice which have taken place across the NHS over the years, and which have often ruined the lives of dedicated NHS staff and their families.**
- **An end to the current 'apartheid system' in NHS disciplinary procedures – there is one law for doctors, but another law for nurses and professions allied to**

medicine.

- I call on the Health & Social Care Select Committee to examine the workings of management in the NHS, and in particular the issue of regulation of NHS managers.
- I ask regulatory bodies to review those cases of dismissal of healthcare staff where similar forms of unjust management procedures were adopted and where members of those regulatory bodies played a key part in the victimisation and bullying of staff. Regulatory bodies should also review their guidance as to what constitutes bullying behaviour and how they deal with it.
- Amin knew that once he was sacked, his career as a nurse was effectively over and he would never work again, and that was one of the things that made him depressed. The Department of Health should have a properly funded scheme for victimised NHS staff who lose their jobs through unfairness in the workplace.
- I would like a meeting with the new Health Secretary Matthew Hancock, who says he is concerned about bullying and low morale in the NHS workforce, so that he can hear from me at first-hand what Amin suffered, what it has meant for me, and how things should change for the future.

I now only have Amin's ashes and my memories of him to comfort me. Nothing can bring Amin back, but I am determined to do all I can to make sure his story is listened to by those who have the power to change things in the future. In conjunction with Dr Narinder Kapur, we have produced a video in pictures, words and music about Amin's story ('A Nurse's Tragic Journey'), set up an award scheme in Amin's memory, and organized a fundraising campaign to support that scheme and also to help NHS staff who may find themselves in times of distress and hardship. Details at –

www.abetternhs.com

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