

<http://stevebarclay.net/why-are-our-political-leaders-defending-sir-david-nicholson/>

Blog from Steve Barclay MP's constituency website:

Why are our political leaders defending Sir David Nicholson?

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Blog, Health



Against a backdrop of public outcry and impotent rage felt by an ever growing number of MP's, the emergence of these new allies is distinctly odd.

Patricia Hewitt described the perfectly reasonable questions relating to Nicholson's responsibility for the neglect and abuse suffered by thousands at Mid Staffs hospital as 'grossly unfair'.

Expressing outrage at the strength of public pressure now weighing on the Chief Executive of the NHS, former Health Secretary Andy Burnham said the Francis Report "didn't say anybody knowingly ignored warnings".

In fact, Robert Francis QC's report showed the scandal at Mid Staffs was allowed to happen precisely because many health professionals- from managers at the very top down to doctors and nurses on the wards- consistently ignored warnings from whistleblowers, patient groups and concerned family members.

There is evidence that Sir David Nicholson dismissed this volley of alarm bells as ‘simply lobbying’.

Sir David Nicholson’s appearance before the Health Select Committee yesterday, in which he admitted to MPs that he “had no idea” about the scandalous failings in care taking place under his nose for 10 months makes the bolstering of his position even more difficult to digest.

Mortality data is the health profession’s benchmark when assessing effective hospital care. When combined with a spike in patient and staff complaints, it should raise a red flag.

It strikes me as highly implausible that a man in his position was – as he claims – completely unaware of mortality rates across the hospitals he supervised. Not least as mortality data has been available within the NHS since 2001.

If he is as ignorant as he claims, then his incompetence alone should be cause for serious reflection.

I was shocked to uncover evidence showing that deaths across a number of hospital trusts had been reclassified, driving down mortality rates and depriving patients’ families of the truth about how their loved ones died.

Surely accountability for manipulation on this scale leads straight to the top of the system.

It is baffling that a close-knit group of former health ministers and front benchers from across the political spectrum appear to be acting as gatekeepers for those who are ultimately responsible for this unprecedented crisis of trust in the NHS.

The most pressing of many serious questions that must now be answered is how far the cover-up actually extends and what senior officials and ex Ministers stand to lose if it is brought into the open.

This article first appeared in the Telegraph: [Here](#).