

MP's outrage as NHS denies neglect of her dying husband

By **Sophie Borland**
Health Reporter

A LABOUR MP who exposed the neglect of her dying husband on a hospital ward told of her anger last night after an official report appeared to dismiss her concerns.

Ann Clwyd previously spoke movingly of how her beloved Owen had died like a 'battery hen' at University Hospital of Wales, Cardiff, in 2012, describing the 'contempt' of nurses.

Her first-hand experience prompted the Prime Minister to put her in charge of overhauling the NHS complaints system and she published a series of recommendations last autumn.

But an investigation by the NHS into her husband's treatment in his final hours has concluded there is

'This is a whitewash'

'insufficient evidence' of poor care - even though it conceded that he died from hospital-induced pneumonia after spending 27 hours in A&E. Owen Roberts, 73, was a former BBC and ITV executive and suffered from multiple sclerosis.

The hospital has rejected many of the 31 complaints made by Miss Clwyd, including her assertions that staff were 'indifferent', 'calous' and that his death was caused by a lack of care and attention.

The hospital said all but five of these complaints could not be upheld due to a lack of evidence.

It said a sixth could only be partially upheld. However, last night Miss Clwyd, 77, accused hospital bosses of an 'outrageous breach of confidentiality' by publicising such detailed information about her husband's death.

She had begged hospital bosses not to release the findings of its

The accusations they brushed aside

Here is a selection of the complaints made by Miss Clwyd, and the hospital's response...

■ He died 'like a battery hen'. HOSPITAL'S RESPONSE: 'There is insufficient evidence to uphold this concern.'

■ He was 'crushed against the bars of an NHS bed'. HOSPITAL: 'This issue is not upheld.'

■ Staff displayed a 'lack of compassion, a lack of care'. HOSPITAL: 'There is insufficient evidence to uphold this concern.'

■ 'My husband died because of lack of care and attention.' HOSPITAL: 'This concern is not upheld.'

■ 'I saw a nurse in the corridor and asked her why my husband wasn't in intensive care. She just said, "There are lots worse than him".' HOSPITAL: 'There is insufficient evidence to uphold this concern.'

■ 'Every time I tried to talk to one of the nurses, they were either on the phone or talking to one another.' HOSPITAL: 'There is insufficient information to uphold this concern.'

■ 'Whenever I asked when we would see someone, the answer was always: "In a minute".' HOSPITAL: 'There is insufficient information to uphold this concern.'

confidential investigation to the public but it said it was obliged to due to freedom of information requests from local media.

The hospital's investigation was carried out by its own staff but overseen by an independent panel of experts. They included deputy vice chancellor of Cardiff University, Professor Elizabeth Treasure, who sits on the hospital's board.

Miss Clwyd, a Labour MP of 29 years, said she has challenged many of the hospital's findings and awaits the result of a second investigation carried out by external experts, not linked to the hospital.

'No one is going to make a complaint in future if their personal details are going to be made public in this way,' said Miss Clwyd.

'I think it is wrong that this summary report has been disclosed while my complaint is ongoing.'

Other MPs say the investigation is a 'whitewash' and accused the Labour-run NHS in Wales of trying to discredit Miss Clwyd.

Last night Charlotte Leslie, Conservative MP for Bristol North West, said: 'It doesn't make sense that someone like Ann Clwyd would sacrifice her popularity in her home country if there wasn't

something to be upheld. The attitude of the Welsh Labour Party in all of this has been appalling and lends weight to the idea that one wants to know. They have given a very good impression wanting to shut her up.'

'Sadly, they've done a very good job of giving a very strong impression that this is a whitewash.'

A spokesman for Cardiff and Vale University Health Board said: 'We would like to make quite clear that the health board has not released the full report and it is not our intention to breach any confidentiality.'



Grief: Ann Clwyd with her late husband Owen Roberts