

Press statement: 23rd January 2012

"Our thoughts are with the families of Linda McDonagh and John Beeley, who both died recently.

"This is a sad and difficult time for the families, but we are comforted that the family of Linda McDonagh has publicly praised the care she received at Stepping Hill Hospital whilst suffering from a long term disease.

"As the police have stated, it is highly likely that these later deaths should more properly be attributed to natural disease. It is very important to differentiate between the deaths of the three patients who died shortly after being poisoned with contaminated saline last summer - and the subsequent deaths over the last month.

"We understand that there is concern about what has happened, but the criminal and malicious act of saline contamination does not reflect on the good care provided by our skilled and dedicated staff and the effective working practices in our hospital.

"We're also reminding people of the additional security measures that we now have in place that go above and beyond standard practice. These include CCTV in some treatment rooms, two nurses for the preparation of drugs on wards, two members of staff required for access to any treatment room in the hospital and security guards on mobile patrol within the hospital.

"Our staff have shown great professionalism in getting on with the day job and have continued to work immensely hard. They are determined that this criminal act does not overshadow this hospital's long-standing record of good care and we are grateful for the outstanding support from our community".