

Our Duty of Candour

Communicating with patients and carers in the event of unintended harm

What is the 'Duty of Candour'?

Despite our best efforts, mistakes occasionally happen. There are numerous safety checks to ensure that these do not affect patients. However, sometimes these systems break down and patients may be harmed whilst in our care. Please be assured that this happens very rarely.

In the unlikely event that it were to happen to you, we would tell you honestly and openly. We would also share with you our understanding of why it happened and offer you involvement in how we plan to reduce the chances of the same mistake happening again.

This is known as the Duty of Candour.

Why do things go wrong?

Healthcare is very complex and things can change rapidly and unexpectedly. Occasionally things do not go to plan and a patient can be harmed despite our best intentions.

We regret every case of harm to our patients but we make sure we use the opportunity to learn and stop similar things happening again.

What can I expect?

- A member of staff will speak to you honestly and openly as soon as possible after the event to discuss what happened, your condition and your ongoing care plan.
- All of the facts may not be clear at this time so staff may not be able to answer all of your questions until we have investigated.
- You will normally be given a named person to speak to about any further queries or concerns.
- You can expect to be involved in and contribute to decisions made about your care.
- You can involve family members or carers in these discussions.
- We will investigate what went wrong and you will be informed about the findings.
- You can expect confidentiality.
- You will be treated with dignity and respect and you will receive an apology.

Who will speak to me about what happened?

- One or more members of staff may talk to you, depending on what happened.
- Usually the person leading the conversation will be someone from your healthcare team who knows the most about what happened and will be able to answer any questions you may have.

Will my comments and suggestions be listened to?

Yes. Your views on what happened and why are essential to understanding and reducing the risk of the same mistake happening again. Please be open with us.

How will I be kept informed of the investigation and its findings?

The healthcare professional leading the investigation will arrange to share their findings with you. You will also be able to contact them if you have questions or concerns in between

these times. When the investigation is complete, a report of the findings and any proposed changes to current practice will be shared with you.

What if I want to make a complaint or claim for compensation?

Being candid with you and involving you in understanding what has happened does not affect your right to make a formal complaint or claim for compensation. In the first instance please contact the Patient Experience Manager:

Tel: 01342 414355

Email: pals@qvh.nhs.uk

Is support available if I need it?

Yes. Details of support available can be found below.

In addition, the person leading the investigation will help to identify specific support relevant to your needs.

Healthwatch - Healthwatch - West Sussex is the local consumer champion in health care and works to share information, expertise and learning in order to improve health and social care services.

Telephone: 0300 012 0122

E-mail: helpdesk@healthwatchwestsussex.co.uk

Website: www.healthwatchwestsussex.co.uk

Support, Empower, Advocate, Promote (seAp) - Independent advocacy services to help resolve issues or concerns you have about your health or healthcare services.

Telephone: 0330 440 9000 or Text SEAP to 80800

E-mail: info@seap.org.uk

Website: www.seap.org.uk

Action against Medical Accidents - An independent charity which can provide free and confidential advice and support through its helpline or put you in touch with one of its accredited solicitors specialising in medical negligence.

Telephone: 0845 123 2352 (Mon-Fri 10-15.30)

Website: www.avma.org.uk

Cruse Bereavement Care - Provides information and support to anyone affected by a death.

Telephone: 0300 311 9959 (West Sussex) 0808 808 1677 (National)

E-mail: westsussexarea@cruse.org.uk

Website: www.cruse.org.uk

Please ask if you would like this leaflet in larger print or an alternative format.

This leaflet has been reproduced with the kind permission of Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals Trust and Guy's and St Thomas's NHS Foundation Trust

Issue 1 – Ref: no. 0515

Approved by the Patient Information Group

Print December 2016 – Review December 2019