

## Improving openness and transparency when things go wrong

Duty of Candour standards have been created to make sure health and social care organisations are open and transparent with people about their care and treatment.

It sets out some specific requirements that organisations must follow when things go wrong, including informing people about the incident, providing reasonable support, truthful information and an apology when things go wrong.

Through our independent health complaints advocacy (IHCAS), work we identified concerns around how a local Trust had implemented this standard.

We were concerned that for at least one person, they had suffered and continued to suffer through something going wrong, but had not got the support and openness expected (as required under a Duty of Candour).

Since raising concerns, the Trust's Head of Clinical Governance has taken several actions to ensure there is more rigour around the Duty of Candour processes.

The improvements include:

- Introducing a weekly Duty of Candour tracker, so assurance is available promptly and those monitoring this can see that senior staff are having good quality conversations with people, when a clinical outcome is unexpected.
- Going forward, the Patient Safety and Patient Experience Team will include the AvMA Duty of Candour Leaflet in all complaint responses and letters accompanying root cause analysis (RCA) sent to patients and families.
- The introduction of a senior staff two day RCA and Duty of Candour training course to support them in having conversations with patients and their families.

Feedback from this has been incredibly positive one delegate said:

“My biggest take-away is that involving patients of relatives in the RCA process is essential. We don't do this at all well and I am confident that we can change this across the trust.”

- Routinely present message to staff across the Trust, at divisional clinical governance days, on why the Duty of Candour is so important. The presentation has recently been given to the CEO, Executives and Clinical Directors with positive impact.
- Re-designing the way cases are used to highlight best practice and share learning more widely across the Trust.