Culture Change in the NHS

Applying the Lessons of the Francis Inquiries

Chris Bostock, NHS Complaints Policy Lead, DH
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Well-documented issues...

- Health Select Committee report 2011
- Robert Francis’s report of the inquiry into Mid Staffordshire hospital 2013
- Clwyd/ Hart review of complaints handling in NHS hospitals: Putting Patients First, Oct 2013
- Public Administration Committee report - Complaints: Do they make a difference?
- Public Administration Committee Inquiry - NHS Complaints and Clinical Failure
Francis; specific themes

- The ‘system’ failed to notice what was happening
- Intolerably low standards were accepted
- Voices of patients and families went unheard
- Obvious warning signs were unheeded
The value of complaints

• They can identify cultural problems in an organisation… transparency

• They can shine a light on poor clinical practice… improved patient safety

• They can aid learning and improvement… better patient experience
Our aims

• Ensure that all forms of feedback help improve care for patients

• Ensure that when things do go wrong, the complaints system is clear, fair and open

• Ensure patients know who they can turn to for independent local support if they want it

• Ensure that at every level the NHS scrutinises and learns from mistakes to improve care for patients
Complaints programme

Mechanics

- DH-chaired complaints programme board in place meeting monthly to oversee the work on improving local complaints handling

- Cross-system membership plus health service and local government Ombudsmen

- Cross-system ownership of the work programme
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Achievements

• A template for a poster setting out how to make a complaint was made available to the NHS in November 2014.

• The Department of Health and NHS England has issued an accessible complaints guide for service users that are dissatisfied with the service they have received from the NHS.

• The Care Quality Commission is now routinely examining how well organisations handle complaints and those that fall short will have this reflected in their inspection findings. All CQC inspections will now look into how well providers handle complaints.
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Achievements (2)

• Healthwatch England commissioned Citizens Advice to expand their health and social care section on the Adviceguide website to give people up to date information and advice on how to navigate the health and social care complaints system.

• The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman, working with Healthwatch England and the Local Government Ombudsman, has published universal expectations for raising concerns and complaints to support improvements in complaint handling.
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Achievements (3)

• The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman also now publishes data about the volume of initial enquiries her office receives about individual Trusts along with the details of where complaints against those Trusts are upheld.

• The KO41A collection will move from annual to quarterly with the first collection period being from 1\textsuperscript{st} April 2015 to 30\textsuperscript{th} June; the first quarter’s information collected July/August 2015; and the KO41B (Primary Care) data will change from April 2016;
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Achievements (4)

• The Royal College of Nursing has recently published guidance on handling feedback from patients to help frontline nurses and health care support workers understand how to deal with feedback, as well as concerns, complaints and compliments.
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Still to do (1)

- The Care Quality Commission’s recent Complaints Matter report concluded that the quality of complaints handling was variable, and it raised concerns about the timeliness of responses to complaints.

- A regular and standardised way of surveying people who have made a complaint in both primary and secondary care is required. The options have been narrowed down and the most viable are currently being worked up in more detail, with the aim of presenting recommendations to Ministers shortly.
“NHS Complaints Advocacy Services should be re-branded, better resourced and publicised”. “[They] should also be developed to embrace greater independence and support to those who complain (Clwyd-Hart). A review of NHS complaints advocacy services will complete in Spring 2015.

The Government intends to fund local authorities to provide advocacy services, subject to them making information publicly available to a nationally agreed reporting standard about how that funding is being spent.

DH will also consider different aspects of Patient Advice and Liaison Services to review the effectiveness of these services within the wider NHS