

Duty of Candour

**Our Commitment to you when something may
have gone wrong**

Quality and Safety Department



Patient information leaflet

Duty of Candour

We have a legal duty to be open and honest with patients, their families or carers when something may have gone wrong and that appears to have caused or could lead to significant harm in the future. This is called the Duty of Candour.

This leaflet explains what you can expect from the process and we hope it will help you to better understand what will happen, what it means and your role in the investigation.

What to expect

We appreciate this may be a difficult time for you, and that there's never a good time to have the initial conversation about the incident. This is what you can expect from the Duty of Candour process:

- A member of staff will discuss the situation with you honestly and openly as soon as possible
- Once the investigation is up and running, we will contact you (usually by letter) to let you know who your named contact is. Please let us know if you'd rather have this information via post, email or a phone call.
- We value your contribution to the investigation at any time throughout the process
- We will try and answer any questions you may have. However, some of your questions may not be able to be answered until the investigation is complete
- We will share the findings of the investigation with you when it is complete

What does this mean for you?

To complete a thorough investigation a lot of information has to be gathered and analysed. We have a maximum of 60 working days to investigate what happened and produce a written report.

Sometimes an investigation may take longer, for example, if we need to seek an external opinion, or if it is very complex. We will advise you of delays as they arise.

As this is a formal report, it is important for you to be aware that it can appear a little impersonal in how it is written. This is because the report needs to be structured and factual in order to see exactly what happened. However, please be assured that you, and the impact of what happened to you, is always our focus throughout the investigation process. Additionally, it is important for us to inform you that sometimes, even after investigation, we do not always find a clear cause for what happened.

Although the report is used mainly by us, the report may also be made available to our commissioners, Her Majesty's Coroner and other agencies if appropriate. For this reason, the report will not include your name or details. This is to protect your privacy. Additionally, completed reports are not kept in your medical records.

Will it affect your on-going care?

Although you may feel anxious about discussing your experience with the people who have been treating you, especially if you need further treatment, we would like to assure you that any future care you receive will be delivered with respect, compassion and dignity. However, we recognise that you may wish to receive treatment from another team or provider and will make arrangements for this as required.

Is support available if I need it?

Yes, details of support can be found below. In addition, the person leading the investigation will help to identify specific support relevant to your needs.

Healthwatch Surrey

The local consumer champion in health care, which works to share information, expertise and learning in order to improve health and social care services.

- **Telephone:** 0303 303 0023
- **Email:** enquiries@healthwatchesurrey.co.uk
- **Website:** www.healthwatchesurrey.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
- **Email:** info@seap.org.uk
- **Website:** www.seap.org.uk

Action against Medical Accidents

An independent charity which can provide free and confidential 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:** 0808 808 1677
- **Email:** info@cruse.org.uk
- **Website:** www.cruse.org.uk

CQC

Further information about Duty of Candour can be obtained from the CQC website

- <https://www.cqc.org.uk/guidance-providers/regulations-enforcement/regulation-20-duty-candour>

This leaflet had been produced by Kent Surrey Sussex Patient Safety Collaborative's community of Practice in Serious Incident, based on a collaborative approach with its patients and partners for Improvement. The Royal Surrey County Hospital NHS Foundation Trust is part of the collaborative network.

Contact details

Frank Jacobs

Telephone: 01483 571122 **ext** 2651

PALS and Advocacy contact details

Contact details of independent advocacy services can be provided by our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) who are located on the right hand side as you enter the main reception area. PALS are also your first point of contact for health related issues, questions or concerns surrounding RSCH patient services.

Telephone: 01483 402757

Email: rsc-tr.pals@nhs.net

Opening hours: 9.00am–3.00pm, Monday to Friday

If you would like information documents in large print, on tape or in another language or form please contact PALS.

Past review date: N/A

Future review date: September 2021

Author: Kate Witt

PIN180718–1564

