

APPENDIX 2: FRANCIS REPORT

Extracts from the Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust Public Inquiry

'Trust management had no culture of listening to patients. There were inadequate processes for dealing with complaints'

'Complaints ... are a source of information that has hitherto been undervalued as a source of accountability and a basis for improvement'

'While a complaints system should be consistent, it must never be applied in a formulistic or insensitive manner'

RECOMMENDATION 119 – LOCAL HEALTHWATCH ACCESS TO COMPLAINTS

The Francis report recommended, 'Overview and scrutiny committees and Local Healthwatch should have access to detailed information about complaints, although respect needs to be paid in this instance to respect for patient confidentiality.'

The government has 'accepted' this recommendation. In their full response they wrote:

Government response to recommendation 119 – Local Healthwatch access to complaints

Complaints data, along with other sources of feedback, have the potential to provide important information to local Healthwatch Organisations and Overview and Scrutiny Committees. It is important that Trusts respect patient confidentiality when releasing information on complaints to outside organisations but, subject to this caveat, we consider that Trusts should seek to provide to these organisations with the complaints data that are requested.

The Department of Health will ensure that each quarter every hospital publishes information on the complaints it has received. This will include:

- the number of complaints received, as a percentage of patient interventions in that period
- the number of complaints the hospital has been informed have subsequently been referred to the Ombudsman, and
- lessons learned and improvements made as a result of complaints.

The Department of Health will work with NHS England and other key partners to determine the most effective mechanism through which to achieve these outcomes.

Rt Hon Ann Clwyd MP and Professor Tricia Hart's Review of the Handling of Complaints in NHS Hospitals recommends that:

- there should be Board- led scrutiny of complaints. All Boards and Chief Executives should receive monthly reports on complaints and the action taken, including an evaluation of the effectiveness of the action. These reports should be available to the Chief Inspector of Hospitals
- patients, patient representatives and local communities and local Healthwatch organisations should be fully involved in the development and monitoring of complaints' systems in all hospitals

Local Healthwatch has an important role to play as patient champion, and it is right that individual local Healthwatch organisations have access to detailed information about complaints, subject to the requirement of patient confidentiality. Local Healthwatch have an important role to play in scrutinising complaints data locally.

The Department of Health will work with the Health and Social Care Information Centre to put complaints data into the existing NHS electronic data collection system, better enabling comparison between hospitals.