Dear Sir / Madam

Never events policy framework review

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed never events policy framework. We welcome the efforts of NHS England in designing a framework that clarifies the responsibilities of clinicians with respect to never events.

The General Medical Council (GMC) is an independent organisation that helps to protect patients and improve medical education and practice across the UK.

- We decide which doctors are qualified to work here and we oversee UK medical education and training.
- We set the standards that doctors need to follow, and make sure that they continue to meet these standards throughout their careers.
- We take action when we believe a doctor may be putting the safety of patients, or the public’s confidence in doctors, at risk.

Every patient should receive a high standard of care. Our role is to help achieve that by working closely with doctors, their employers and patients, to make sure that the trust patients have in their doctors is fully justified.

We strive to promote an open and transparent culture that puts patients first. Our existing guidance *Good Medical Practice* requires doctors to be open and honest with patients when things go wrong. If a patient has suffered harm the doctor must put matters right (if that is possible), offer an apology and explain fully and promptly what has happened and the likely short-term and long-term effects. This is complimentary to the new statutory organisational duty of candour recently announced by the Department of Health.

We, together with the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) have worked with all the professional regulators to develop a consistent approach to candour. A joint
statement on the professional duty of candour, agreed by the Chief Executives of eight of the professional regulators was published on the 13 October.

Additionally we are currently consulting on joint guidance (with the NMC) *Openness and honesty when things go wrong: the professional duty of candour*. The never events policy framework links closely to this guidance, in terms of the responsibility to encourage openness and honesty in reporting adverse incidents, and supports our aim to actively foster a culture of learning and improvement within healthcare. We therefore welcome the proposed framework given our own work to clarify the professional obligations of doctors in this area.

We hope that the framework will help providers to support doctors in following our own draft guidance (with the NMC) on the duty of candour, and would suggest signposting to this guidance within the framework.

Should you have any questions about any of the elements of this response or wish to discuss further, please do not hesitate to contact me directly.

Yours sincerely

Paul Buckley

*Director of Strategy and Communication*