

Joint statement from the Chief Executives of statutory regulators of healthcare professionals

Openness and honesty - the professional duty of candour

Health professionals must be open and honest with patients when things go wrong. This is also known as 'the duty of candour'.

As the Chief Executives and Registrars of statutory regulators of healthcare professionals, we believe that this is an essential duty for all professionals working with patients.

Although it may be expressed in different ways within our statutory guidance, this common professional duty clarifies what we require of all the professionals registered with us, wherever they work across the public, private and voluntary sectors.

We will promote this joint statement on 'the duty of candour' to our registrants, our students, and to patients, ensuring our registrants know what we expect of them. We will review our standards and strengthen references, where necessary, to being open and honest, as appropriate to the professions we regulate. We will encourage all registrants to reflect on their own learning and continuing professional development needs regarding the duty of candour.

We will also work with other regulators, employers and commissioners of services to help develop a culture in which openness and honesty are shared and acted on.

The Professional Duty of Candour

Every healthcare professional must be open and honest with patients when something goes wrong with their treatment or care which causes, or has the potential to cause, harm or distress.

This means that healthcare professionals must:

- tell the patient (or, where appropriate, the patient's advocate, carer or family) when something has gone wrong;
- apologise to the patient (or, where appropriate, the patient's advocate, carer or family);
- offer an appropriate remedy or support to put matters right (if possible); and
- explain fully to the patient (or, where appropriate, the patient's advocate, carer or family) the short and long term effects of what has happened.

Healthcare professionals must also be open and honest with their colleagues, employers and relevant organisations, and take part in reviews and investigations when requested. Health and care professionals must also be open and honest with their regulators, raising concerns where appropriate. They must support and encourage each other to be open and honest and not stop someone from raising concerns.

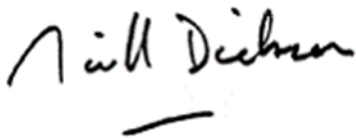
CEO signatures (alphabetical by organisation)



David Howell
Chief Executive and Registrar
General Chiropractic Council



Evlynn Gilvarry
Chief Executive and Registrar
General Dental Council



Niall Dickson
Chief Executive and Registrar
General Medical Council



Samantha Peters
Chief Executive and Registrar
General Optical Council



Tim Walker
Chief Executive and Registrar
General Osteopathic Council



Duncan Rudkin
Chief Executive and Registrar
General Pharmaceutical Council



Jackie Smith
Chief Executive and Registrar
Nursing and Midwifery Council



Trevor Patterson
Chief Executive
Pharmaceutical Society NI