

Duty of Candour Benchmarking



Duty of Candour is a statutory requirement that ensures openness, honesty, and transparency when things go wrong in patient care. NHS organisations must inform patients or their families as soon as a notifiable safety incident is identified, provide a sincere apology, explain what happened, and outline next steps, including support and ongoing communication. Policies, training, and governance processes underpin the Duty of Candour, ensuring incidents are identified, reported, and managed consistently. It is central to building trust, supporting learning, and improving patient safety across the NHS.

MIAA reviewed the core controls for Duty of Candour across a number of NHS clients in 24/25. This Insight aims to highlight the key themes identified.



Areas of Good Practice

- *Clearly defined roles, responsibilities and processes.*
- *Embedded training and resources incorporated into induction and ongoing learning, with staff awareness confirmed.*
- *Regular meetings, flagging systems, and dashboards ensured timely identification and management.*
- *Audits, escalation pathways, and committee oversight provided accountability.*
- *Communication was compassionate, documented, and included clear information and support.*
- *Feedback loops, KPIs, and reporting drive learning and refinement.*
- *Just Culture principles promoted fairness, learning, and staff development.*
- *Coordinated approaches and investment in systems strengthened Duty of Candour.*



Areas for Enhancement:

- *Inconsistent monitoring, reporting, and KPI tracking.*
- *Gaps in documentation, letters, apologies, and follow-ups.*
- *Uneven staff training and incomplete attendance records.*
- *Risk management systems not reliably capturing or storing information.*
- *Delays in meeting statutory timeframes for contact and notifications.*
- *Variable patient and family support, including tailored assistance and interpreters.*
- *Weak coordination with other organisations on joint Duty of Candour processes.*
- *Unclear or irregular breach escalation and senior reporting.*

Challenge Questions

1. How is staff training and policy compliance ensured?
2. How are incidents flagged and acted on within timeframes?
3. How are patients and families communicated with and supported?
4. How reliable is monitoring and reporting for assurance?
5. How are breaches escalated and managed across organisations?

This Insight provides information to support organisations in reviewing their duty of candour processes. It is intended to prompt and inform discussions in this area.