

## Cause for concern policy

Occasionally a case is discussed in which there are elements which appear to be outside the general themes arising from the study and raise concern amongst the case reviewers that harm could be occurring to current patients due to a substandard quality of care. This may involve, clinical matters such as prescribing errors or organisational matters such as access to services.

Following the Bristol Inquiry and in consultation with the GMC it was agreed that where NCEPOD found such a case we had a duty under paragraph 27 of Good Medical Practice to refer it to an appropriate authority. The NCEPOD Steering Group agreed that this should be the hospital Medical Director.

## Process

If a case reviewer raises a cause for concern case it is discussed within that reviewer group meeting and if all agree, it is discussed between the chair of that meeting, the Lead NCEPOD Clinical Co-ordinator and the NCEPOD Chief Executive.

Based on their knowledge of the themes arising from all case review meetings for that study a decision is made as to whether it is a case that demonstrates a level of care which could have a negative impact on the care of current patients. If it is agreed that it is such a case then the Chief Executive breaks the identity of the patient and writes to the Medical Director, following the process agreed.

The letter should include:

1. An outline of the data submitted and from which the 'cause for concern' has originated
2. A request that the letter is formally acknowledged within twenty-five working days from receipt of the communication

If a formal response has not been received within twenty-five working days of the initial letter raising the 'cause for concern', a reminder letter should be sent to the Medical Director and Chief Executive Officer. If no response is received within a further 10 working days, discuss the issue with HQIP. Agreement should then be reached on whether the healthcare and/or professional regulators should be notified.

## Process Flow

