

I support the proposed organisational duty of candour, but do not support the addition of criminal sanctions. This will have a detrimental effect on the creation of an open, honest and learning culture required for the improvement of services and safety of our patients. We have mechanisms in place to allow reporting and if necessary, investigation and escalation of concerns if staff are concerned about the standards of care/treatment in my workplace.

I have seen examples of a learning culture take root and grow since I was a junior doctor and through my training years, until it is now an accepted part of my job as a senior doctor. Indeed all doctors are familiar with and participate in learning meetings and any subsequent recommendations are part of reflections in appraisal.

I do not support the introduction of individual duty of candour as doctors are already subject to a duty of candour and other regulatory and employment sanctions. If individuals are targeted, they will begin to view NI and its health system as a blame culture. They will look to work in other parts of the UK where there is a more progressive attitude and this in turn will lead to exacerbate the current chronic understaffing and may even precipitate early retirements. Doctors may start to practice defensive medicine which will have a detrimental effect on our health system here in NI.

I think there should be more input from clinicians who are actually making decisions in the healthcare environment, both primary and secondary. We do not want to promote fear, as this is a barrier to learning and ultimately what we want for our patients is a safe place to come to be seen and treated.

Yours sincerely,