



Many of the recommendations are being ignored or rejected with no sound argument. However, there was one huge piece of good news - the Government agreed a u-turn to bring in a statutory duty of candour binding on all healthcare organisations. AvMA will continue to press for all key recommendations to be implemented. Commenting on the Duty of Candour, Peter Walsh AvMA's ceo said:

“If done properly a legal Duty of Candour will help change the culture of cover up and denial, but we are not under any illusion about the amount of hard work required to see this through. The fierce opposition we encountered from the Department of Health and medical defence organisations shows that. It was only the force of our campaign coupled with the unequivocal recommendation from Robert Francis QC which forced ministers into this u-turn. We now need everybody to own it. Staff need support, training and protection from persecution from management for doing the right thing.”

“For over sixty years the NHS has done no more than pay lip service to the fundamental principle that patients and their families should be told the truth when there has been an error which causes harm. Whilst frowning upon cover-ups, the system has effectively tolerated them. This culture of cover up and denial is a cancer eating away at the NHS and leads to scandals like we saw at Mid Staffordshire. A hospital that is prepared to tolerate this will not be a safe hospital. The legally enforceable Duty of Candour will help change that culture and represents the biggest advance in patient safety and patients'rights in the history of the NHS.”

“If it is done properly, the legal Duty of Candour should be known as ‘Robbie’s Law’ in honour of Robbie Powell. Since his death 23 years ago his father Will Powell has done more than anyone to raise awareness of the need for this.”