

Doctors and Dentists Case Review Process

23 August 2013

1. The Board of Directors of the Belfast HSC Trust (The Board) has a responsibility to provide high quality care, which is safe for patients, clients, young people, visitors and staff and which is underpinned by the public service values of accountability, probity and openness. The Trust's existing procedures for the management and support of staff must always be followed and sit alongside the specific support provided through Maintaining High Professional Standards in the Modern HPSS (MHPS).
2. The line management of doctors and dentists is the responsibility of the Service Director (ordinarily delegated to the relevant Codirector) in whose specialty the doctor or dentist works. Within the Directorate, doctors and dentists are professionally responsible to their Clinical Director and Associate Medical Director, and through them they are accountable to the Medical Director, who is also the Responsible Officer for the Trust.
3. Concerns about a doctor or dentist may arise from a number of sources eg complaints, incident reports, appraisal, audit, morbidity and mortality review, patient/colleague feedback and litigation. Where there is a single significant issue that causes concerns in relation to the performance of a doctor, or where there is an accumulation of issues or concerns, these should be considered, as appropriate, within the directorate and escalated to the Associate Medical Director. The Associate Medical Director (and Codirector) will be responsible for determining if a threshold of concern has been reached such that the case is brought to the attention of the Medical Director and Service Director.

The Medical Director will ensure that any case raised, is "logged" for consideration as appropriate at the next Doctor and Dentists Case Review Meeting (DDCRM). This meeting which is attended by representatives of the Medical Director's office, senior HR staff, the Trust's solicitor, and Directorate management staff serves as an advisory body for those with management responsibility for doctors and dentists.

The DDCR meeting will ensure that where appropriate the informal or formal stages of MHPS are followed.

Concerns may also be raised directly with the Medical Director's Office through external agencies eg the Ombudsman, PSNI, the Deanery, HSCB, PHA, DHSSPS, GMC. These will be logged at the Doctor and Dentists Case Review Meetings.

4. Trust policies, particularly including Complaints Procedures, Incident Reporting and Disciplinary Procedures must be adhered to.
5. Other than in respect of seeking advice from NCAS, actions and communications OUTSIDE of the Trust will be through the office of the Medical Director. For example in the event of communication being required with the DHSSPS, HSCB, PHA, GMC, GDC, PSNI, NIMDTA or other bodies, this will be through the Medical Director's Office, with appropriate liaison with the Service Director and/or Associate Medical Director.
6. Actions and communications WITHIN the Trust will be the responsibility of the manager within the Directorate.
7. The Medical Director's office, and Medical HR will be available to provide advice in relation to these matters outside of the regular Doctor and Dentist Case Review meetings.
8. The Medical Director's office will seek to ensure that due process is complied with in relation to each case, inclusive of review at the Doctor Case Review Meeting.
9. In circumstances where the management of a case involving a doctor or dentist is under ongoing review at the Doctor and Dentist Case Review meeting, the relevant AMD should ensure that the doctor/dentist is aware of this, and also aware of the Terms of Reference of the Meeting.
Communication to the doctor/dentist should be considered at the Doctor and

Dentist Case Review meeting, and where agreed and completed, should subsequently be logged at the next Doctor and Dentist Case Review meeting.

Explanatory Notes

1. The national framework for handling concerns about the conduct, clinical performance and health of medical and dental employees is Maintaining Higher Professional Standards in the Modern HPSS (November 2005). (MHPS). The Belfast Trust has established a regular series of meetings to support medical and other managers in the efficient and effective implementation of the framework ; these meetings are referred to the Doctor and Dentists Case Review meetings.
2. As in MHPS, where the term, "performance" is used, it should be interpreted as referring to all aspects of a practitioner's work, including conduct, health and clinical performance.