

16 June 2015

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MPS response to NAO report - use complaints to create long-lasting solutions

Dr Pallavi Bradshaw, Senior Medicolegal Adviser at the Medical Protection Society said:

“The complaints system can be confusing for patients and inconsistent for healthcare professionals and we agree with the NAO that urgent reform is needed.

“It is worrying that only 31% of public service complainants were satisfied with the outcome of their complaint. We believe that patients should always be encouraged and supported to raise concerns with their local practice or hospital first, to get the open and honest explanation they deserve at a local level, before escalating it to the next stage.

“Recently proposed reforms could help to modernise the system. However, it is absolutely crucial that the new Ombudsman must have the expertise to understand complex clinical complaints, and have fairness to all parties at its core.

“To improve the experience for patients and the healthcare professional, the system needs to be consistent and transparent, both in the supply of information and the recommendations for redress, to instil trust for all involved. It also needs to make better use of complaints to improve care services and create long-lasting solutions to adverse issues.

“While it is vital that healthcare professionals are properly regulated, we must empower and support them to do what they are in healthcare to do – care for patients. A single incident can lead to investigations by the employer, regulator, Ombudsman and can even lead to litigation, all of which can impact on their stress levels, confidence, reputation and morale. We believe the focus should be on sharpening existing processes, instead of giving more powers to investigate healthcare professionals.”

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Notes to editor:

To read the National Audit Office’s full report, please click here: <http://www.nao.org.uk/press-releases/public-service-markets-putting-things-right-when-they-go-wrong-3/>

About MPS

MPS is the world’s leading protection organisation for doctors, dentists and healthcare professionals. We protect and support the professional interests of more than 300,000 members around the world. Our benefits include access to indemnity, expert advice and peace of mind. Highly qualified advisers are on hand to talk through a question or concern at any time.

Our in-house experts assist with the wide range of legal and ethical problems that arise from professional practice. This includes clinical negligence claims, complaints, medical and dental council inquiries, legal and ethical dilemmas, disciplinary procedures, inquests and fatal accident inquiries.

Our philosophy is to support safe practice in medicine and dentistry by helping to avert problems in the first place. We do this by promoting risk management through our workshops, E-learning, clinical risk assessments, publications, conferences, lectures and presentations.

MPS is not an insurance company. All the benefits of membership of MPS are discretionary as set out in the Memorandum and Articles of Association.