

Press Release

For immediate release

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Conference bids to tackle Clinical Negligence Claims

A conference to assess the impact of new Government measures that are being introduced to counter the costs of lawsuits against the NHS for clinical negligence, is to be held at the end of November.

The conference entitled "Forging a Future that Works - Is there a better way to handle clinical negligence claims?" will take place at the Institute of Child Health in London on 29th November, organised by the medical negligence specialists Bolt Burdon Claims.

Clinical negligence claims against health care professionals and the NHS rose to their highest levels in the 1990s which led the Government to announce a review of the present system to stem the spiralling cost. In fact, costs as well as claims against the NHS no longer seem to be rising due to changes in practice and procedures over the last 5 years but the subsequent draft report, published last year, is now set to have far-reaching implications over the next 18 months.

"It is extremely important that all parties involved in clinical negligence claims and the provision of care in the community are aware of the new measures likely to be introduced and the impact these will have", said health care solicitor and former nurse, Rosamund Rhodes-Kemp. "This applies not only to how solicitors obtain compensation but also to the caps on this and the emphasis on care being provided

locally out of existing resources for those most severely injured by medical error. We all want what is best for patients and it is important to discuss how new proposals will work in practice before they are fully introduced. It is always difficult to go back if a new scheme does not work. It is much better to get it right at the start.”

The conference will take place at a time when the issue of clinical negligence compensation is just one part of a much bigger debate over the standards in the NHS.

But while claims seem to be on the decline, figures recently published by the British Medical Journal estimated that 850,000 medical errors have been reported within the NHS resulting in as many as 40,000 deaths. However, it has since been revealed that these figures may not have been accurate and a further article in the BMJ states that the figure could be even higher. In addition to this, the public remains concerned over the MRSA "super-bug" that is threatening patients in hospitals. Speeches made at both the Conservative and Labour Party Conferences in September revealed that standards and hygiene in NHS hospitals will play an important part when setting the agenda at the forthcoming election.

The speakers at the conference will include Steve Walker, Chief Executive of NHSLA, Colin Stutt, Head of Policy and Legal Department, LSC, Margaret Dangoor, Executive Director, ALARM, Brian Raincock, Managing Director, Litigation Protection Ltd, Janice Smith, Defendant Solicitor, Capsticks and Allan Gore, QC.

"In most cases medical compensation claims are not about receiving six figure payouts, but are about getting the relevant people to be accountable for their actions, to apologise and to prevent the same mistakes from happening again. For those badly injured and who need care and financial support it is vital that they continue to

receive both. This is why the conference is so important," concluded Rosamund Rhodes-Kemp.

Ends.

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