

Press Release

For immediate release

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Medical lawyer claims measures to reduce claims against NHS being introduced by stealth

The Government is fast-tracking measures to combat the rise in clinical negligence claims against the NHS, according to a leading medical lawyer.

Rosamund Rhodes Kemp, a partner in the Islington firm of Bolt Burdon Claims and former nurse, has alleged that current draft proposals to curb spiralling NHS compensation claims are already being introduced before the consultation process has even finished.

In 2001 the Government launched a report into finding ways to reform the current system and to stem the tide of financially crippling law suits against the NHS.

In 2003, the Chief Medical Officer published the preliminary draft report containing measures that it was hoped would reduce the time spent processing small claims and more efficiently deal with larger claims. Importantly, one of the ways of reducing costs was to reconsider how those most badly injured through medical error could be cared for out of existing resources. The report then went out for further consultation.

However, medical and legal experts are concerned that the Government is now ignoring this consultation period and is already implementing the measures by the back-door.

"It would appear that many of the proposals are already being introduced and that many others are set to come into practice in the next 18 months," commented Rosamund Rhodes-Kemp, specialist clinical negligence solicitor.

“The Government has ignored the consultation period and failed to properly test new measures which will have profound impact on patients injured as a consequence of medical errors.

“We all want to keep improving the way these claims are handled and feel that now is the time to discuss how to implement changes whilst safeguarding the interests of patients” she added.

To highlight the issues, a conference is being organised by Bolt Burdon Kemp to involve the medical profession, legal experts and clinical specialists.

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.

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.

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