



UNISON HEALTHCARE - BRANCH UPDATE

From: Christina McAnea, UNISON National Secretary - Health

BRIEFING HC-013-13

20 February 2013

The Francis Report

Who needs to know?

- All Health Branches

Summary:

The Francis Report was published in February 2013. This circular gives details of key aspects of the report along UNISON's response and actions.

In full:

Mid Staffordshire Public Inquiry

On 6th February 2013 the Francis Report findings were made public. The findings from the Francis Report into the Mid Staffordshire Foundation Trust provide lessons not only for the hospital, but for the Government and for all NHS organisations. It must be recognised that day in day out the NHS and our members deliver excellent care in hospitals across the country. However we support the need for rigorous inspection as a vital part of maintaining high standards and highlighting failures. We owe it to the patients who died and to their relatives to make sure that the lessons of this and previous Inquiries are learned, not only in hospital corridors but in the corridors of Whitehall. The full report can be found at <http://www.midstaffspublicinquiry.com/report>.

The initial UNISON press release on the Francis Report can be found at http://www.unison.org.uk/asppresspack/pressrelease_view.asp?id=2957.

The Report highlights:

- The need for safe staffing levels and appropriate and right skill mixes in order to deliver high quality, compassionate and dignified patient care. This is a key area that UNISON has been campaigning on for the last few years and we are currently working in a coalition with other staff side organisations to demand safe staffing levels.
- The devastating consequences of financial pressures bearing down on the hospital.

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- That the solution is not necessarily scapegoating or reorganisation and further bureaucracy.
- That a real change in culture is needed, at all levels, including senior management and boards.
- The deep and damaging effects of a bullying culture entrenched within the organisation.

The report covers four volumes and includes 290 recommendations. Some of these are:

- Openness, transparency and candour throughout the healthcare system underpinned by statute.
- Improved support for compassionate, caring and committed nursing.
- As well as regulation of HCAs, the report calls for a common set of national standards for the education and training of Healthcare Support Workers.
- Stronger healthcare leadership.
- National entry requirement for student nurses to complete three months of practical experience prior to the commencement of training.
- Every nurse should be required to demonstrate their continuing professional development by producing an annual learning portfolio.
- The creation of the status of Registered Older Person's Nurse.
- Ward nurse managers should ensure and develop a clinical aspect to their role, working alongside staff as a role model and mentor with less emphasis on administration.
- Name badges and uniforms to make it clear to patients and relatives who's who.

UNISON's Responses

- UNISON has developed advice and guidance to enable members to raise concerns in clinical areas – this can be found at <http://www.unison.org.uk/file/A5882.pdf>.
- A training course has been developed by UNISON which can be delivered in different workplaces. The course (currently being piloted in the West Midlands Region) helps members and staff understand how they can raise concerns and why it is important to do so. This course is being piloted from February 2013 – see below for more details.
- UNISON's Health Executive will be deciding how best to consult within UNISON on the implications for service delivery and on the workforce.
- UNISON will be working with other health unions to discuss ways forward and to develop a union response to the Francis Report.
- UNISON is already involved in discussions with the Department of Health on how the recommendations will be taken forward and emphasizing the need for full staff engagement at all levels.
- Branch advice will be produced on dealing with the recommendations at Trust level.

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Training Programme

The aim of the training programme is to equip employees with the confidence to raise concerns about unsafe practice in the workplace effectively. The design uses 'train the trainer' methodology to enable UNISON activists to carry out a short, two hour course with staff in their workplace. The 'train the trainer' programme will be a practical two-day course, and is being piloted in February in the West Midlands region. The 'train the trainer' programme commences with a session on duty of care, looking at statutory and professional regulations, e.g. what the rules are and who you can go to. It then focuses on how to facilitate discussions with members about raising concerns, the steps taken in challenging unsafe practice and escalating concerns, and concludes with a discussion about the best way to roll-out the two-hour course within organisations, e.g. who to approach within the organisation about running the course, how to map staff in the workplace and the best delivery method.

Safe Staffing Levels Survey

UNISON will be running its second annual Safe Staffing Levels Survey on 5 March 2013. All healthcare workers in the nursing family are encouraged to participate. The purpose of the survey is to find out what staffing levels are like in workplaces across the country on a regular day. Staff are asked to keep track of the nurse-to-patient ratio (the number of patients per nurse, in other words) in their workplace on 5 March and then answer questions in an online survey.

Please see the attached Health Circular on Safe Staffing Levels for further information.

Five important initial actions that you can take locally

1. Raise the report at local Partnership or staffside forums.
2. Arrange meetings with the local Directors of Nursing to discuss the local impact of the report's findings.
3. If there are any cuts in services or service delivery in your branch, then we recommend a pause (in light of the Francis Report) to ensure that the reorganisation is appropriate.
4. Make use of UNISON's publications such as <http://www.unison.org.uk/healthcare/dutyofcare/index.asp> to safeguard our members in their place of work.
5. Encourage members to complete the annual staffing survey which will run on 5 March 2013.

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