

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

The Hon. Member for Douglas North, Mr Wannenburgh, to ask The Minister for Health and Social Care:

What improvements are planned to reduce the risk of future clinical negligence claims and associated payouts.

Question W-202501-1959 published on 28 10 2025; Answer published on 11 11 2025.

The Minister for Health and Social Care (Ms Christian):

The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) is responsible for overseeing the delivery of high quality and safe health and social care services on the Isle of man. This includes maintaining oversight of the cost of claims for clinical negligence, and by association the number and outcome of these claims.

The DHSC also maintains oversight of the broader complaints and duty of candour process. Each year, the DHSC publishes the Manx Care Annual Report and provides a written statement about the report to Tynwald. Maintaining close oversight of the entire process, from initial contact through to a potential claim for clinical negligence ensures that the DHSC can see evidence of how the voices of service users are listened to, heard, and responded to as early as possible in the complaints process. This is vital, as feedback from the public suggests that reasons for negligence claims often include a desire to prevent similar events from occurring, to receive an apology or explanation, and to ensure a robust investigation into why an incident occurred.¹ Therefore, the DHSC maintains an oversight assurance role, with a strategic aim of preventing, as far as possible, situations where service users feel compelled to make a claim for clinical negligence.

Furthermore, as set out in the mandate, one of the five key priority areas is for Manx Care to provide safe, appropriate and consistent care. In line with this, one of Manx Care's core objectives is to provide safe and high-quality care across all services for the people of the Isle of Man. Manx Care undertakes a number of initiatives to reduce the risk of harm to patients and services users, thereby decreasing the number and types of clinical negligence claims that are upheld and settled.

1. Strengthening Clinical Governance

Manx Care is continually strengthening Clinical Governance arrangements and has actively moved to a clinical led model of leadership in 2025.

¹ National Audit Office report on the Costs of Clinical Negligence. October 2025.
<https://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/costs-of-clinical-negligence-report.pdf>

Clinical governance ensures accountability for maintaining and improving patient care standards. Key components include:

- Clear leadership and accountability structures
- Regular clinical audits and peer reviews
- Evidence-based practice protocols
- Robust incident reporting systems
- Continuous professional development and training

2. Improving Communication and Informed Consent

There is a clear focus on improving communication with patients and services users and a specific emphasis on informed consent, which if not managed well, can lead to clinical negligence claims. Manx Care therefore encourages and expects our clinicians and practitioners to:

- Use plain language when discussing treatment options.
- Ensure informed consent is properly documented.
- Encourage shared decision-making with patients.
- Foster a culture of transparency and openness, especially after adverse events.

3. Enhancing Patient Safety Culture

Manx Care are working to enhance and improve their culture and particularly patient safety culture. In order to promote this the following is undertaken:

- Promote non-punitive reporting of errors and near misses.
- Conduct root cause analyses to understand the root causes of incidents and events which have led or may lead to harm.
- Implement checklists and safety protocols for high-risk procedures.
- Encourage multidisciplinary teamwork and second opinions.

4. Investing in Workforce Development

Manx Care is investing in its people to ensure they have the most appropriately trained and experienced workforce with the right skill set to deliver high quality and safe services. This is achieved through:

- Regular training on clinical standards, legal responsibilities, and risk mitigation.
- Simulation-based learning for emergency scenarios and complex procedures.
- Leadership development to support clinical decision-making and ethical practice.

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