



BRITISH CONGENITAL CARDIAC ASSOCIATION

British Congenital Cardiac Association statement on reflective practice

Despite the dramatic improvement in the results of treatment for congenital heart disease over the past several decades, both the organisation of services and individual performance remain under close scrutiny. Improved results have depended on a systematic and honest appraisal both of best practice and also analysis of individual errors or systemic failures. Recent high profile cases have led many in our speciality, particularly those in training grades, to become concerned about open discussion of mistakes and the use to which their reflective records will be put.

The British Congenital Cardiac Association welcomes the recent rapid policy review, led by Professor Sir Norman Williams¹, into gross negligence manslaughter cases in healthcare. The recommendations will, amongst other things, impact on the quality of local investigations and clarify the approach to the use of reflective material in disciplinary or court proceedings. The General Medical Council has also announced a review led by Dame Clare Marx² which aims to “encourage a renewed focus on a just culture, reflective practice and individual and systemic learning”.

We believe that it is only by reflection and collective learning, both within and between institutions, that patient care will continue to improve and the potential risks to patients will be minimised.

1. Williams review into gross negligence manslaughter in healthcare. Published 11 June 2018, updated 20 June 2018. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/williams-review-into-gross-negligence-manslaughter-in-healthcare>

2. GMC independent review into how gross negligence manslaughter, and culpable homicide (in Scotland), are applied to medical practice. <https://www.gmc-uk.org/news/media-centre/media-centre-archive/gmc-announces-terms-of-reference-for-gross-negligence-manslaughter-review>