Serious Untoward Incident Policy and Procedure

Wessex Deanery

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Policy

Introduction

It is essential that all serious and/or untoward incidents that occur in the Wessex Deanery or with its trainees for whom it has educational responsibility, are reported in an appropriate and timely manner, and handled effectively.

Staff and trainees should be encouraged to report incidents, whether to the Deanery or the Trust by whom they are employed without fear of disciplinary action, and in a culture of learning.

This document lays out the process to be followed by the Deanery should a serious untoward incident occur and describes the actions which will be taken, the communication and the follow up actions when a serious or untoward incident occurs. It provides guidance to all staff employed by the Deanery and all trainees for whom the Deanery has a responsibility. It is important that all staff and trainees are conversant with this policy and its procedural content.

A robust system for identifying, reporting and managing serious incidents allows the Deanery, where appropriate, to investigate incidents quickly, to review practice and identify trends and patterns.

The Deanery has a responsibility to work with statutory bodies such as the Police and this document does not supersede the normal legal requirements to notify such agencies of certain incidents.

What constitutes a Serious Untoward Incident (SUI)?

A SUI may be clinical or non-clinical.

A SUI is an incident where a patient, member of staff or member of the public has suffered serious injury, major permanent harm or unexpected death or where there is a cluster or pattern of incidents or actions by NHS staff which have, or are likely to have, caused significant public concern.

“Near misses” may also constitute SUIs, where the contributory causes are serious and under different circumstances may have led to serious injury, major permanent harm or unexpected death, although no actual harm resulted on this particular occasion.

Examples are:

- Unexpected patient death or death in unusual circumstances
- Safeguarding Children issues
- Serious complaint or allegation against a member of staff
- Breaches of confidentiality such as loss of data
- Equipment failure or misuse

The Deanery has a responsibility to its staff, and to patients through the quality of education of its trainees, to ensure risks are minimised.
**Trainees involved in SUIs**

If a trainee is involved in a SUI, either directly or as a witness they will come under the relevant policy and subsequent investigation of their employing Trust.

Directors of Medical Education/Clinical Tutors must notify the Deanery of serious incidents involving trainees in Trusts. These incidents will also be notified by the relevant Trust to the Strategic Health Authority. For example, if a trainee is involved in a SUI, the Director of Medical Education/Clinical Tutor will notify the Postgraduate Dean or Deanery Business Manager. The Postgraduate Dean will then notify the relevant Programme Director.

If there is a possibility that the incident could enter the public domain via the media, the Postgraduate Dean or Deanery Business Manager will assist the appropriate senior SHA Director and SHA Communications Team with any additional information that may be required over and above that supplied by the host Trust.

The Deanery should offer support and advice to the trainee, if required, during the investigation of the SUI.

If the trainee is unhappy with the outcome of the investigation or is involved with any action following the outcome of the investigation, the Deanery will provide appropriate support and advice.

The Deanery will request the host Trust to notify it of any impact on the trainee caused by the outcome of the SUI investigation so that any relevant lessons may be incorporated into future training sessions and/or support given to the trainee.

**Wessex Deanery staff involved in SUIs**

The most likely cause of Deanery staff being involved in a SUI is through an issue such as data loss.

If there is a SUI involving Deanery staff, the Postgraduate Dean will be notified immediately. The Postgraduate Dean or Deanery Business Manager will notify the appropriate senior Director at the Strategic Health Authority as soon as practicable.

**Out of hours**

Out of hours, if senior Wessex Deanery staff become aware of any SUI, or potential SUI, they will need to contact South Central Strategic Health Authority.