



## Duty of Candour Annual Report

for Adult Social Work

1<sup>st</sup> April 2024 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025

East Lothian Health and Social Care Partnership	Duty of Candour Lead: Isobel Nisbet (Adult Social Work)
Issue Date: Date presented to Adult Social Work Governance Group 17/6/25	Status: Approved by ELHSCP Clinical & Care Governance Group 28/8/25
	Review Interval: One Year

## Introduction

All health and social care services in Scotland have an organisational duty of candour. This is a legal requirement which means that when certain types of incidents happen, the people affected understand what has happened, receive an apology, and the organisation learns how to improve for the future.

An important part of this duty is that we provide an annual report about the organisational duty of candour in our services. This report describes how our organisation, East Lothian Health and Social Care Partnership's Adult Social Work has operated the organisational duty of candour during the period 01 April 2024 to 31 March 2025.

If you have any questions or would like more information about East Lothian Health and Social Care Partnership, please feel free to contact us at: [elhscp@eastlothian.gov.uk](mailto:elhscp@eastlothian.gov.uk) or 01875 824 309.

## Incident Reporting

**How many incidents happened within adult social work to which the organisational duty of candour applied?**

- In the last year, there have been no incidents within adult social work to which the organisational duty of candour applied.

## About East Lothian Health and Social Care Partnership (ELHSCP)

ELHSCP serves a population of around 113,740 people (mid-2023 estimate<sup>1</sup>). We cover a diverse geographical area, including large and small towns as well as rural areas. Our aim is to provide high quality care for every person who uses our services, and where possible help people to receive care at home or in a homely setting.

## Policies and Procedures

ELHSCP has various information and governance platforms that provide opportunities for staff to review adverse events and discuss learning to identify where further support or training may be relevant. Through adverse event processes, we determine if there are factors that may have caused or contributed to an event, and this helps to identify duty of candour incidents:

- The General Manager Adult Social Work participates in the Patient Safety and Experience Action Group (PSEAG). PSEAG multi-disciplinary meetings take place every two weeks. Reviews of Significant Adverse Events (SAE) form part of the agenda with discussion taking place as to whether duty of candour should be implemented.
- The Adult Social Work Governance group meet monthly. This forum is chaired by the Chief Social Worker and ensures safe and effective practice is taking place across social work and provides the opportunity for professional discussion re appropriate adverse

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<sup>1</sup> National Records of Scotland [nrs.scot.nhs.uk](https://nrs.scot.nhs.uk)

events that have been identified. Where relevant these are escalated to ELHSCP Quarterly Clinical Care Governance meetings.

- Regular Adult Protection Learning Reviews provide a further opportunity to consider whether duty of candour should be actioned.
- Social work complaints are reviewed, and themes are collated three monthly with learning points and potential training opportunities identified.
- Duty of Candour is part of our overall approach to managing incidents. Social Work's 'Sphera' reporting system picks up if incidents are reportable and this cascades into our quality governance reporting.

#### Process:

- The organisation uses the DoC Decision making Diagram to determine whether an incident requires triggering of our organisational duty of candour.
- Adult social work staff report potential incidents to the General Manager for Adult Social Work within East Lothian Health & Social Care Partnership.
- By following the duty of candour Checklist, we ensure all steps are followed and information is gathered to support the investigation, outcome, and learning.
- The staff member records the incident and reports, as necessary.
- The duty of candour procedure is being updated based on the 2025 guidance.

## What have we learned?

This year has been focused on strengthening staff understanding of the organisation's responsibilities under duty of candour and ensuring training and support is in place to help identify potential incidents.

## Training and support for staff

The newly developed adult social work induction pack will include reference to our duty of candour.

The NES online Learnpro training module on duty of candour is mandatory for all social work staff. The General Manager for Adult Social Work receives regular compliance reports that monitor this training. 100% of adult social work staff have completed duty of candour training.

Advice is being sought on obtaining access to the updated NES Training materials following the 2025 reviewed Scottish Government guidance. We plan to undertake face to face training in the coming year to help embed duty of candour into everyday practice.

We know that serious mistakes can be distressing for staff as well as people who receive care and their families. In the event of an incident staff would be supported by a senior manager and sign posted where appropriate to a range of supports for example:

- Access to the Employee Assistance Programme is available for staff if they have been affected by an organisational duty of candour incident. We recognise that the site staff are directed to could be more user friendly.
- Mental wellbeing support: staff support services and helplines
- 'Listening Ears' – an impartial listening service.
- Four weekly staff supervision includes check ins on well-being.

- Support through trade unions.

## Support for relevant persons

Where a relevant person (i.e., children, patients, families, etc.) has been affected by an incident that has activated our organisational duty of candour, a senior manager will offer to meet directly with them. Apologies will be offered verbally and in person to the individual/family who have been affected and the investigation process explained. An information leaflet will be provided and where appropriate links will be offered to wellbeing support services. The senior manager will contact them on the conclusion of the investigation and advise of the outcome.

## Further information

This is the sixth year of the duty of candour being in operation.

As required, ELHSCP's Adult Social Work has submitted this report to the Care Inspectorate and have placed it on our website and the intranet. In addition, Adult Social Work's duty of candour data will be included in the annual CSWO report.

If you would like further information regarding this report, please contact:

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