



Press release

26 November 2014

Hospital policy enforcement 'vital' to safeguard patients

Healthcare legal experts have warned Trusts that they must act now and strictly enforce hospital policies covering commercial visitors to minimise the risk of harm to vulnerable patients and reduce the NHS £22.7 billion medical negligence set-aside.

In a [White Paper](#) launched at Patient First 2014 today (26 November) senior solicitor Amanda Pringle and clinical lead nurse for theatres Anne Rhodes explain that enforcement of Trust policies is a 'vital safety umbrella' that not only reduces risk to patients, but helps protect Trusts, who may be liable in medical negligence claims arising as a result of the actions of commercial visitors.

The White Paper is available to download for free at www.intellicentrics.co.uk/download-contact-form.

Tens of thousands of commercial visitors have access to hospital premises every year and in a large NHS Trust, there can often be upwards of thirty on the premises at any one time. They can be involved in anything from meeting with procurement officers to advising in operating theatres during procedures involving specialist medical equipment.

"Commercial visitors often have very close contact with patients, and work in sensitive hospital areas where following decontamination protocols or having the right immunisations can significantly impact patient outcomes," say Pringle and Rhodes.

They point out that Trusts – under their legal duty of care to patients and health and safety obligations towards commercial visitors – have a responsibility to assess risk and prevent commercial visitors from harming themselves and others.

They say the potential risks are great, meaning comprehensive policy enforcement – already commonplace in the US – is a must for the UK. It will help NHS Trusts meet Health Secretary Jeremy Hunt's target of saving 6,000 lives in his 'Sign up to Safety' campaign, and reduce the annual NHS negligence set-aside of £22.7 billion.

Pringle and Rhodes explain how Trusts might consider a policy enforcement service already used by one of the largest NHS Trusts, Leeds Teaching Hospitals, that:

- communicates and manages compliance with hospital policies
- manages check-in and enforces credentialing: the process of obtaining, checking and assessing commercial visitors' qualifications to visit restricted or patient sensitive areas.

Azadar Shah, Managing Director of healthcare policy compliance and enforcement experts IntelliCentrics UK, and an adviser on the White Paper said: “We believe Trusts must act now to meet their legal obligations by ensuring they have a comprehensive service in place.

“Furthermore, it is not enough to have a system where commercial visitors merely sign in before moving around hospital premises. Every Trust should ensure these visitors have the right training, immunisations, qualifications and background checks, and have demonstrably agreed to be bound by relevant hospital policies and procedures before being given access to patient-sensitive areas.

“Only then will the NHS know that it has done everything it can in this area to safeguard vulnerable patients.”

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Notes to editors

- IntelliCentrics is the global leader in policy enforcement for the healthcare sector. Its Reprax system is used by over 6,000 healthcare facilities in the US. The company launched a UK arm following strong interest from NHS Trusts. www.intellicentrics.co.uk.
- Reprax is a secure, web-based solution that enables hospitals to quickly and easily control access by commercial visitors. It means that, at any given time, hospitals know exactly who is on site, who they are visiting, and that they comply with the hospital’s policies. www.reprax.co.uk
- The service is free of charge to hospitals; commercial visitors pay an annual membership fee.

How Reprax works

- Once a hospital’s policies and credentialing requirements have been loaded onto Reprax, these are communicated to the relevant commercial visitors. If credentials are required – for example, proof of an up-to-date DBS check – the commercial visitor submits these onto the system and they are checked.
- When a commercial visitors arrives on site, the hospital contact (receptionist or security) logs on to the Reprax portal to view an immediate summary of the commercial visitors level of compliance with their safety and security access policy. The system prints a time and date stamped photo identification badge for the commercial visitor to wear for the duration of their visit.
- Other sign-in options include self-service kiosk and a mobile app.