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Policy Statement

Oxford Psychiatry Group is committed to providing safe, high-quality and compassionate care. We recognise our legal, professional and ethical responsibility to be open, honest and transparent with patients when something has gone wrong or may have caused harm. We must act with candour at all times, even when the outcome is uncomfortable for the organisation or individuals involved.

This policy applies to all employees, associates, contractors and clinicians working on behalf of Oxford Psychiatry Group.

Legal Framework

This policy is aligned to:

- CQC Regulation 20 – Duty of Candour (Statutory)
 - Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014
 - GMC/NMC Professional Duty of Candour Standards
 - UK GDPR & Data Protection Act 2018
 - Caldicott Principles
 - CQC Regulation 17 – Good Governance
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When the Duty of Candour Applies

The statutory duty applies when a notifiable safety incident has occurred. This means care has resulted in:

- Death, or
- Moderate or severe harm, or
- Prolonged psychological harm, or
- Harm that has the potential to cause significant distress or risk if not addressed

If there is uncertainty, the organisation should apply the duty.

Our Responsibilities to Patients

When something goes wrong, Oxford Psychiatry Group will:

1. Inform the patient (or their representative) as soon as possible
2. Offer a sincere, meaningful apology
3. Explain openly what is known and what will be investigated
4. Provide written follow-up communication
5. Support the patient's emotional, clinical and practical needs
6. Share findings and learning from any investigation
7. Explain what action has been taken to prevent recurrence

An apology is not an admission of liability, but a professional duty.

Expectations of Staff

All staff must:

- Be honest and transparent with patients and colleagues
- Report incidents, near-misses and concerns immediately through internal systems
- Never discourage others from raising concerns
- Co-operate fully with investigations and audits
- Respect confidentiality while remaining open and truthful

It is misconduct to conceal information, mislead a patient, alter records, or obstruct duty of candour processes.

Organisational Responsibilities

Oxford Psychiatry Group will:

- Maintain systems for incident reporting, investigation and learning
 - Monitor risk and patient feedback to identify problems early
 - Conduct regular audits and governance reviews
 - Share learning with staff to improve safety
 - Provide training on duty of candour and openness
 - Support staff involved in incidents, recognising the emotional impact
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Confidentiality

While being open, we continue to protect patient information in accordance with:

- UK GDPR / Data Protection Act 2018
- Caldicott Principles

Information will only be shared with consent or where legally required.

Evidence and Record Keeping

The organisation will keep clear records of:

- Conversations with the patient
- Written apology and follow-up
- Investigation findings
- Actions taken to prevent recurrence

These records support both learning and CQC compliance.

Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or earlier if legislation or CQC guidance changes.

Summary

At Oxford Psychiatry Group, our culture is one of honesty, openness, learning and accountability. Being candid protects patients, strengthens trust, and drives continuous improvement in line with CQC expectations.