

The Francis Report and its impact on health and social care values script

Recently, we have looked at how the 6 Cs and the Core Values of the NHS Constitution are guiding principles of all work in health and social care. In order to contextualise these, it is helpful to learn about the impact of the Francis Report of 2013. By looking at what can go wrong when patients and service-users are neglected, we can truly appreciate the need for structural and far-reaching adherence to person-centred care practice based on certain empathetic and compassionate principles.

What is the Francis Report?

The Francis Report was the result of a public enquiry following serious allegations of neglect, abuse, poor standards of care and ultimately, an unusually high mortality-rate among patients at Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust between 2005 and 2009. The enquiry was led by Sir Robert Francis, a medical-law barrister, and after whom the report is named. It was published in February 2013. It uncovered failings at every level of the trust from management downwards, and also revealed that complaints about poor care and neglect were ignored, as the hospital focussed solely on its corporate self-interests. In response to the publication, Jackie Smith, chief-executive of the Nursing and Midwifery Council wrote:

“What happened at Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust was shocking. Robert Francis’ thorough report outlines failures by individuals, tiers of management and regulators. Those who raised concerns were not heard. The system failed and it was a preventable tragedy.”

While the Francis enquiry specifically focussed on events at one hospital, the findings, recommendations and reforms that came out of it impacted across the entire NHS. In fact, the report listed 290 recommended changes. One of the most notable is the *statutory duty of candour*, meaning that all staff are legally obliged to speak up and report what they suspect is malpractice or harm to patients. More generally, it called for a change in the culture of the NHS. This is where we can consider the NHS Core Values, and the 6 Cs. They are fundamental principles which apply to every worker in health and care, at every level. By adopting these values in your own ethics, attitudes and practices, you will be making sure that you, your colleagues, and the institutions that you represent adhere to an agreed set of standards or concepts which ensure values-based practice, high levels of professionalism and positive outcomes for all.

Finally, let us have a look at how to cite and reference the Francis Report in the Harvard style as you may need to do this in your assignments. To cite the report in your text you just need the name of the author, or in this case the enquiry chairman, and the year. You do not need to write this in italics. At the end of your assignment, you will need to include the Francis Report in your reference list. Although it is commonly known as, and referred to as, the Francis Report the actual full title of the document is “Report of the Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust Public Enquiry” so you will need to include this in the Harvard reference. Additionally, because this was an independent public enquiry that was presented to and then published by the British Parliament, it has what is called a

Parliamentary number. These numbers usually begin with HC if the report was presented before the House of Commons, or HL if presented to the House of Lords. If you use the government document library at gov.uk/government/publications, you can easily find all of this information. Here, you can see the Parliamentary number for this report is HC898. The full formula is: authors surname and first initial; year of publication; title of the report; Parliamentary number; URL and finally the date that you accessed it. Remember to check for the use of brackets and italics in the format of your reference.

References:

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