



Response to press articles about lawyers' costs in medical negligence cases - 19 August 2015

Sir,

Government proposals to change the way costs are paid in cases where patients have been injured reflect the fact that the NHS does not want to pay for its avoidable mistakes.

The Government completely overhauled the costs system in 2013, a process which is making dramatic reductions to claimants' costs. As it typically takes several years for a medical negligence case to be resolved, the impact of those cuts will only start to be felt next year, making the tired war stories repeatedly trotted out by the NHS both misleading and irrelevant.

The solutions to the cost of compensation claims are in the NHS' own hands: stop needlessly injuring your patients and, when you do, admit liability quickly instead of dragging the patient to the door of the court, racking up costs along the way, before paying the compensation which was due in the first place.

As the outgoing chief executive of the NHSLA, Steve Walker, said very succinctly to the British Medical Journal in 2012: "if you stopped getting things wrong so consistently then you wouldn't have to pay in the first place..."

Jonathan Wheeler

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