PRESS RELEASE

More than 33,000 incidents causing moderate, severe harm or death to patients recorded by NHS Trusts

More than 33,000 of the most harmful Patient Safety Incidents were recorded by NHS Trusts in England in the most recent six-month period (1st October 2019 – 31st March 2020) according to new data analysed by medical negligence solicitors, Blackwater Law. This is an **increase of 19.5%** when compared to the same period the previous year (1st October 2018 – 31st March 2019).

Patient Safety Incidents are defined as "any unintended or unexpected incident that could have or did lead to harm for one or more patients receiving NHS-funded healthcare" *. Each incident is recorded along with the level of harm that was suffered by the patient as a result of the incident, ranging from no harm through to death:

- No harm – no harm occurred.
- Low harm – includes instances that required extra observation or minor treatment and caused minimal harm to the patient.
- Moderate harm – includes incidents that required further treatment, surgical intervention or the cancellation of treatment and resulted in short-term harm to the patient.
- Severe harm – Resulting in permanent or long-term harm to the patient.
- Death – Any unexpected or unintended event that caused the death of one or more persons.

Patient Safety Incidents encompass a broad spectrum of medical errors and events including misdiagnosis, incorrect treatment, surgical errors, procedural errors, medication errors and problems, patient administration errors, as well as failure to prevent self-harming behaviour.

During the six-month period of 1st October 2019 – 31st March 2020 there were a total of 33,292 Patient Safety Incidents that resulted in moderate harm, severe harm or death to a patient, compared to 27,864 recorded in the same period the year before. In total, there were 314,013 instances of harmful Patient Safety Incidents, those causing anything from low harm through to death, recorded by the 213 NHS trusts in England and Wales[i] in the same six-month period. This is a 17.9% increase on the 266,342 recorded in the same period in the previous year.

The number of Patient Safety Incidents recorded by each individual Trust varies significantly with University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust recording the highest number of harmful Patient Safety Incidents (low, moderate, severe harm and death) during the six-month time period with 8,024. In contrast Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust recorded the least amount of harmful incidents with only 3. The five NHS Trusts recording the highest number of harmful incidents are shown below:

NHS Trust	Number of low, moderate, severe harm and deaths recorded as Patient Safety Incidents during 1st October 2019 – 31st March 2020
University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust	8,024
Midlands Partnership NHS Foundation Trust	5,728
Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust	5,310

London North West University Healthcare NHS Trust	5,085
Croydon Health Services NHS Trust	4,983

The NHS data analysis undertaken by Blackwater Law is part of a wider NHS performance tracker which enables individuals to review the performance of their local NHS Trust against a number of different performance metrics. The NHS performance tracker can be viewed here.

Commenting on the data, Partner and Head of Blackwater Law, Jason Brady, said: "It is a concern to see such a material increase in the number of Patient Safety Incidents resulting in moderate or severe harm to patients, or even death.

"At Blackwater Law we see the consequences of these incidents and errors in medical care on patients and their loved ones, some of whom suffer life changing injuries and illness as a result. We are contacted by suffering patients every day. It is important to remember that every number is a patient and a family.

"We welcome the transparency of the NHS in reporting these incidents and it is hoped that lessons can be learnt from these. However, it is important that patients receive safe and effective medical care, given the huge implications it can have on patients when this does not happen. We hope the NHS can learn from the data and individual cases.

"The data relates to the period before the coronavirus pandemic gathered speed and lockdown was introduced.."

Notes to editors:

For further information please contact Emily Bardell ebardell@holmes-hills.co.uk or 0800 0835500

*Definition of Patient Safety Incidents taken from: NHS England. *Report a Patient Safety Incident* [Online] Viewed 08 October 2020 <https://www.england.nhs.uk/patient-safety/report-patient-safety-incident/>. [1] 213 Trusts provided Patient Safety Incident data in the reporting period 1st October 2019 – 31st March 2020

Data has been collated by Blackwater Law and a further breakdown is available upon request. The data has been obtained from NHS England. *Patient Safety* [Online] Viewed 08 October 2020 <https://www.england.nhs.uk/patient-safety/>

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About Blackwater Law:

Blackwater Law is a team of specialist medical negligence and serious personal injury solicitors that operate as part of Holmes & Hills Solicitors.

Blackwater Law solicitors provide compensation claim advice and representation to clients across the country. The team primarily deal with serious medical negligence claims such as those involving misdiagnosis claims, surgical error claims, birth injury claims (e.g. cerebral palsy claims), wrong prescription claims and general hospital negligence claims.

Blackwater Law is a trading name of Holmes & Hills LLP.

Interactive Tool

Give your readers the opportunity to look up performance statistics for their local NHS trust without needing to leave your website by easily including our interactive NHS performance tracker.

We have included the required code below, but this may need some intervention from your technical or website team. However, if you are able to include links etc within your copy then you may be able to just copy and paste the code.

Code:
<iframe src="https://blackwaterlaw.co.uk/nhs-performance-tracker/" scrolling="yes" frameborder="0" width="636" height="700" ></iframe>

Take and look and see how this could look: https://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-6674277/How-hospital-coping-winter-Performance-tracker-breaks-figures-local-trusts.html