

Shetland Islands Council Annual Duty of Candour Report 2024/2025

Responsible Officer – Ruth MacMillan, Acting Chief Social Work Officer

All health and social care services in Scotland have a duty of candour. This is a legal requirement which means that when unintended or unexpected events happen that result in death or harm as defined in the Act, the people affected understand what has happened, receive an apology, and that organisations learn how to improve for the future. It places an expectation on organisations to be open, honest and supportive.

An important part of this duty is that we provide an annual report about how the duty of candour is implemented in our services. This short report describes how Shetland Islands Council has implemented the duty of candour during the time between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025. We hope you find this report useful.

About Shetland Islands Council

Shetland Islands Council is responsible for social care and social work services for a population of around 23,000. Social care and social work services are delivered from a network of locations, including social work offices, regulated services which include residential care centres for older people, children's homes, and day care services and in people's own homes. Services are provided in seven localities across Shetland. These services are delivered in a way that will meet Shetland's Health and Care Vision, which states that by 2025 everyone is supported in their community to live longer, healthier lives and we will have reduced health inequalities.

2. How many incidents happened to which the duty of candour applies?

Between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025, there were no incidents where the duty of candour applied. These are where types of incident have happened which are unintended or unexpected, and do not relate directly to the natural course of someone's illness or underlying condition.

3. Information about our policies and procedures

Shetland Islands Council has in place a reporting system for recording and reporting personal injury to individuals who work within the services and who are in receipt of services. The Council's Complaints Handling Procedure aims to help us "get it right first time" whilst enabling us to better understand how to improve our services by learning from complaints. This is a council-wide system that is managed and monitored regularly, with procedures in place that identifies and responds to incidents within a specified time frame. Both systems were updated in 2021 to include consideration of duty of candour. In addition to this each regulated service is responsible for notifying the Care Inspectorate

and their Executive Manager of any adverse events and concerns. The Shetland Islands Council and NHS Shetland have arrangements in place to jointly discuss incidents which may invoke the duty of candour.

All staff have access to the NES (NHS Education for Scotland) duty of candour digital learning that will become part of the induction process for all relevant staff. All Managers and team leaders also have access to in-house “Difficult Conversations” training.

Shetland Islands Council values underpin everything we do and form the basis of our employee communication, engagement and service delivery. They are:-

- Taking Personal responsibility
- Delivering Excellent Service
- Working Well Together

We know that adverse events can be distressing for staff as well as people who receive care. We have support available for all staff through our line management structure as well as through occupational health and staff health and well-being resources.

Ruth MacMillan
Acting Chief Social Work Officer
10.6.25