Investigating for safer NHS care: learning with the Healthcare Safety Investigations Branch

CHAIR

- John Short, Chief Executive, Birmingham & Solihull Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust

SPEAKERS

- Keith Conradi, Chief Investigator, Healthcare Safety Investigations Branch (HSIB)
- Paul Davis, HSIB investigator
- Sandy Lewis, HSIB investigator

SESSION SUMMARY

- HSIB is functionally independent but currently funded by the Department of Health via NHS Improvement.

- HSIB will be national in scale and focus – while investigations may be triggered by an event identified at a trust, it will only become an HSIB investigation is the team has determined through application of its criteria – available on its website – of the wider value of the investigation to safety yin the NHS. These are:
  - outcome impact – adverse outcome or potential for harm
  - systemic risk – symptomatic of a wider issue
  - learning potential – opportunity for improvement.

- Clear focus on understanding causes of incidents, not apportioning blame or liability.

- Anyone can refer a matter to HSIB – patients, families, staff, trusts, regulators. 30 investigations a year, 9 currently underway.

- Recommendations will be included in interim report in which all involved parties will have an opportunity to comment on – transparency is key to the whole process.

- Team of 30 full-time safety investigators mix of skill sets and personal qualities – medicine, nursing, aviation, human factors. Human Factors a significant aspect of all work.

- Investigators are dispassionate and humble, curious.

- Bill for statutory independence is out for consultation – these powers are necessary to ensure that the organisation can operate without fear of interference from regulators or other organisations and to ensure that evidence gathered in the investigation is confidential.

- Investigators explained their backgrounds and what they are learning about how HSIB will operate. There are strong similarities in the underlying issues that relate to safety issues in military aviation as well as in healthcare. Much to learn from each other.