

Guide to logging clinical safety incidents

Clinical safety is of fundamental importance to the implementation and use of systems provided under NHS Digital. The accurate identification and logging of IT incidents that are deemed to compromise clinical safety is of great importance. A clinical safety incident is any unintended or unexpected incident which could have, or did, lead to harm for one or more patients receiving healthcare. This document provides an overview of the actions required to manage such incidents.

If an incident is thought to prejudice patient safety, a rapid clinical impact assessment should be carried out. **However, if in doubt the incident should be treated as a “clinical safety” incident until proven otherwise.**

Questions to consider

- Has a patient already been affected by the incident?
- Could the incident cause the safety of a patient to be put at risk by the use of misleading or incorrect data or information? E.g. is a clinician likely to be misled in treating a patient?
- Does the incident have the potential to impact multiple sites and/or users and therefore affect an increased number of patients?
- Is immediate action required to ensure patient care is not compromised?

If the answer to any of the above questions is YES, then you should log it as a clinical safety incident. To facilitate the process you should provide the following minimum data when logging an incident (see flow diagram):

- Geographical location and system provider
- Site code and application if known
- Detailed description of the incident, including any technical information where possible
- Time and date of first and any subsequent occurrences
- If the incident has been reported in the past, please give the Systems and Service Delivery (SSD) National Service Desk number and information about any help desk calls and responses.
- The number of patients affected or at risk
- The nature of risk to the patient:
 - Is it delayed or immediate?
 - What are the likely outcomes of the incident?

Where possible, please contact the following:

- Your organisation’s clinical safety lead.
- Your organisation’s duty manager and/or IT lead.
- Senior clinician or delegated clinician with responsibility for the clinical area.
- If the incident occurs out of hours, please give contact details for the relevant ‘on-call’ personnel to your IT service desk.

Systems and Service Delivery (SSD) National Service Desk Telephone – 0300 3 035 035 ssd.nationalservicedesk@nhs.net	NHS Digital Solution Assurance Safety Helpdesk Telephone – 0113 397 3033 safety.incident@nhs.net
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Steps to logging a clinical safety incident or risk

Step 1. If you identify a potential clinical safety incident/risk.



Step 2. Inform your organisation's Local Service Desk and your organisation's Clinical Safety Officer or senior clinician that an IT related clinical/potential clinical safety incident has occurred.



Step 3. Your Local Service Desk will inform the NHS Digital Service Desk. If your Local Service Desk is an Accredited Local Service Desk they will inform the affected Suppliers Service Desk directly.



Step 4. Following assessment the confirmed clinical/potential incident will be passed to the NHS Digital Clinical Safety Team who will assess the incident/risk and aim to make the incident/risk safe within 24 hours.

Useful terminology

NHS Digital Clinical Safety Group (CSG) – Group consisting of NHS Digital Clinical Safety Officers (CSO) and Safety Engineers dealing with clinical safety.

Clinical Safety Officer (CSO) – Person in your organisation responsible for ensuring the safety of a Health IT System in the organisation through the application of clinical risk management and provides clinical support to the clinical safety process.

Local Service Desk (LSD) – Helpdesk service provided by your local health or Social Care Organisation

Made Safe – Introduction of measures to mitigate the immediate risk of harming the patient(s). This may include the following actions:

- Circulating a warning to clinicians via the health organisation's clinical safety lead.
- Implementing a workaround in the system
- Removing access to the functionality (screens/dialogues) which is behaving in an un-safe manner
- Closing the system down

Clinical Safety Incident – Software or hardware incident that creates a risk to patients, compromising patient care.

SSD National Service Desk (NSD) – Provides a national service; all major incidents including clinical safety incidents should be logged with the SSD National Service Desk by your Local Service Desk.

NHS Digital Solution Assurance (SA) – Provide support to the NHS Digital Clinical Safety Group (CSG) and National Clinical leads.

SIR Number – NHS Digital Solution Assurance Safety Helpdesk allocate a unique reference number to an incident. This is called the SIR number i.e. the safety incident reference number.