

## Issue 2 - May 2018



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## Welcome to the Verita bulletin

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For the past few months our news pages have been filled with stories of governance issues in both the health and charity sector. We have seen Save the Children's pledge to withdraw applications for further government funding until they have 'gotten their house in order' and most recently, a Belfast hospital recalling patients over treatment fears, reminding us all too vividly of the case of Paterson in 2014. The message to us all is quite clearly *get your governance in order*.

While governance is a focus in this issue, we hope you enjoy our other articles too. Welcome to our second bulletin of 2018.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Ed Marsden'.



**Ed Marsden**

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## Charity sector governance

### Save the Children - investigations & recommendations

#### How unregulated HR processes can affect your company

2018 has seen the charity sector under fire like never before, with sustained media and political scrutiny over failings in corporate governance to tackle serious misconduct and abuse here and abroad.

Save the Children have recently announced they have commissioned a formal investigation into staff misconduct. Such scandal, and the justified public outrage, highlights the fragility of reputations based on trust and intensifies the scrutiny on a sector which relies on reputation to operate.

The spotlight is now well and truly on governance. Reputational damage has been done, and in order to restore public confidence, charities need to prove they are once again good citizens in how they operate corporately and in the field.

Save the Children have withdrawn from bidding for new UK government funding until they can demonstrate they have their house in order. The next steps will be crucial. Ensuring their governance is robust, and quickly, is essential to moving on, and turning the spotlight back from how charities operate and onto to the people and causes they are there to support.

Our experience and knowledge means we understand the complexities of delivering good governance. We can provide the support that charities need to reassure their supporters, staff, regulators and most importantly the people they are there to serve.

Email Verita for more details: [enquiries@verita.net](mailto:enquiries@verita.net)



**Author:**  
Bethany Simpson  
Project and Marketing manager

## Business to government

## Sorry needn't be the hardest word

Verita support the Apology Clause campaign and their mission to clarify the compensation act so businesses can apologise when they should. We have signed their petition and, to raise awareness to our own readers, we have asked them to write an article for our bulletin.

The media is full of tragic stories in which someone who has suffered terribly is left to say that all they wanted was an apology, which they didn't receive.

Sometimes under guidance from legal advisors, or insurers, the businesses say and do nothing. Or they simply roll out a convoluted "non-apology" ("I am sorry if you feel that way...").

These situations need not happen. The law supports apologies. Yet too often businesses put their fear of legal ramifications over what they see as their moral obligations. They fear if they apologise properly they will leave themselves open to legal action. That refusal to do the right thing can have serious and lasting impact on victims.

A clear apology can lift the burden that victims very often carry for a long time after a trauma. It can enable them to move on. To stop blaming themselves. To stop re-living the most agonising moment. To rebuild.

Apology Clause campaigns to put "sorry" on the map

## Apology Clause

**Campaign to clarify the Compensation Act so businesses can apologise when they should**

That is why we set up the Apology Clause campaign - to make it easier for businesses to behave with compassion when things go wrong, and to help victims have better recoveries.

"Sorry" really does make a difference to victims, as it can for the reputations and financials of businesses caught in the eye of the storm. While it is easy to see why lawyers' first instinct is to be extremely cautious, there are times when embracing the apology clause would serve their clients better.

Visit the [campaign website](#) to find out more, contact us at [hello@apologyclause.com](mailto:hello@apologyclause.com), or show your support by signing the petition at [www.change.org/p/secretary-of-state-for-justice-clarify-the-apology-clause](http://www.change.org/p/secretary-of-state-for-justice-clarify-the-apology-clause)

*Nick Wright is a co-founder of the Apology Clause campaign*

*([www.apologyclause.com](http://www.apologyclause.com) and @ApologyClause).*

**Author:**  
Nick Wright  
Co-founder of the Apology Clause campaign

## Complaint handling

## Verita's top five tips: how to use complaints as positive feedback

**1. Complaints are a useful source of data**

Data is a valuable commodity. Viewing complaints as a form of data allows you and your business to harness free information that points you in the direction of improvement. You can then use this information to plot and track progress on making things better.

**2. Complaints tell you honestly what people think of your services**

Complaints tell you where people feel you have room for improvement in all kinds of areas. If you use this information, you can identify areas of your business that needs refining. You might hear something you would not have heard otherwise.

**3. Complaints keep your finger on the pulse**

New complaints should be seen as a form of live feedback, telling you what is wrong in real time. This allows you to benchmark your current performance and whether you are keeping up with the expectations of your customers.

**4. Complaints tell you things you don't want to hear**

Organisations, big or small, always want to hear positive comments. It's the same with management. But negative comments identify the hard truths you need to improve and stay competitive.

**5. Complaints encourage communication**

Complaints are an opportunity for the organisation and its customer or user to positively engage. A rapid acknowledgement, explanation and resolution of an issue will reduce the risk of escalation, a better customer experience and provide a useful reputational boost.

To read more about Verita's complaint management and how to respond to complaints effectively, please visit our website or contact Kieran Seale at [kieranseale@verita.net](mailto:kieranseale@verita.net)

**CHECKLIST**

**Author:**  
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## Save the date

### Independent healthcare - getting your governance in order

Verita have partnered with leading law firm Hill Dickinson to create an insightful discussion on the implications on healthcare providers following the jailing of disgraced breast surgeon Ian Paterson in 2017 for 17 counts of wounding with intent.

NHS and independent healthcare providers are encouraged to join us for a morning seminar on **Wednesday 23 May** to discuss the findings of the Verita 2014 Paterson report, the scope and terms of reference of the current independent inquiry into the issues raised by Paterson, and the importance of good governance for the healthcare sector.

Ed Marsden, managing director of Verita and Kiran Bhogal (Hill Dickinson's head of healthcare in London), will discuss the recommendations and lessons learned from the report as well as implications for the healthcare sector. We will also share our insight and experience on how organisations can ensure high quality governance and the likely consequences of failing to do so.

To register for the event, please follow the link below.

[Independent healthcare - getting your governance in order](#)

**Author:**  
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## Development programme

### Human performance development programme

To understand the conditions that make failure more likely, and why teams can choose to deviate from a tried and tested 'right' path, a client recently put 20 senior experts through our human factors development programme. This training explored behavioural types and individual performance capabilities and limitations. These factors can, for a number of reasons, lead to failure in seemingly odd and unpredictable ways. Since the development course, and based on staff feedback, the client has examined the importance of team communication and the implementation of steps to proactively prevent such failures. By clearly identifying undesirable outcomes, it is possible to determine the best defences against human performance failures.

Find out more about the courses that we offer: <http://www.verita.net/service/training/>

**Author:**  
Chris Brougham  
Director

## Healthcare

## Deep breath - the evolution of NHS healthcare

Just over five years ago, the NHS underwent a seismic shift. Reforms ushered in by the then Health Secretary Andrew Lansley meant the end of increasing consolidation of organisations, resources and plans at regional level under fewer but more powerful strategic health authorities. With SHAs put to the sword, the system expanded rapidly, with new GP-led organisations created to drive up the quality of services by using free market disciplines of reward and failure.

Lansley's tenure as Health Secretary ended after just two years. Views of his reforms vary; they were undoubtedly a huge distraction, and at great cost. Experience was lost and the new cadre of leadership took time to mature and gain confidence. With so many new organisations forming, demand for talent outstripped supply. Sharing of corporate expertise was no longer encouraged as competition, not cooperation, was now king. Boards and governance arrangements struggled to meet the demands of a rapidly evolving regulatory and policy environment and external communication was dominated by the technical, not the practical or aspirational.

On the flip side, the changes shifted focus back onto the local, with the NHS increasingly looking out rather than just up. Relationships strengthened between the NHS, local authorities and other partners. Perhaps this is why, five years on, under STPs and the emerging integrated care systems, the system is consolidating again.

A powerful but unintended consequence of the reforms was that by creating so much rivalry, the NHS has now realised it is so much stronger working together. Competition has abdicated in favour of cooperation. Integrated services and shared budgets are seen as the way to meet increased demand, today's health challenges, and the opportunities offered by expanded prevention, community services and technology.

This evolution will continue, but there remain serious challenges ahead. One of the most overlooked at times of rapid change is the importance of robust governance. Whilst patients and staff will welcome more joined-up care, ultimately the buck must stop somewhere. As cooperation increases, and formal and informal alliances are made, leaders must make sure that they continue to have an effective line of sight of patient care no matter where or by who it is delivered.

**Author:**  
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Communications director

## Verita's industry sectors

From charities and healthcare to education and business-to-government, we help a variety of industry sectors.

**EDUCATION**

Prospective students are increasingly more discerning and have a greater choice than ever before. It is important that their concerns are handled safely and swiftly.

**HEALTHCARE**

We have a long and successful history of working with healthcare organisations to make improvements through investigation, training and consultancy.

**CHARITIES**

For all registered charities, reputation is key. If complaints and compliance issues are not dealt with swiftly and effectively, the damage can be significant and long lasting.

**BUSINESS TO GOVERNMENT**

Over the years we have developed a good understanding of the difficult environment in which providers of services to government operate.

Verita are a leading independent consultancy for regulated organisations. We specialise in carrying out objective investigations of complex and often sensitive issues in a thorough and progressive manner. We provide organisations with specialist support and advise them on challenging operational and strategic issues in order to help them evolve and improve.

At Verita, we are known for our thoroughness and commitment to producing evidence-based reports and advice that not only withstand rigorous challenge, but provide insight and a clear path to resolution or improvement.

Our approach is measured, appropriate and acutely focused on finding solutions. Our approach saves our clients time and money by getting it right the first time.

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