



## Duty of candour

Sir, In reporting on the introduction of a Hillsborough Law (news, Sep 25) you say that a statutory duty of candour already applies to NHS providers, and that the new law would widen this duty to include all public servants and bodies. There are significant problems with this. The NHS duty of candour is implemented at best as a "one-off" disclosure, with no requirement for honesty and openness thereafter. The subsequent change of stance by staff often evident in investigations, complaints, inquests and litigation is deeply distressing, certainly to the families at the heart of the East Kent maternity services investigation, and others. This would be a poor model.

If we suppose that the NHS already has this right, we will miss a major opportunity to reform the NHS duty of candour. A statutory, enduring duty of candour for the NHS, as called for in the report of the East Kent maternity services investigation, would mean significant improvement in the response to families harmed and bereaved by patient safety incidents.

**Bishop James Jones**, chair, Hillsborough Independent Panel and Gosport Independent Panel;  
**Bill Kirkup**, chair, Independent Investigation into East Kent Maternity Services

## Labour

Sir, You report that the minister promises the use of migrant labour to boost the economy ("PM migration but offer taxes", Sep 24). It is the same day you also report on the problems facing employers ("no-shows and early departures", Sep 24) and the failure of firms to start jobs ("Quarter of firms fail to start jobs", Sep 24). It is a reality for many years that the economy has been able to function without migrant labour in sectors of our economy such as hospitals and hospitals.

**Richard Holman**  
Alderley Edge, Cheshire

Sir, I share your worry about the lacklustre performance of the prime minister and the Labour Party conference ("Labour Party conference: War", leading article, Sep 24). Labour leadership will move from empty rhetoric to policy plans. With the report about First Hydro pumped hydropower in Dinorwig, Snowdonia, an opportunity ("Bro Hydro stake to Canada", Sep 24).

## Human rights

Sir, Melanie Phillips's challenge to "the national challenge" to "the national challenge" (comment, Sep 24; let overlooks two fundamental First, almost every leg respecting the rule of