

SPEAK UP LISTEN UP FOLLOW UP

Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust Freedom to Speak Up Strategy 2022-2025

“Failure to speak up can cost lives. The NHS is blessed with staff who want to do the best for their patients. They want to be able to raise their concerns, free of fear that they may be badly treated when they do so, and confident that effective action will be taken.

We need to get away from a culture of blame, and the fear it generates, to one which celebrates openness and commitment to safety and improvement. If these things are achieved, the NHS will be a better place to work. Above all, it will be a safer place for patients.”

Sir Robert Francis QC

“Everyone needs to be valued and listened to and feel fairly treated at work. Nowhere is this more important than in health when it can be a matter of life or death.

We have shown that a positive speaking up culture is often associated with higher performing organisations. Workers are the eyes and ears of an organisation, and they should be listened to when considering patient safety and experience. The best leaders understand how important this is. These leaders create an inclusive speaking up culture where everyone’s insight and expertise is valued, and all workers are empowered to speak up and contribute to improvements in patient care.”

Dr Henrietta Hughes - Former National Guardian

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SPEAK UP LISTEN UP FOLLOW UP

Introduction

In response to the principles and actions described in the review into Mid-Staffordshire Hospitals¹ (2013) and the subsequent review of whistleblowing in the NHS² (2015), undertaken by Sir Robert Francis QC; here at Lancashire Teaching Hospitals report, we reviewed our processes and systems for inviting, listening, and responding to concerns raised by staff. The Board of Directors oversaw implementation of a range of measures to strengthen systems and processes to enable staff across the Trust to raise concerns and speak up with confidence. These included:

- The appointment of a FTSU Guardian,
- Establishment of board level representation for staff raising concerns,
- Establishment of Trust policy
- Quarterly reporting of concerns and learning that comes from them
- Inclusion of importance of raising concerns in new staff induction for all staff including board members and inclusion in mandatory training

Completion of these and other actions does not represent an end point. There is more to do to ensure that raising concerns is business as usual for all our staff, and that when they do so they can be confident that those concerns will be heard and, as appropriate, acted upon.

SPEAK UP, LISTEN UP, FOLLOW UP

Speaking up where we have concerns or see opportunities for change and improvement is essential if we are to achieve our key ambitions³ to:

- Consistently deliver excellent care.
- Deliver value for money.
- Ensure that we are fit for the future, and
- Ensure that Lancashire Teaching Hospitals is an excellent place to work.

SPEAK UP, LISTEN UP, FOLLOW UP

This strategy supports Lancashire Teaching Hospitals commitment to deliver safe, excellent care with compassion to patients and their families. It complements other Trust strategies for improvement and cultural change, including *Our Culture Counts*, *Always Safety First*, *Continuous Improvement*, and *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion*. Our mission, consistent with the national mission is to make speaking up business as usual throughout the Trust. Our primary aims are:

- To ensure that all staff who work in the Trust understand the importance of raising concerns as a vehicle for the delivery of excellent care with compassion.

¹ [Francis Enquiry 2013](#)

² [Freedom to Speak Up report 2015](#)

³ [Our Big Plan - Trust Intranet](#)



- To contribute to the development of a just culture, underpinned by effective policy, education, leadership, and active Guardian support.
- To provide a safe environment in which all staff can raise concerns with confidence and without fear of detriment
- To develop a culture where gratitude, recognition, and positive response towards those who speak up
- To promote learning and improvement through listening and responding

Making Speaking Up Business as Usual

The National Guardians Office commits to working partnership to improve **speaking up, listen up, follow up** cultures. They aim to achieve this, in part, by bringing national bodies together to develop a consistent and supportive response when they raise concerns, promote universal principles for speaking up and develop a consistent set of metrics that promote understanding of speaking up culture.

Trust strategy has been developed in the context of, and regarding the new National Guardian Office's Freedom to Speak Up Strategic Framework⁴ and the following key Trust documents:

- Our Values
- The Workforce and Organisational Development Strategy
- Equality and Inclusion Strategy 2019-2023

Locally, delivery of our primary aims will be through three core pillars, reflecting national guidance:

- The Freedom to Speak Up Guardian
- All Staff
- Leadership

Good Governance and an open and honest culture of shared ownership of incidents, concerns and risks enables individuals to feel comfortable about raising concerns with their colleagues or managers and as such is indicative of a positive culture of speaking up to ensure good governance, we will:

- Review the Raising concerns (Whistleblowing) Policy on an annual basis, update where necessary and approve in accordance with Trust policy.
- Ensure that speaking up is referenced in relevant Trust policies.
- Ensure compliance with strategies, policies and guidance related to 'speaking up' received from the NGO, CQC and NHSI.

The FTSU Guardian will seek feedback on the experiences of colleagues who raise concerns to provide an overview of staff attitudes towards speaking up, awareness of, and ease of access to the FTSU team.

The quarterly (and annual) reports to the Workforce Committee and the Board of Directors will provide the mechanism through which the FTSU Guardian appraises the Chief Executive Officer and the Board of Directors of speaking up concerns. These reports will include themes and

⁴ [NGO Strategic framework](#)



trends and feedback from users of the FTSU service. Reports will also include gap analysis against national guardian office case reviews, and progress against annual goals.

In addition, the Board of Directors seeks assurance from several sources including:

- Incident reporting: numbers, quality of reports, levels of feedback
- Grievances: numbers and themes
- Local initiatives to improve patient safety and staff experience
- Feedback provided by staff through local and national surveys, exit interviews, valuing your voice
- Feedback obtained directly from staff during departmental visits and walkabouts by Board members
- Internal audit reports
- Culture reviews
- CQC inspection reports

Each year, goals will be agreed by the Trusts Raising Concerns Group, reflecting changing priorities and progressions of existing ones to support delivery of the mission statement and primary aims. Identification of priorities for action will be informed by a review of all FTSU activity alongside other sources, including, but not limited to:

- Relevant Datix reports
- Staff survey results
- Intelligence from workforce and organisational development activity
- Whistleblowing through sources other than FTSU
- Relevant Safeguarding activity
- Feedback from staff side representatives
- Feedback from reports to external bodies (e.g., CQC, HEE)
- Benchmarking against external/national reviews/reports
- Informal feedback through other sources

Goals for 2022-2023 can be found in the next sections.



The Freedom to Speak Up (FTSU) Guardian

The Freedom to Speak Up Guardians promote learning and improvement by ensuring that colleagues are supported in speaking up. They help identify and address barriers to speaking up and foster a positive culture of speaking up ensuring that issues raised are used as opportunities for learning and improvement.

To perform their role effectively the Guardian must have the necessary knowledge, skills, and credibility to meet the needs of colleagues seeking support.

Improvement Goals and Actions – 2022-23

Goal one

During 2022-23 the Guardian will maintain knowledge, skills, and credibility by:

- Completing training and any associated competency assessments as prescribed by the National Guardians Office (NGO)
- Submitting to any registration requirements required by the NGO
- Review current roles and responsibilities against nationally defined job description
- Actively engaging with regional and national networks and conferences not only to maintain knowledge but also to provide support and inform and influence policy and practice.
- Review all relevant key organisational vision and strategies. To ensure that the importance of developing a positive culture where speaking up is business as usual is reflected within.
- Extend roll out of the Datix reporting module for FTSU activity, ensuring the system supports triangulation and extraction of learning
- Ensure that there are sufficient FTSU Champions through targeted recruitment in areas of need
- Ensure that the role of the Champions reflects national guidance



All Staff

The 2021 staff survey results were very much consistent with the national picture and reflected strong resilience of the Trust as a whole and of staff collectively in the face of the challenges faced during a difficult year. However, putting aside Trust performance against in the national, regional, and local context and viewing results purely in isolation, concerns nevertheless still exist that we cannot ignore if we are serious in our aim to make Lancashire Teaching Hospitals a great place to work for all.

However as our culture strategy: *To create a positive organisational culture* suggests, we are all custodians of the culture we work in and it is everyone's responsibility to be a "cultural architect", helping to shape the culture, and to challenge when 'things do not feel right'

Staff survey results suggest that:

- Eight percent of staff believe they have experienced discrimination
- Twenty-seven percent would not feel secure raising concerns about clinical practice (38% about anything that concerns them)
- Thirty-six percent who experienced physical violence did not report it
- Nine percent of staff experience harassment, bullying or abuse from managers
- Seventeen percent from colleagues
- Fifty-four percent who experienced harassment, bullying or abuse at work did not report it
- Nineteen percent do not receive the respect they believe they deserve from colleagues
- Fifteen percent will leave the organisation if they can find another job

Results highlight several areas of improvement in the experiences of staff. Indeed, the results in respect of the bullying and harassment questions should be viewed in the context of year-on-year improvement, but there is still more to do, to foster a **Speak Up Listen Up Follow Up** culture where staff are listened to, and appropriate action taken as a result.

It is known that suppression of the voices of workers causes suffering for people who are trying to do the right thing. It erodes trust in speaking up processes and can lead to a failure to prevent harm and miss opportunities for improvement.

Improvement Goals and Actions – 2022-23

In support of our staff, we will, during 2022:

Goal two

Ensure that staff are aware of arrangements for speaking up, listening up and following up by:

- Reviewing the Trust policy against national guidance and in response to local need and approve through local Governance processes
- Continuing with ongoing recruitment of Freedom to Speak Up champions according to local need
- Continue to promote key principles of the 'Call it out with compassion' initiative
- Engage with the communication team to ensure that key messages promoting speaking up are included in Trust communications and event involving staff
- Provide support to teams with implementation of just culture principles



Goal three

Promote protection for those who speak up, by:

- Thanking all staff who speak up to the Guardian or Champions
- Engaging with workforce colleagues to support staff who believe that speaking up has impacted negatively on them
- Promoting the value of speaking up and making suggestions that can lead to prevention of harm and improvement in the quality of services, treatment, and care

Goal four

Make available training tools for staff that promote a **speaking up, listening up, following up** culture, by:

- Reviewing available training resources for all new staff – reintroducing face-to-face induction
- Supporting the delivery of training resources for staff, specifically the introduction of e-learning resources as developed by the NGO and enhanced with local information as part of the Trust mandatory training programme



Leadership

Speaking up is an opportunity to learn, develop and improve. Welcoming speaking up, however it happens, is an integral aspect of leadership. Where such welcome is embraced by our leaders, speaking up effectively contributes to the safety and quality of care, the efficiency of services and improvements in the working environment.

Leaders at all levels must understand that they set the tone when it comes to fostering a **speaking up, listen up, follow up** culture and a just culture. The Trust culture strategy: *To create a positive organisational culture*, suggests that the culture of an organisation can be felt by all our colleagues, including those across the region as well as in the Trust. Where speaking up is not supported and where staff feel afraid or unable to speak up, preventable harm is more likely to occur, improvement opportunities are missed and staff will leave, as we can evidence.

It is essential that our leaders and senior leaders support and encourage **speaking up, listen up, follow up** in their teams (and including themselves)

Improvement Goals and Actions – 2022-23

In support of our leaders, we will, during 2022:

Goal five

Make available training tools for leaders that promote a **speaking up, listen up, follow up** culture, by:

- Supporting the delivery of training resources for leaders and senior leaders including the Board of Directors, specifically the introduction of e-learning resources as developed by the NGO and enhanced with local information as part of the Trust mandatory training programme

Goal six

Ensure that the Board of Directors and senior leaders behave in a way that encourages others to speak up by:

- Undertaking (following publication) the *Freedom to Speak Up review tool for NHS trusts and foundation trusts* to reflect on our current speaking up culture as part of this strategy

Goal seven

Promote wider learning across our leadership by:

- Undertaking and disseminating the results of a gap analysis of all NGO case reviews using tools provided by the NGO
- Share information on incidence, themes, and trends using Datix reporting systems and Board reporting

Goal eight

Ensure that external stakeholders are engaged and have access to FTSU information and intelligence, by:

- Continuing to provide scheduled and extraordinary reports at the public Board of Directors meeting
- Sharing our strategy with National Guardians Office
- Sharing reviews and audits externally e.g., through the regional FTSU group, to support improvement elsewhere
- Sharing our F2SU reports as part of our relationship visits with the CQC where requested

Whilst the above narrative describes **key** improvement goals, the actions described are not exhaustive. Due to the nature of speaking up, it is anticipated further in-year actions will be required and added to the Trust FTSU action plan which will continue to be subject to quarterly review by the Raising Concerns Group.

This strategy will be reviewed by the Executive and Non-executive Lead Director and the FTSUG on an annual basis with agreement of year 2 and year 3 goals and actions, subject to approval by the Raising Concerns Group and Workforce Committee.

