

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

NOVEMBER 2018

FREEDOM TO SPEAK UP GUARDIAN

Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to outline progress to date with the development of the role of the Freedom to Speak Up Guardian (FTSUG) and the support role of Freedom To Speak Up Ambassadors (FTSUA) across both South Tyneside (STFT) and City Hospitals Sunderland (CHS) Foundation Trusts.

Background Facts

The Francis Report into the failings at Mid Staffs resulted in the Secretary of State commissioning a 'Freedom to Speak Up Review' which was published in 2015. The aim of the report was to provide advice and recommendations that would result in staff feeling safe to raise concerns and that those concerns would be listened to and appropriate action taken. The review identified concerns about the way in which some NHS organisations dealt with concerns and the way some of those who raised concerns were subsequently treated.

The review identified five key themes, the need for culture change, improved handling of cases, measures to support good practice and vulnerable groups and the need to extend the legal protection.

From the review Francis wanted ensure that there is an 'independent' dedicated person in every Trust to whom concerns can be easily reported, a "Freedom to Speak Up Guardian" out with the normal 'line management' structure. This was reinforced in 2015 by the Department of Health who at that point made the appointment of a Freedom to Speak up Guardian mandatory for every Trust.

In addition, an independent non statutory body was established, the National Guardian's Office (NGO), led by After a short delay Dr Henrietta Hughes who was appointed as the National Freedom to Speak Up Guardian in October 2016 and since then has been driving the agenda forward.

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) assesses a trust's speaking up culture during inspections as part of the 'well-led framework'.

Policy Framework

Both Trusts currently have a Raising Concerns (Whistleblowing) Policy, both are currently under review pending approval of a single policy across both Trusts developed in line with the national policy and input from the NGO and renamed as Freedom to Speak Up: Raising Concerns at Work Policy. It is anticipated that this revised policy will be in place in December 2018.

Guidance for Boards on Freedom to Speak Up

Earlier this year NHS Improvement issued the above which sets out their expectations of boards in relation to FTSU and is accompanied by a self- review tool. The guide is aligned with the good practice set out in the well-led framework and will be subject to a separate paper to the Board of Directors.

Current Position

Since 2016 the Director of HR and OD has taken on the role of FTSUG for CHS, this was extended to include STFT from October 2017.

At CHS nine FTSUAs from a variety disciplines have been in place since May 2017. In September 2018 four staff from STFT were trained and took on their role as FTSUAs. Following discussion with all thirteen ambassadors they have agreed to be available to staff from either Trust to contact to raise a concern/speak up.

October 2018 was nationally badged as 'Speak Up' month as part of this the Chief Executive Officer 'wrote' to staff via email/intranet to again raise awareness about speaking up and to launch the new poster showing all thirteen trained ambassadors who can be contacted to listen to staff who wish to 'speak up'/raise a concern (copy attached at **Appendix 1**).

Concerns Raised

The number of concerns raised via the Freedom to Speak Up Guardian/Ambassadors continues to be low:

	STFT	CHS
2017/18	1	9
2018/19	0	5

There are a range of issues that are raised including:

- Unhappy with grievance outcome
- Suspected fraud
- Staffing numbers on ward

- Cover arrangements for gap in rota
- Potential patient & staff safety concern
- Bullying/ Harassment/ Undermining.

It should be noted that the only 'concerns' that are recorded are those that are raised with the FTSUG or a FTSUA. Any patient safety or any other concern raised via another route e.g. grievance, disciplinary, anonymous letter are not included in these figures.

Concerns raised are addressed either via an investigation by a senior manager or the counter fraud, or by following the appropriate HR process.

All concerns raised have been followed up and feedback provided to the individual staff members. Of the concerns raised in 2018/19 one remains open with actions/investigations in progress.

Staff Survey Results 2018

The results of the staff survey questions in respect of raising concerns are detailed below:

Question	CHS	STFT
Staff confidence & security in reporting unsafe clinical practice	3.78 (3.65)	3.70 (3.67)
Fairness & effectiveness of procedures for reporting errors, near misses and incidents	3.82 (3.73)	3.73 (3.73)
% of staff reporting errors, near Misses or incidents witnessed in the last month	89% (90%)	86% (91%)
% of staff/colleagues reporting most recent experience of harassment, bullying or abuse	46% (45%)	44% (47%)
Staff reporting good communication between senior management & staff	37% (33%)	27% (33%)

Actions for 2018/19


Good progress has been made to date with regard to getting the overarching framework in place with regard to FTUG and trained FTSUAs.

The next stage of the work is to make sure staff are aware of the new policy once it is ratified, to increase the visibility of the Guardian and Ambassadors across both Trusts and to embed a Freedom to Speak Up Culture across both Trusts.

In addition, following completion of the self - review tool in the 'Guidance for Boards on Freedom to Speak up' an action plan will be developed and taken forward.

Recommendations

Directors are asked to note the content of this report.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kathleen Griffin', written in a cursive style.

Kathleen Griffin
Freedom to Speak Up Guardian

**Raising Concerns
Freedom to Speak Up**

MEET OUR FREEDOM TO SPEAK UP GUARDIAN AND AMBASSADORS

We want our staff in South Tyneside and Sunderland to feel comfortable raising any concerns they may have so, if you are worried or have a concern about something that is happening at work, please do not keep it to yourself.

Unless you tell us about your concern – whether it is about patient care, health and safety, a breach of a professional code or other wrongdoing - then we may not find out about it until it is too late. The Freedom to Speak Up Guardian and team of Ambassadors are here to listen to your concerns, openly, or confidentially and will take these forward.



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