



Freedom to Speak Up Report

Safina Nadeem

EDI Director

Freedom to Speak Up Guardian



Background

The role of Freedom to Speak Up (F2SU) guardians and the National Guardian were established in 2016 following the events at Mid-Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust and recommendations from Sir Robert Francis' Freedom to Speak Up Inquiry.

FTSU has also become part of the CQC Well Led inspection component since October 2016

The National Guardian's office (NGO) was established in October 2016 at the same time as it became a contractual obligation for every NHS Provider Organisation to have appointed a FTSU Guardian.

Each Trust Guardian provides reports to their own respective Boards on the number and types of cases seen through the F2SU process

This report provides details from 2022-2023 Q3 submissions, and includes data from the following organisations:

- Berkshire Health NHS Foundation Trust
- Frimley Health NHS Foundation Trust
- NHS Frimley
- Surrey And Borders Partnership NHS Foundation Trust

What ICB's should do

- **Freedom to Speak Up for ICB workers by 30 January 2024**

ICB's own staff have access to routes for speaking up including Freedom to Speak Up guardian(s). ICB's adopt the new national policy and use the guide and improvement tool to map the plan for the next three years.

- **Freedom to Speak Up for primary care workers over the next 18 months**

- **Freedom to Speak Up across the ICS over the next 18 months** – ICBs should start to think about:

- How they will gain assurance that all NHS organisations across the ICS have accessible speaking up arrangements and understand and address any barriers
- NHS England has asked that all NHS trusts adopt the policy and apply the guide and improvement tool over the next 18 months and have provided assurance to their public boards by the end of January 2024
- How they might share good practice and learning across the ICS about speaking up culture improvements.
- The systems they will put in place to capture and measure speaking up data.

ICB's should think about how F2SU will support delivery of outcomes in terms of voice, experience and patient safety. ICBs have a great opportunity to ensure speaking up routes are available for all workers in NHS healthcare providers across the ICS. This must include access to a Freedom to Speak Up guardian(s) at organisation, place and/or system level. Appointing an executive and non-executive lead for Freedom to Speak Up within your ICB will provide leadership.



F2SU Data

- Number of cases brought to F2SUG's -**105**
- Number of cases raised anonymously - **6**
- Number of cases with element of Patient Safety/Quality – **27**
- Well-being element – **13**
- Bullying and harassment element -**21**
- Inappropriate attitudes/behaviour – **65**
- Number of cases where people felt they are suffering a detriment -**3**

National Picture from Staff Survey 2023

- The Freedom to Speak Up sub-score **declined** from 6.5 in 2021 to 6.4 in this year's NHS Staff
- There was a marked **fall** for raising concerns relating to clinical practice
- For the first time, bank staff completed a **bank staff survey**. The results were in line with the core survey results for all four speak up questions.
- By sector, **ambulance trusts** continue to score **least well** (and are continuing to worsen) whereas **community trusts continue to perform best**.
- The gap between community and ambulance/acute trust results is **widening**, potentially indicating the impact of pressures on frontline services.
- The Freedom to Speak Up sub-score **positively correlates with Care Quality Commission** ratings.
- The North East and Yorkshire, North West and South East regions scored the highest.

Fear and Futility Report – What does the Staff Survey Tell us about Speaking Up in the NHS June 2023

Key Points from the data

The number of concerns around behaviours, relationships and Bullying & Harassment is increasing and this impacts on patient care and experience.

It may be a sign of the pressure the healthcare system is under which may prevent creating an inclusive culture and supporting staff to bring their whole self to work to provide compassionate care.

There are voices that aren't being heard . What detriment is being suffered by those raising subjective concerns such as bullying, microaggressions & other poor behaviours against protected characteristics, having to provide evidence to support a subjective experience.

There are drawbacks of dealing with anonymous cases (not able to ask further questions or provide feedback).

Managers play a key role in fostering a culture where speaking up is encouraged and valued. Although the tone one is set from the top, as it sends a clear message to the organisation of what behaviours are expected, it is the line manager who has the strongest influence on workers' psychological and physical environment



Discussion points for Board

- These are the cases that staff have been courageous to speak up about, but are we hearing, listening, and giving the opportunities for all staff to speak up via all the routes they speak up in
- The board is asked to support joined-up work in developing an impactful and consistent approach with the follow-up training for senior leaders and listen-up training for middle managers across the ICS
- The Board is asked to reflect the importance of FTSU and how they role model FTSU in their everyday interactions. The Board to understand how this supports improvements to patient care and experience and well as wellbeing and retention.
- As staff are increasingly working across borders, a joined-up approach across the ICS is needed.
- How do we ensure that leaders are listening – otherwise they will speak to regulators or stop speaking up if futile ?
- How do we support people who suffer a detriment through speaking?

Improving F2SU Culture

As an ICS we want to agree to commit to :-

- Creating a culture where speaking up is welcomed and celebrated as a tool for improvement
- Enabling managers to promote psychological safety within teams
- Creating an environment which encourages free thinking, innovation, experimentation, with an acknowledgement that things can go wrong and if they do, we use this as a learning opportunity for everyone .
- Promoting a positive workplace and culture where everyone has a voice and can talk about concerns without being spot lit or suffer any backlash/detriment



Next Steps

- Continue to work collectively to improve culture of speaking up where it is welcomed and used as a tool for improvement
- Routinely collect equality monitoring data to understand who is and isn't speaking up
- Develop a plan/approach for speaking up in Primary Care
- Engage in a Board Seminar around F2SU
- Work with Local Authority colleagues to understand speaking up arrangements
- Continue to raise issues with organisations in our system, once brought to the ICB's attention
- Organisations to adopt the new national policy and use the guide and improvement tool to map our plan for the next three years.