

National Guardian Freedom to Speak Up

Freedom to Speak Up Guardian Job Description

March 2018

Purpose

Freedom to Speak Up Guardians help:

- Protect patient safety and the quality of care
- Improve the experience of workers
- Promote learning and improvement

By ensuring that:

- Workers are supported in speaking up
- Barriers to speaking up are addressed
- A positive culture of speaking up is fostered
- Issues raised are used as opportunities for learning and improvement

Expectations

Freedom to Speak Up Guardians:

- Operate independently, impartially and objectively, whilst working in partnership with individuals and groups throughout their organisation, including their senior leadership team
- Seek guidance and support from and, where appropriate, escalate matters to, bodies outside their organisation
- Support, and contribute to, the national Freedom to Speak Up Guardian network, comply with National Guardian Office guidance, and support each other by providing peer-to-peer support and sharing learning
- Should be supported with the resources they need, including ring-fenced time, to ensure that they meet the needs of workers in their organisation. Their views on the impact of activities and decisions on Freedom to Speak Up should be actively sought

Appointment

Appointments to the Freedom to Speak Up Guardian role are made locally and should take into account the needs of workers in the organisation. Appointments should be made according to local policies, fairly, openly and transparently.

Role

Freedom to Speak Up Guardians are responsible for taking action to promote the following outcomes:

Outcome	Detail
Workers throughout the organisation have the capability, knowledge, and skills they need to speak up themselves and to support others to speak up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everyone who works in the organisation has appropriate training and easy access to the knowledge and support they need to speak up and to support others to speak up • Action is taken to ensure that groups that may face particular barriers to speaking up have the knowledge and support they need
Speaking up policies and processes are effective and constantly improved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local policies and processes are clear and readily available to all workers, meet minimum standards where they are set, and regularly reviewed and updated • Feedback on policies and processes is regularly sought to ensure that they are continuously improved and meet the needs of workers
Senior leaders role-model effective speaking up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior leaders receive regular reports from their Freedom to Speak Up Guardian that include information on the number and types of cases they deal with, barriers to speaking up, and details of opportunities for learning and improving • Freedom to Speak Up Guardians present their reports in person • Freedom to Speak Up Guardians meet regularly with the organisation's CEO or equivalent, and other members of the senior leadership team, as appropriate • Local measures of the impact of freedom to speak up and the Freedom to Speak Up Guardian role are agreed and used to monitor progress
All workers are encouraged to speak up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Induction processes include freedom to speak up messages and explain the Freedom to Speak Up Guardian role • Freedom to speak up messages and details of the Freedom to Speak Up Guardian role are regularly communicated across the organisation, including feedback on matters that workers are speaking up about, and, mindful of preserving confidentiality where needed, action taken in response to them – the impact of these communications is measured • Action is taken to ensure that freedom to speak up messages reach groups that may face particular barriers to speaking up

<p>Individuals are supported when they speak up</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Freedom to Speak Up Guardians provide effective and compassionate support and guidance to all workers, developing a local network of champions (or similar) as appropriate to local need, to ensure that they have suitable reach across the organisation • There are alternative routes to progress cases that may otherwise present a Freedom to Speak Up Guardian with a conflict • Cases are recorded according to National Guardian Office guidance • Appropriate action is taken when an issue is brought to the attention of a Freedom to Speak Up Guardian, with confidentiality being respected as appropriate, fair and effective investigation, and regular feedback on progress being given • Individuals who have spoken up are thanked and do not suffer as a result of speaking up • Feedback is sought from everyone who is supported by a Freedom to Speak Up Guardian
<p>Barriers to speaking up are identified and tackled</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sources of information on barriers to speaking up are assessed and used to prioritise areas for improvement • Action is taken to reduce barriers to speaking up, prioritised according to local need
<p>Information provided by speaking up is used to learn and improve</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any information that indicates a potential risk to patient safety is acted on immediately • Information from cases raised by people speaking up, and barriers to speak up, is brought alongside other intelligence on patient safety, service quality, and staff experience and used to inform organisational learning and development
<p>Freedom to speak up is consistent throughout the health and care system, and ever improving</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidance issued by the National Guardian's Office is followed, and feedback on its effectiveness and impact provided • Freedom to Speak Up Guardians contribute to and support the national Freedom to Speak Up Guardian network • Intelligence on speaking up, case studies and good practice is shared at regional meetings, across networks, and with the National Guardian's Office • Information requests from the National Guardian's Office are responded to, and Freedom to Speak Up Guardians support the National Guardian's Office case review process locally • Freedom to Speak Up Guardians role-model good speaking up practice and challenge poor practice • Freedom to Speak Up Guardians regularly assess their own skills and capabilities and take action to improve • Freedom to Speak Up Guardians offer support and advice to their peers

Competencies

The Freedom to Speak Up Guardian role requires a range of skills and competencies. These are set out in the Freedom to Speak Up Guardian Education and Training Guide. These include, but are not limited to, skills and competencies in:

- Communication
- Partnership building and relationship management
- Knowledge of the speaking up agenda and local systems
- Driving continuous improvement
- Time management and prioritisation
- Measuring effectiveness and impact
- Training and capability building
- Working with senior leaders

Values

The following values are upheld by Freedom to Speak Up Guardians:

- **Courage** ... *speaking truthfully and challenging appropriately*
- **Impartiality** ... *remaining objective and unbiased*
- **Empathy** ... *listening well and acting with sensitivity*
- **Learning** ... *seeking and providing feedback and looking for opportunities to improve*