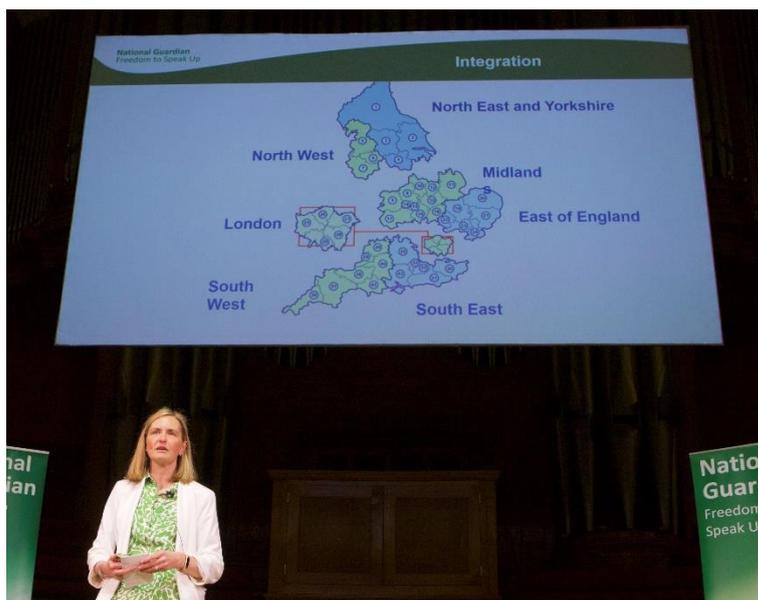


News from the National Guardian



The health service in England is changing, along with the needs of the population and its workforce. In the NHS Long Term Plan, published in January, NHS England asked Sustainability and Transformation Partnerships (STPs) and Integrated Care Systems (ICSs) to devise strategies that will set out how they intend to turn the ambitions of the NHS Long Term Plan into local action to improve services and the health of the communities they serve.

As the health service moves towards integrated care, it is vital now more than ever that Freedom to Speak Up Guardians work across boundaries to support workers. Guardians also need to be advocates for partnership working, bringing together local organisations and multidisciplinary teams when concerns need to be escalated and the right actions taken. Anyone working in the NHS should feel able to speak up and know who to turn to.

In line with these priorities, NHS England has asked my office to support the implementation of Freedom to Speak Up in primary care organisations, and develop an integrated approach across traditional primary and secondary care boundaries.

At this year's National Freedom to Speak Up Conference, my office outlined its plans for this, including working with vanguards in primary care and newly appointed Regional Liaison Leads.

This will create new opportunities to support the existing networks of guardians as they continue to support workers speaking up. I look forward to working together to expand the speaking up culture in primary care, and establish an integrated approach to speaking up in the NHS and the wider healthcare system.

Dr Henrietta Hughes, National Guardian for the NHS

“As the health service moves towards integrated care, it is vital now more than ever that Freedom to Speak Up Guardians work across boundaries to support workers.”

National Freedom to Speak Up Conference outlines key priorities for the future



A large audience consisting of guardians and representatives from a wide range of organisations including NHS trusts, regulators, professional bodies and primary care attended the National Freedom to Speak Up Conference at Central Hall Westminster.

This year's conference included keynote speeches from the Minister of State for Care Caroline Dinenage MP, East London NHS FT Chief Executive Dr Navina Evans, Professor Megan Reitz from Hult International Business School and Dr Chris Turner from Civility Saves Lives.

The conference provided an excellent opportunity for delegates to come together in their new seven regions to discuss integration with other healthcare providers.

The National Guardian's Office outlined its Freedom to Speak Up Integration Plans and its priorities for speaking up in primary care, including working in partnership with primary care vanguards.

Thank you to everyone who completed the feedback. We're delighted that 94 per cent of delegates said it was very good or good, and we will use all the feedback to make improvements to future events.

“I was impressed by the enthusiasm, commitment and compassion of the many Freedom to Speak Up Guardians I shared stories with at the conference.

“In particular, I was struck by how Freedom to Speak Up feels like a culture change movement, and I look forward to supporting this agenda in the future. Knowing how to speak truth to power – mindfully – matters.”

Professor Megan Reitz

Regional Liaison Leads to develop local Freedom to Speak Up Integration Plans

NHS England has asked the National Guardian's Office to support the implementation of the guardian role in primary care organisations, and develop an integrated approach to speaking up across primary and secondary care boundaries.

To lead on this significant change, Regional Liaison Leads (RLLs) will be responsible for the implementation of local Freedom to Speak Up Integration Plans and the continued development of networks to support Freedom to Speak Up Guardians.

The National Guardian's Office has recruited five Regional Liaison Leads (RLLs) so far - North West, North East and Yorkshire, South West, South East and Midlands. These are new roles that will be based throughout the new seven regions.



“I’m delighted that the Regional Liaison Leads will soon be joining the team to provide a regional link to the national office.

“They bring a wealth of knowledge about regional and local healthcare systems that are fundamental to these roles. I look forward to welcoming them and to learning more about the Freedom to Speak Up landscape in primary care.

“Together we will implement our integration plans across the regions and help create new opportunities for speaking up in the NHS.”

Dr Henrietta Hughes

New guidance on settlement agreements referenced in NHS standard contract

Settlement agreements can create barriers to speaking up. They can leave workers unclear about what they can speak up about, or even if they can speak up at all.

Sometimes they include 'non-disclosure agreements' or confidentiality clauses, which can result in workers fearing that they can't access the support they need during what is, often, a very stressful time. The National Guardian's Office has therefore been working with partners to make some important changes.

The work began with a summit of major law firms who work with the health service convened by NHS Employers. The National Guardian's Office contributed to this summit and has worked alongside NHS Employers, Unison and the Department of Health and Social Care to co-produce clearer guidance on the use and content of settlement agreements. In addition, Henrietta appeared on Radio Four's Today programme to discuss the issue.

In collaboration with the law firms, NHS Employers have now published this [updated guidance](#) and accompanying [factsheet](#). NHS England has also revised the NHS [Standard Contract](#) so that it refers to this guidance. The guidance describes best practice for the leaders of organisations, for example, for chief executives to sign off the settlement agreement which is not currently done by all trusts.



“My experience as a GP is that people can often feel very vulnerable at the time they are offered a settlement agreement and that's why it's vital they can access support at this difficult time. The guidance assures workers they can still speak up and talk to their GP even if they are being offered a settlement agreement.

“This is an important step, and we have seen what has happened in other industries recently, such as fashion and film, where we know settlement agreements of one form or another have been used to silence people. I am proud in the NHS we can say we have addressed this issue and taken one further step towards making speaking up business as usual.”

Dr Henrietta Hughes

The role of managers in encouraging a speak up culture



By Katherine Bradshaw
Head of Communications
Institute of Business Ethics

Line managers play a critical role in the successful establishment of a culture where speaking up is encouraged and valued. Although tone from the top is important and sends a message throughout the organisation of what behaviours are expected, of everyone in the organisation it is the line manager who has the strongest influence on the employee's psychological and physical environment.

According to IBE's *Ethics at Work Survey*, a fifth of UK employees have been aware of misconduct during the past year at work. Of those who had witnessed misconduct only half say they reported it. Fear it might jeopardise their job (33 per cent) and the belief that no corrective action would be taken, deter employees who are aware of misconduct from raising their concerns.

As organisations work at encouraging a speak up culture, it is important that we acknowledge the vital role which line managers play in employees' psychological safety. According to IBE research, managers themselves can feel unsupported or unsure of how to handle concerns from others as well as their own concerns. It can be difficult for them to manage their own feelings, especially if they perceive the report as undermining them. Managers at all levels need sufficient training in listening attentively and handling concerns appropriately.

What managers can do when handling concerns

- Be aware of the emotions involved, and how the employee might be feeling
- Find out the facts
- Make an informed decision
- Communicate the decision quickly
- Escalate if required
- Learn the lessons

How they can react if the concern involves them

- Acknowledge the feedback
- Neutralise their feelings and don't take it personally
- Report back on what action will be taken – don't ignore it
- Make time for informal discussions and opportunities for challenge

Attentive and active listening is a core competency which all managers should be trained in.

It is one thing asking employees to speak up, but quite another to listen to what they are saying. Speaking up practices and organisational culture will suffer if employees repeatedly speak up and don't feel heard. For further information about IBE, please: <https://www.ibe.org.uk/>

Case study

Guardian supports Anti-Bullying Week at University Hospitals of North Midlands

In the 2016 NHS staff survey, 28 per cent of workers at University Hospitals of North Midlands NHS Trust reported experiencing bullying or harassment in the last 12 months. 26 per cent of staff reported bullying or abuse from patients and the public.

As a result, the trust launched an annual anti-bullying week to raise awareness of bullying and harassment and to promote compassionate leadership. Their campaigns in 2016 and 2017 involved promotion at both hospital sites, with a stand manned by Freedom to Speak Up Guardian Charlotte Lees and supported by employee support advisors (ESAs) who support workers feeling bullied.

The trust also created a dedicated section on the trust intranet for Freedom to Speak Up, dignity at work, ESA, and internal mediation services. The trust included an interview with an ESA about how they can help staff experiencing bullying or harassment. They also updated their bullying in the workplace employee guidance which includes useful questions and links to relevant resources.

The trust's senior leaders and wider workforce demonstrated their support by having photos taken holding a 'Stop Bullying' placard. For the November 2018 campaign, they launched a bullying and harassment infographic and a video message from the Chief Executive, Chief Nurse and HR Director discussing the impact of bullying and harassment in the organisation.

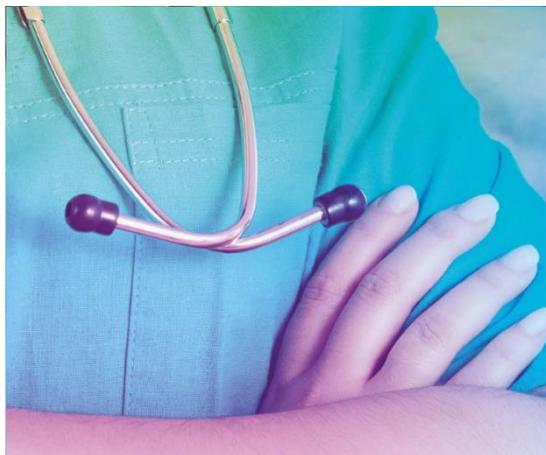


“I’m so pleased that senior leaders in our organisation have been particularly keen to support this campaign. It’s vital that workers know that their leaders value a culture where everyone is encouraged to speak up for the benefit of patient safety and the experience of workers.

“The impact of our schemes to create a compassionate workplace and foster an open speaking up culture will continue to be measured through the Staff Survey and our survey indicators.”

Charlotte Lees
Freedom to Speak Up Guardian
and Workforce Equality Manager

New publication: alliance against bullying and harassment in the NHS



A [new publication](#) was launched on 4 April following a meeting co-chaired by the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh and the National Guardian's Office in September 2018.

This meeting brought together a range of medical and healthcare organisations with campaigns and initiatives aimed at addressing the high levels of workplace bullying and harassment in the NHS.

As a result, an informal anti-bullying alliance has been formed to share ideas and enact initiatives across health, including the National Guardian's Office, NHS Improvement, NHS Employers, GMC, BMA and several of the Royal Colleges. The anti-bullying alliance recognises that by working in partnership, we can together help create the culture and leadership needed to eradicate bullying.

The document, with an introduction from Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, Rt Hon Matt Hancock MP, aims to give an overview of some of the initiatives being enacted across the healthcare professions to tackle undermining behaviours and bullying.

By sharing information and providing links to a range of resources, this document also aims to further raise the profile of this issue, promote discussion and encourage more organisations to commit themselves to joining this alliance.

If you have any queries about the contents of this newsletter, please contact the National Guardian's Office by emailing: enquiries@nationalguardianoffice.org.uk