

MEETING	PUBLIC BOARD MEETING 12 December 2018
Agenda Item Paper Number	10 CM/12/18/10
Agenda Title	CQC Freedom to Speak Up Guardian – mid- year update to Board
Sponsor	The CQC Board
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Additional Presenters	Sandra Miller – Strategy & Intelligence Philip Wales – Customer & Corporate Services Stella Franklin – Hospitals Attending and presenting as Freedom to Speak Up Ambassadors

PURPOSE OF PAPER:

Actions required by the Board:

For the Board to **Note** the mid-year update from the CQC Freedom to Speak Up Guardian and to hear from the three Ambassadors attending to share their reflections.

1. Summary

This paper sets out the key decisions and activities for the first six months of the year together with information about the number of cases and themes. The three ambassadors attending the meeting will share their reflections on the role, their successes and challenges.

2. Key decisions

The Board has signed off an updated and expanded Freedom to Speak Up Policy. The policy reflects the national guidance published jointly by NHS England and NHS Improvement and takes account of best practice within the NHS.

The Executive Team has agreed a proposal to merge the roles of Dignity at Work Advisors and Freedom to Speak Up Ambassadors, recognising the significant overlap in the roles and the common skill set required. Advisors and Ambassadors have been involved in identifying the additional training and support needed to make this change.

The Guardian has accepted an invitation to be a member of the National Strategy Group on Wellbeing.

3. Internal Engagement

Presentations on the role and purpose of the Guardian and the ambition to make speaking up a way of life in CQC have been made to over 600 staff. Invitations from Strategy & Intelligence, Customer and Corporate Services, Registration and the Digital Team have resulted in well attended sessions with good engagement and debate. Following each session a number of people have come forward seeking support and others have volunteered to become Ambassadors.

Ambassadors have developed a standard presentation that has been delivered to around 15 teams to date with further dates planned including directorate conferences and development days. Feedback from these events has been positive. It has been a challenge at times to keep up with demand.

4. Freedom to Speak Up Month & Anti Bullying Week

The National Guardian promoted Freedom to Speak Up Month in October and ran a series of national events. At CQC the month was celebrated with two events for Dignity at Work Advisors and Ambassadors in London and Newcastle, attended by 75 people. It was a chance to recognise the pioneering work of the Dignity at Work Advisors and to thank them for their considerable contribution. People shared their experiences and their ambitions to improve the culture of speaking up. Ian Trenholm attended both sessions and shared his own experiences of speaking up.

Another key part of the CQC celebrations was a series of four blog posts linking Freedom to Speak Up and Black History months. Supported by members of the Race Equality Network four TED talks were chosen to inspire and challenge thinking. One theme was how it seems easier to stand up for others than it is to stand up for ourselves. The feedback confirmed that this is not uncommon within CQC with people feeling more confident when it comes to protecting people who use services and less confident in giving honest feedback to peers and managers.

Anti-bullying week is an annual event run in November by the charity the Anti Bullying Alliance and is mainly focused on education. Last year this was used as an opportunity to promote CQC's Zero Tolerance approach to bullying. This year, taking the theme "choose respect", colleagues were reminded that the policy is rooted in CQC values and were asked to reflect on the question "are you a bully?". A virtual coffee break on the subject was run and attended by 40 people, many of whom had responded to the open invitation in the CQC

bulletin. Given the positive feedback a series of virtual coffee breaks are planned.

5. Staff Survey

The impact of the Freedom to Speak Up work is being judged against the question “Is it safe to challenge the way things are done in CQC”. There is no change from the 2017 survey with this remaining at 42% overall with wide variations within directorates. A detailed assessment of the results and the implications for the work plan are being considered by the Freedom to Speak Up Reference Group.

6. Themes

At the half way point in the year 23 people had come forward seeking support to speak up, this is broadly comparable with the same stage last year. Concerns about the behaviour of colleagues and managers, including concerns about harassment, account for the majority. There were also concerns about the time taken to investigate complex grievances and the way in which some decisions around major changes have been handled and communicated. A fuller assessment including changes in policy and approach arising from cases will be included in the annual report.

7. Next steps

The Speak Up Reference Group is looking at the resources needed to support Speak Up and any recommendations arising from this will be brought to the Board. Following the decision to merge the roles referred to above training for Ambassadors will be restarted and any gaps addressed.