

News from the National Guardian



In this edition of the newsletter we have updates on Phase Two of our Case Review Process, our new national training guidelines for Freedom to Speak Up and innovative good practice to tackle bullying and harassment and discrimination.

These are all speaking up matters. The dedicated NHS workforce provide compassionate and empathetic care to our families, friends and loved ones. It's therefore vital that health organisations foster an environment where all workers are able to speak up.

My office provides support and challenge to the system by reviewing speaking up cases where NHS trusts may have not followed good practice. We make recommendations for learning and improvement which can be used by organisations across the country.

Last week we launched Phase Two of our case review process. This includes the findings from our independent evaluation and views from people who have referred cases to us. The new process will provide more ways for us to respond to individuals. We will help the referrer access support where they work, engage with the trust concerned to improve their speaking up arrangements and continue to carry out trust-wide reviews of speaking up culture, systems and processes.

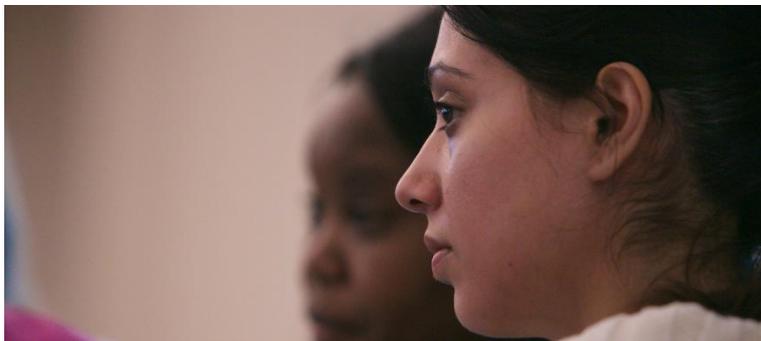
The launch of this year's Speak Up Month and 100 Voices campaigns create greater opportunity for integration, collaboration and learning. The experience of workers will provide greater insights into how their speaking up has led to improvements.

It's vital that everyone in health understands about speaking up and receives high quality training on how to do this and how to listen and act. We have published national training guidelines for all healthcare organisations in England. Speaking up training plays an essential part in improving patient safety and the experience of workers and should be considered on par with other, mandatory, training. Leaders should ensure existing training is brought in line with these new guidelines.

To help primary care organisations implement speaking up arrangements, we have appointed Regional Liaison Leads across England. We are working with vanguards that are pioneering Freedom to Speak Up in primary care. Learning from their experience will help to develop models which can be used by other primary care and integrated delivery organisations. Bringing these organisations together with Freedom to Speak Up in trusts and developing an integrated approach will help to make speaking up business as usual.

Dr Henrietta Hughes, National Guardian for the NHS

Revised case review process provides more ways to respond to workers' referrals



Phase Two of the National Guardian's Office (NGO) [case review process](#) incorporates learning and improvement from an evaluation of our original pilot process. At the heart of the new process are more ways the office can respond to the referrals we receive.

Case reviews identify where the handling of NHS workers' concerns may fall short of the standards of accepted good practice in supporting speaking up. We make recommendations to trusts to help them to take appropriate action where they have not followed good practice, while the reviews also commend areas of good practice.

Case reviews were established as a function of the NGO and piloted over a 12-month period beginning in June 2017. At the end of that pilot we reviewed the effectiveness of the process through a formal evaluation by an independent external body.

The evaluation included a survey of individuals who had submitted referrals, and feedback on the process from the NGO's Accountability and Liaison Board, Advisory Working Group and Freedom to Speak Up Guardians. The evaluation and feedback identified some important learning that has contributed to the changes that informed the Phase Two model.

In addition, we have also taken into account the Government's response to the report of the Gosport Independent Panel. Notably the desire for the office to 'take a more active approach in looking at how organisations handle concerns raised by staff who speak up'.

Whereas during the pilot a case review was undertaken if the referral met certain criteria, with the Phase Two process the office will adopt a less rigid approach. We will respond to a referral by using one of three different options:

- supporting the referrer to access support to speak up where they work
- undertaking engagement with the trust concerned to support them to improve their speaking up processes and culture, where required
- undertaking a trust-wide review of the speaking up culture, policies and procedures to identify learning and improvement.

"Our case review process has led to some significant changes over the last couple of years for the trusts where reviews were carried out. More importantly, other trusts were also able to look at the recommendations and apply the learning to their own arrangements. In this way we have helped to diffuse the innovation across the NHS," explained Dr Hughes.

"What's more, we have made recommendations for others as part of our role to challenge the healthcare system. So, the CQC amended its guidance around the Fit and Proper Persons test and NHS Employers issued new guidance around settlement agreements – both directly related to recommendations made in our case review reports. What Phase Two will mean is more issues that are referred will be looked into and more changes and improvement will result from that process. By listening to our referrers, accessing support from the excellent network of guardians and retaining the ability to carry out a full review where appropriate, we can make sure we achieve our purpose of making speaking up business as usual in the NHS."

National guidelines on Freedom to Speak Up training launched to reflect the NHS's approach to speaking up

Last month we published our national guidelines on speaking up training for all organisations in the health sector in England.

This guidance comes as a direct result of one of our recent case review recommendations. We observed that training on Freedom to Speak Up had not kept pace with developments in the field and did not fully reflect the NHS's approach to speaking up. Our guidance is designed to improve the quality, clarity and consistency of training.

The guidelines are for any individual or organisation commissioning or delivering Freedom to Speak Up training and are applicable to providers of healthcare, regulators, and other bodies with a role in healthcare. They are set out in three parts covering:

- Core training for all workers
- Line and middle management training
- Senior Leaders training.

Dr Hughes said, "Knowing how to speak up about patient safety and the experience of workers, and supporting colleagues to do so, is everyone's responsibility. That's why Freedom to Speak Up training is crucial for everyone working in and around the NHS."

"It's important that not only the health service takes pride in providing the best possible care for patients, but it also takes pride in supporting and learning from those who speak up. Workers who speak up should be seen as an indispensable and invaluable part of any healthcare organisation in England. They need to be treated with the same level of respect, dignity and compassion as our patients."

The national guidelines are available on [our webpages](#) and include suggestions of the methodology that organisations could employ when designing training.

Speaking up has an essential part to play in patient safety and the experience of workers – we therefore believe that it should be considered on a par with other mandatory training.

"Knowing how to speak up about patient safety and the experience of workers, and supporting colleagues to do so, is everyone's responsibility. That's why Freedom to Speak Up training is crucial for everyone working in and around the NHS."

Dr Henrietta Hughes



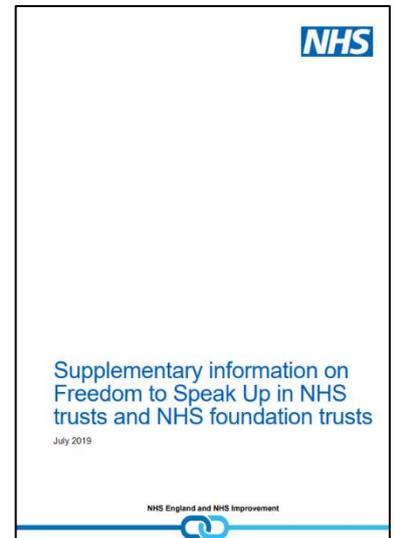
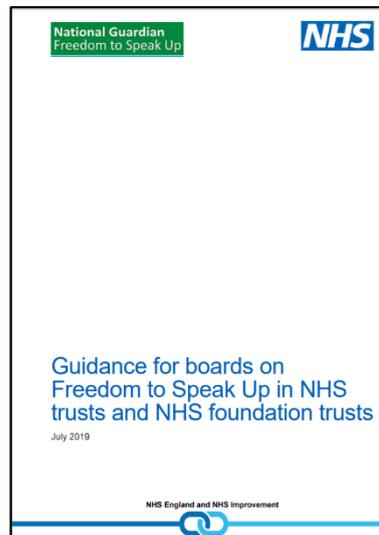
NHS Improvement publishes revised guidance for trust boards on speaking up

NHS Improvement has revised the guidance it produced to set out the expectations of boards and board members in relation to Freedom to Speak Up.

[The guidance](#) is now accompanied by a number of supplementary resources, a streamlined toolkit and contains some practical 'how to' information that boards should find helpful.

The guidance is designed for the Executive Lead for Freedom to Speak Up to use in order to review the progress their trust has made against the original document and refine their Freedom to Speak Up development plans. As before, these plans should be discussed with the board and ideally shared with workers.

NHS Improvement would like all trusts in England to use the self-review tool to identify areas for development and improve the effectiveness of their leadership and governance arrangements in relation to Freedom to Speak Up.



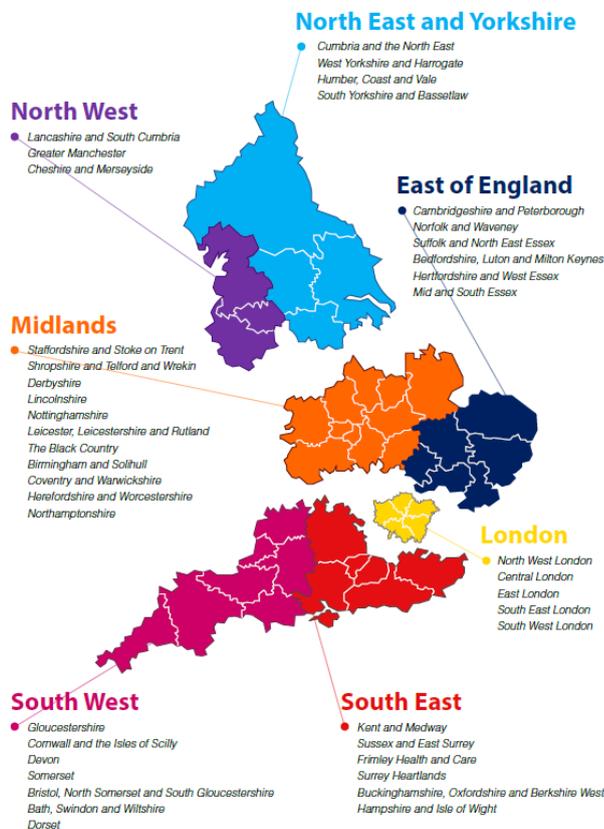
Regional Liaison Leads to develop a cohesive approach to speaking up across England

The National Guardian's Office has appointed Regional Liaison Leads (RLLs) to help bring together local Freedom to Speak Up Integration Plans. The RLLs work across primary and secondary care boundaries to develop a cohesive and unified approach to speaking up within the different regions in England.

The RLLs have only been in post for a few months, but already they are making great strides in connecting with guardians, service providers, senior leaders and other workers to help develop integration plans in the regions.

If you have not already done so, please get in touch with your RLL to share your insights and expertise into local speaking up cultures and how we can work across healthcare boundaries to create an integrated approach to speaking up.

Below are profiles of our new RLLs from six of the seven regions (London to be recruited):



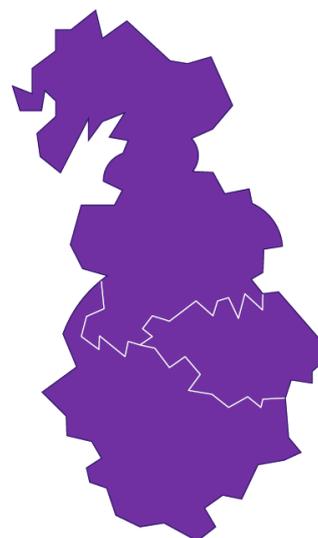
North West region

Jenni Fellows is the RLL for the North West region. For the last twenty years, Jenni has worked in the NHS as a registered nurse, gaining significant experience in intensive care and as a neonatal sister. She joins us from Chesterfield Royal Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, where she was also the trust's Freedom to Speak Up Guardian.

“It’s testament to all the guardians, champions and ambassadors that the Freedom to Speak Up agenda is spreading. However, I understand the challenges individuals face when speaking up and there is still much work to do.

“I’m looking forward to using my experience in the Regional Liaison Lead role to develop Freedom to Speak Up as it moves into primary care and supporting new and existing guardians in the process.”

Jenni Fellows



North East and Yorkshire region

Julie Huggan is the RLL for the North East and Yorkshire region. Having worked in both the NHS and military for the last 23 years, Julie has had a diverse career delivering care in a range of different environments. She received a commission in the Royal Air Force and completed tours in both Iraq and Afghanistan, working as the Aeromedical Liaison Officer.

In recent years, Julie was part of a small team that set up the Acute Oncology and Cancer Unknown Primary Service at the Northern Centre for Cancer Care.

“I was drawn to the role as I strongly believe in cultural change, improving patient safety and supporting our incredible workforce. I look forward to working with everyone in my region to create an integrated approach to speaking up.”

Julie Huggan

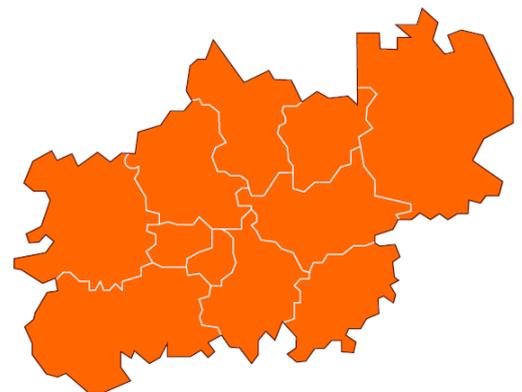


Midlands region

Kate Whittaker is the RLL for the Midlands region. A qualified social worker, Kate joins us from a community health services provider, where she was the lead for patient engagement, feedback and complaints. She has worked in a range of organisations in health, social care and the voluntary sector.

“I’ve enjoyed working closely with colleagues supporting the Freedom to Speak Up agenda, ensuring that the experience of our patients and staff was embedded in our service improvement. I look forward to continuing to support the great work already underway in the Midlands.”

Kate Whittaker



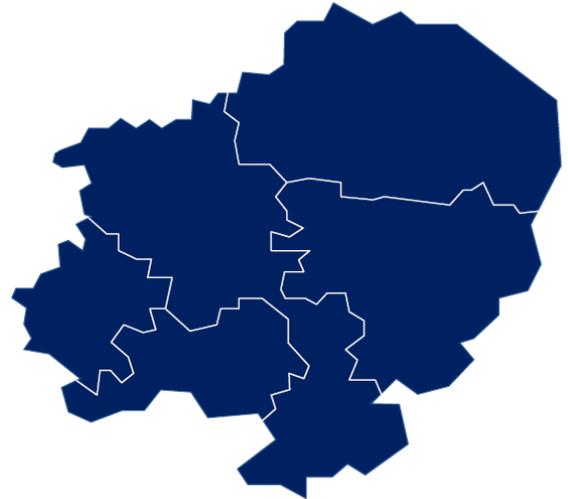
East of England region

Emma Duffield is the RLL for the East of England region. As a qualified Physiotherapist, Emma Duffield has worked in a wide range of healthcare settings including NHS, private and social care services.

“I know from first-hand experience that speaking up can come with immense challenges and isn't always well-received. This should not be the case as it always needs to be supported and encouraged.

“I am so excited to work with the National Guardian's Office in their mission to drive speaking up culture and to make speaking up business as usual in the NHS.”

Emma Duffield



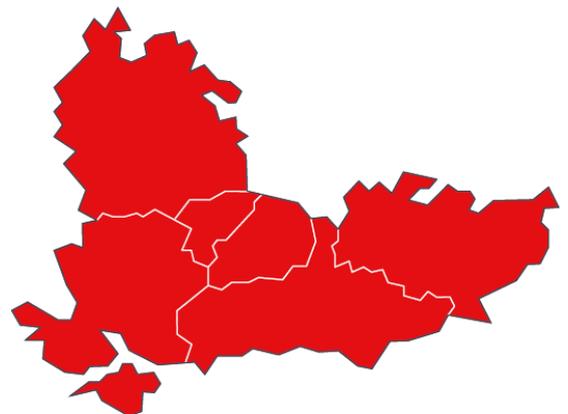
South East region

Petra Freeman is the RLL for the South East. Petra is a qualified nurse and joins us from Avon and Wiltshire Partnership NHS Trust where she was also a Freedom to Speak Up Guardian.

Petra has a background in adult education and training and says:

“I have supported and empowered workers when speaking up, listening with sensitivity and ensuring that appropriate actions were taken. I am not afraid to challenge leaders to encourage them to embrace a culture of learning.”

Petra Freeman



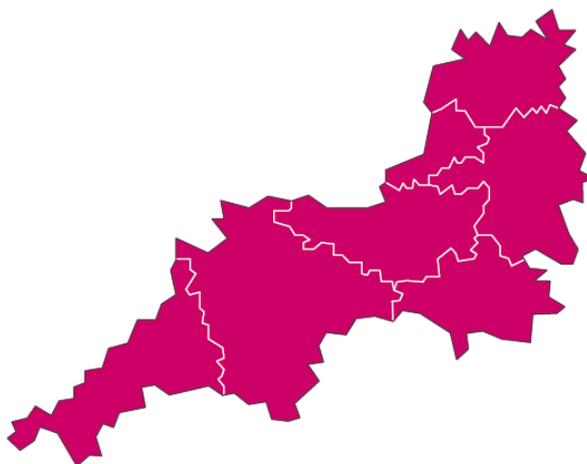
South West region

Sarah Speck is the RLL for the South West region. Sarah trained as a plant biologist and science communicator and has experience in public-facing roles in both the private and public sectors. Most recently she has worked in an NHS role as the Lay Member for Public and Patient Involvement and Quality for the Worcestershire Clinical Commissioning Groups, ensuring that the voice of the local population is heard and that CCG decisions are patient-focused.

“I’m delighted to have been appointed as the RLL for the South West and look forward to working closely with all the guardians, champions and ambassadors in my region.

“Your valuable insights, alongside my experience of healthcare systems, will help to create an integrated approach to speaking up in the South West.”

Sarah Speck



Freedom to Speak Up campaigns

October is Speak Up Month

We will be launching our second Speak Up Month this October to raise awareness of speaking up, increase commitment where possible and introduce it where no practical steps have yet been taken.

Last year many organisations across England took part, holding over 100 events, publishing articles, creating videos and animations and reaching out to NHS workers to let them know guardians are in post to listen to any issues they may have.

This year there are even more organisations with guardians in post across a broader range of healthcare providers. This not only increases the potential for the scope of activity, but also creates greater opportunity for integration and collaboration.

Dr Hughes travelled over 2,000 miles to attend events last year and will be out and about around England this year too. We will also be spreading the word about what is going on via our Twitter feed – do follow the campaign hashtag **#SpeakUpToMe** and be sure to retweet! Last year **#SpeakUpToMe** was used more than 5,000 times during the month.

It's not too late to get involved either and we have created a range of communications materials to help organisations promote an event or launch an initiative during Speak Up Month, so do email us at enquiries@nationalguardianoffice.org.uk if you would like more information.



100 Voices campaign

In the [Government's response](#) to the events at Gosport Hospital, the Department of Health and Social Care asked the National Guardian's Office to publish an independent Parliamentary report to highlight best practice in speaking up across the healthcare sector.

Our 100 Voices campaign aims to create a database of at least 100 case studies that describe where speaking up has led to improvements for the good of workers, patients, families and carers.

Some of these case studies will be published as a report to demonstrate how speaking up results in learning and improving. Some of these will also be included in the National Guardian's Annual Report, which will be laid before Parliament early in the New Year.

Workers in the healthcare sector can submit case studies if they have spoken up, supported a worker who has spoken up, or responded to a situation where someone has spoken up – this is not just limited to Freedom to Speak Up Guardians.

Case studies can cover a wide range of topics, but we're particularly interested in the following themes:

- How organisations embedded learning from our case review recommendations
- Creating partnerships with local champions, equality networks and other organisations
- Engaging boards and workforce on speaking up matters
- Visible leadership and reflections from Chief Executives
- Learning and improvements.

This is a fantastic opportunity for organisations to be recognised for all the hard work that local networks do to support workers speaking up, driving cultural change, and improving care for patients. No case is too big or too small – they're all important.

To help organisations submit case studies, we have created an online form and user-guide. These resources are [available here](#).



Work of guardians and anti-bullying alliance championed at Parliamentary roundtable

Dr Hughes was one of the speakers at a recent Parliamentary roundtable on bullying and harassment that was hosted by the General Medical Council (GMC) and chaired by Dr Philippa Whitford MP and Baroness Joan Walmsley.

Dr Hughes gave an overview of the Anti-Bullying Alliance and advocated the positive progress that has been made by guardians in the NHS in England to improve the lives of patients, families and workers in the health service.

An informal anti-bullying alliance has been formed by the National Guardian's Office and the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh to share ideas and interventions across the NHS. The alliance works in partnership with healthcare workers across the UK to help create the culture and leadership needed to eradicate bullying.

The roundtable, hosted on Tuesday 7 May at the House of Commons, aimed to build on the work of the Anti-Bullying Alliance and bring organisations across the four countries of the UK together to:

- Identify what initiatives work and what are the barriers to their success
- Identify what needs to change, going forward, to address bullying and undermining in the NHS



The roundtable was attended by a range of health organisations, NHS bodies, regulators, royal colleges, membership bodies, charities, peers, and hospital trusts active in this area. Dr Chris Turner, founder of Civility Saves Lives, and Charlie Massey, Chief Executive and Registrar at the GMC were also in attendance.

Participants at the roundtable said the Freedom to Speak Up Guardians were having a positive impact and should continue to help to address bullying and harassment in the NHS in England.

The discussion identified several key themes which attendees agreed to work on together:

- The Anti-Bullying Alliance will work towards an agreed four-nation definition of bullying and encourage its member organisations and all parts of the NHS to adopt the same language
- The GMC and its partners will continue to pilot its Professional Behaviours and Patient Safety training programme throughout 2019 and report back on its outcomes
- Through its members and affiliates, the Anti-Bullying Alliance should encourage NHS organisations to improve their performance measurement policies
- The Anti-Bullying Alliance will review the outcomes of the bullying and undermining roundtable and discuss further next steps.

[Click here](#) to view the Anti-Bullying Alliance publication – 'Alliance against bullying, undermining and harassment in the NHS'.

New General Medical Council blog on speaking up



In a new blog, Dr Stephanie Jordan and Dr Chris Brooks reflect on developing materials on speaking up, conversations they've had, and what they've learned from the 'Speak Up, Speak Out' workshop that they co-led at the General Medical Council (GMC) conference in April.

In the blog, they highlight the importance of:

- Using language that helps create a space for workers to speak up
- Recognising that it is not just Chief Executives and national leaders who need to recognise their role in encouraging a speaking up culture – it is everyone's responsibility
- Being mindful of conversational habits
- Changing how you are perceived by other colleagues
- Saying thank you.

Dr Jordan said, "I always tried to be an advocate for my patients – I want to keep them and my colleagues safe. But I'd previously viewed speaking up as a series of steps to take, a chain of events and a need to 'do the right thing'. I'd never before viewed it as a philosophy. I do now."

Dr Jordan is a Care of the Elderly registrar training in the South West and one of six Clinical Fellows who worked with the GMC this year. Dr Brooks worked as a Policy Officer in the GMC's Education and Standards Directorate and has now returned to her role as a Junior Medical Officer in Australia.

[Click here](#) to read the full blog on the GMC's website.

Case study

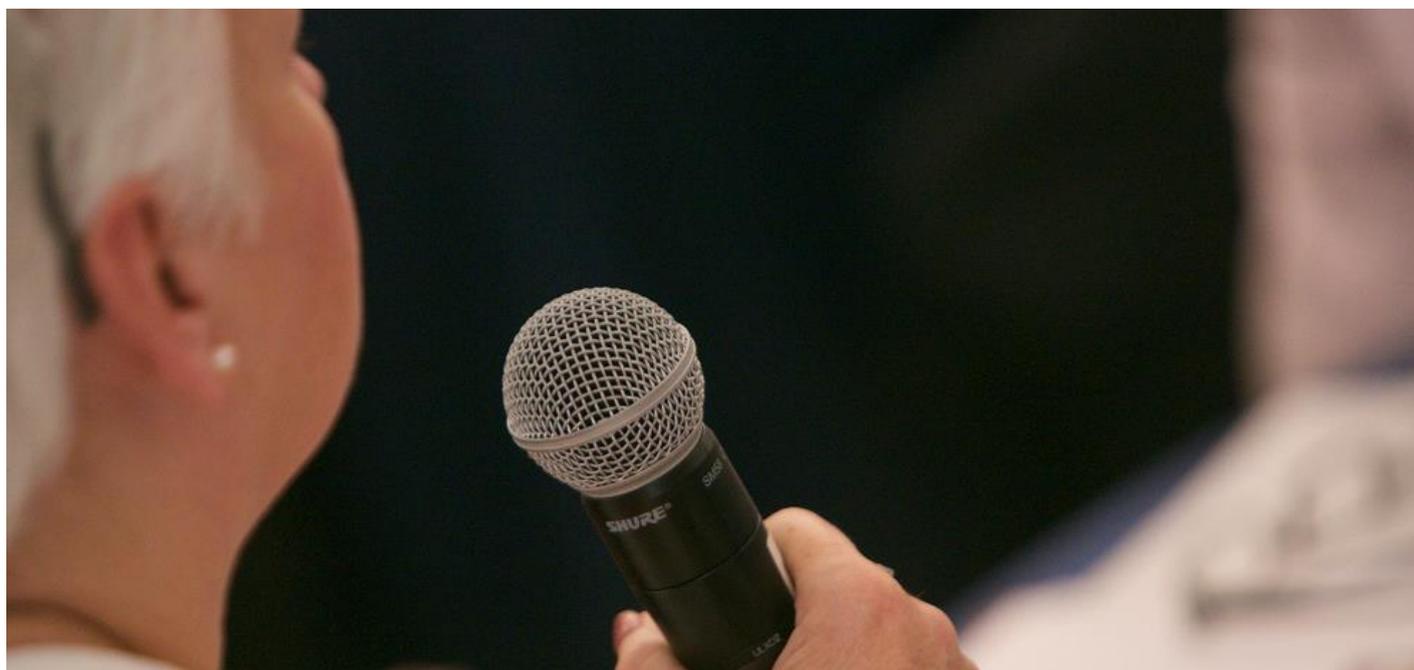
‘Pause and review’ approach supports a fair and learning culture at Barts Health

Barts Health is one of the largest trusts in the country, serving approximately 2.5 million patients a year. It has a diverse workforce with approximately 50 per cent of workers coming from a Black Minority Ethnic (BME) background.

“Our vision that we set out in our People Strategy is to be a high-performing group of NHS hospitals, renowned for excellence and innovation, providing safe and compassionate care to our patients,” said Michael Pantlin, Group Director of People. “And part of that includes our goal to be an outstanding place to work.

“Based on the Workforce Race Equality Standard (WRES) information we reviewed in 2016, we recognised the need to implement system changes to address the fact BME staff were more than twice as likely to enter the formal disciplinary process when compared to figures for white staff.”

Using learning from Royal Free London NHS Foundation Trust and the ‘James Reason substitution test’ for cases of serious incidents, Bart’s commissioned a pre-disciplinary checklist tool. The aim was to combat any ‘rush to judgement’ and facilitate a ‘pause and review’ process when it comes to undertaking or considering entering the disciplinary process.



Case study



“The pre-disciplinary checklist acknowledges the facilitation of a ‘learning culture’ in the NHS rather than a ‘blame culture’,” explained Roger Kline, the Research Fellow at Middlesex University who helped develop the checklist with the trust in January 2017.

The process requires line managers to go through the checklist with a ‘triumvirate member’ prior to deciding to commission an investigation or discipline a staff member. The multi-disciplinary triumvirate is made up of three designated officers from each trust site, including a medical lead for doctors, a nursing and midwifery for nurses and midwives, and an operational lead for all other staff groups

The checklist is used by the reviewing manager and the appropriate member of the triumvirate, before a decision is made to formally investigate a member of staff. This ensures that all necessary steps have been taken to learn from the incident, rather than blame.

A 12-month review of the use of the pre-disciplinary checklist has revealed a decrease in the numbers of both BME and white staff entering the disciplinary process. It has also led to a reduction in the percentage representation of BME workers compared to white in total number of disciplinary cases and overall likelihood of BME staff entering the disciplinary process.

“We’re really pleased that having implemented this process we are already beginning to see it making a real difference,” said Michael. “In 2017, there was a 14 per cent reduction from the 2016 figures in BME representation of staff, compared to white, in the total number of disciplinary cases reported.

“The feedback we have received from managers is that the checklist is useful and that it provides valuable guidance. Used alongside other trust-wide interventions, we believe it can help us improve the experience of BME staff and create a fairer environment for all our workers.”

For further information about this initiative, contact Oyebanji Adewumi at Barts Health at oyebanji.adewumi2@nhs.net

Case study

Spire Healthcare guardian provides confidential environment for worker to speak up



A colleague at Spire Healthcare contacted their hospital Freedom to Speak Up Guardian, Jon Nobbs, to raise an issue about a colleague they worked closely with. They contacted their guardian outside of working hours as the matter concerned a colleague who sat near them in a small office and they were concerned about protecting their anonymity.

The colleague described a situation involving bullying, harassment and other inappropriate behaviour. Concerns about the individual creating risks to confidential data were also described, including patient records going missing and being found in inappropriate places.

These matters were causing the colleague considerable distress and anxiety, but they didn't want to escalate it to their line manager as the manager had a good working relationship with the individual concerned and they felt that if they dealt with the problem, the issue wouldn't be taken seriously, and it would expose them. The impact of the situation was leading to the colleague considering leaving the organisation and seeking new employment.

After discussing the concern together, the guardian sought advice from the Matron, whilst protecting the colleague's anonymity. The Matron was supportive and offered several options to deal with the situation appropriately. The response from the Matron gave the colleague the reassurance and confidence they needed to firstly speak to them in person, and subsequently their line manager.

Case study



Inappropriate behaviour, including compromises to confidentiality or bullying and harassment, are taken extremely seriously across the business. This was exactly how both the line manager and the Matron responded to the concerns. Their response led to appropriate action being taken to fully investigate and sort out all of the issues, which have now been suitably resolved with support from the hospital's senior management team. Jon said, "In this instance, the key lesson was helping our colleagues and our senior management understand that the Freedom to Speak Up process works well and gives them confidence.

"In my role as guardian, I gave the colleague a confidential environment where they could say anything, knowing that unless it posed an immediate risk to patient safety it wouldn't be taken any further, unless they wanted it to. Giving them that reassurance and autonomy helped give them the confidence to take the issue further.

"The colleague involved has been extremely positive about the Freedom to Speak Up process and provided me with regular updates on how much their work life has improved since the resolution of their situation. In turn, I have found it immensely gratifying to see the positive change that was able to be made by the confidential environment Freedom to Speak Up offers for staff to speak up."

Recently, their guardian was delighted to hear that the colleague who raised the concern wants to be one of the hospital's Freedom to Speak Up Ambassadors, providing an extra avenue for others across the hospital.

This example demonstrates the benefit of having Freedom to Speak Up as another way for colleagues to raise concerns and demonstrates that they are taken seriously, which will hopefully encourage others to share any concerns they may have.

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