

## Cover Sheet

Trust Board Meeting in Public: Wednesday 8 November 2023

TB2023.103

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**Title:** Freedom to Speak Up [FtSU] – Annual Report 2022/2023

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**Status:** For Discussion

**History:** TME2023.421, Trust Management Executive, October 2023  
TB2023.47 FtSU Six-monthly Update Q1/Q2 2022/23  
TB2022.58 FtSU Annual Report 2021/22

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**Board Lead:** Chief People Officer

**Presented by:** Lindley Nevers, Freedom to Speak Up Lead Guardian

**Authored by:** Susan Polywka, Freedom to Speak Up Project Manager

**Confidential:** No

**Key Purpose:** Assurance

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## Executive Summary

1. This paper presents the Freedom to Speak Up [FTSU] Annual Report 2022/23, to provide an overview of speaking up activity by all our people to the FTSU Guardians and team between 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2023.
2. In adherence to the OUH Freedom to Speak Up Policy<sup>1</sup>, the FTSU Annual Report must be submitted to the Board.
3. The full OUH Freedom to Speak Up [FTSU] Annual Report 2022/23 is **attached** at **Appendix 1** and includes high level, anonymised data relating to speaking up, as well as information on actions the Trust is taking to support a positive speaking up culture.

## Recommendations

4. The Trust Board is asked to note the Freedom to Speak Up [FTSU] Annual Report 2022/23, **attached** at **Appendix 1**.

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<sup>1</sup> approved by the Board in November 2022, the OUH FTSU Policy incorporates the provisions of the [updated national model FTSU policy](#) and associated [FTSU Guidance](#) published by NHS England and the National Guardian's Office [NGO] in June 2022

## Freedom to Speak Up [FtSU] – Annual Report 2022/2023

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### 1. Purpose

- 1.1. This paper presents the Freedom to Speak Up [FTSU] Annual Report 2022/23 for consideration by the Trust Board ahead of its submission to the Board. The full FTSU Annual Report is **attached** at **Appendix 1**.

### 2. Background

5. The OUH Freedom to Speak Up Policy<sup>2</sup> requires that the Board receive an annual report providing a thematic overview of speaking up by staff to the Trust's FTSU Guardians.

### 3. Freedom to Speak Up Annual Report 2022/23

- 3.1. The full Freedom to Speak Up [FTSU] Annual Report 2022/23, **attached** at **Appendix 1**, provides:

- High level, anonymised data on cases formally opened after contact, including:
  - The reasons why people have spoken up;
  - The proportion of cases raised anonymously;
  - The incidence of detriment indicated;
  - Typical response times; and
  - Some feedback received from those who have spoken up.

- 3.2. The Annual Report also highlights some recurrent topics and themes in concerns raised, and summarises some of the action taken to make a difference.

- 3.3. An assessment of the Trust's speaking up culture is considered, based on the results of the [NHS Staff Survey](#) 2022, and an update is provided on progress in the on-going development of that culture, in the context of continuing learning and improvement.

### 4. Transitional arrangements for FTSU at OUH

- 4.1. The Freedom to Speak Up [FTSU] Annual Report 2022/23 will be presented to the Board by Lindley Nevers, in his capacity as the newly appointed FTSU Lead Guardian at OUH. Dr Taffy Makaya was the Interim FTSU Lead Guardian in post throughout the period 1 April 2022 – 31 March 2023, and she was supported during that time by Interim Guardian

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<sup>2</sup> approved by the Board in November 2022, the OUH FTSU Policy incorporates the provisions of the [updated national model FTSU policy](#) and associated [FTSU Guidance](#) published by NHS England and the National Guardian's Office [NGO] in June 2022

Tendai Gutti. The Annual Report 2022/23 has been drafted by the FTSU Project Manager, on the basis of data provided by them.

- 4.2. The Executive Director with lead responsibility changed in the course of 2022/23, from the Chief Assurance Officer to the Chief People Officer. The Non-Executive Director with lead responsibility for FTSU throughout 2022/23 has been and remains Claire Flint.

## 5. Conclusion

- 5.1. Much has been done to consolidate improvements to the speaking up culture at OUH, building on sustained efforts to improve staff engagement in recent years, and specifically implementing recommendations for improvement based on the [Report on Key Findings of the OUH FTSU Review 2021](#) , all with the aim of delivering a positive impact on the quality of patient care and staff experience.
- 5.2. All efforts to promote a healthy speaking up culture align well with the [OUH Strategy 2020-2025](#), which enshrines the commitment to an open, inclusive and just culture in which everyone feels valued, and can be confident that their feedback, ideas and concerns will be listened to and acted upon appropriately.
- 5.3. Delivery of a listening, speaking up culture is also an express objective of the Trust's [People Plan](#), with an explicit priority in Year 2 of the plan to support an inclusive culture.
- 5.4. Progress made in a positive safety culture contributes to the development of a culture where speaking up is not exceptional, but is normal expected behaviour.
- 5.5. The importance of committing to a positive speaking up culture was already well-recognised at OUH, and has been reinforced recently in [correspondence](#) received from NHS England (18 August 2023), highlighting the need for effective policies and processes that enable staff to raise concerns without fear of detriment.
- 5.6. Freedom to Speak up Guardians and the team of volunteer Champions have continued to make a valuable contribution to promote, create and sustain an open and transparent culture of speaking up, listening up and following up at OUH.

## 6. Recommendations

6. The Trust Board is asked to note the Freedom to Speak Up [FtSU] Annual Report 2022/23, **attached at Appendix 1**.

## Freedom to Speak Up [FTSU] – Annual Report 2022/2023

### 1. Purpose

1.1. This Annual Report provides the Board with an overview of the work of the Freedom to Speak Up Guardians, including contacts made and cases formally opened in the 12 months from April 2022 to March 2023, and outlines actions the Trust is taking to support a positive speaking up culture.

### 2. Recorded staff contacts and cases opened

#### The numbers:

2.1. The Freedom to Speak Up [FTSU] Guardians and team have greatly increased the reach of their contact with staff across the Trust, recording a total of **4,161** informal contacts with staff in 2022/23, through a range of initiatives including regular Listening Events, Roadshows and other sessions aimed at raising awareness and removing barriers to speaking up.

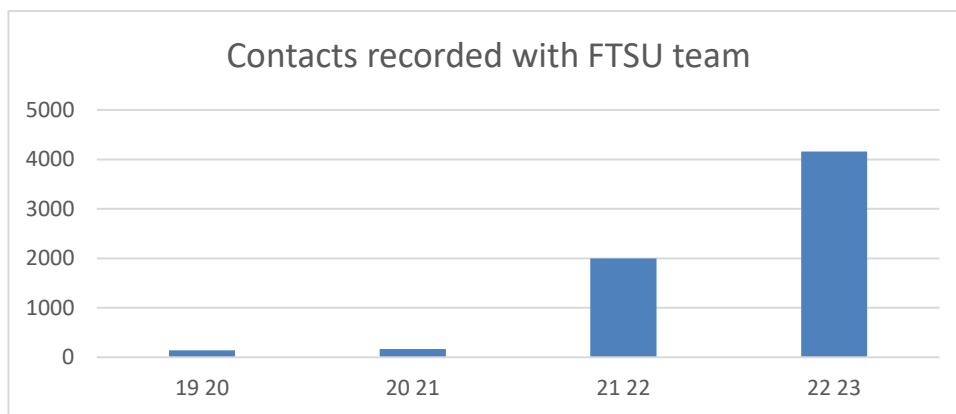


Figure 1 - Contacts recorded with FtSU team

Graph 1 – Informal contacts recorded at OUH (Source: OUH Lead FTSU Guardian)

2.2. There were **94** cases formally opened after staff contact with the FTSU Guardians and team at OUH in 2022/23.

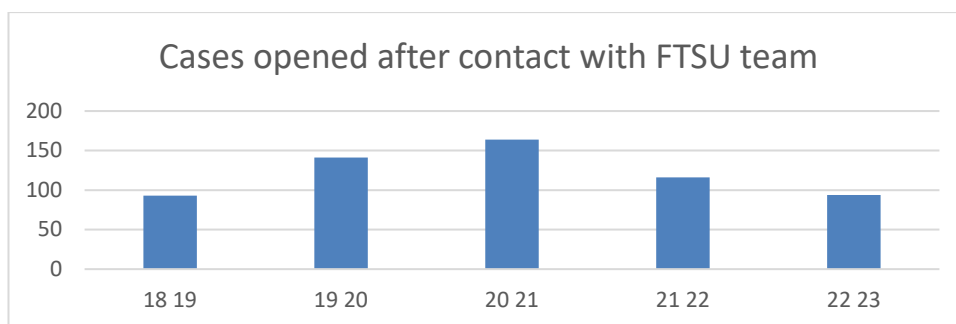


Figure 2 - Cases opened after contact with FtSU team

Graph 2 – Cases opened at OUH after contact (Source: OUH Lead FTSU Guardian)

- 2.3. A case is formally opened in accordance with guidance on [Recording Cases and Reporting Data](#) provided by the [National Guardian's Office - Freedom to Speak Up](#) [“NGO”]. This guidance advises that FTSU Guardians should “record **all** cases of speaking up that are raised with them, whether they are raised 'formally' or otherwise.”
- 2.4. In the NGO case review of speaking up processes, policies and culture at [Derbyshire Community Health Services NHS Trust](#), it was accepted that it may not be practical to act on all informal discussions, but still recommended that the “Freedom to Speak Up Guardian [should] record all instances of speaking up raised to them, not just those cases where workers state that they are raising a matter 'formally’”.
- 2.5. At OUH, throughout 2022/23, FTSU Guardians followed the guidance (and continue to do so) to open and record a ‘case’ after any contact with a member of staff who has raised a concern **but not** where the conversation has been limited to advice only about how to speak up, without mentioning any specific issue(s) about which the member of staff has a concern.
- 2.6. Data on the number of contacts giving rise to a case being opened at OUH, from 2017/18 to 2022/23, is provided in Table 1.

Year	Period covered	No of contacts where cases were opened	
2017/18	8 months		56
		<i>Half year</i>	<i>Full year</i>
2018/19	Q1 and Q2	39	
	Q3 and Q4	54	
	12 months		93
2019/20	Q1 and Q2	86	
	Q3 and Q4	55	
	12 months		141
2020/21	Q1 and Q2	92	
	Q3 and Q4	72	
	12 months		164
2021/22	Q1 and Q2	38	
	Q3 and Q4	78	
	12 months		116
2022/23	Q1 and Q2	37	
	Q3 and Q4	57	
	12 months		94

Table 1 - Number of contacts (Source: OUH Lead FTSU Guardian)

- 2.7. The most recent national [Annual Speaking Up Data Report 2022/23](#) published by the National Guardian’s Office [NGO] shows that the total number of cases opened by FTSU Guardians throughout the NHS in England increased by around 25%, from 20,362 in 2021/22 to 25,382 in 2022/23. The average number of cases opened in ‘large’ trusts (defined as

those with more than 10,000 workers) increased from just over 130 cases to just over 160 cases per annum.

- 2.8. In contrast, the number of cases opened at OUH has fallen over the last two years. This year's total of 94 is significantly lower than the national average of 160, and the year-on-year drop of 19% runs counter to the national increase of 25%.
- 2.9. The falling number of cases opened may be considered in the context of the increased breadth of informal contacts made with staff. As awareness is raised about speaking up, including how to do so through all available channels, there may be more instances where concerns are raised and appropriately addressed under established processes, without recourse to the FTSU service.
- 2.10. However, when the FTSU data is triangulated with other data, e.g. [NHS Staff Survey 2022 OUH Results](#) and Employee Relations [ER] case data on bullying and harassment, there is an evident gap between what our staff are voicing in the Staff Survey and what is being reported to FTSU or managed through ER.
- 2.11. This would seem to indicate that there is still work to be done to ensure that all staff have the opportunity to raise concerns and be listened to, and to demonstrate that they can be confident their concern will be addressed.

### **Elements identified in cases opened: the reasons why people spoke up**

- 2.12. In 2022/23, the NGO required cases to be reported under four categories: patient safety/quality, worker safety or wellbeing, inappropriate attitudes and behaviours, and bullying or harassment. (Of course, a case may include elements of multiple reporting categories and there may be overlapping cases reported in each type of issue).
- 2.13. Across all healthcare organisations in the country:
- 30% of cases were reported to have an element of “inappropriate attitudes or behaviours”;
  - and a further 22% of cases were reported to have an element of “bullying or harassment”;
  - 27% of cases had an element of “worker safety or wellbeing”; and
  - 19% had an element of “patient safety or quality”.
- 2.14. A comparison with the breakdown of reasons why people spoke up at OUH in 2022/23 is provided in Graph 3.

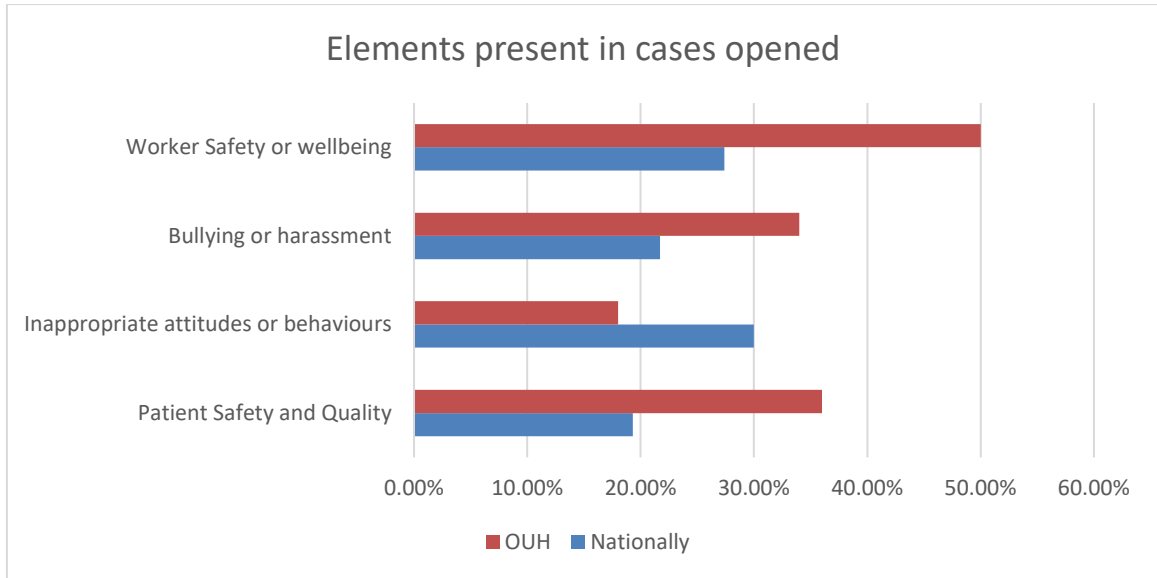


Figure 3 - Elements present in cases opened

Graph 3 – Comparison of the elements present in cases nationally and at OUH (Source: [Annual Speaking Up Data Report 2022/23](#) and OUH Lead FTSU Guardian)

2.15. A year-on-year comparison of data on the reasons for a case being opened following contact with OUH FTSU Guardians is provided in Table 2 (noting again that multiple reasons for contact may be identified in respect of a single case).

**Year-on-Year comparison:**

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Element of patient safety/quality	63	25	34
Behaviours incl. bullying & harassment	47	66	<i>Category then sub-divided; if re-amalgamated = 49</i>
Element of bullying and harassment	<i>Categories not previously sub-divided</i>		32
Element of other inappropriate attitudes or behaviour	<i>Categories not previously sub-divided</i>		17
Element of staff safety	<i>Not reported</i>	47	<i>Category then revised to include staff wellbeing</i>
Element of staff safety or wellbeing	<i>Category didn't previously include staff wellbeing</i>		47
Reported suffering detriment	12	7	3

Table 2 – reasons for contacts with OUH FTSU Guardians, 2020/21 to 2022/23 (Source: OUH Lead FTSU Guardian)



2.16. A quarterly breakdown of data on the reasons for a case being opened following contact with OUH FTSU Guardians during 2021/22 and 2022/23 is provided in Table 3.

**Quarterly breakdown for 2021/22 and 2022/23:**

Themes	21/22 Q1	21/22 Q2	21/22 Q3	21/22 Q4	22/23 Q1	22/23 Q2	22/23 Q3	22/23 Q4
Element of patient safety/quality	6	8	10	9	7	3	15	9
Behaviours including bullying & harassment	18	10	20	18	<i>Category then sub-divided</i>			
Element of bullying and harassment	<i>Categories not previously sub-divided</i>				0	9	13	10
Element of other inappropriate attitudes/behaviour	<i>Categories not previously sub-divided</i>				2	4	14	3
Element of staff safety	2	5	22	18	<i>Category then revised to include staff wellbeing</i>			
Element of staff safety or wellbeing	<i>Category didn't previously include staff wellbeing</i>				6	11	17	13
Suffered detriment	2	2	2	1	0	1	2	0

Table 3 – reasons for contacts by quarter during 2021/22 and 22/23 (Source: OUH Lead FTSU Guardian)

2.17. Trends in the reasons why people have spoken up at OUH over the past three years are represented in Graph 4.

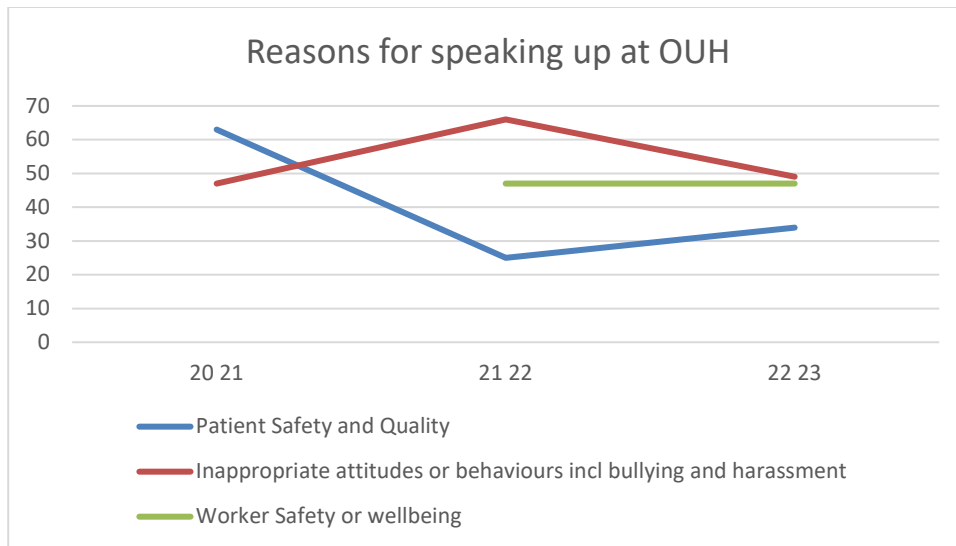


Figure 4 - Reasons for speaking up at OUH

Graph 4 – Reasons for speaking up at OUH, 2020/21 to 2022/23 (Source: OUH Lead FTSU Guardian)

**Anonymous reporting**

2.18. Two cases were reported anonymously in the first half of the year, both in Q2. No cases were raised anonymously in the second half of the year (Q3 and Q4).

2.19. This represents 2% of cases opened at OUH during 2022/23, compared to 9.3% nationally (down from 17.7% nationally when data was first collected in 2017). The NGO Report comments that “levels of anonymity are [seen as] an indicator of confidence in the guardian route for speaking up”, and welcomes the falling proportion of cases raised anonymously.

### Detriment

2.20. The NGO defines “detriment” as disadvantageous and/or demeaning treatment for speaking up, which may include being ostracised, given unfavourable shifts, being overlooked for promotion, or moved from a team.

2.21. There were 3 cases of detriment indicated at OUH in 2022/23 (3% of cases opened, compared to 4% nationally), down from 7 in 2021/22 and 12 in 2020/21.

### Response times

2.22. Throughout 2022/23, the average time taken for FTSU Guardians to provide an initial response to contact made was between 24 and 48 hours.

### Feedback on the experience of speaking up

2.23. Every trust is also required to submit data to the NGO on responses received to the feedback question, “Given your experience, would you speak up again?”. At OUH in 2022/23, this question had a response rate of almost 70% (65 people), of whom:

- 68% (44 people) answered “Yes”
- 26% (17 people) answered “Maybe”
- 6% (4 people) answered “No”

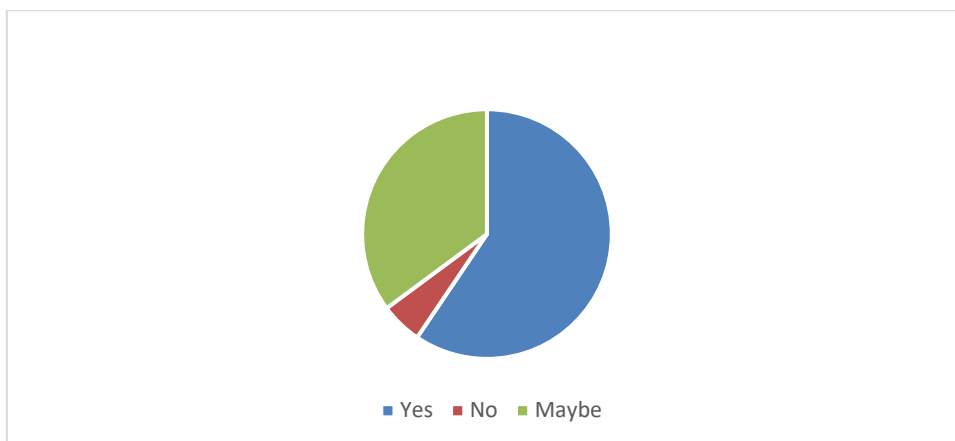


Figure 5 - Feedback on the experience of speaking up - Would you speak up again?

Graph 5 – Feedback on whether people will speak up again (Source: OUH Lead FTSU Guardian)

### 3. Topics and themes

- 3.1. Some recurrent themes in the issues raised in contact made with the FTSU Guardians and team during 2022/23 are summarised below.

#### **Patient safety/quality**

- 3.2. Concerns have been raised that the physical space allocated for some services presents challenges to the maintenance of patient safety when delivering care.
- 3.3. Concerns have been raised that difficulties encountered in recruiting and retaining permanent staff, and the level of unfilled vacancies in some areas, may impact on the safety and quality of patient care.

#### **Staff Safety and Wellbeing**

- 3.4. Concerns have been raised that the working environment in some areas impacts adversely on the wellbeing of staff in post; in turn making it more likely that staff may leave, and making it more difficult to recruit new staff.

#### **Inappropriate behaviours and attitudes and Bullying and Harassment**

- 3.5. Concerns have been raised by individuals who have felt that they were not treated with civility, respect, and kindness.

#### **Speaking Up – Listening Up – Following Up**

- 3.6. Concerns have been raised by individuals who have felt that their line manager did not listen when they first raised concerns.
- 3.7. Concerns have been raised by individuals who have been dissatisfied with the response provided through HR processes established by the Trust.

### 4. Making a difference

- 4.1. The FTSU Guardians and team work closely with colleagues across the Trust with the aim of ensuring that leadership is listening up and following up, so that learning leads to action.

#### **Patient safety/quality**

- 4.2. FTSU Guardians maintain close liaison with the Head of Clinical Governance and have contributed to the project plan for implementation of the Patient Safety Incident Response Framework under the [National Patient Safety Strategy, safer culture, safer systems, and safer patients](#)
- 4.3. Following concerns raised about the difficulties encountered with staff recruitment – and with the retention of staff, especially on lower bands given concerns raised about the lack of pay progression – the FTSU team collaborated with colleagues in HR to organise a Listening Event to hear

these concerns. The Listening Event was well received by the many staff who attended, and HR staff have continued to make themselves accessible to staff who are concerned about the problems they may encounter in this regard.

### **Staff Safety and Wellbeing**

- 4.4. Following an increase in the number of concerns raised about staff wellbeing, the FTSU team organised a Listening Event on the theme of 'Psychological safety and wellbeing', which was well received by the many staff who attended.
- 4.5. Following a specific concern raised about the electrics and general dilapidation in a particular area, the Health & Safety team were urgently called in to check that there was no immediate risk to staff safety. A full re-test of all electrics was conducted (confirmed to be safe) and a plan of works was initiated to address energy efficiency and proactive roof repairs.

### **Inappropriate behaviours and attitudes and Bullying and Harassment**

- 4.6. The FTSU team collaborated with colleagues to organise a Listening Event on the theme of 'Civility saves lives', which helped to identify barriers to speaking up about bullying and harassment and inappropriate behaviours. The Listening Event was well received by the many staff who attended.
- 4.7. The Trust has launched a 'Kindness in Action' culture change programme, including the promotion of 'Leading with Kindness' e-learning modules. These initiatives have an important role to play in influencing and championing the benefits of kindness within the workplace, and help create a culture where everyone feels they belong and are treated with civility, respect and kindness.
- 4.8. FTSU data on Bullying and Harassment, together with data from the 2022 OUH NHS Staff Survey, and Employee Relations (ER) case data, has informed further analysis by the Trust Management Executive, to develop a strategy for the eradication of bullying and harassment.

### **Combatting the fear of futility: Speaking Up – Listening Up – Following Up**

- 4.9. The Trust has continued to promote easy access to the FTSU team, including through the network of volunteer FTSU Champions based on each of the main OUH sites.
- 4.10. Importantly, the FTSU Lead Guardian continues to meet regularly with the Trust Chair to give anonymised feedback, as well as reporting formally to the Board on issues and themes identified in the concerns raised.

**Combatting the fear of retaliation: Protecting against detriment**

4.11. The NHS Guardians and team publicise the [NHS England - Speaking Up support scheme](#) and will support any member of staff who wishes to explore whether they are eligible for the structured support offered by the scheme for those who have experienced a significant adverse impact (in their professional or personal life) following a formal speaking up process.

**5. Assessing our speaking up culture: NHS Staff Survey**

5.1. The annual [NHS Staff Survey](#) helps the Trust to monitor and improve staff experiences, including an assessment of our speaking up culture based on the responses to four key questions:

- Q19a Do you feel secure raising concerns about unsafe clinical practice?
- Q19b Are you confident that the Trust would address your concern?
- Q23a Do you feel safe to speak up about anything that concerns you?
- Q23f Are you confident that if you spoke up, the Trust would address your concern?

5.2. At a national level, the percentage of positive responses decreased in respect of Questions 19a, 23a and 23f, and remained static in respect of Q19b. The percentage of positive responses recorded by the best performing trusts decreased slightly from last year’s scores in respect of all four questions, as was the case at OUH. However, OUH performance was above the national average in relation to three of the questions, and was very close to the national average in relation to one question (Q19b).

5.3. Based on the responses to the four key questions, the OUH performed **above** the national average in the assessment of the element: "We each have a voice that counts" (relating to Raising Concerns) with an overall score of **6.5** (compared to the national average of 6.4, and significantly better than the worst performers who scored 5.7) out of 10, as is shown in Table 4.

**People Promise Element: “We each have a voice that counts” (relating to Raising Concerns)**

			2021		2022	
<b>NHS Staff Survey National average</b>	<b>(Score 1-10)</b>		<b>6.4</b>		<b>6.4</b>	
<b>Best and worst performers</b>			Best: 7.4	Worst: 5.7	Best: 7.1	Worst: 5.7
<b>OUH Staff Survey Result</b>			<b>6.6</b>		<b>6.5</b>	

Table 4 – Assessment of the People Promise Element: We each have a voice that counts (Source: NHS Staff Survey 2022)

## 6. National Guardian's Office [NGO]

- 6.1. In Q1, the NGO published a report looking at the results of the FTSU Guardian Survey 2021: [Supporting the wellbeing of FTSU Guardians](#) , which emphasised the importance of adequate ring-fenced time for carrying out both the proactive and reactive elements of the Freedom to Speak Up Guardians' role.
- 6.2. In June 2022 NHS England and the NGO together published an [updated national model FTSU policy](#) , associated [FTSU Guidance](#) and a [FTSU reflection and planning tool](#) . The updated guidance requires all Trusts to refresh their FTSU Policy by January 2024 at the latest – ensuring that it is consistent with the provisions of the updated national model policy – and the OUH Board has already approved a revised and fully compliant FTSU Policy for OUH (formally approved in November 2022).
- 6.3. As part of the annual national Speak Up month in October 2022, the NGO promoted the [Ted Baker Speak Up For Safety Blog - National Guardian's Office](#), in which the former Chief Inspector of Hospitals at the Care Quality Commission urged trusts to regard every safety event as an opportunity to learn and improve, creating a culture where speaking up is not exceptional, but is normal expected behaviour.

## 7. National Annual Speak Up Month at the OUH (October 2022)

- 7.1. On Friday 14 October, 2022, the Chief Executive and other members of the Board welcomed [Dr Jayne Chidgey-Clark, National Guardian - Freedom to Speak Up](#) to deliver a talk as part of Speak Up month at the OUH on the theme of *“Freedom to Speak Up – supporting Patient Safety, Inclusion, and Worker Wellbeing”*. The talk was made available to staff across OUH and in all trusts in the BOB ICS<sup>3</sup> via a YouTube link.
- 7.2. Dr Chidgey-Clark then made a visit to Level 7 of the Maternity Department, where she spent around an hour engaging 1-to-1 with front-line clinical staff in the Spires Midwifery-Led Unit for childbirth, and with bereavement specialist midwives working on Level 7. As she concluded her visit, Dr Chidgey-Clark expressed how greatly impressed she was by all that she had heard and seen at OUH which demonstrated the health of the speaking up culture at the Trust. In particular, she welcomed the opportunity given for her to undertake a Walkabout in Maternity Services, as evidence of the Trust's genuine commitment actively to encourage staff to speak up about their views of the service and their experiences as an employee.

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<sup>3</sup> [Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care System](#)

- 7.3. A Communications Impact Report in relation to Speak Up month at the OUH in October 2022 was prepared by the Director of Communications and Engagement. This showed a high level of engagement with staff across the Trust, and good partnership working with colleagues from the Wellbeing and Culture & Leadership Service teams who supported the FTSU team at 5 face-to-face roadshows held on each of the 4 main hospital sites and OUH Cowley. Contact was made with nearly 1,000 staff at the roadshows (compared with 533 staff at 6 roadshows held in Speak Up Month 2021).
- 7.4. The Communications Impact Report showed a successful Speak Up month in 2022, aligning well with the Trust's Strategy and People Plan, and demonstrating good Board visibility in hosting the talk given by Dr Chidgey-Clark and in the attendance of the Vice-Chair at the roadshow held at the Horton and the attendance of the Interim Chief Medical Officer at the NOC and JR events.

## 8. National recognition

- 8.1. During Q1 of 2022/23, the [OUH Freedom to Speak Up \[FTSU\] Review 2021](#) and resultant [Report on Key Findings of the FTSU Review](#) won a High Commendation at the [HSJ Awards 2022](#).
- 8.2. The OUH experience is featured as one of the [case studies](#) on the NGO website, and the Interim FTSU Lead Guardian was invited to present at the National Guardian's Conference in March 2023.

## 9. On-going development of the speaking up culture at OUH

- 9.1. At the time of publication of an [updated national model FTSU policy](#) in June 2022, review of the OUH Freedom to Speak Up Policy was already underway, and in November 2022 the Board formally approved a revised policy for the Trust that it is fully compliant with national requirements (well ahead of the deadline of January 2024).
- 9.2. The Trust has also noted and welcomed the associated [FTSU Guidance](#) and a [FTSU reflection and planning tool](#), which helpfully
- place freedom to speak up very much within the context of a compassionate and inclusive culture; and
  - address how all elements of such a culture are closely linked to FTSU and must be implemented alongside it.
- 9.3. Noting that the [FTSU Guidance](#) includes transformational information needed for culture and behavioural change, this aligns well with the OUH 'Engagement Promise', as expressly endorsed by the Board in May 2022, under which the Trust pledged to promote activities throughout the year

that demonstrate the commitment to listen to staff feedback, through the gathering, analysing, co-creation, reviewing and feeding back of solutions.

- 9.4. Promotion of a healthy speaking up culture aligns with the [OUH Strategy 2020-2025](#), which enshrines the commitment to an open, inclusive and just culture in which everyone feels valued, and can be confident that their feedback, ideas and concerns will be listened to and acted upon appropriately.
- 9.5. Delivery of a listening, speaking up culture is also an express objective of the Trust's [People Plan](#), with an explicit priority in Year 2 of the plan to support an inclusive culture.
- 9.6. The Trust also endorses the former Chief Inspector of Hospital's statement that every safety event should be regarded as an opportunity to learn and improve - and that this contributes to the creation of a culture where speaking up is not exceptional, but is normal expected behaviour. Over the last 3 years, the Trust's safety culture has been transformed through the introduction of several workstreams, including several safety meetings and assurance forums, and the work that the Trust has done on Quality Improvement has been recognised in the award of the [HSJ Patient Safety Award 2022](#).

## 10. Learning and Improvement

- 10.1. In Q1 of 2022/23, the Interim FTSU Lead Guardian undertook a review of the impact of Modules 1 and 2 of the training modules developed by Health Education England working with the NGO, which are available on *My Learning Hub*
  - Module 1 "Speak Up" ([Speak Up](#)) – available for all staff
  - Module 2 "Listen Up" ([Listen Up](#)) – for all leaders; and (later)
  - Module 3, "Follow Up" ([Follow Up](#)) - for senior leaders including executive and non-executive directors, and governors; to be undertaken after completion of Modules 1 and 2.
- 10.2. The main findings of the review of the impact of Modules 1 and 2 were:
  - Uptake of the (non-Core, non-mandatory) modules was very low
    - although of those who had completed the 'Speak Up' module, it may be noted that 35% described themselves as being from a black, Asian minority ethnic background;
  - Low uptake was attributed to reasons that included:
    - lack of time
    - perceived poor promotion of the modules
    - limited access to computers/space to undertake the modules;



- Uptake by senior staff was even lower than the average across all staff, which may be attributed to a prevailing (possibly mis-placed) assumption by many senior staff that they already know all they need to know about speaking up and listening up;
- When comparing staff who had completed the modules to those who had not, those who had completed the modules displayed a significant improvement in:
  - engagement behaviours with the FTSU service;
  - attitudes to speaking up, and
  - knowledge about how to raise concerns and respond to them.

10.3. Working with the Executive Lead for FTSU, the Interim FTSU Lead Guardian developed a strategic framework for improving uptake of the e-learning modules by:

- encouraging optional uptake of the 'Speak Up' e-learning module by all staff;
- particularly targeting take-up by BAME staff; while
- making both the Speak Up and Listen Up modules obligatory for line managers, senior Trust leaders, and senior clinical staff who can then support junior and other frontline staff in raising concerns.

10.4. This approach is intended to encourage knowledge about how to speak up in all staff groups, while particularly targeting vulnerable groups and empowering senior leaders and middle managers to support the promotion of a healthy speaking up culture.

10.5. All members of the FTSU team have undertaken the e-learning modules.

10.6. The FTSU Guardians have also completed updated Guardians' training, launched by the NGO, and have regularly attended and shared learning at meetings of the Regional FTSU Network.

10.7. The FTSU team have focused on working with key stakeholders across the Trust during the monthly Listening Events, to encourage learning across multiple groups and stakeholders. Some Listening Events are preserved for attendees to raise any issues, while some are organised around a theme, such as:

- Recognising and coping with stress in the workplace
- BAME staff health and wellbeing
- Pay review/progression policy and process
- "Freedom to Speak Up OUH Review - One year on: You Said, We Did"
- Impact of incivility in the clinical area and work environment
- Psychological safety and Wellbeing
- Coaching and coaching skills

## 11. Recommendations

11.1. Having appointed a new Freedom to Speak Up Lead Guardian at OUH, it is recommended that priority be given to an assessment of the resources of the FTSU service, to ensure that they are appropriate to support the needs of staff in relation to speaking up, both:

- Proactively *e.g.* – continuing to remove barriers to speaking up;  
*including to give specific consideration to*  
whether the provision of a confidential, external web-based app for anonymous reporting of concerns would narrow the evident gap between what our staff are voicing in the Staff Survey and what is being reported to FTSU or managed through ER;
  - implementing the strategic framework for improving uptake of the FTSU e-learning modules;
  - triangulating data on FTSU cases with other key data to identify any areas of concern; and
- Reactively – responding in a timely way to all contacts made, opening cases and offering support as appropriate.

11.2. It is recommended that the FTSU Lead Guardian and team continue to work in alignment with the Trust's Strategy and the People Plan, contributing to the staff engagement programme, to help meet the on-going challenge to promote, create and sustain an open and transparent culture of speaking up, listening up and following up at OUH.

Lindley Nevers  
OUH Freedom to Speak Up Lead Guardian