

FREEDOM TO SPEAK UP

REVIEW 2021

Report on Key Findings

Introduction

This report summarises the key themes and issues that have emerged from engagement with staff during July 2021, and further information-gathering undertaken in August, as part of a review of the Freedom to Speak Up [FtSU] service at the Trust.

It includes an assessment of the current Freedom to Speak Up culture at OUH, as reflected in the FtSU Index score, and provides an overview of what we have learned from how the FtSU service is operated at some other trusts.

Staff were invited to have their say on the Freedom to Speak Up service in a variety of ways, including through an online Survey, Listening Events and Focus Groups.

Staff told us about what they thought was working well, and made suggestions about what might be done better.

The key themes identified are representative of views expressed by who engaged with the review.

Current OUH Freedom to Speak Up Strategy

VISION:

'To promote and ultimately create an open and transparent culture where every member of staff can and should speak up safely, action is taken so the concern is resolved and our patients ultimately benefit'.

National Guardian Freedom to Speak Up

The Office of the **National Guardian Freedom to Speak Up** encourages staff to Speak Up about

‘Anything that gets in the way of patient care’

‘Anything that affects working life’

#SpeakUpListenUpFollowUp

Assessing the Speaking Up culture

The key metric for organisations to assess their Speaking Up culture is the FtSU Index, which is published annually by the National Guardian's Office [NGO].

The **FtSU Index Report 2021** shows incremental improvement in the OUH FtSU Index score since 2018. For the last two years, the overall OUH score has been very slightly higher than the national average.

	2018	2019	2020
FtSU Index Report 2021 - National average	78%	78.7%	79.2%
OUH overall, average score	77%	79.5%	80.3%

The FtSU Index is based on the percentage of staff who “agree” or “strongly agree” with four of the questions in the **NHS Staff Survey 2020**, and the NGO publishes the overall, **average score for each trust**.

Looking in more detail at the OUH responses to each of the four questions in the NHS Survey, OUH performance is at or around the national average, with room to improve to match the best performing trusts.

If you were concerned about unsafe clinical practice, would you know how to report it? (Q17a)

	2018	2019	2020
FtSU Index Report 2021 - National average	94.8%	94.7%	94.9%
Highest and lowest performers			Best: 98.6% Worst: 91.3%
OUH Staff Survey 2020 Result	93.3%	93.9%	94.5%

Does your organisation encourage you to report errors, near misses or incidents? (Q16b)

	2018	2019	2020
FtSU Index Report 2021 - National average	88.1%	88.4%	88.3%
Highest and lowest performers			Best: 95.1% Worst: 77.3%
OUH Staff Survey 2020 Result	87.2%	89.2%	89.8%

Assessing the Speaking Up culture

Would you feel secure raising concerns about unsafe clinical practice? (Q17b)

	2018	2019	2020
FtSU Index Report 2021 - National average	70.7%	71.7%	72.5%
Highest and lowest performers			Best: 83.7% Worst: 58.0%
OUH Staff Survey 2020 Result	67.9%	71.75%	72.6%

Does your organisation treat staff involved in an error, near miss or incident fairly? (Q16a)

	2018	2019	2020
FtSU Index Report 2021 - National average	58.3%	59.7%	60.9%
Highest and lowest performers			Best: 74.1% Worst: 36.9%
OUH Staff Survey 2020 Result	58.7%	64.1%	65.2%

In 2020, for the first time, the NHS Staff Survey included an additional question. Although the FtSU Index Report 2021 did not reflect the responses to this question (to enable comparability to previous years), the National Guardian's Office [NGO] welcomed its inclusion, and has indicated it will be looked at in more depth in a future report. OUH responses to this question were slightly better than the national average, with room to improve to match the best performing trusts.

Do you feel safe to speak up about anything that concerns you in the organisation? (Q18f)

			2020
FtSU Index Report 2021 - National average			65.6%
Highest and lowest performers			Best: 78.3% Worst: 43.7%
OUH Staff Survey 2020 Result			68.2%

What's working well?

Responses to the Survey, and contributions made at staff engagement events held throughout July 2021, indicate that staff feel that the things that are working well include the following.

😊 Having clear points of contact, and a choice of who to contact

😊 Providing open access through FtSU 'Roadshows' (pre-pandemic)

All the FtSU staff are very approachable and dedicated

😊 Having supportive Staff Networks

I find that colleagues feel comfortable speaking within **BAME Network** meetings

😊 Sustaining 'COVID-safe' opportunities for access and contact when face-to-face contact is not possible

The FtSU virtual events have been fantastic. A great opportunity to share verbally and via chat function

😊 When someone is well-supported, it can really make a difference

I was very well-supported by the FtSU team so I would feel able to raise any future concerns

😊 Linking with and using processes that work well, e.g. clinical incident reporting and investigation

It's easy to raise clinical concerns because there's a clear process

😊 When the culture of a team is supportive, it's likely to encourage staff to speak up

I always feel I can speak up if needed because [in my current team] the culture is already very transparent and non-hierarchical

What did staff say could be improved?



Many spoke of the need to **clarify the process/(processes)**.

People can be confused about the process and may be worried about where it will go.



There are evidently some misunderstandings about the role of the FtSU Guardian, and wider team. People asked us to clearly **explain the role of the FtSU Guardian** and team.

Sometimes need 'fresh eyes', and advice on the right route to tackle a concern.



Many people emphasised the need to **understand the organisational context** within which the FtSU service operates; to be clear about who is responsible for addressing concerns raised.

We need line management to be equipped and empowered in dealing with issues as they arise, before they escalate further.



It was recognised that lack of clarity about the FtSU process, and misunderstandings about the role of the FtSU Guardian, could lead to FtSU failing to meet the expectations of staff. Many stressed how important it is to **manage realistic expectations** of the FtSU service.

I do think there are huge discrepancies in what staff understand the purpose of FtSU to be and what they can expect of it. Setting expectations is really important.



Many said how important it was to **provide support for staff; both** for those who speak up to raise a concern, and for anyone about whom a concern has been raised.

Managers should be trained in openness and transparency [and to] appreciate the impact of behaviour on others.

Many staff feel it is important to address the key themes identified above, so as to achieve the overarching aim of instilling in all staff the necessary trust and confidence to speak up, if they have a concern. Staff can and should speak up through a variety of channels, not just FtSU. The FtSU team does not undertake investigations, and is not responsible for the ultimate outcome of action taken to address concerns raised. However, as guardians and champions of the freedom to speak up, the FtSU team is responsible for ensuring that the freedom can be exercised effectively by all staff.

I believe that the key to instilling confidence in the service is the feeling that concerns are effectively addressed.

Next steps for consideration

To clarify the process/(processes)	PROPOSAL: To co-produce a guide which the FtSU team will deploy to signpost staff through the variety of processes that are available to address concerns raised.
To clearly explain the role of the FtSU Guardian and team	PROPOSAL: To build on engagement and communications with staff during the FtSU Review 2021, and throughout Speak Up Month 2021; continuing to raise awareness of Freedom to Speak Up, and clarifying the role of the FtSU team.
To inform better understanding of the organisational context in which concerns may be raised	PROPOSAL: To co-produce guidance specifying the allocation of responsibility for taking action to address concerns raised, depending upon the nature of the matter to which a concern relates.
To help manage realistic expectations of the Freedom to Speak Up service	PROPOSAL: To inform staff as to what may reasonably be expected of the FtSU service, including through making available on My Learning Hub training modules developed by Health Education England and the NGO: Module 1: "Speak Up" (for all staff) Module 2: "Listen Up" (for all leaders)
To provide support for staff both for those who speak up to raise a concern, and for anyone about whom a concern has been raised	PROPOSAL: To seek to develop a network of Local Guardians and Champions in support of the Lead FtSU Guardian, linked to existing networks/ other mechanisms as appropriate. PROPOSAL: To ensure that the capability and capacity of the FtSU Guardian and team are sufficient to meet the needs of staff.
To demonstrate that concerns are being addressed effectively	PROPOSAL: To consider including anonymised case studies in FtSU Annual Report (and mid-year report, where possible), to illustrate outcome of concerns raised.

How did staff engage and have their say?

The Review was supported by a full internal Communications and Staff Engagement Plan, developed under the leadership of the Director of Communications, the main elements of which are described in further detail below. A dedicated inbox was setup to receive any comments made by email to FtSUReview@ouh.nhs.uk

Staff were invited to share any personal or observed experience of speaking up to raise a concern (through any channel, not just via the FtSU service); and were asked to share their thoughts about:

- **what works well?**; and suggestions about
- **what could be done better?**

In line with the **Strategic Framework** of the **National Guardian's Office**, the Trust confirmed its aim to support adoption of the universal principles for creating a **Speak Up, Listen Up, Follow Up** culture.

Survey

All staff were invited to respond to an online Survey during July 2021. An analysis of the 832 responses received has been considered by the Trust's Integrated Assurance Committee.

Listening Events

An open invitation was extended to all staff to register for one of three online Listening Events held throughout July 2021. Two of the events were held in the middle of the day (one on a Wednesday, and one on a Thursday), and one was held in the late afternoon (5-6pm on a Thursday).

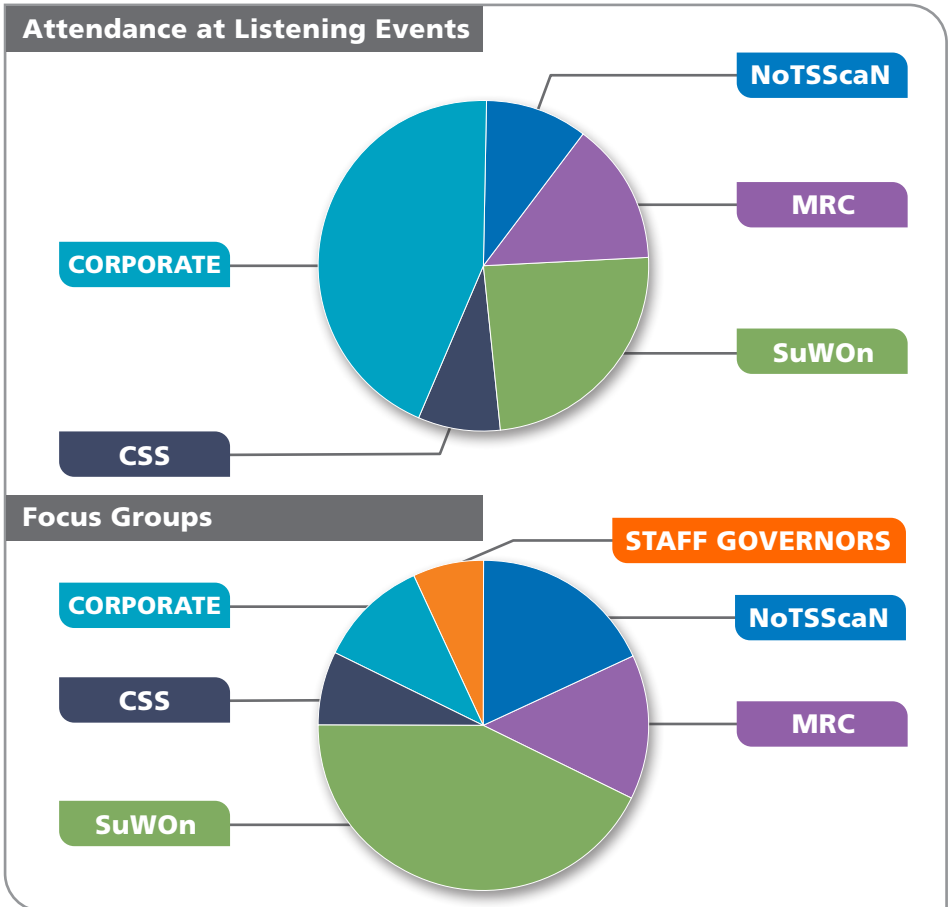
The events were publicised on the basis that the total number of attendees at each event would be capped (at 30-35, including members of the Board and the FtSU team), to facilitate interactive discussion. Places were to be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis (with an offer to arrange an additional event if demand exceeded capacity).

All three of the Listening Events attracted the maximum number registering interest to attend. As had been anticipated – given the potential for competing priorities (clinical and other) – there were some staff who, having registered, were not able to attend on the day but a total of **85 people attended across the three Listening Events**, including representation from all of the Clinical Divisions, and from the Corporate Division.

Staff Engagement

Focus Groups

The clinical Divisions and the Corporate Division were invited to nominate individuals who could engage further in the FtSU Review, representing their division at smaller Focus Groups, with the intention of providing an opportunity to explore and share experiences and suggestions in a little more depth. Nominations were also invited from Staff Governors, and from staff side. A total of **37 people attended across three Focus Groups**, (some of whom also attended a Listening Event).



Staff Engagement

Staff Networks

Following up on Trust-wide communications, and in order to encourage as many staff as possible to engage with the Review, the Project Manager attended meetings of key Staff Networks, including:

- **BAME Staff Network**
- **Disability and Accessibility Staff Network**
- **LGBT+ Staff Network;** and
- **Women's Network**

Who has been listening?

The Trust Chair attended all three of the Listening Events, as did the Chief Assurance Officer (as the Executive Lead for FtSU).

Four other Non-Executive Directors [NEDs] (including the NED Lead for FtSU, and the Trust Vice-Chair) attended a Listening Event, as did the Chief Executive, the Chief Operating Officer and the Chief Medical Officer, as well as the Interim Lead FtSU Guardian, other members of the FtSU team, and the Project Manager for the FtSU Review.

The Chief Assurance Officer also attended all three Focus Groups, and she was joined by three other Non-Executive Directors (one at each of the Focus Groups), as well as the Interim Lead FtSU Guardian, other members of the FtSU team, and the Project Manager for the FtSU Review.

Did staff feel engaged?

Staff expressed how much they appreciated the opportunity to engage and have their say as part of the Freedom to Speak Up Review 2021.

‘Very informative and productive, good to meet and see Trust Board members and see their engagement with staff’

An online evaluation of the main engagement events garnered a response rate of just over 37%, and this showed:

- 100% satisfaction that staff had had the opportunity to raise their views and suggestions
- 100% satisfaction that staff felt their views and suggestions had been heard by the Board.

Overall, the sessions were rated as productive, with an average rating of 4.64 (on a scale of 5).

Further feedback on the process of staff engagement included:

‘I found it useful to hear colleagues’ ideas and feedback’

'I really felt this was a refreshing change for things to come, having the Trust Board involved showed that the Trust cares, and are listening. I hope the momentum doesn't fade on this project'

'Thank you very much, it's really important to feel we have this opportunity to hear from the Board members too'

'It'll be interesting to see if any of the comments made during the session result in change. As a Trust we are very good at listening, not so good in following up and acting on what was discussed. If something can't happen, feedback as to why would be better than it just disappearing into the ether'

Key Themes

1 Clarify the process/(processes)

At the Listening Events and Focus Groups, many people said there was a need for greater clarity about what the Freedom to Speak Up service could deliver, and how it should link with other processes and systems in the Trust. This view was also reflected in responses to the Survey.

Survey Responses

Staff said that clarity of process was amongst the things that would encourage them to speak up; and inaccessibility of a clear process was cited as a barrier to speaking up.

In discussion of exactly how the process/(processes) facilitated by the FtSU service should be clarified, consideration was given to the extent to which the FtSU service should aim to:

- capture the majority of concerns that might be raised at the 'front-end', before referring concerns to be addressed through the most appropriate channel; and/or
- provide a 'last resort', for concerns that hadn't been/couldn't be resolved after pursuing any other channel.

'People may be more confident if they can just have a conversation initially'

Many felt that the essential element of a FtSU service should be **to provide clear 'signposting'**; to enable any concern to be addressed appropriately, using the range of processes that are established in the Trust e.g. HR, Health and Safety, clinical incident reporting and investigation; also linking with other systems, e.g. Wellbeing Leads, Staff Networks, other Culture and Leadership initiatives.

'The issue is often not knowing the route to take. Signposting is crucial'

Key Themes

1 Clarify the process/(processes)

It was suggested that the FtSU service could be clarified as applying a process akin to **triage**, assessing and advising on the most appropriate route by which a concern could be addressed and resolved.

It was also clearly important to many that the routes for speaking up should be accessible to all, and it was suggested that staff should have a choice of clearly identified contact points.

In considering whether the introduction of a web-based app for anonymous reporting of concerns would be welcomed as a clear and accessible mechanism by which staff could raise concerns, many people expressed concern that it could be open to misuse or abuse.

Many were of the view that resources would be better directed to instilling trust and confidence that a concern would be addressed, without adverse consequences to the individual who had raised the concern.

The consensus of those who engaged with the Review was that there was more to be gained from maximising opportunities for the Trust to follow up on and learn fully from concerns raised, than from expanding on the existing facility for anonymous reporting.

There was strong support **to provide a simple, flexible guide**, to help people navigate the process/(processes).

'FtSU should be seen as complementary to existing processes, and an important 'safety net'

'Need a good array of signposting to give choice of who the individual feels most comfortable with'

Key Themes

2 Explain the role of the FtSU Guardian

(and the role of the wider FtSU team)

As well as some confusion about the FtSU process, there was evidently also some misunderstanding about the role of the FtSU Guardian, the key elements of which – as prescribed in the National Guardian’s Office [NGO] **Universal Job Description for FtSU Guardian** – are to:

- support staff in speaking up
- address barriers to speaking up
- ensure that the Trust encourages a positive culture of speaking up
- ensure that matters raised are used as opportunities for learning and improvement.

In particular, it seems that not all staff understand that it is not the role of the FtSU Guardian to undertake investigations, nor is it the role of FtSU Champions (see further NGO **Guidance on FtSU Champions**).

Survey Responses

The importance of explaining the role of FtSU may be reflected in the responses that showed:

- around half of those who had spoken up said they had not felt well-supported, and almost as many felt that their concern had not been satisfactorily addressed; while
- 44% of those with whom a concern had been raised felt they had been able to address the concern in full, or to refer it appropriately; 45% said they had addressed the concern so far as they were able; 11% said they did not feel able to address the concern, and didn’t know where to refer it.

Key Themes

2 Explain the role of the FtSU Guardian (and the role of the wider FtSU team)

In discussion of how the role of the FtSU Guardian and the team should be explained, it was suggested that key elements of the role included:

- active listener
- a calm, objective 'sounding post'
- Guide/Signposter/Navigator
- protector (of due process)
- provider of feedback
 - on how an individual concern was being addressed; and
 - on what could be learned from concerns raised.

'There should be a well-resourced team, including a visible lead to make the service feel real and humanised'

It was suggested that a balance would need to be struck between:

- providing continuity and consistency through a Lead Guardian/central team; and
- ensuring that the service was accessible to all, through diffused and diverse resources.

Understanding the role of the FtSU Guardian and team may also be linked with people's expectations; and with defining how staff should be supported (see further below).

If the role of the FtSU Guardian/team is not understood, this can clearly lead to disappointment.

'It was good to talk to the FtSU Guardian, but I did then feel quite alone and [having brought my concern to the surface] it made it worse in some ways for a while'

Key Themes

3 Understand the organisational context

Specify allocation of responsibility for taking action to address concerns raised

The vision of the current OUH Freedom to Speak Up Strategy is:

To promote and ultimately create an open and transparent culture where every member of staff can and should speak up safely, action is taken so the concern is resolved and our patients ultimately benefit.

It was acknowledged that the realisation of this vision would depend on more than just the Freedom to Speak Up team.

There was widespread support for the view that line managers should be further supported, equipped and empowered to deal with issues, and that this might prevent the need for escalation.

Feedback provided in responses to the Survey also supported the need for an improved understanding of who is responsible for taking action to resolve certain issues, across the organisation.

Survey Responses

Staff said that the interaction/overlap with other processes should be clarified, including e.g. HR processes, and the role of Wellbeing Leads.

Many people highlighted the importance of linking with other roles and systems established across the Trust, e.g. Wellbeing Leads, Staff Networks, Respect & Dignity Ambassadors and other Culture and Leadership initiatives.

‘There is a need – and an opportunity – to align with other processes’

Key Themes

3 Understand the organisational context

Specify who is responsible for taking action to address concerns raised

There was strong support for improving understanding that creation of an open and transparent culture depended upon promoting ease of access to raise a concern through any of the available channels, using all existing processes.

It was recognised that whichever process was used, due process must be observed and – however a concern had first been raised – there should be clear terms of reference for any investigation, ensuring that concerns were addressed in a thorough, standardised and transparent manner.

It was noted that some felt that it was easier to raise clinical concerns (than non-clinical concerns), because the process for reporting and investigating anything that could be characterised as a clinical incident was clear, and widely understood.

In contrast, some said it could be more challenging to raise non-clinical concerns, particularly those relating to bullying and harassment.

It was evident that some people had experienced confusion over how HR policies and procedures should be applied. Irrespective of the channel through which a concern was first raised, there was a plea to clarify when a matter should be referred for investigation under an HR process, and how that HR investigative process should be undertaken.

‘It needs to link to Just Culture and not blame culture’

Key Themes

4 Manage realistic expectations

Many felt that lack of clarity about the FtSU process, and misunderstandings about the role of the FtSU Guardian and team, could inevitably lead to FtSU sometimes failing to meet the expectations of staff.

Staff indicated that they would welcome readily available information and training materials, to inform what may reasonably be expected of the FtSU service – and what may reasonably be expected of those asked to respond to a concern raised.

In discussion of what would constitute realistic expectations, many felt that it was important to distinguish between anonymity and confidentiality, to clarify that:

- While a concern can always be raised anonymously (other than in relation to fraud or safeguarding);
- If the matter is to be referred for investigation, confidentiality will always be observed as appropriate, but the scope of any investigation may be limited if anonymity is not waived.

Survey Responses

65% of staff did place 'Guarantee of anonymity unless waived' amongst the Top five things that would encourage them to speak up if they had a concern

BUT

The thing staff said would most encourage them to speak up (selected by over 78% of respondents) was **'Confidence that my concern will be addressed'**

– and this was also the thing that was mentioned most often in free text comments.

Key Themes

4 Manage realistic expectations

Many said that they would have an expectation of feedback, both

- on how their individual concern had been addressed; and
- on what could be learned from concerns raised (triangulated with data from other sources).

There was support from many for the suggestion that 'Staff Stories' should be shared (subject to preserving confidentiality), and this suggestion also featured in free text responses to the Survey.

Survey Responses

Staff said they would be encouraged to speak up if they could:

"hear stories from people who raised some issue and got positive outcome from it"

and if they could see

" ... evidence of change when others have raised concerns."

The vital role of feedback from users – in order to improve the service – was also mentioned.

Staff reported that some seemed to expect that the FtSU process would exact retribution, and the consensus of those who engaged with the Review was that this was wholly inappropriate.

It was said that referral to FtSU was sometimes used as a threat, and there was strong support for ensuring that the FtSU process was not mis-used or abused by attempts to 'weaponise' it.

'Seeking feedback from those who have used the service is vital in order to improve it'

Key Themes

5 Provide support for staff

To discharge the responsibilities specified in the National Guardian's Office [NGO] Freedom to Speak Up Guardian Job Description, the FtSU Guardian should ensure that staff are supported in speaking up.

Many people said how important it was to support both staff who speak up to raise a concern; and staff about whom a concern had been raised.

Survey Responses

Approximately 18% of respondents (1 in 6) said they had spoken up to raise a concern, of whom:

- > around half said they had felt well-supported; but
- > around one third (representing 6% of all respondents) said they had experienced some (sometimes multiple) difficulties.

One in seven of the difficulties experienced were characterised as:

- retaliation, being ostracised or shunned; or
- difficulty in maintaining professional relationships.

Over 61% of respondents placed **'Confidence that I will be supported'** amongst the Top five things that would encourage them to speak up.

'I want to know we would be well-supported and that the issue would get taken on board and dealt with properly rather than ignored'

Key Themes

5 Provide support for staff

In wide discussion of precisely what constituted the support required, points raised included the following.

- Encouraging all staff to speak up if they have a concern, including overcoming timidity of the 'quiet voices' and 'seldom heard'
- Removing barriers to enable anyone to speak up if they have a concern
- Providing a 'safe space'/'sounding board' to express and work through concerns
- Being an Active Listener, i.e.
 - paying careful attention
 - asking open questions
 - paraphrasing to reflect understanding of what's been heard
 - summarising without judgement on the issue(s)
- Standing beside staff who speak up
 - not in a partisan way, but to guide them through the process
 - providing timely updates, and having regard to the impact on staff wellbeing
- Supporting due process, for everyone involved
- Protecting staff who speak up from the potential for any adverse consequences
 - investigation under any of the Trust's processes should follow 'due process', and should be pursued in the context of a 'Just Culture'; and further
 - the National Guardian's Office guidance makes it clear that the FtSU Guardian should provide protection against any individual 'suffering detriment' as a result of having raised a concern.

Many people also highlighted the importance of training managers across the Trust, to ensure that they can address concerns raised, and provide appropriate support to staff who speak up.

What do other trusts do?

As a key part of the Review, the Trust is keen to ensure that the opportunity is taken to learn from others. An initial, desk-top review was undertaken of the operating models in use at some comparator trusts, covering organisations with a broadly comparable profile to OUH (including other members of the **Shelford Group**), and trusts which were amongst those identified in the **FtSU Index Report 2021** as the Top 10 Performing and the Top 10 Improving Trusts. An **Overview of FtSU Operating Models at comparator trusts** has been considered.

Good practice at other trusts

In addition to the desk-top review, the FtSU Lead Guardian circulated a questionnaire to trusts in the South East Regional NGO Network, and follow-up telephone interviews were conducted with FtSU team members in trusts amongst the Top 10 Performing and Top 10 Improving Trusts identified in the **FtSU Index Report 2021**. Good practice identified includes that summarised below.

Re: the process

An effective FtSU process may be defined as one which:

- is **open and accessible** – offering access to a diverse team
 - maybe e.g. providing a QR code to scan for ease of access to an online form that is also made available on the Trust intranet;
- which complements – but does not replace – other channels for raising concerns;
- which **signposts** staff to the most appropriate channel for resolution; and
- which provides a **safety net** for concerns which cannot be raised through any other channel.

What do other trusts do?

Re: the role of the FtSU Guardian and team

It seems that the FtSU process may be most effective where the role of the FtSU Guardian and team is explained to be that of:

- mouthpiece and listening ear for staff
- supporter
- trainer
- awareness-raiser
- barrier-breaker.

Re: the organisational context

It seems that those trusts whose FtSU service works well:

- can demonstrate engagement of senior leadership;
- encourage staff to speak up first to their line manager (unless concern relates to line manager);
- foster links between FtSU service and other teams, e.g. HR, Wellbeing, Staff Networks;
- provide sufficient support to the FtSU team to cultivate and sustain those links.

Re: expectations

It seems that in those trusts where the FtSU service is working well, speaking up is promoted to become 'business as usual', on the basis that concerns are treated confidentially (by default), but will remain anonymous only by request (**NB** anonymity cannot be retained in cases of safeguarding or fraud).

It is notable that the National Guardian's Office recognises that the success of national Freedom to Speak Up Month (in October) is associated with an increased number of concerns raised, but a **decrease** in the proportion of concerns that are raised anonymously.

What do other trusts do?

Re: support

Successful support would seem to be characterised by:

- accessibility and approachability of the FtSU team, including
 - pro-actively reaching out to groups of staff who may find it harder to speak up;
- visibility of FtSU team across the trust, through participation in a range of other groups and activities; and
- demonstrable authority of the FtSU team (recognised by senior leadership in the Trust).

Re: learning from concerns raised

Those trusts where the FtSU service is operating effectively recognise that confidence in the process is likely to be sustained where it can be demonstrated that the trust is learning from concerns raised. This has been achieved by some trusts through:

- sharing anonymised case studies;
- holding learning events for members of the FtSU team; and
- providing feedback in FtSU Annual Report.

Practical measures taken by the most improved trusts include:

- hosting MS Teams sessions
- working closely/forging links with:
 - Health & Wellbeing, Leadership & Quality, Union reps, Equality & Diversity and Chaplaincy
- attending staff meetings – including Junior Doctor Forum – and other training sessions
- making a video to be shared at staff induction
- Conversation Café ('Café Bus')
- Facebook Live platform
- weekly bulletin
- learning from Events (the good and the bad) – open sessions
- personal site visits.

What do other trusts do?

Options for developing the operating model

In NGO guidance and related supplementary information, produced jointly with NHS England and NHS Improvement, it is noted that assessment of a trust's speaking up culture will be a Key Line of Enquiry in the Care Quality Commission's well-led domain of inspection. The guidance is intended to support trust boards in fulfilling the requirement to create an open and honest culture where staff feel safe and able to speak up.

There are options for how a trust may develop the operating model for its FtSU service, but the guidance makes it clear that a well-resourced FtSU Guardian and Champion model – based on an assessment of capability and capacity required to meet the needs of staff – is regarded as essential to demonstrate a board's commitment to creating the necessary Freedom to Speak Up culture.

Consideration of the overview of FtSU operating models at comparator trusts indicates that:

- based on an assessment of what is required to meet the needs of staff, the number of hours ringfenced to discharge the role of FtSU Guardian – and the seniority of the individual holding that role – may vary from trust to trust; but
- case-studies from top-performing and most improved trusts cited in the FtSU Index Report 2021 (including the case-study from South Tees NHS Foundation Trust) may be instructive; and
- amongst all the other trusts reviewed, the Lead Freedom to Speak Up Guardian has the support of a network of FtSU Champions and/or Local Guardians.

Conclusion

This report on the key findings of the Freedom to Speak Up Review 2021 will be submitted to the Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust Board.

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Our core values are:

-  **Respect**
-  **Excellence**
-  **Learning**
-  **Delivery**
-  **Compassion**
-  **Improvement**