



Oxford University Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

FREEDOM TO SPEAK UP

STRATEGY 2019-2022



FREEDOM TO SPEAK UP

LISTENING TO YOUR CONCERNS

Background

- The Freedom to Speak Up Guardian (FtSU) role came about following the inquiry into Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust in 2013.
- The inquiry was completed by Sir Robert Francis QC in February 2013 and he recommended the creation of the National Guardian role and Freedom to Speak Up Guardians in every NHS trust in England. He saw Guardians as a 'vital step towards developing the right culture and environment for speaking up' and as facilitating the development of an 'open and transparent' culture where staff feel safe to raise concerns, which will ultimately impact positively on the safety of patients.
- Sir Robert Francis stated that 'speaking up is essential in any sector where safety is an issue'.

The 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'.

The vision has been endorsed by the Chief Executive Officer and Chair.

Our strategy

This document sets out the OUH Freedom to Speak Up vision and strategy and should be read with the Trust's Raising Concern's (Whistleblowing) Policy.

- The strategy has the support of the Trust Board.
- The Executive team and senior leaders will work closely with the FtSU Guardians to create an open and transparent culture across OUH so that every member of staff feels able to speak up about concerns they have within the workplace.
- The ultimate aim of supporting staff to speak up is to ensure the best and safest care for all our patients, achieved by learning from and sharing outcomes from concerns raised.
- In order to achieve the strategy the focus for the next three years will be working towards the ultimate realisation of an open and transparent culture across OUH.
- The strategy will be achieved by raising awareness of speaking up, analysis and triangulation of data and learning and development from the concerns raised by individuals.
- The strategy aligns to the national context (NHS Long Term Plan and Interim People Plan) to ensure an increased focus on how we support staff.
- The strategy aims to ensure speaking up is 'business as usual'.

The role of the FtSU Guardian

Freedom to Speak Up Guardians help to improve the experience of staff, protect patient safety and the quality of care they receive and promote learning and improvement. Guardians achieve this by ensuring that workers are supported in speaking up, barriers to speaking up are addressed, a positive culture of speaking up is fostered and issues raised are used as opportunities for learning and improvement.

Freedom to Speak Up Guardians will:

- operate independently, impartially and objectively, while working in partnership with individuals and groups throughout the organisation, including the senior leadership team
- seek guidance and support and, where appropriate, escalate matters to bodies outside the organisation
- comply with the National Guardian Office guidance
- have courageous conversations with leaders to engender change
- support staff who speak up and report if the individual suffers detriment as a result of raising concerns
- work closely with the FtSU Champions and support them to highlight and promote the principals of speaking up.

Who is the strategy for?

- This strategy has been written for all staff groups working within OUH and includes contractors and staff working with private organisations on all sites.
- Every member of staff must take responsibility for speaking up and supporting colleagues who are raising concerns.
- It is expected that there will be a flow of information and appropriate dialogue to and from all levels of the organisation.
- This strategy complements a number of other mechanisms in place to support staff who wish to raise concerns.
- Focusing on Freedom to Speak Up is a key part of delivering our new OUH strategy and making OUH a great place to work for all our staff.



Contacting the FtSU Guardians

- ✓ Individuals contacting the FtSU Guardians will be offered a meeting, either face to face or by telephone, to discuss their concerns and to offer support, advice and guidance. *(See Appendix One for all contact details).*
- ✓ Concerns are led by the individual members of staff who raise them and generally managed as outlined in the flowchart in Appendix One.
- ✓ Brief notes of the meeting are recorded and shared with the member of staff raising concerns.
- ✓ The outcome of the discussion and any agreed action depends on how the member of staff wishes the concern to be managed. This will influence timelines.

Priorities for achievement

- ✓ Leaders are knowledgeable about FtSU.
- ✓ Leaders have a structured approach to FtSU.
- ✓ Leaders actively shape the speaking up culture.
- ✓ Leaders are clear about their role and responsibilities.
- ✓ Leaders are confident that wider concerns are identified and managed.
- ✓ Leaders receive assurance in a variety of forms.
- ✓ Leaders link with all relevant stakeholders.
- ✓ Leaders are focused on learning and continual improvement.

The priorities reflect the national framework and best practice in respect of FtSU as determined by the National Guardian Office and NHS Improvement.

Governance and reporting processes

- The OUH Raising Concerns (Whistleblowing) Policy will be updated and ratified annually.
- Ensuring that speaking up is referenced in relevant Trust policies.
- Ensure compliance with the relevant policies related to 'speaking up' from the NGO, CQC and NHSi.
- The Lead Guardian will triangulate data from key sources to provide assurance about concerns raised. Examples include Staff Survey results, retention statistics, dignity and respect concerns, issues raised to the CQC and number of concerns raised to the FtSU Guardians.
- Learning from individuals who have raised concerns will help senior leaders across OUH deliver the Trust's objectives; improve performance, staff retention and communication.
- Guardians will gain an overview of staff attitudes towards speaking up, awareness and ease of access to the FtSU team.
- A Freedom to Speak Up Report will be presented to the Board via the Trust Management Executive every six months by the Freedom to Speak Up Guardian and the Executive Lead for raising concerns.

The report will include:

- background information including relevant information from the National Guardian
- an overview of the contacts with the FtSU Guardians, the themes identified and actions taken
- numbers of cases closed
- open cases and the reason why ongoing
- learning from FtSU cases
- case studies ensuring the anonymity of members of staff
- benchmarking with similar trusts and national data
- local activities e.g. awareness raising sessions
- agreed actions for the forthcoming year
- recommendations.

Sharing best practice

- ✓ Staff stories will be incorporated into Board reports and shared at Divisional Executive meetings to highlight the importance of speaking up, and to provide evidence that staff have been listened to and appropriate actions taken.
- ✓ The FtSU Guardians will share best practice and learning from Guardians in other trusts and information from the National Guardian Office.
- ✓ Information from the National Guardian Office will be shared appropriately with senior leaders.
- ✓ The OUH Guardians will link closely with regional colleagues to share best practice and learn from other organisations.

Supporting learning

FtSU Guardians will:

- ✓ support learning across OUH by triangulating data from other sources to identify areas of concern so that additional support, training and guidance can be provided
- ✓ communicate key messages to staff through the Divisional and Directorate teams about the themes raised with the Guardians, actions and learning with a view to encourage openness and transparency
- ✓ ensure managers are clear about their roles and responsibilities when handling concerns and are supported to do so effectively
- ✓ ensure managers and Human Resources teams support the use of mediation to try and resolve interpersonal relationships and team working.

Raising the profile of speaking up

- Guardians will work closely with the OUH Communications team to market and raise the profile of speaking up e.g. information in the OUH Staff Bulletin and presentations at the Staff Briefings.
- Updates will be provided at least quarterly in the OUH Staff Bulletin.
- Guardians will work with the Communications team to effectively use social media to reach a wider group of staff working with OUH.
- Guardians and Champions will ensure they reach all staff groups especially those who do not have access to emails and the intranet.
- Guardians will attend meetings with senior leaders and staff from all departments to raise awareness.
- Guardians will raise the profile and visibility of FtSU by holding regular events which will be held across all sites.
- Guardians will do presentations at new staff and medical staff induction sessions.
- A quarterly 'At a Glance' will be produced by the OUH Guardians for the senior leadership teams and will be posted on the FtSU intranet page.

What will success look like?

- ✓ Every member of staff will be listened to, supported and guided as appropriate.
- ✓ OUH will have an open and transparent culture where every member of staff can speak up safely.
- ✓ The culture will have a positive impact on patient safety.
- ✓ There will be an improvement in the Staff Survey responses to the questions related to speaking up.
- ✓ Positive feedback will be received from staff speaking up.

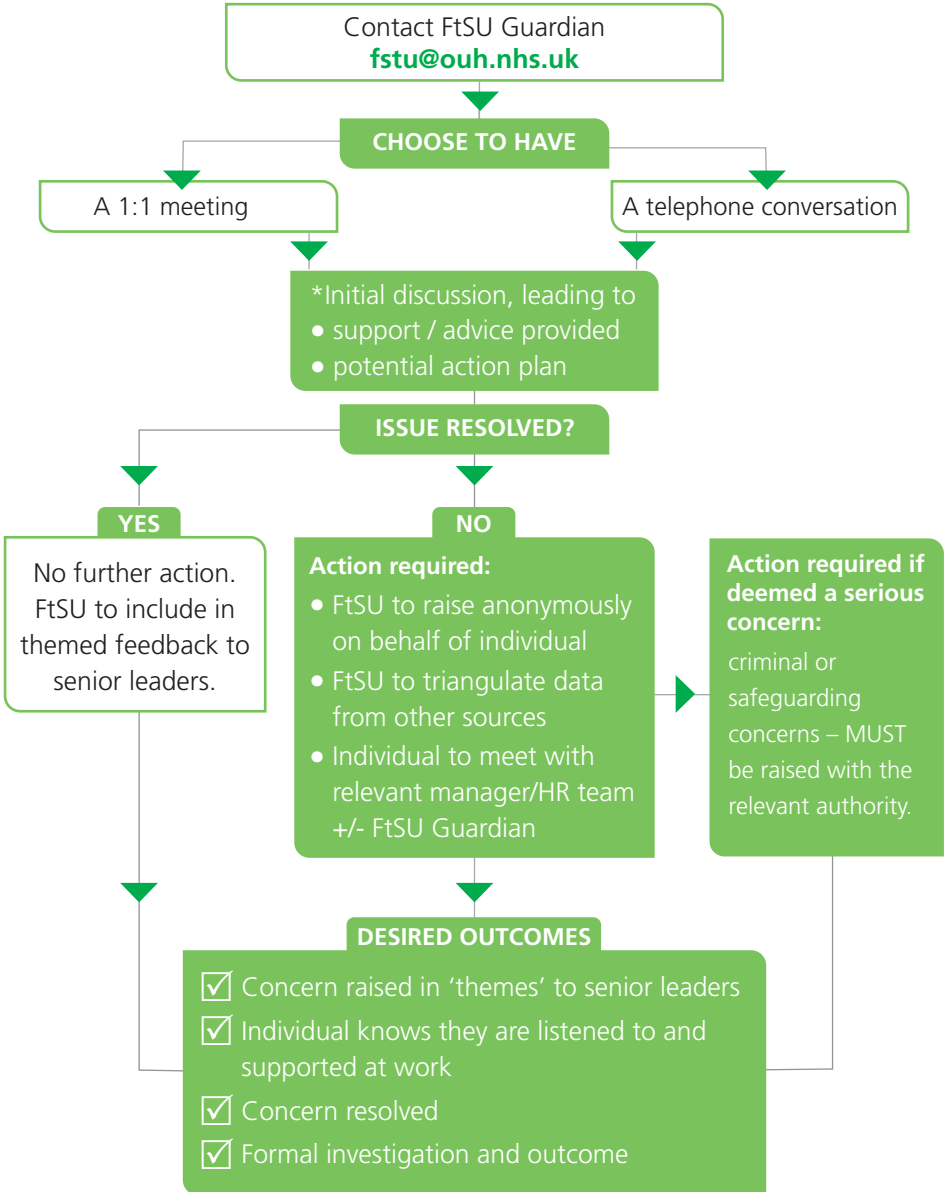
Implementation process

- ✓ Strategy agreed by Trust Board on 14 November 2019.
- ✓ Stakeholder event reviewed the implementation priorities which will reflect local needs.
- ✓ Key responsible individuals and roles agreed.
- ✓ The final implementation plan ratified by Trust Board in March 2020.

References

1. OUH Raising Concerns Policy 2018
2. Sir Robert Francis Freedom to Speak Up Review

Process for raising a concern



*Brief notes are taken during the meeting/telephone discussion and these are shared with the member of staff raising concerns and stored confidentially by the Lead Guardian.

Summary

The 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'.

The strategy included:

- how the Freedom to Speak Up role came about
- the role of the FtSU Guardian
- who the strategy is for...all staff
- contacting the FtSU Guardian and what to expect
- governance and reporting processes
- how we plan to raise the profile of 'speaking up'
- priorities for achievement, showing best practice and supporting learning
- what success will look like in OUH
- a flowchart outlining the process for raising a concern.

Contact Freedom to Speak Up (FtSU) guardians

The Lead Guardian is based at **the John Radcliffe Hospital**.

 ftsus@ouh.nhs.uk  07500 107 889  01865 234 955

Our core values are:

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