

## Freedom to Speak Up Vision and Strategy

### Purpose

Sir Robert Francis's 'Freedom to Speak Up Review' published in February 2015 highlighted the need 'to ensure that NHS staff in England feel safe to raise concerns, confident that they will be listened to and the concerns will be acted upon'. The Review recommended a number of principles and actions, including the creation of a Freedom to Speak Up Guardian to support staff to raise concerns.

This Strategy sets out the Trust's vision and strategy for Freedom to Speak Up, the proposed outcomes and measures. It should be read in conjunction with the Trust's Freedom to Speak Up policy and the Dignity at Work policy, which provide guidance to all staff on the behaviours expected to ensure everyone is treated respectfully at work, and the Staff Support and Being Open policy which underpins the proactive patient safety culture within the Trust. This Strategy feeds into the developing People and Diversity & Inclusion Strategies, and the Trust values and leadership behaviours, which provide the blueprint for how we interact with each other and our patients.

### Background and Context

The basis of this Freedom to Speak Up Vision and Strategy was created through engagement with staff from across the organisation, including Freedom to Speak Up staff advocates and members of the Equality & Diversity Group during 2018/19, and via a survey open to all staff. Engagement focused on the following three questions:

- What does speaking up mean to you?
- What does speaking up look like in UH Bristol now?
- Where should we be in five years' time?

It was clear from discussions with staff that their understanding of what speaking up means and how effectively the Trust deals with concerns is mixed, and that there was a need to build trust and confidence to help develop a culture of safety and learning. The annual Staff Survey provides one indication on whether staff know how to raise concerns (around unsafe clinical practice), feel able to do so and feel that concerns are taken seriously. In 2018, 71.5% of staff who responded to the survey said they would feel secure raising concerns and 61% would be confident that the concerns would be addressed. While these figures are an improvement on the 2017 results they are still too low. They are not a perfect indicator of the culture of Speaking Up in the Trust as the questions specifically refer to clinical concerns only. We know that the majority of concerns raised through Freedom to Speak Up at UH Bristol are around attitudes and behaviours – and the 2018 Staff Survey results reveal a slight increase in staff experiencing harassment, bullying or abuse from their managers and/or colleagues. This highlights the need for our Freedom to Speak Up Strategy to feed into the broader People Strategy, specifically around how we bring about *leadership and cultural change* within UH Bristol.

### Our Vision for Speaking Up

To create a culture of openness and transparency so that anyone who works within the Trust feels confident to raise concerns.

### Strategy

To deliver the vision, and so help bring about a change in culture, we need to see improvement across the following areas:

- 1) Awareness – so that everyone knows how to raise concerns and to whom concerns can be raised

- 2) Confidence in speaking up – concerns are heard, promptly and thoroughly investigated, feedback is provided and outcomes are shared wherever possible
- 3) Training and support – for all leaders and managers in understanding their own behaviours and dealing with concerns.

These areas of focus must involve all staff in the Trust, including agency staff, students/trainees, contracted workers and volunteers.

Activities in the three areas will be led by the Guardian, with support from the lead Executive (the Director of People), and the lead Non-executive Director (Senior Independent Director), with additional support and commitment from the Board of Directors as well as the network of Freedom to Speak Up staff advocates. The Trust is also engaged with the National Guardian's Office and Freedom to Speak Up Guardians in the South West region to learn and share best practice.

Work around the third objective relating to supporting leaders and managers to understand their own behaviours ties into the People Strategy, specifically to the targets and measures around leadership and cultural transformation. The actions for this third objective will be aligned with the People Strategy, and will be developed as this strategy develops.

Each of these strands of work must ensure that the huge contribution our staff make to patient care is reflected in our own commitment to looking after them – with the ultimate aim of ensuring staff are able to raise any concerns with their line manager or a senior colleague without the need to seek out the Guardian and staff advocate network.

### **Key Objectives and Actions**

To deliver the Strategy the following key objectives and actions have been identified:

#### **Objective 1 – Improve awareness of the Speaking Up programme**

Action 1 – All new starters are made aware of Speaking Up at corporate induction or at local training (e.g. volunteer induction).

Action 2 – All staff will be issued with a simple guide to Speaking Up as part of the recruitment process, with the expectation that all members of staff act to challenge inappropriate behaviour and compassionately address concerns.

Action 3 – A rolling communications programme ensures all workers are made aware of the Speaking Up programme through marketing materials in all areas of the hospital (posters and leaflets), regular email updates and face to face communications. In line with the Dignity at Work Policy, staff are aware of the range of additional support available to them if they have a concern or issue, and each of these support services actively promotes the work of the others.

Action 4 – There is clearly accessible information about Speaking Up and how to raise concerns on the Trust Connect pages.

Action 5 – Speaking Up staff advocates will be available in all areas of the Trust and from a range of backgrounds and roles.

#### **Objective 2 – Improve confidence in Speaking Up**

Action 6 – Individuals will all have the opportunity, and adequate time, to discuss their concerns with the Guardian, or an Advocate if they prefer.

Action 7 – The number of cases raised and resolved, and key themes of concerns will be reported to staff on a regular basis through the Advocate network and existing communication channels such as Newsbeat.

Action 8 – Wherever possible, case studies will be developed and communicated to share outcomes from investigations.

Action 9 – Annual review of Freedom to Speak Up policy and strategy to ensure they are fit for purpose.

Action 10 – Concerns are dealt with promptly, independently and confidentiality.

Action 11 – All those who raise concerns receive feedback on the outcome of the investigation and have the opportunity to provide feedback themselves on the process.

**Objective 3 – Support all leaders and managers to understand their own behaviours and deal with concerns positively**

Action 12 – Training on leadership behaviours for all leaders and managers, including training on the importance of listening to and positively responding to concerns, will be undertaken by all existing and new leaders and managers.

**Outcomes and measures**

The measures to monitor progress against the actions are as follows:

Awareness	Confidence	Supporting leaders and managers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consistently high compliance for corporate induction training and local induction</li> <li>• Number and type of updates to staff and other workers in the Trust about speaking up</li> <li>• Response to annual ‘snapshot’ survey relating to awareness of Speaking Up (targeted also to volunteers, agency workers, students and trainees)</li> <li>• Number and location of Freedom to Speak Up staff advocates across the Trust</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of cases raised through the Raising Concerns phone line, email address and Datix</li> <li>• Number of case studies completed and shared</li> <li>• Response to question in annual ‘snapshot’ survey relating to confidence in Speaking Up</li> <li>• Timelines for cases from date raised to date closed</li> <li>• Feedback from those who have raised concerns (i.e. whether they would speak up again)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take up of management (behaviours) training by division, hospital site and pay band</li> <li>• Prevalence of ‘hot spot’ areas identified through Happy App data and annual Staff Survey</li> </ul>

**Monitoring**

An update on the Freedom to Speak Up programme will be presented to the Board and People Committee every quarter by the Freedom to Speak Up Guardian. Updates will include:

- An overview of the cases reported and themes identified
- An overview of progress against this Strategy’s outcomes and measures
- A snapshot of data from the Happy App and Staff Survey reflecting ‘hot spots’ or potential future ‘hot spots’ for targeted support
- Benchmarking data to show how the Trust compares with other acute trusts nationally.