

Report Title:	Freedom to Speak Up – Board Paper		
Sponsoring Executive:	Frieza Mahmood, Chief People Officer		
Report Author:	Leeanne Owen, Interim Head of People, Frieza Mahmood, Chief People Officer		
Meeting:	Trust Board (Public)	Date	2 nd December 2021

1. Suggested discussion points *[two or three issues you consider the Trust Board should focus on]*

This report provides an update on the management of Freedom to Speak up (FTSU) issues in the Trust. Feedback from staff engagement sessions, surveys and recent complaints shows considerable additional work is required to achieve the FTSU ambitions set out in the revised People Plan (currently being consulted on with staff).

The core issues centre primarily on:

- Improving staff confidence in raising concerns
- Staff experience during the investigative and review process
- Embedding of wider thematic learning to address broader and systemic issues.

The report identifies current priorities, recent developments and future changes to support a shift in emphasis.

2. Alignment to our Vision *[indicate with an 'X' which Strategic Objective this paper supports]*

Our Patients	Our People	Our Population
To be good or outstanding in everything that we do	X	To work seamlessly with our partners to improve lives

3. Previous consideration *[where has this paper been previously discussed?]*

N/a

4. Recommendation(s)

The Trust Board is asked to:

- NOTE:** the content of the report and future developments
- DISCUSS:** any additional areas where assurance is required
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5. Impact *[indicate with an 'X' which governance initiatives this matter relates to and where shown elaborate]*

Trust Risk Register					
Board Assurance Framework					
Equality Impact Assessment	Is this required?	Y	N	X	If 'Y' date completed
Quality Impact Assessment	Is this required?	Y	N	X	If 'Y' date completed

SANDWELL AND WEST BIRMINGHAM HOSPITALS NHS TRUST

Report to the Public Trust Board: 2nd December 2021

Freedom to Speak Up

1. Introduction

This report provides an update on the progress made by the Trust to align itself to the National Guardians Office expectations to support the creation of a strong Speak up culture.

The report acknowledges considerable additional work is required to achieve the FTSU ambitions set out in the revised People Plan (currently being consulted on with staff).

Insights from staff engagement sessions, surveys and recent complaints reveal a continued lack of confidence in raising concerns, inconsistencies in staff experience and weaknesses in triangulating data to embed wider thematic learning for broader or systemic issues.

The report identifies current priority areas of focus, developments over recent months and planned future changes to support a changing shift in emphasis for leaders to drive cultural improvements.

It also sets out planned future work to ensure progress and momentum for the delivery of a two-year improvement plan endorsed by NHSEI.

2. Progress since the previous update

Recruitment

Following the Board approving funding for a Lead Freedom to Speak up Guardian, a rigorous external recruitment campaign was completed which competitively assessed a number of high calibre candidates from within and outside of the Trust. The outcome of this process was successful appointment to a full time Lead Freedom to Speak Up Guardian role to commence in post in Quarter 4 of 21/22.

3. Awareness

As part of National Speak Up Month in October a bespoke Speak Up communications campaign was delivered to improve awareness of the existing and new channels open to staff to highlight concerns relating to experience, safety and quality, along with promoting managerial access to support tools.

4. Approach

As part of reinforcing the importance of creating a culture of openness, trust, learning and accountability, our focus has been on introducing mechanisms to build a Restorative and Just Culture.

We have created a related decision making framework for all conduct related employee relations concerns to ensure that all relevant matters are dealt with in a fair and consistent manner, enabling swift and proportionate action is taken to address the identified concerns, in line with Just and Learning Principles. This is supported by the introduction of a multi-disciplinary group to independently assess the severity of the concern, make recommendations on action, and monitor progress on delivery against expectations; this is to include support for staff wellbeing and embedding of learning.

Furthermore the Chief Executive, Chief Nurse and Chief People Officer have made concerted efforts to engage with staff offering drop in sessions for staff to raise concerns and share ideas for improvement. In addition to this feedback 400 leaders to date have participated in providing feedback on the new people plan (includes Speak Up commitments under psychological safety) and values which will help to drive and embed the cultural improvements required in this area. The plan will also reach a further 10% of the organisation over the coming months. This outcome of this work will lead to a new behavioural compact and aligned leadership development framework to support the required change in emphasis.

5. Priority Areas of Focus

Policy Development

We are currently reviewing the whistleblowing policy as one of the priority policies for engagement with Trade Union colleagues through the Trust's negotiating and consultative mechanisms to support ratification in Quarter 4. This will be followed by a relaunch of Trust communications and training.

Recording and Monitoring

There is a current gap in reporting of concerns and taking action on themes through the group management structure. These gaps can act as a barrier to learning and restrict the ability for local improvements to be made. Currently no central log is maintained of all whistleblowing concerns raised and investigated. Therefore the overall quantum of such issues is difficult to gauge. A central Whistleblowing recording system will be established to document all issues of a whistleblowing nature raised and a template investigation document will be developed to ensure that an audit trail is maintained of cases to ensure consistency. This will allow lessons learnt to be disseminated trust-wide. We will be adapting the established existing database currently designated for the confidential management of all Employee Relations issues to record all whistleblowing concerns in a secure, confidential and where necessary anonymous manner, to ensure all concerns are centrally logged and able to be reported on. This will enable tracking against Key Performance Indicator resolution targets.

Intervention

A cultural barometer has been produced for the POD Committee which acts as a Heat Map, identifying teams in difficulty by triangulating key performance indicators such as sickness absence, turnover levels, staff satisfaction scores etc across a range of people measures. Speak Up and incident numbers will now also be included in this tool moving forwards to ensure deeper dives and intervention work is appropriately targeted to tackle emerging trends and themes in this area.

Future Developments

Despite the tremendous efforts of existing Speak Up Guardians and the positive introduction of a new Lead Freedom to Speak Up Guardian (who will be commencing in post in the new year), the capacity of the existing Guardians remains a challenge. The recent recruitment exercise to the Lead Guardian role has shown us that there is much more enthusiasm and interest in getting involved to support the delivery of the Speak Up agenda than we were aware of. This potential can be harnessed to increase the number and diversity of the Guardians who are available to support the progression of Speak Up aims along with considering more structured arrangements for regular release to facilitate engagement with a regular CEO, Non-Executive Director Lead for Speak Up and CPO lead forum. This is strongly suggested as being necessary to facilitate the appropriate oversight, support and learning.

7. Recommendations

The Board is asked to:

- NOTE: the content of the report and future developments
- DISCUSS: any additional areas where assurance is required

Frieza Mahmood, Chief People Officer
Leeanne Owen, Interim Head of People
25th November 2021