

RAISING CONCERNS/FREEDOM TO SPEAK UP POLICY	
Summary statement: How does the document support patient care?	By ensuring staff and anyone performing functions related to the Trust and understand how they raise a concern about patient safety, wrongdoing, financial malpractice or any other risk
Staff/stakeholders involved in development: <i>Job titles only</i>	Head of Employee Relations Policy Discussion Group Employee Partnership Programme Freedom to Speak Up Guardians
Division:	Executive
Department:	Corporate
Responsible Person:	Director of Organisational Development
Author:	Freedom to Speak Up Guardian
For use by:	All staff, volunteers, anyone that has worked in the past for the NHS, agency workers, temporary workers, students, governors and anyone performing Trust related activity
Purpose:	<i>To provide a framework and procedure for raising concerns</i>
This document supports: <i>Standards and legislation</i>	The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 Bribery Act 2010 BSI Code of Practice on Whistleblowing Arrangements Guidance written by Public Concern at Work 2010 RCN Guidance 'Raising concerns' GMC 'Raising & Acting on concerns about Patient Safety' 2012 Sir Robert Francis Freedom to Speak Up Review (February 2015)
Key related documents:	HR policies Professional codes of practice Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Policy Francis Report Public Concern at Work (PCAW) Grievance policy Dignity at Work Policy Investigation Policy Disciplinary Policy Data Protection Policy
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Speaking up about any concern you have at work is really important. In fact, it's vital because it will help us to keep improving our services for all patients and the working environment for our staff.

Our underlying message for all staff is if you've '**seen something – say something**'

You may feel worried about raising a concern, and we understand this. But please don't be put off. In accordance with our duty of candour, our senior leaders and entire board are committed to an open and honest culture. We will look into what you say and you will always have access to the support you need.

This 'standard integrated policy' was one of a number of recommendations of the review by Sir Robert Francis into whistleblowing in the NHS, aimed at improving the experience of whistleblowing in the NHS. It is expected that this policy (produced by NHS Improvement and NHS England) will be adopted by all NHS organisations in England as a minimum standard to help to normalise the raising of concerns for the benefit of all patients.

Our local process has been integrated into the policy/adheres to the principles of this policy and provides more detail about how we will look into a concern.

2.0 WHAT CONCERNS CAN I RAISE?

You can raise a concern about risk, malpractice or wrongdoing you think is harming the service we deliver/commission. Just a few examples of this might include (but are by no means restricted to):

- unsafe patient care
- unsafe working conditions
- inadequate induction or training for staff
- lack of, or poor, response to a reported patient safety incident
- suspicions of fraud (which can also be reported to our local counter-fraud team (see page on staff net or [click here](#))
- a bullying culture (across a team or organisation rather than individual instances of bullying).

For further examples, please see the Health Education England video 'responding to concerns'. To view the film [click](#) here

Remember that if you are a healthcare professional you may have a professional duty to report a concern. If in doubt, please raise it. **Seen something - say something.**

Don't wait for proof. We would like you to raise the matter while it is still a concern. It doesn't matter if you turn out to be mistaken as long as you are genuinely troubled.

This policy is not for people with concerns about their employment that affect only them – that type of concern is better suited to our grievance policy.

Feel safe to raise your concern

If you raise a genuine concern under this policy, you will not be at risk of losing your job or suffering any form of reprisal as a result. We will not tolerate the harassment or victimisation of anyone raising a concern. Nor will we tolerate any attempt to bully you into not raising any such concern. Any such behaviour is a breach of our values as an organisation and, if upheld following investigation, could result in disciplinary action.

Provided you are acting honestly, it does not matter if you are mistaken or if there is an innocent explanation for your concerns.

Confidentiality

We hope you will feel comfortable raising your concern openly, but we also appreciate that you may want to raise it confidentially. This means that while you are willing for your identity to be known to the person you report your concern to, you do not want anyone else to know your identity. Therefore, we will keep your identity confidential, if that is what you want, unless required to disclose it by law (for example, by the police). You can choose to raise your concern anonymously, without giving anyone your name, but that may make it more difficult for us to investigate thoroughly and give you feedback on the outcome.

Who can raise concerns?

Anyone who works (or has worked) in the NHS, or for an independent organisation that provides NHS services can raise concerns. This includes agency workers, temporary workers, students, volunteers and governors.

Who should I raise my concern with?

In many circumstances the easiest way to get your concern resolved will be to raise it formally or informally with your line manager (or lead clinician or tutor). But where you don't think it is appropriate to do this, you can use any of the options set out below in the first instance.

If raising it with your line manager (or lead clinician or tutor) does not resolve matters, or you do not feel able to raise it with them, you can contact one of the following people:

- one of our Freedom to Speak Up Guardians (or equivalent designated person) by e-mailing freedomtospeakup@wsht.nhs.uk or telephoning/texting Shelton Bates on 07500 766162 or Delia Reed on 07770 701836– this is an important role identified in the Freedom to Speak Up review to act as an independent and impartial source of advice to staff at any stage of raising a concern, with access to anyone in the organisation, including the chief executive, or if necessary, outside the organisation. Details about the role in our Trust can be found on staff net or if you [click here](#)
- our Counter Fraud Team – e-mail Heather.Greenhowe@rsmuk.com further details of how to contact the team can be found on staff net or if you [click here](#)

There are other sources of support available for raising a concern and details of these are available in **Appendix 1**.

If you still remain concerned after you have raised your concern, you can contact:

- our executive director with responsibility for Speaking Up Denise Farmer Denise.Farmer@wsht.nhs.uk
- our non-executive director with responsibility for Speaking Up Joanna Crane Joanna.Crane@wsht.nhs.uk
- our medical director George.Findlay@wsht.nhs.uk

All these people have been trained in receiving concerns and will give you information about where you can go for more support.

If for any reason you do not feel comfortable raising your concern internally, you can raise concerns with external bodies, **see section 4.0**

Advice and support

As well as local support available to you, you can also contact the Whistleblowing Helpline for the NHS and social care (08000 724725) click [here](#) for details or your own professional body or trade union representative.

How should I raise my concern?

You can raise your concerns with any of the people listed above in person, by phone or in writing (including email).

Whichever route you choose, please be ready to explain as fully as you can the information and circumstances that gave rise to your concern.

3.0 WHAT WILL WE DO?

We are committed to the principles of the Freedom to Speak Up review and its vision for raising concerns, and will respond in line with them (**see Appx B**).

We are committed to listening to our staff, learning lessons and improving patient care. On receipt the concern will be recorded and you will receive an acknowledgement within two working days. The central record will record the date the concern was received, whether you have requested confidentiality, a summary of the concerns and dates when we have given you updates or feedback.

Investigation

Where you have been unable to resolve the matter quickly (usually within a few days) with your line manager, we will carry out a proportionate investigation – using someone suitably independent (usually from a different part of the organisation) and properly trained – and we will reach a conclusion within a reasonable timescale (which we will notify you of). Wherever possible we will carry out a single investigation (so, for example, where a concern is raised about a patient safety incident, we will usually undertake a single investigation that looks at your concern and the wider circumstances of the incident). The investigation will be objective and evidence-based, and will produce a report that focuses on identifying and rectifying any issues, and learning lessons to prevent problems recurring.

We may decide that your concern would be better looked at under another process; for example, our process for dealing with bullying and harassment. If so, we will discuss that with you.

Any employment issues (that affect only you and not others) identified during the investigation will be considered separately.

Communicating with you

We will treat you with respect at all times and will thank you for raising your concerns. We will discuss your concerns with you to ensure we understand exactly what you are worried about. We will tell you how long we expect the investigation to take and keep you up to date with its progress. Wherever possible, we will share the full investigation report with you (while respecting the confidentiality of others).

How will we learn from your concern?

The focus of the investigation will be on improving the service we provide for patients. Where it identifies improvements that can be made, we will track them to ensure necessary changes are made, and are working effectively. Lessons will be shared with teams across the organisation, or more widely, as appropriate.

Quality Assurance Committee

The purpose of the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) is to support the Board in ensuring that the Trust's management, and clinical and non clinical processes and controls are effective in setting and monitoring good standards and continuously improving the quality of services provided by the Trust in line with the principles and values of the Patient First programme.

The Committee will receive a quarterly and annual report from the Freedom to Speak Up Guardians.

Board oversight

The QAC reports to the Board after each of its meetings and makes recommendations to the Board of Directors concerning any issues that require decision or resolution by the Board. The Committee also reports as required to the other Trust Committees any matters that require the attention or decision of that Committee. The Committee chair will provide an annual report to the Board detailing how the Committee has discharged its Terms of Reference.

Review

We will review the effectiveness of this policy and local process at least annually, with the outcome published and changes made as appropriate.

4.0 RAISING YOUR CONCERN WITH AN OUTSIDE BODY

Alternatively, you can raise your concern outside the organisation with:

NHS Improvement for concerns about:

- how NHS trusts and foundation trusts are being run
- other providers with an NHS provider licence
- NHS procurement, choice and competition
- the national tariff

Care Quality Commission for quality and safety concerns

NHS England for concerns about:

- primary medical services (general practice)
- primary dental services
- primary ophthalmic services
- local pharmaceutical services

Health Education England for education and training in the NHS

NHS Counter Fraud Authority for concerns about fraud and corruption www.cfa.nhs.uk.

Protect is a charity

which provides confidential advice for people who have witnessed wrongdoings at work but are unsure of how to raise their concerns. The helpline number is 020 3117 2520 www.pcaw.org.uk

Making a 'protected disclosure'

There are very specific criteria that need to be met for an individual to be covered by whistleblowing law when they raise a concern (to be able to claim the protection that accompanies it). There is also a defined list of 'prescribed persons', similar to the list of outside bodies on page 8, who you can make a protected disclosure to. To help you consider whether you might meet these criteria, please seek independent advice from the Whistleblowing Helpline for the NHS and social care, Public Concern at Work or a legal representative.

National Guardian for Freedom to Speak Up

The Office of the National Guardian can independently review how staff have been treated having raised concerns where NHS trusts and foundation trusts may have failed to follow good practice, working with some of the bodies listed above to take action where needed. See website for more details (www.cqc.org.uk/national-guardians-office) or [click here](#)

5.0 Process for raising and escalating a concern

Step one

If you have a concern about a risk, malpractice or wrongdoing at work, we hope you will feel able to raise it first with your line manager, lead clinician or tutor (for students). This may be done orally or in writing.

Step two

If you feel unable to raise the matter with your line manager, lead clinician or tutor, for whatever reason, please raise the matter with our local Freedom to Speak Up Guardian(s): **Shelton Bates or Delia Reed** at freedomtospeakup@wsht.nhs.uk or by telephoning/texting 07500 766162 or 07770 701836.

These members of staff have been given special responsibility and training in dealing with whistleblowing concerns. They will:

- treat your concern confidentially unless otherwise agreed
- ensure you receive timely support to progress your concern
- escalate to the board any indications that you are being subjected to detriment for raising your concern
- remind the organisation of the need to give you timely feedback on how your concern is being dealt with
- ensure you have access to personal support since raising your concern may be stressful.

If you want to raise the matter in confidence, please say so at the outset so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

Step three

If these channels have been followed and you still have concerns, or if you feel that the matter is so serious that you cannot discuss it with any of the above, please contact the chief executive (Marianne.Griffiths@wsht.nhs.uk), our medical director (George.Findlay@wsht.nhs.uk), your responsible officer, Chief Nurse (Maggie.Davies@wsht.nhs.uk) or the nominated non - executive director (Joanna.Crane@wsht.nhs.uk) .

Step four

You can raise concerns formally with external bodies **please see section 4.0**

6.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

6.1 All Staff

6.1.1 All staff should read this policy and be vigilant as they have a professional duty and responsibility to ensure that any concerns they have are reported. For staff who are licenced with a regulatory body (e.g. GMC, NMC and HCPC) this is also a requirement of their professional codes of conduct.

This duty requires staff to be honest, open and truthful in all their dealings with patients, visitors and each other.

6.1.2 Staff are also expected to demonstrate behaviours that support the Trust's Vision of "We Care". This means being:

- Kind
- Friendly
- Respectful
- Compassionate

- Professional
- Working as a Team

6.2 Managers and Clinical Leaders

- 6.2.1 Bring this policy to the attention of their staff.
- 6.2.2 Promote a culture of openness, transparency and candour.
- 6.2.3 Treat any concern raised seriously and deal with it promptly and confidentially, giving the employee full support during the whole process. This may involve arranging for an interpreter to be present when meeting with the individual.
- 6.2.4 Managers must ensure that adequate time is allowed for trade union representatives to undertake their role, recognising the importance of professional representatives in helping to keep the organisation safe.
- 6.2.5 Managers must create an open and safe atmosphere where staff feel their views regarding the safe and effective delivery of care and services to our users is welcomed and seen as an opportunity to learn and consider how services and therefore the patient experience may be improved.
- 6.2.6 A Manager's Top Tips is available (see Appx 2) which compliments the policy and is available on StaffNet on the Freedom to Speak Up page.

6.3 Chief Executive

The Freedom to Speak Up Guardians will meet bi monthly with the Chief Executive and have access within 24 hours should the Guardians need to raise concerns. The purpose of the meeting will be to discuss themes and trends and any concerns brought by the Guardians that have been raised by staff and the actions being taken to address these. Confidentiality will be maintained at these meetings.

6.4 The Head of Organisational Development

The Freedom to Speak Up Guardians will meet bi monthly with the Head of Organisational Development and have access within 24 hours should the Guardians need to raise concerns. The purpose of this meeting will be to discuss themes and trends, the operational aspects of the Guardian role, any reports from the National Guardian and associated action plans, review this policy and any specific concerns or issues that the Guardians may have. Confidentiality will be maintained at these meetings.

6.5 Board of Directors

The Board of Directors is committed to this policy. In order to discharge its responsibilities this will include:

- Ensuring that high standards of patient centred care and behaviours are set and maintained across the organisation as identified through our commitment to Patient First.
- Establishing an organisational culture where patients and staff are listened to.
- Taking all concerns seriously, dealing with them thoroughly, expeditiously, confidentially and fairly

- d. Training and providing guidance to its managers and clinical leaders in dealing with issues of concern.
- e. Developing and deploying reliable and transparent measures for the culture and health of the Trust.
- f. Ensuring a responsive system of warning signs is in place to prevent danger, professional misconduct or financial malpractice.
- g. Ensuring organisational learning takes place at all levels when patient, visitor or staff safety is at risk of or has been compromised.
- h. Provide support to the Guardians in the form of the 1-1 meetings with the Director of Organisational Development as the executive lead for Freedom to Speak Up and the bi-monthly meetings with the Chief Executive.
- i. Training, resources and time for the role and meetings and access to supervision via the counselling service if required for the Freedom to Speak Up Guardians.

6.6 Human Resources Department

6.6.1 The Freedom to Speak Up Guardians will meet regularly (bi monthly) with the Head of Employee Relations

6.6.2 It is recognised that raising a concern particularly when it is a serious one can be worrying and sometimes distressing for staff. It is therefore important that staff are supported to maintain good health and wellbeing during this time. Support through the Trust's Occupational Health department (wsht@teamprevent.co.uk) and the confidential counselling service (ext 31624 for SRH or 85356 for Worthing and Southlands) are available to all staff.

6.7 Freedom to Speak Up Guardians

Freedom to Speak Up Guardians operate independently, impartially and objectively, whilst working in partnership with individuals and groups throughout their organisation, including their senior leadership team. They will seek guidance and support from and, where appropriate, escalate matters to, bodies outside their organisation. The Guardians will treat concerns confidentially (unless it is a criminal matter) and is someone staff can talk to if they are worried about a wrong doing and are unsure of how to raise a concern.

6.8 Elected Trade Union Representatives

The role of the elected trade union representatives is to act as an advocate for staff and to provide them with advice and support to help address concerns and problems in a constructive and timely way. This may include accompanying an employee to any formal meeting.

Where a trade union is also a professional representative (for example, the Royal College of Nursing) their role will also be to ensure professional standards of service and conduct are upheld. They will therefore have a duty to pursue professional concerns about the standards independently of individual members of staff.

7.0 MONITORING COMPLIANCE & EFFECTIVENESS

7.1.1 The Health & Wellbeing Group will regularly receive an anonymised, confidential report of all concerns raised under the policy as part of the monitoring of effectiveness. This allows for the Trust to triangulate intelligence from staff. The Health & Wellbeing Group reports to

the Organisational and Workforce Development Group as well as providing a report to the Trust Board every 6 months.

The Freedom to Speak Up Guardians are members of the Trust's Triangulation committee providing information about any patient safety issues that are raised.

7.1.2 A spreadsheet will be used for logging, reporting and monitoring concerns raised directly with the Guardians, access to these concerns being restricted to the Guardians.

7.1.3 There will be liaison between the Freedom to Speak Up Guardians and other groups (HR, Diversity Matters, Unions, Staff governors etc) to triangulate any recurrent themes which might arise.

7.2 Monitoring Oversight

7.2.1 The Chief Executive is responsible for this policy.

7.2.2 The Head of Employee Relations will monitor the application of this policy on a quarterly basis and report to The Quality Assurance Committee on its success.

7.2.3 The Freedom to Speak Up Guardians will monitor the daily operation of the policy and if staff have any comments or questions these should be directed to the Head of Organisational Development.

7.3 The National Guardian and the National Guardians Office

A National Guardian has been appointed to provide leadership for Freedom to Speak Up Guardians.

A National Guardians Office has been set up to support the role of the National Guardian. The National Guardian's Office is hosted by the Care Quality Commission.

The office's main functions are:

To establish and support a regional network of Freedom to Speak Up Guardians.

To highlight NHS organisations that are successful in creating the right environment for staff to speak up safely and share this best practice across the NHS.

To independently review cases where NHS organisations may have failed to follow good practice and work with statutory bodies to take action where needed.

To make recommendations on putting in place the structures and processes that will enable staff to speak up safely.

Where improvements are needed these will be highlighted and reinforced through the work of the Care Quality Commission, NHS England and NHS Improvement. .

Information about the cases that our Freedom to Speak Up Guardians are aware of will therefore be shared in an anonymous format with the Office of the National Guardian when requested. Data will be processed according to the data protection policy.

WHO WAS CONSULTED

This policy has been drawn up in consultation with the Trust's recognised trade unions including the RCN, BMA, RCM and Unison and HR.

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Name of Policy, Service, Function, Project or Proposal	Raising Concerns/Freedom To Speak Up Policy
Department	Human Resources
Lead Officer for Assessment	
What is the main Purpose of the Policy/Service/Function/Project/Proposal?	Policy and procedure for how staff raise concerns they may have about danger, professional misconduct or financial malpractice that might affect patients, staff or the Trust
List the main activities of the policy or service re-design (e.g. Manual Handling would relate to health and safety of patients; health and safety of staff; compliance with NHS and Government legislation or standards etc.)	Patient safety
Is the policy or service relevant to:	
Promoting Good Relations between different people?	No
Eliminating discrimination?	No
Promoting Equality of Opportunity?	No
Which groups of the population do you think may be affected by this proposal?	
Minority Ethnic People	<u>No</u>
Women and Men	<u>No</u>
People in religious/faith groups	<u>No</u>
Disabled people	<u>No</u>
Older people	<u>No</u>
Children and young people	<u>No</u>
Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people	<u>No</u>
People of low income	<u>No</u>
People with mental health problems	<u>No</u>
Homeless people	<u>No</u>
Staff	<u>No</u>
Any other group (please detail)	

Do you have any information that tells you of the current use of this service? No (if yes please detail)

Is it broken down by ethnicity, gender, disability, age, religion and sexual orientation? No (please detail)

Does this information reflect the proportions from the 2001 Census?
No (If no, can you explain why) - not applicable to the purpose of this policy

If there is no information available or if this is patchy, specify the arrangements that will make this available

Using the information above, please complete the grids below:

How will the Policy etc. affect Men and Women in different ways?

Gender	Positive Impact	Negative Impact	Neutral	Reason/Evidence	Don't know
Women			X		
Men			X		

How will the Policy etc. affect Black and Minority ethnic people?

Race	Positive Impact	Negative Impact	Neutral	Reason/Evidence	Don't know
White			X		
Mixed			X		
Other Ethnic Group			X	There is anecdotal evidence that staff from non-British cultures are may be more reluctant to report concerns	
Black/Black British			X		
Asian/Asian British			X		

How will the policy affect people with disabilities?

Disability	Positive Impact	Negative Impact	Neutral	Reason/Evidence	Don't know
Visually Impaired			X		
Hearing Impaired			X		
Physically Disabled			X		

Learning Disability			X		
Mental Health Related			X		

How will the policy affect people of different ages?

Varying ages	Positive Impact	Negative Impact	Neutral	Reason/Evidence	Don't know
			X		

How will the policy affect people of different sexual orientation?

Sexual Orientation	Positive Impact	Negative Impact	Neutral	Reason/Evidence	Don't know
			X		

How will the policy affect Transgender or transsexual people?

	Positive Impact	Negative Impact	Neutral	Reason/Evidence	Don't know
Transgender			X		
Transsexual			X		

How will the policy affect people of varying religious beliefs?

Varying beliefs	Positive Impact	Negative Impact	Neutral	Reason/Evidence	Don't know
			X		

How will the policy affect those with carer responsibilities or impact on basic human rights?

Carers / Human Rights	Positive Impact	Negative Impact	Neutral	Reason/Evidence	Don't know
			X		

Considering your responses above, what are the areas that are have a positive and / or negative impact?

	Positive + / Negative -	Reason Given for Impact
Gender		
Race		
Disability		
Age		
Sexual Orientation		
Religious Belief		

Has there been any consultation about this Policy etc.? If there has, what were the key issues identified?

Consultation	Date	Summary of Key Issues to be addressed
Gender		
Race		
Disability		
Age		
Sexual Orientation		
Religious Belief		

If consultation is planned, when will it happen and what are the key themes for consultation?

How do you intend to consult staff?

Through TU representatives and via StaffNet

What does Local / Regional / National research show with regards to these groups and the likely impact?

Group	Source	Key Issues
Gender		
Race		
Disability		
Age		
Sexual Orientation		
Religious Belief		

As a result of consultation / information gathering, what changes do you intend to make to the policy etc? If 'None', please state as relevant:

Gender

Issue	Action Required	Lead Officer	Timescale	Outcome Measure	Review Date

Race

Issue	Action Required	Lead Officer	Timescale	Outcome Measure	Review Date

Disability

Issue	Action Required	Lead Officer	Timescale	Outcome Measure	Review Date

Sexual Orientation

Issue	Action Required	Lead Officer	Timescale	Outcome Measure	Review Date

Religious Belief

Issue	Action Required	Lead Officer	Timescale	Outcome Measure	Review Date

Age

Issue	Action Required	Lead Officer	Timescale	Outcome Measure	Review Date

Please outline the monitoring and reviewing process and timescale

The Trust's Workforce and Organisational Development Group will monitor the implementation of this policy on a quarterly basis and report its findings to the Trust Board.

Agreed Review Date: ?

Signed by: Delia Reed and Shelton Bates, Freedom to Speak Up Guardians

Trust Equality & Diversity Lead Nikki Kriel

Date:

Appx 1

Sources of Support for Raising a Concern

- Line Manager, Lead Clinician, Educational Supervisor
- Freedom to Speak Up Guardians, Shelton Bates or Delia Reed
freedomtospeakup@wsht.nhs.uk 07500 766162 or 07770 701836
- Junior Doctors Guardian of Safe Working Hours Patrick Carr,
Patrick.Carr@wsht.nhs.uk
- Lead Local Counter Fraud Specialist, Heather Greenhowe 07800 617331 or 01293 591878 Heather.Greenhowe@rsmuk.com or [click here](#) for the relevant page on staffnet
- Director of Clinical Governance or any other member of the Patient Safety team - via Jo Habben Jo.Habben@wsht.nhs.uk
- Health and Safety Team (ext 8073)
- Equality Diversity and Inclusion Team (ext 84025)
- Union Representative and Staff Side
- Chaplaincy (ext 35380 or 84004)
- Staff Counselling (details on StaffNet or [click here](#)) ext 31624 at SRH and 85356 at Worthing and Southlands
- Celebrating Cultures Network Babs Harris or Kelly Salter
Barbara.Harris@wsht.nhs.uk or Kelly.Salter@wsht.nhs.uk
- LGBTQ Forum contact Kelly Salter above
- NHS Whistleblowing Helpline 08000 724725 www.wbhelpline.org.uk
- Public concern at Work – 02074046609
www.pcaw.co.uk
- CQC 03000 616161 www.cqc.org.uk
- GMC confidential helpline 0161 923 6399 www.gmc-uk.org

Managers/Clinical Leaders - Useful Tips on dealing with a concern raised under Raising Concerns/Freedom To Speak Up

As a manager or clinical leader in the Trust you are expected to lead by example. Be clear with your staff what sort of standards of service and behaviour are unacceptable and practise what you preach.

Encourage staff to ask you what is appropriate if they are unsure before – not after – the event.

If you find wrongdoing or a potential risk to patient safety, take it seriously and deal with it immediately.

	Action when a staff member raises a concern	✓
1.	Read the Raising Concerns/Freedom to Speak Up policy	
2.	Thank the staff member for telling you, even if they may appear to be mistaken. Staff can be daunted and very anxious by the prospect of raising a concern with their manager.	
3.	Respect and heed legitimate staff concerns about their own position or career	
4.	Manage expectations and respect promises of confidentiality	
5.	Discuss reasonable timeframes for feedback with the member of staff.	
6.	Remember there are different perspectives to every story	
7.	Determine whether there are grounds for concern and investigate if necessary as soon as possible. If the concern is potentially very serious or wide reaching, consider who should handle the investigation and know when to ask for help. If asked, put your response in writing	
8.	Always remember that you may have to explain how you have handled the concern	
9.	Feedback any outcome and/or remedial action you propose to take to the person who raised the concern and be careful if this could infringe any rights or duties you may owe to other parties. By not providing feedback, confidence that you have treated it seriously will be lost and this will discourage future concerns being brought to your attention. Support in providing this feedback can be obtained from your Divisional HR representative.	
10.	Log the concern with the Freedom to Speak Up Guardian's office who will be keeping a database of all concerns raised. The details of how to contact the office are in the policy.	
11.	Consider reporting to your divisional management board, Executive Director and/or an appropriate regulator the outcome of any genuine concern where malpractice or a serious safety risk was identified and addressed	
12.	Record-keeping – it makes sense to keep a record of any serious concern raised with those designated under the policy, anonymising these where necessary	

Appx 3

Raising Concerns*/Freedom to Speak Up flowchart

*A concern may be where someone’s health and/or safety has been put in danger because of an action or inaction, a criminal offence has been committed, a malpractice or wrong doing has been covered up.

