

Board of Directors (in Public) Item 5.2

Subject: Freedom to Speak Up (FTSU) Q1 2021/22 Report
Date of Meeting: Tuesday 27th July 2021
Prepared by: Peris Widdows, Freedom to Speak Up Guardian
Presented by: Peris Widdows, FTSU Guardian
Purpose of Report: To Note

BAF Ref	Impact on BAF
BAF 1-4	The report provides assurance on the arrangements in place to support staff to speak up and to ensure learning from staff concerns is identified and embedded.

Level of assurance (please tick one)

To be used when the content of the report provides evidence of assurance

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Acceptable assurance Controls are suitably designed, with evidence of them being consistently applied and effective in practice	<input type="checkbox"/>	Partial assurance Controls are still maturing – evidence shows that further action is required to improve their effectiveness	<input type="checkbox"/>	Low assurance Evidence indicates poor effectiveness of controls
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1. Executive Summary

The purpose of this paper is to provide the Trust Board with an update of the work of the Freedom To Speak Up (FTSU) Guardian and Champions in supporting the safety culture within the Trust, provide an overview of issues and concerns raised in this quarter and updates from the National Guardians Office of Freedom To Speak Up, with the aim of giving assurance that the local arrangements in place continue to meet best practice and support staff to raise concerns.

The paper provides a reflection on the progress made by the FTSU Network in empowering staff to speak up freely and encourage ongoing positive cultural change.

This is done in the context of an evolving and maturing national agenda that is learning from the collective experiences of FTSU Guardians, their champion networks and those at the National

Guardian Office.

The Board is asked to review the quarterly report.

2. Background

The National Guardian Office of Freedom to Speak Up leads the way in changing the speak-up culture in the NHS and emphasizes the need to empower workers to speak up without limitation “about anything which gets in the way of patient care and worker well-being”

<https://nationalguardian.org.uk/speaking-up/what-is-speaking-up/>

It is a requirement that NHS Trusts and Foundation Trusts employ a Freedom To Speak Up Guardian, whose role is to enhance patient safety by providing an alternative channel for workers to raise concerns, ensuring that issues raised are responded to and to provide support and feedback for those who speak up.

At LHCH Trust, the FTSU Guardian role is led by the Executive and Non-Executive Directors of FTSU and supported by a deputy guardian and a network of 11 Champions.

The Trust’s Chief Executive regularly emphasises her personal pledge encouraging all staff to speak up, reassuring that when they do so, their concerns will be investigated, and they will be protected from any detriment after speaking up.

The FTSUG works closely with the Executive FTSU Lead and senior leaders to enable effective escalation, review and triangulation of safety and welfare concerns; within the governance process is a standard operating procedure that ensures patient safety and any serious issues are escalated immediately to the Chief Executive and investigated and followed up.

Quarterly meeting between the FTSUG, Executive Director, NED Lead for FTSU and the Chair have been upheld to brief on the issues raised, actions taken and learning.

The FTSUG provides quarterly non-identifiable speak-up data requested by the NGO. This data is used for analysis of themes and trends of concerns raised nationally to provide case reviews and learning outcomes. The NGO shares data with NHS England and Improvement (NHS E/I), who in turn upload this information to the Model Hospital, a digital information service to support improvement in the NHS which is used along with other indicators and intelligence, to inform their thinking as to where to offer improvement support in relation to FTSU

The Guardian maintains engagement with the National Guardian’s Office and the Northwest Regional Network of FTSU Guardians through regular communication and attendance of meetings for peer support and updates from the NGO.

Regional and national information is cascaded to the trust by the guardian, through regular meetings with the Executive FTSU Lead, to the wider organisation by presentations at the trust’s monthly Team Briefs and to the Board of Directors through quarterly reports.

To maintain a high profile within the organisation, FTSU visibility and awareness-raising walkabouts are conducted at LHCH by the guardian, deputy guardian and FTSU champions. These compliment other profile-raising activity such as such as monthly presentation at team briefs mentioned afore, information at trust inductions, attendance to departmental audits days, participation in Equality and Inclusion Steering Group as well the Health and Wellbeing group to name a few. This is intended to raise awareness of the FTSU policy and offer assurance of the trust’s commitment maintain a safety speak-up culture.

3.1 Assessment of issues: Quarter 1 2021/22;

Concerns Raised through the Freedom to Speak Up Policy Framework policy have seen a steady rise in keeping the national trend, which is partly linked to impact of changes caused by the COVID-19 crisis.

- A total of 12 concerns were raised through the Freedom to Speak Up Policy. These include concerns that relate primarily staff values and behaviour(s), but also some issues associated with working practices and system processes. The 'bullying and harassment' theme has been consistently the largest number of concerns raised through the FTSU network in the trust, which corresponds with numbers of cases reported nationally the NGO in this category.
- Three of the concerns were raised anonymously through letters sent directly to the Freedom to Speak Up Executive Lead, Director of Nursing and the Chief People Officer.
- The themes of the concern as per categorization by the National Guardians Office (NGO) were:

Total Number of cases raised to the Guardian / Champions	12
Number raised anonymously	3
Number of cases with an element of:	
Patient Safety / quality	0
Bullying or Harassment:	5
worker safety	0
Number of cases where detriment as a result of speaking up) is indicated.	
Other:	7

- All Concerns were escalated in line with FTSU standard operating procedure and actioned appropriately.
- Of the 12 concerns raised this quarter, 5 have been fully actioned and closed; 7 have been escalated and actioned but still in progress.

Note: These concerns relate only to those raised directly with the FTSUG / Champions network – other concerns raised e.g. through safety huddle or with line managers are not logged unless referred to the FTSU Guardian

3.2 A comparative summary of themes and trends over the past 4 quarters as previously categorized by the NGO is provided in table 1 below.

Themes	Q1 2020/21	Q2 2020/21	Q3 2020/21	Q4 2020/21	Q1 2021/22
Bullying and Harassment	2	2	4	2	5
Patient Safety	0	1	2	4	0
Other	3	4	3	7	7

Total	5	7	9	13	12

Table 1: Comparative themes of trends of the previous year and current quarter's concern as categorized by the NGO.

3.3 The table below reflects the professional level of individuals who spoke for the current quarter 2021/22 and the previous year 2020/21, as per the reporting guidance issued by the National Guardian Office:

Concerns raised by staff bands	Worker	Senior Manager	Senior Leader	Unknown / Not disclosed
Q1 2021/22	9	0	0	3
Q1 2020/21	5	0	0	0
Q2 2020/21	3	2	1	1
Q3 2020/21	8	0	0	1
Q4 2020/21	12	0	0	1

3.4 The table below reflects the professional groups of the 'speak ups' for the current quarter 2021/22 and the previous year 2020/21 as per the current National Guardian Office guidelines.

Concerns raised by professional group	Medics	RGN/ Midwives/ ANPs	Nursing Assistant s & HCA	Allied Health Practitioners	Admin, Clerical	Maintenance / Ancillary/ Cleaning/ Catering	Corporate Service Staff	Unknown / undisclosed
Q1 2021/22	2	3	0	0	0	1	1	5
Q1 2020/21	0	2	0	0	0	0	2	1
Q2 2020/21	0	3	0	1	0	1	1	1
Q3 2020/21	2	2	1	1	2	0	0	1
Q4 2020/21	1	4	1	4	2	0	0	1

3.5 Governance

The governance processes which were reviewed and updated in 2020/21 have been upheld in this quarter to maintain effective escalation, review and triangulation of safety and welfare concerns. These include:

- Adherence to the FTSU policy and the standard concern escalation process.
- Ongoing regular 1:1-meetings between the FTSUG and Director of Corporate Affairs.
- The Quarterly 'Improving People Practices' meeting between the FTSUG, Director of Corporate Affairs, Chief People Officer and HR Business Partner which enables FTSU concerns to be triangulated with ongoing employee relations cases and facilitates a review of welfare support being given to any staff member undergoing an HR process.
- FTSUG and Director of Corporate affairs in the quarterly Safety Surveillance meetings to triangulate FTSU with other patient safety metrics.
- As part of the trust's FTSU Agenda for 2021/22, the FTSU Guardian holds fortnightly drop-in sessions for engagement with the FTSU champions; this creates opportunities to receive regular updates /guidance and share experiences to facilitate learning and development in relation to FTSU.

3.6 Internal Evaluation and Assessment

- Staff who have raised concerns to the FTSU guardian and champions are asked to feedback on their experience of speaking after the cases have closed.
- Guidance from National Guardian's Office suggests that feedback is recorded in the quarter it is received and may relate to concerns raised in previous quarters.
- In this quarter, 8 speak-up staff including some from previous quarters were sent feedback requests: 8 of the 12 speak-ups raised in this quarter are still in progress so feedback has not yet been requested.
- 4 responses were received this quarter - all agreed they would be happy to raise concerns through the FTSU policy again.
- Of the 4 who responded, 3 are from this quarter's speak-ups and one from previous quarter.
- Some speak-up staff have not responded; some of the colleagues who had raised concerns have however left the trust at the end of their employment contracts.
- Below is one example of the FTSU feedback responses received:

Given your experience would you speak up again?	Please explain your response.
Yes, most definitely.	The support we received as a team was great. We felt heard and felt comfortable to voice our concerns and fears. We were happy with the explanations and forward planning regarding the issues we had.

3.7 NGO Annual Report 2020 and National FTSU updates:

The National Guardian's Office published the 2020 Annual Report which is available at https://nationalguardian.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/NGO_AR_2020_Digital.pdf. The impact of the COVID 19 crisis was acknowledged and the role FTSU Guardians in supporting workers during the pandemic was noted. 2019/20 saw a 32% increase in case reported to the NGO through the national network of FTSU Guardians.

In June 2021 the NGO announced in that the National Guardian for the NHS, Dr Henrietta Hughes OBE, will be stepping down in September 2021, after five years in the role, to take up a new role as the Chair of The Institute of Integrated Systemic Therapy – Childhood First charity, which promotes and furthers the care, treatment and rehabilitation of children and adolescents who are psychologically and emotionally disturbed. The CQC in association with NHS England /Improvement will lead the competitive recruitment process for the next National Guardian for the NHS post which will be advertised shortly.

3.8 Training

Nationally, the NGO is focusing highly on raising the speak up culture by encouraging workers and leaders to undertake speak-up and listening training modules:

- Speak-Up Core training for all workers: <https://www.e-lfh.org.uk/programmes/freedom-to-speak-up/>
- Newly launched Listen-Up training – “for all line and middle managers, focused more on listening up and the barriers that can get in the way of speaking up.” <https://www.e-lfh.org.uk/programmes/freedom-to-speak-up/>
- Follow Up Training – “for all senior leaders including executive board members (and equivalents), Non-Executive Directors, and Governors is in the pipeline.
- Within LHCH the training modules are now accessible at the trust’s ESR system and is completed by the FTSU network as part of mandatory training. There is not clear definition yet of how include speak-up training mandatory for the wider workforce, but the guardian is in liaison with education leads with this regard, with efforts being made to raise staff awareness.
- The NGO has also created guidance for the FTSU Champions / Ambassadors roles. In view of this, the champions’ role description in the trust will be reviewed to align with the NGO’s guidance.

3.9 FTSU Index Report

The National Guardian’s Office has published Freedom to Speak Up Index Report 2021, which is available on the NGO’s website at:

<https://nationalguardian.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/FTSU-Index-Report-2021.pdf/>

The FTSU Index is a metric for NHS trusts drawn from four questions incorporated within the NHS Annual Staff Survey, to assess whether workers in NHS feel safe, knowledgeable, supported and encouraged and to raise concerns, and if they would be treated fairly if they were involved in an error, near-miss or safety incidents.

Overall results of the FTSU Index:

- North West was the 3rd best performing region = 79.9% average
- Community Trust were top by Trust Type = Average 84.6%
- Acute Specialist Trust 2nd best = 82.0%
- Highest Trust Index Scores (Top Cambridgeshire Community Services NHS Trust = 87.6%)
- LHCH top acute specialist Trust in the country
- LHCH top Trust in Cheshire and Mersey and across North West
- LHCH 10th best Trust in the country = 84.7%

At a national level and rated against the organisations with most improvement, LHCH scores although high have remained static from the previous year, while other organisations who hadn’t performed well in the past made improvements. The Trust guardian will be working closely with the Human Resources Improving Practice business partners to continue to improve on the FTSU index.

3.10 Benchmarking

- Rated against other Cheshire & Mersey Trusts on the FTSU Index overall scores, LHCH Trust had the top score of 84.7%, with the lowest score in the trust in the region scoring 75.7%. A detailed report of the regional index score has been provided in Appendix 1.
- In overall ratings FTSU Index against other Acute Specialist Trusts, LHCH also got the top score of 84.7%, with Clatterbridge Cancer Centre NHS Foundation Trust scoring second at 84.1%, and the Walton Centre NHS Foundation Trust 3rd at 83.1%. Details of the Acute Specialist Trusts FTSU Index are available at Appendix 2.

3.11 Learning Opportunities for LHCH

The NGO Report included 3 case studies from FTSUGs of organisations that had made the biggest improvements in their FTSU index between 2019 and 2020. Many of the examples are already embedded at LHCH but some further opportunities for consideration are as follows:

- Commission video / talk on psychological safety at work – ‘silence isn’t safe’ and refresh on Civility Saves Lives work
- Consider whether Champions can have ringfenced time for FTSUG work – walkarounds, attend HWG / Inclusion Group/ junior doctors forum,
- Conversation café concept in staff hub / virtual via Teams
- Ensure FTSU features prominently in new Quality & Safety Strategy and People Delivery Plan
- Link with Hospital Chaplains
- Link with TU representatives
- Include FTSU training module in Mandatory Training for all staff

4. Conclusion

The Freedom to Speak-Up channel compliments the well-established safety culture in the trust where staff are encouraged to raise concerns. While workers are encouraged to speak openly to enable feedback, FTSU network provided an alternative channel for staff to speak confidentially or anonymously and for workers to be supported while concerns are investigated.

This quarter has seen a rise in the number of concerns raised anonymously which suggests there is still work-to-do in instilling confidence and reassurance to colleagues who fear they might suffer detriment if they speak-up. One of the case reports produced by the NGO relates to response to anonymous speak-ups; part of this response is already practiced at LHCH trust where senior leaders have addressed departments and offered assurance to staff that concerns will be investigated and addressed.

FTSU agenda for 2021/22 is progressing well – some of plans set at beginning of the year to be actioned as follows:

- FTSU Strategy (this was paused in 2020/21 due to the coronavirus pandemic) will be revisited and launched and ensure it is aligned with the new Quality and Safety Strategy.
- Facilitate a Board review of the national self-assessment toolkit for FTSU which is due for review by November 2021
- Upcoming - review the Freedom to Speak Up (Raising Concerns) policy.

- Plan for FTSU awareness month – October 2021
- The FTSU Guardian will maintain an active role in engaging with the staff to raise FTSU profile.
- FTSU Guardian will continue to engage with the National Office and regional network to ensure LHCH continues to lead the way in relation to best practice, and
- Continue to provide updates quarterly and in annual reports, on the number of concerns raised through the FTSU Network and any common themes to the Board of Directors.

5. Recommendations

The Board of Directors is asked to:

- i) note the quarter 1 2021/22 report;
- ii) note the FTSU Index summaries (raised in Appendices 1 and 2)
- iii) accept assurance that local FTSU arrangements are in place and meet best practice guidance.

Appendix 1: Cheshire & Mersey Trusts – FTSU Index:

Trust	%
Liverpool Heart and Chest Hospital	84.7%
Wirral Community Health and Care NHS Foundation Trust	84.2%
The Clatterbridge Cancer Centre NHS Foundation Trust	84.1%
The Walton Centre NHS Foundation Trust	83.1%
Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust	82.9%
Bridgewater Community Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust	82.7%
St Helens and Knowsley	82.3%
North West Boroughs Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust	81.9%
Alder Hey Children's NHS Foundation Trust	81.7%
Cheshire and Wirral Partnership NHS Foundation Trust	81.6%
Mid Cheshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust	81.3%
Warrington and Halton Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust	80.4%
Countess of Chester Hospital NHS Foundation Trust	79.4%
East Cheshire NHS Trust	78.0%
Liverpool Women's NHS Foundation Trust	77.8%
Liverpool University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust	76.8%
Wirral University Teaching Hospital NHS Foundation Trust	75.7%

Appendix 2: Acute Specialist Trusts – FTSU Index

Trust	%
Liverpool Heart and Chest Hospital	84.7%
The Clatterbridge Cancer Centre NHS Foundation Trust	84.1%
The Walton Centre NHS Foundation Trust	83.1%
The Royal Marsden NHS Foundation Trust	83.1
Royal Brompton and Harefield NHS Foundation Trust ¹⁴	82.3
The Robert Jones and Agnes Hunt Orthopaedic Hospital NHS Foundation Trust	82.2
Royal Papworth Hospital NHS Foundation Trust	82.1
Queen Victoria Hospital NHS Foundation Trust	81.8%
Alder Hey Children's NHS Foundation Trust	81.7%
Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital NHS Trust	81.0%
The Christie NHS Foundation Trust	81.0%
Birmingham Women's and Children's NHS Foundation Trust	80.9%
Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children NHS Foundation Trust	80.5%
Moorfields Eye Hospital NHS Foundation Trust	80.3%
The Royal Orthopaedic Hospital NHS Foundation Trust	79.1%
Liverpool Women's NHS Foundation Trust	77.8%