

Freedom to Speak Up (Raising Concerns) Policy

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Freedom to Speak Up (Raising Concerns) Policy

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2. Speak up – we will listen

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.

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.

3. This policy

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 and provides more detail about how we will look into a concern.

4. What concerns can I raise?

You can raise a concern about **risk, malpractice or wrongdoing** you think is harming the service we deliver. 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 or bribery which can also be reported to our local anti-fraud specialist (AFS) at Mersey Internal Audit Agency Telephone 0151 285 4500
- ☐ a bullying culture (across a team or organisation rather than individual instances of bullying).

For further examples, please see the [Health Education England video](#).

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

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 which is available to you via the staff intranet.

5. 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.

Remember that 'Freedom to Speak Up' is just one of many ways in which you can raise concerns. Other processes include:

- The Daily Safety Huddle (Monday – Friday 9.30am in the Chief Executive's Office)
- Invoke the HALT process (**H**ave you noticed this? **A**sk – did you hear my concern? **L**et them know there is a safety issue **T**ell them to stop until it is agreed that it is safe to continue);
- Call the confidential Raising Concerns Hotline – Extension 1658
- Submit an incident form

6. 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.

7. 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.

8. 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:

- ☐ our Freedom to Speak Up Guardian **Lucy Lavan, Associate Director of Corporate Affairs** – 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.
- ☐ any of our Freedom to Speak Up Champions (<http://nwww.staffintranet.lhch.nhs.uk/corporate/freedom-to-speak-up/>) – the champions have been trained to listen to your concerns and help to sign-post you to the right support

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you can contact whichever champion you wish – they will respect your confidentiality if you ask them to and may refer matters / seek further advice from the Freedom to Speak Up Guardian. They will do this in a way that protects your confidentiality if you ask them to, unless the matter requires disclosure by law, as described above.

Annex B provides details of the FTSU Guardian and our network of FTSU Champions, along with their contact details. All these people have been trained in receiving concerns and will give you information about where you can go for more support.

- our risk management team.

If you still remain concerned after this, you can contact:

- the Chief Executive or any member of the executive team; or
- the Chairman; or
- the Senior Independent (Non Executive) Director

If after exhausting the above and for any reason you do not feel your concern has been taken seriously or satisfactorily resolved, you can raise concerns with external bodies, listed in Paragraph 12.

9. Advice and support

Details on the local support available to you can be found at Annex A and on the staff intranet, <http://www.staffintranet.lhch.nhs.uk/corporate/freedom-to-speak-up/>. However, you can also contact the [Whistleblowing Helpline](#) for the NHS and social care, your professional body or your trade union representative.

Trade Unions recognised by LHCH are as follows:

Royal College of Nursing (RCN)
British Medical Association (BMA)
Unison
Unite the Union
GMB
Society of Radiographers (SOR)
Chartered Society Physiotherapists (CSP)

10. 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.

11. 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. This means that you will be treated with respect at all times and thanked for raising the concern.

We are committed to listening to our staff, learning lessons and improving patient care. On receipt

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the concern will be recorded and you will receive an acknowledgement as soon as possible, normally within two working days. You will be given the opportunity to meet, to discuss and agree next steps and how follow up / feedback will be provided. A record will be kept to record the date the concern was received, whether you have requested confidentiality / anonymity, a summary of the concern/s and dates when we have given you updates or feedback. Where enquiries need to be made or an investigation is to be commissioned you will be kept informed of likely timescales, progress and conclusion.

Investigation

Where you have been unable to resolve the matter quickly (usually within a few days) with your line manager, we will determine the need to 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 - in such circumstances the Incident Reporting Policy will be followed). 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.

Board oversight

The Board, via the People Committee will be given high level information about all concerns raised by our staff through this policy and what we are doing to address any problems. This will be reported on a 6 monthly basis. We will include similar high level information in our annual report to the Board of Directors. The Board fully supports staff raising concerns and wants you to feel free to speak up.

Review

We will review the effectiveness of this policy and local process at least annually, and will report

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on this to the Audit Committee. We will publish the outcome of this review in terms of any changes made as to this policy or the local FTSU arrangements.

12. Raising your concern with an outside body

We expect and hope that you will take all steps to exhaust internal procedures before raising concerns outside of the Trust. However, if after following this policy, you feel that the issue you have raised is not being taken seriously, or has not been satisfactorily resolved, 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 Protect](#) for concerns about fraud and corruption.

Please remember that your trade union representative or professional organisation is also there to provide you with independent advice. If you do make an external disclosure, you must ensure that you do not breach patient confidentiality.

13. Making a 'protected disclosure'

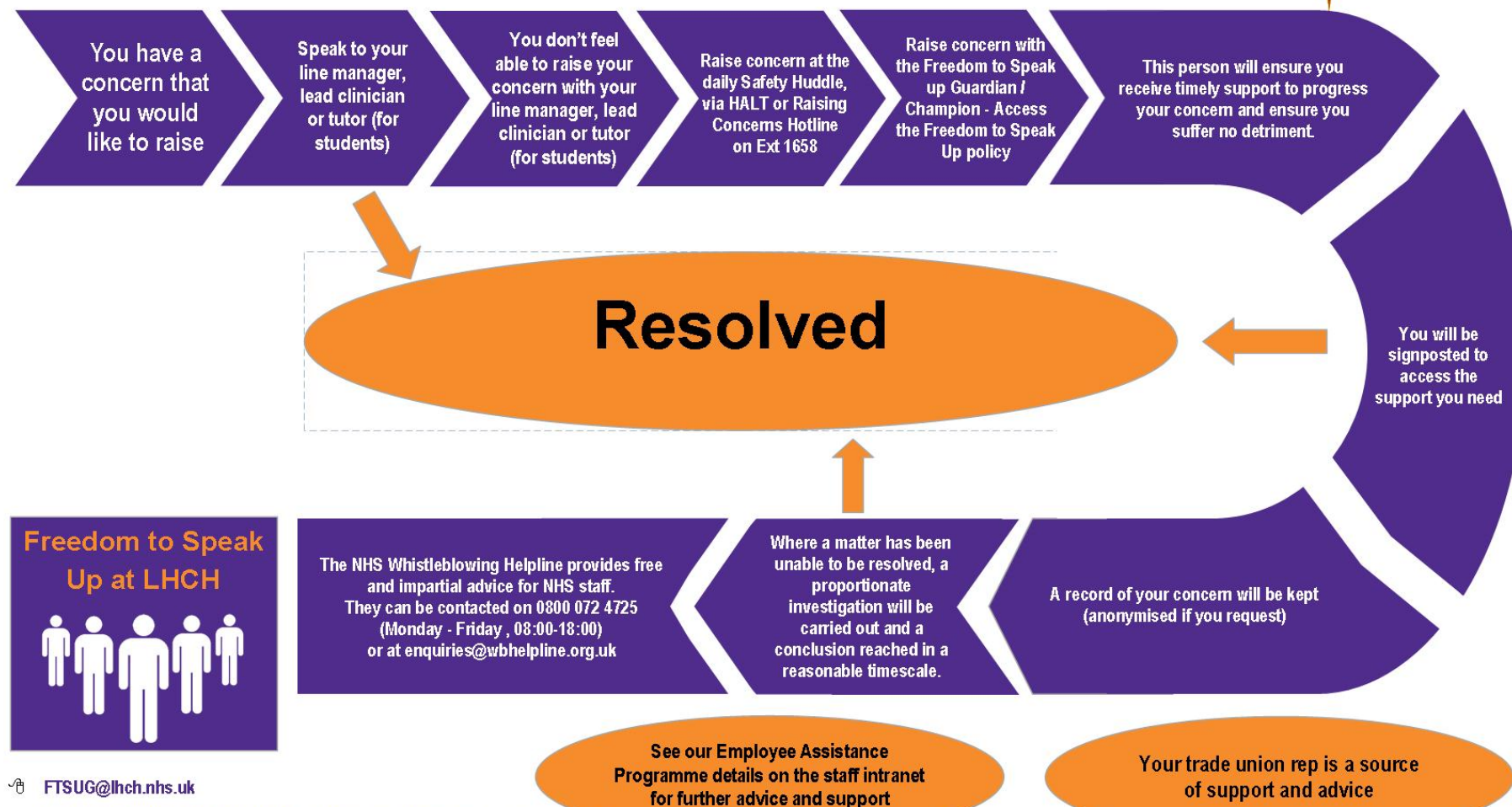
There are very specific criteria that need to be met for an individual to be covered by whistleblowing law when they raise a concern (to be able to claim the protection that accompanies it). There is also a defined list of '[prescribed persons](#)', similar to the list of outside bodies in paragraph 12 above, 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.

14. National Guardian Freedom to Speak Up

The new National Guardian (once fully operational) 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.

Freedom to Speak Up Flowchart for raising concerns

Liverpool Heart and Chest Hospital **NHS**
NHS Foundation Trust



✉ FTSUG@lhch.nhs.uk

☎ Individual Freedom to Speak Up Champions (see intranet below for details)
<http://nww.staffintranet.lhch.nhs.uk/corporate/freedom-to-speak-up/>

Annex B

Freedom to Speak Up

Liverpool Heart and Chest Hospital 

NHS Foundation Trust



FTSU Guardian

Lucy Lavan
Associate Director of Corporate Affairs
Email: lucy.lavan@lhch.nhs.uk

 <p>FTSU Champion</p> <p>Barry Farmer Healthcare Assistant, Cedar Ward Ext: 1166</p>	 <p>FTSU Champion</p> <p>Sanjay Ghotkar Specialty Doctor, CT Surgery Email: sanjay.ghotkar@lhch.nhs.uk</p>	 <p>FTSU Champion</p> <p>Joanne Gleave Hygiene Assistant, Mulberry Ward Ext: 1908</p>	 <p>FTSU Champion</p> <p>Sara Liggett Ward Clerk, Birch Ward Email: sara.liggett@lhch.nhs.uk</p>
 <p>FTSU Champion</p> <p>Stephen Lomax Assistant Practitioner, Radiology Email: stephen.lomax@lhch.nhs.uk</p>	 <p>FTSU Champion</p> <p>Alistair Marshall Surgical Care Practitioner, Theatres Ext: 1234</p>	 <p>FTSU Champion</p> <p>Dave Marteau Exercise Physiologist, Therapies Ext: 1950 / 1957</p>	 <p>FTSU Champion</p> <p>Clare Mullen Ward Sister, Cherry Ward Ext: 1428</p>
 <p>FTSU Champion</p> <p>Dr Justin Ratnasingham Consultant Anaesthetist Email: justin.ratnasingham@lhch.nhs.uk</p>	 <p>FTSU Champion</p> <p>Nicola Shaw Deputy Income & Costing Accountant Email: nicola.shaw@lhch.nhs.uk</p>	 <p>FTSU Champion</p> <p>Alex Thompson Admin Lead - ICE CAP Research Group Email: alexandra.thompson@lhch.nhs.uk</p>	 <p>FTSU Champion</p> <p>Lyndsey Wigelsworth Exercise Physiologist Ext 1844</p>

*Excellent, Compassionate and Safe care for **every patient**, every day*

8. Endorsed By:-

Name of Lead Clinician/ Manager or Committee Chair	Position of Endorser or Name of Endorsing Committee	Date

9. Record of Changes

Section Number	Version Number	Date of Change	Description of Amendment	Description of Deletion	Description of Addition	Reason