

## Board of Directors (in Public)

### Item 5.3

**Subject:** Freedom to Speak Up (FTSU) Q2 - 2023 /24  
**Date of Meeting:** 29<sup>th</sup> November 2023  
**Presented by:** Helen Martin, Head of Risk Management/FTSU Guardian  
**Purpose of Report:** For Assurance

BAF Ref	Impact on BAF
ALL	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 ( <i>please tick one</i> ) <i>To be used when the content of the report provides evidence of assurance</i>					
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>Acceptable assurance</b> Controls are suitably designed, with evidence of them being consistently applied and effective in practice	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Partial assurance</b> Controls are still maturing – evidence shows that further action is required to improve their effectiveness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Low assurance</b> Evidence indicates poor effectiveness of controls

## 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, reflect on the progress made by the FTSU Network in empowering staff to speak up freely and encouraging ongoing positive cultural change. The paper provides an overview of issues and concerns raised in Q1 with comparison of figures for previous quarters.

Updates from the National Guardians Office for Freedom to Speak Up are provided, with the aim of providing assurance that the local arrangements in place continue to meet best practice and support staff to raise concerns. 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.

Good progress is being made against the delivery of the strategic priorities set for 2023/24 which included an extensive review of the policy in line with the NGO recommendations.

The Board of Directors is asked to review the quarterly report and receive assurance that the FTSU arrangements in place continue to meet best practice.

## 2. Background

The Freedom to Speak Up (FTSU) policy has recently undergone an extensive review and continues to be integrated at Liverpool Heart and Chest Hospital alongside the Trust's other forms of Speak-Up Safely channels. In line with the national guidelines, the trust has appointed Freedom to Speak Up Guardians, whose role is to provide of an alternative channel for workers to raise concerns, ensuring that concerns received are escalated, investigated, and followed up to enhance patient safety and worker experiences.

The FTSU Guardian continues to maintain engagement and communication with the National Guardian's Office and the Northwest Regional Network of FTSU Guardians for regular updates, continued learning and support. The FTSUG continues to work closely with the FTSU Executive Director, champions and senior leaders to enable effective escalation, review and triangulation of safety and welfare concerns. A standard operating procedure within the governance process ensures that all concerns, especially any patient safety or serious issues are escalated immediately to the Chief Executive, investigated, and followed up.

Through a personal speak-up safety pledge, the Trust's Chief Executive encourages all staff to speak up and gives assurance that any concerns raised will be investigated, and the staff will be protected from any detriment after speaking up.

The FTSU network at LHCH comprises of the FTSU Executive Director, Non-Executive Director Lead, two Freedom to Speak Up Guardians, a Deputy Guardian, and a network of multi-disciplinary FTSU Champions. A newly appointed FTSU Guardian is due to commence in post in November 2023.

### 3 Assessment of FTSU concerns Quarter 2 2023/24

The Trust has several safety reporting channels such as speaking directly to line managers, the HALT process, incident reporting and team and trust Safety Huddles. Issues raised in other channels are not logged as FTSU unless referred to or raised directly to the FTSU Guardian or champions. A total of 5 concerns were raised through the FTSU policy in Q2 with a further enquiry raising a concern but not wanting to formally record it as an FTSU.

The themes of the FTSU concerns raised in Q2 2023/24 as categorised by the NGO guidelines and outcomes are detailed in the table below.

**Table 3.1: Themes of FTSU concerns (categorised by the NGO guidelines and outcomes)**

Themes of concerns as categorised by the NGO	No. of concerns (Q2 23/24)	Outcome	Status (Closed/ in progress)
Number of cases raised anonymously	0	Raised with relevant managers	
Element of Patient Safety / Quality	2	Raised with Senior team	In progress
Element of Worker Safety, policies or Wellbeing	0		
Element of Bullying or Harassment	2	Discussed with Senior Manager of the Division	HR process instigated in both circumstances - Closed
Number of cases where disadvantageous or demeaning treatment (detriment) from	0		

Themes of concerns as categorised by the NGO	No. of concerns (Q2 23/24)	Outcome	Status (Closed/ in progress)
speaking up is indicated			
Other Category:	1 (attitudes and behaviours towards a member of staff)	Discussed with Manager of the team and other specialists in the Trust (Lead for disability). Awareness raising conducted with the team. Sign posting for the affected member of staff.	Closed

Comparative numbers and themes to previously reported quarters are set out below.

**Table 3.2: Comparative themes**

Themes of concerns as categorised by the NGO	Q2 2023/24	Q1 2023/24	Q4 2022/23	Q3 2022/23	Q2 2022/23
Element of Patient Safety or Quality	2	3	0	1	0
Element of Worker safety, policy or Wellbeing	0	8	5	0	2
Element of Bullying or Harassment	2	0	0	3	3
Number of cases where disadvantageous or demeaning treatment (detriment) from speaking up is indicated	0	0	0	0	1
Other:	1	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Number of cases raised anonymously</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

In line with the NGO guidance, comparative views of concerns raised in Q1-2023/24 and the previous quarters, per professional groups are provided below.

**Table 3.3: Comparisons of staff groups raising concerns**

Concerns raised by staff bands	Worker	Senior Manager	Senior Leader	Unknown/ Undisclosed	Total
<b>Q2 2023/24</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Q1 2023/24</b>	11	0	0	0	11
<b>Q4 2022/23</b>	5	0	0	2	7
<b>Q3 2022/23</b>	4	0	0	0	4
<b>Q2 2022/ 23</b>	6	0	0	0	6

The table below reflects comparative data of concerns raised by different professional groups for the current and previous 4 quarters, as per the National Guardian Office guidelines.

**Table 3.4: Comparison of concerns raised by different professional groups**

Concerns raised by professional groups	Q2 2023/24	Q1 2023/24	Q4 2022/23	Q3 2022/23	Q2 2022/23
Medics	0	2	0	2	1
RGN/ Midwives/ ANPs	0	7	2	0	0

Concerns raised by professional groups	Q2 2023/24	Q1 2023/24	Q4 2022/23	Q3 2022/23	Q2 2022/23
Nursing Assistants & HCA	0	0	1	1	0
Allied Health Practitioners	4	0	1	0	2
Admin, Clerical	0	2	0	0	1
Maintenance/Ancillary/Cleaning/Catering/ Porters	1	0	0	1	1
Corporate Service Staff	0	0	0	0	0
Undisclosed	0	0	1	0	1
<b>Total number of speak-ups</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>

In terms of analysis of FTSU concerns and actions:

- The speak ups regarding attitudes and behaviours towards a member the team with disabilities was managed by having an awareness raising session with the whole team. The staff member involved reported that they are in a good place following the session.
- The speak ups with an element of patient safety have been escalated to the senior team in the relevant division. The division are also conducting a much wider piece of work encompassing Trust values, behaviours and culture.

The following areas for wider organisational learning areas were identified and have been shared extensively through a range of communications channels:

- Manager support and consistency – training re handling speak ups was conducted with managers across the ward/department areas and was well received
- FTSU Guardians and Champions often provide support through signposting colleagues and/or factfinding/ information gathering
- Listening can help individuals to determine the action they want to take
- Triangulation of data with HR colleagues is important to ensure a long-term resolution is found.

#### 4. Update on previous ongoing cases

The speak ups that have been raised in previous quarters have been closed. HR have been involved in one instance. Cultural work has been undertaken in the areas affected to help improve the overall behavior in the area.

#### 5. Progress on Internal assessments and Governance

The FTSU Policy has undergone an extensive review in line with latest revision of the NGO policy. Updates include clarification regarding escalation and process.

Engagement with the FTSU champions for support and updates continues through regular correspondence and quarterly FTSU workshops. These create opportunity for champions to learn and share / showcase their experiences. The Q2 workshop was held on the **6<sup>th</sup> July 2023** and was attended by the FTSU Executive Director, the NED lead for FTSU, the two Guardians and Deputy Guardian and 14 out of the 19 champions. Staff volunteering to be Champions are still coming forward.

A new FTSU Guardian is due to commence in post on 13<sup>th</sup> November 2023.

#### FTSU Strategy Priorities 2023/24

A set of priorities has been developed to ensure the continued enhancement to FTSU arrangement. These include:

- Conducting an FTSU survey to ascertain the needs of staff and identify barriers to speaking up, and an action plan developed to address concerns
- Reviewing and updating the FTSU policy in line with the NGO policy
- Expanding visibility of FTSU across all shift patterns
- Training for managers on how to manage when a speak up is raised in their team
- Continuing to expand the Champions network across the organisation
- Develop and deliver against a formal communications plan
- Improving sharing of learning from speak ups where possible
- Inclusion of the FTSU module on Inphase to aid staff to speak up

Progress against the priorities is good, including the completion of the survey; delivery of training to managers; review of the FTSU policy; and more volunteers coming forward to be Champions. Communications are planned throughout the year with additional opportunities for FTSU month in October.

## **6. Updates from the National Guardian Office**

- This years theme for FTSU month in October is ‘Breaking Barriers’ – removing the obstacles which people feel stop them from speaking up.
- Planning has commenced for the FTSU conference in March 2024.
- An FTSU Guardian shared her own experience of speaking up which explored the complexities of speaking up and the need to remove detriment.
- The NGO Lead Guardian, Jayne Chidgey Clark has spoken following the Lucy Letby conviction regarding the importance of listening when staff speak up.

## **7. Conclusion**

The FTSU compliments existing speak-up safely policies and processes within the trust, providing an alternative channel for staff to speak confidentially or anonymously. The policy provides assurance that concerns will be escalated, and workers are supported during the process and investigations.

The FTSU Guardians supported by the network of Champions continue to maintain engagement with the staff to raise the FTSU profile, support staff who have raised concerns, record and follow-up cases raised. A recent call out for FTSU volunteers has seen the Champions network increase by members of staff in clinical and non-clinical departments.

The FTSU Guardians will continue to provide quarterly and annual reports on the number of concerns raised through the FTSU Network and any common themes to the Board of Directors and the National Guardian’s Office. Learning from cases will continue to be reviewed and shared appropriately. The FTSU guardians will continue to maintain engagement with the National Office and regional networks to ensure that national updates are cascaded and implemented.

## **8. Recommendations**

The Board of Directors is asked to:

- i) note the Q2 2023/24 report.
- ii) receive assurance that local FTSU arrangements are in place and continue to meet best practice.