

Trust Board meeting		Date:	26 July 2017
Agenda item	Title	Executive Director lead and presenter	Report author
BD/17/107	Freedom to Speak Up Guardian / Whistleblowing Q1 report.	Interim Company Secretary	Petra Freeman, Freedom to Speak up Guardian
This report is for:			
Decision			
Discussion			X
To Note			X
History			
None			
The following impacts have been identified and assessed within this report			
Equality	X		
Quality	X		
Privacy	X		
Executive summary of key issues			
<p>This report advises the Board of the Freedom to Speak up Guardian (FTSUG) role and responsibilities.</p> <p>Petra Freeman was elected as the Trust FTSUG in April 2017. In quarter 1, FTSUG was contacted over five issues, involving seven members of staff, as one contact involved three members of staff.</p> <p>The contacts were made to either ask for support whilst raising an issue, or to inform the FTSUG of a concern that had already been raised.</p> <p>There were two contacts made to the whistleblowing lead, during the same time period. One concern had been raised with the FTSUG at the same time and the second involved a different organisation.</p> <p>The Board is asked to note the report.</p>			
This report addresses these strategic priorities:			
We will deliver the best care			X
We will support and develop our staff			X
We will continually improve what we do			X
We will use our resources wisely			X
We will be future focussed			X

1 Background

1.1 Background

1.1.1 In response to concerns about the culture in the NHS, the Secretary of State for Health commissioned Sir Robert Francis QC to carry out an independent review: 'Freedom to Speak Up' (FTSU). The review was asked to identify measures to foster a culture in the NHS in England where staff can feel safe to speak out about patient safety, as well as learning lessons by listening to those who have experiences to share, both positive and negative.

1.1.2 In the subsequent DOH report 'Learning Not Blaming' published in July 2015, the department accepted a number of recommendations including the one that there should be a "Freedom to Speak Up Guardian" (FTSU) in every NHS trust, appointed by the chief executive. Their role is to act in a genuinely independent capacity to provide the leadership and support to create a culture where staff understand and feel confident in raising concerns, however insignificant they may appear, so that it becomes part of normal, everyday practice.

1.1.3 The role will help to ensure staff know how to, and where to, raise concerns. Staff should feel entirely confident that their concerns will be listened to and acted upon as necessary and, most significantly, that they will not experience any detriment for having raised their concerns.

1.1.4 Every NHS trust is required to have appointed a Freedom to Speak Up Guardian during the coming financial year (2016/17) with Trusts expected to have plans in place by September 2016

1.2 National Freedom to Speak Up Guardian

1.2.1 Freedom to Speak Up Guardians are supported by the Office of the National Guardian.

1.2.2 Dr Henrietta Hughes, a practising GP, was appointed as the National Guardian for the NHS in October 2016.

1.2.3 The Office has discretion to review cases referred to it where there is evidence that an NHS service has not responded appropriately to the safety concerns raised by its workers.

1.2.4 In June 2017, the National Guardian's Office launched a 12 month trial of its case review process. The trial will review the handling of concerns and the treatment of people who have spoken up, where there is evidence that good practice has not been followed.

2 AWP Freedom to Speak Up Guardian

2.1 AWP Freedom to Speak Up Champion role

2.2.1 Petra Freeman, Freedom to Speak Up Guardian, has been in post since 21 April 2017. She has a day a week to undertake the role.

2.2.2 The FTSUG works alongside Trust Leadership Teams to support the organisation in becoming a more open and transparent place to work, where staff are actively encouraged and enabled to raise concerns safely and without fear of repercussions.

2.2.3 The main aim of this role is to promote and reinforce best practice in supporting staff to speak up safely through either the FTSUG or (in future) a network of FTSUG Champions, which are planned to be developed across the Trust, to enable everyone to have easy access to someone outside their immediate line management chain who can advise and support them.

2.2.4 The FTSUG is independent, trusted and impartial, thereby helping existing staff to feel comfortable to raise concerns and seek help to resolve their issues. An advocate, promoting the culture of raising concerns openly, by being accessible, visible and honest.

2.2.5 The FTSUG does not investigate concerns raised. If a concern is raised that cannot be appropriately investigated via senior management or Trust processes, this may be referred to the Whistleblowing lead. In some instances, staff may contact both the FTSUG and the whistleblowing lead.

3 Activity in Quarter One

3.1 Work undertaken in quarter one

3.1.1 To ensure that FTSU is embedded in all trust activities and is regarded as business as usual, the FTSUG has:

- Attended Trust induction; to ascertain how and where FTSU can be emphasised in relation to information already shared. Learning & Development will be involved to review further and ensure transparency and signposting as appropriate in the Trust Induction materials.
- Attended Staff Engagement Groups; both Trust-wide and Local groups
- Been interviewed by CQC in relation to: the history of the role (appointment); support given to carry out the role; themes from people who have raised concerns to date.
- The FTSUG has met with various key contacts, including: the Head of Patient Safety, Whistleblowing lead, Company Secretary and the Communications team.

- The FTSUG has attended the national training event in London and a local FTSUG network meeting in the South West. Arrangements for peer support and supervision are in place with other local Guardians in Trusts in the South West. There is a national conference on the 19th October 2017 in London and attendance at this event is planned.

3.1.2 A dedicated email address: awp.raisingconcerns@nhs.net has been set up and is included in the whistleblowing policy.

3.1.3 The FTSUG has developed and started collating concerns in a confidential database. This enables the FTSUG to monitor the outcomes of the concerns raised. The concerns will be owned and dealt with by the most relevant manager accountable, as the FTSUG does not investigate cases.

3.1.4 Follow-up and feedback is given by the FTSUG to all those staff who raise concerns to ensure a conclusion is made. Thereby identifying and monitoring trends and themes from this data (measuring the impact).

3.1.5 Completion of reports to the National Guardian's office (NGO) are completed each quarter

3.2 Next steps

3.2.1 Work with the Communications team to discuss developing and launching an awareness campaign to include splash screens, web pages and other publicity events.

3.2.2 Plans are in place for further staff engagement events, including:

- * HR team meeting and Unregistered Practitioners Forum in September
- * To meet with staff side representatives.

4 Concerns raised

4.1 Deliver the best care

4.1.1 Seven members of staff have contacted the FTSUG relating to five issues, in this initial period. All first contact has been via email. Follow up has been via email and telephone conversations, plus one face to face meeting for a small group of people who voiced a collective concern.

4.1.2 To date all concerns raised have come from staff within Bristol area, although relating to different issues.

4.1.3. All seven people had already raised their concerns with their direct line managers. They contacted the FTSUG as they had some unanswered questions and concerns which they wanted followed through and to obtain closure, some were copying in the FTSUG, whilst raising the concern with their manager.

4.1.4 Two of these people have now retired, as they contacted the FTSUG during their planned retirement period. Two other individuals are about to retire.

4.1.5 Actions taken by the FTSUG include: active listening and constructive discussion (via telephone and face to face); determining the facts then signposting to the whistleblowing policy and webpages; signposting to other relevant policies on Our Space; recommending that people can speak to their local HR representative; signposting to relevant senior members of staff.

4.1.6 Following up cases and seeking feedback from those who have previously raised concerns, to check their issues have been fully resolved.

4.1.7 Themes/trends are being monitored and links between concerns raised will be reflected on and followed up with accountable managers, once clearly identified.

4.2 Whistleblowing

4.2.1 There have been two contacts made to the whistleblowing lead in quarter one.

4.2.2 The first related to a previous whistleblowing case and this individual also contacted the FTSUG and is included in those contact figures.

4.2.3 The second case related to primary care and the individual was supported in raising the concern with the appropriate organisation.

5 Future Focused

5.1 Longer term plans for the role

5.1.1 Longer-term plans include –

- * Assessing the FTSUG process: To complete the 'Draw the line' self-assessment tool; which can identify how effective an organisation is in relation to raising concerns.
- * Identifying barriers to Speaking up process
- * Further developing plans to 'normalise' speaking up in the culture of the Trust, including increasing staff confidence to raise concerns
- * To continue to assess individual cases, intervening when these are failing people who speak up and making recommendations for improvement.
- * To continue to engage with hard to reach groups: small teams, isolated teams, staff who are not confident to speak up, new starters, out of hour's workers
- * Celebrating good practice, working with the Communication team (and other key people) to share learning in the future.
- * To introduce learning packages. Two e-learning packages from Health Education England are being considered and explored. The intention is that these will be available for all staff to access later in the year in relation to both raising a concern and responding to concerns.

6 Challenges - conclusion

6.1

The biggest challenge to the role is having a confidential space and time to talk and meet with people. To date, the FTSUG has met people at their place of work, however this may not be convenient, suitable or appropriate in the future. Mutually agreed places to meet, which are neutral to all parties will be considered in all cases in the future.

7. Recommendation

The Board is asked to discuss the Quarter one report from the Freedom to Speak Up Guardian.