



Purpose of the role

The Freedom to Speak Up (FTSU) Guardian will work alongside trust leadership teams to support the organisation in becoming a more open and transparent place to work, where all staff are actively encouraged and enabled to speak up safely.

Outcomes

The FTSU Guardian role is designed to contribute to achieving the following outcomes:

- A culture of speaking up is instilled throughout the organisation
- Speaking up processes are effective and continuously improved
- All staff have the capability to speak up effectively and managers have the capability to support those who are speaking up
- All staff are supported appropriately when they speak up or support other people who are speaking up
- The Board is fully sighted on, and engaged in, all Freedom to Speak Up matters and issues that are raised by people who are speaking up
- Safety and quality are assured
- A culture of speaking up is instilled throughout the NHS

Role Description

The role of the FTSU Guardian is to:

Culture

- Develop and deliver communication and engagement programmes to increase visibility of the Freedom to Speak Up Guardian amongst all staff.
- Promote local speaking up processes and sources of support and guidance, demonstrate the impact that speaking up is having in the organisation, and celebrate speaking up.
- Ensure that all 'frontline' staff are aware of, and have access to, support to help them speak up.
- Where appropriate, develop and support a network of 'advocates' to ensure that Freedom to Speak Up reaches all parts of the organisation and everyone has easy access to someone outside their immediate line-management chain who can advise and support them.

Process improvement

- Work with HR professionals and others to ensure that speaking up guidance and processes are clear and accessible, reflect best practice, and address any local issues that may hinder the speaking up process.
- Assess the effectiveness of Freedom to Speak Up processes and the handling of individual cases, intervening when these are failing people who speak up, and making recommendations for improvement.

Capability

- Assess the knowledge and capability of staff to speak up and to support people when they speak up.
- Ensure that all staff have the relevant skills and knowledge to enable them to speak up effectively, and those supporting, managing or investigating speaking up issues have the capability and knowledge to do this effectively.
- Ensure that appropriate items on speaking up are incorporated into induction programmes for all staff.
- Ensure that groups of staff and individuals who may find it difficult to speak up are given particular support.

Supporting staff

- Ensure that information and data are handled appropriately, and personal and confidential data are protected.
- Ensure that individuals receive appropriate feedback on how issues that they speak up about are investigated, and the conclusion of any investigation.

Example Job Description (Freedom to Speak Up Guardian) (September 2016)

- Where necessary, give extra support, including 1-2-1 support, to people who are experiencing difficulty with speaking up, or those who are experiencing difficulty in handling or supporting someone who is speaking up.

Working with and challenging the Board

- Develop strong and open working relationships with the CEO, NEDs and other Directors, with direct access to Trust leaders as required.
- Attend board meetings regularly to report on Freedom to Speak Up activities. Reports should include assessment of issues that people are speaking up about (and trends in those issues), and barriers affecting ability of people to speak up. Particular attention should be given to concerns which may suggest a link to patient safety and quality.
- Hold the Board to account for taking appropriate action to create a Freedom to Speak Up culture, assess trends, and respond to issues that are being raised.

Safety and quality

- Take immediate appropriate action when matters that people are speaking up about indicate that safety and quality may be compromised.
- Develop measures, data sets, and indicators to monitor trends and identify linkages between issues raised through people speaking up, and issues raised through other safety and quality routes.

NHS culture

- Take part in National Guardian Office activities and training, actively supporting fellow Freedom to Speak Up Guardians, developing personal networks and peer-to-peer relationships, contributing to wider networking events, and sharing and learning from best practice.
- Raise issues that cannot be resolved locally with the National Guardian's Office, including where Trusts appear to be failing in their obligations.
- Keep abreast of developments and best practice, assessing their own development and training needs, and seeking support in addressing these.

Example Job Description (Freedom to Speak Up Guardian) (September 2016)

Personal qualities:

FTSU Guardians are expected to have the qualities and experience that will enable them to uphold these key principles:

Key principles	...what this means
Independent	... in the advice they give to staff and trust's senior leaders, and free to prioritise their actions to create the greatest impact on speaking up culture ... and able to hold trusts to account for: creating a culture of speaking up; putting in place processes to support speaking up; taking action to make improvements where needed; and displaying behaviours that encourage speaking up
Impartial	... and able to review fairly how cases where staff have spoken up are handled
Empowered	... to take a leading role in supporting staff to speak up safely and to independently report on progress on behalf of a local network of 'champions' or as the single role holder
Visible	... to all staff, particularly those on the frontline, and approachable by all, irrespective of discipline or grade
Influential	... with direct and regular access to members of trust boards and other senior leaders
Knowledgeable	...in Freedom to Speak Up matters and local issues, and able to advise staff appropriately about speaking up
Inclusive	... and willing and able to support people who may struggle to have their voices heard
Credible	... with experience that resonates with frontline staff
Empathetic	... to people who wish to speak up, especially those who may be encountering difficulties ... and able to listen well, facilitate constructive conversations, and mediate to help resolve issues satisfactorily at the earliest stage possible
Trusted	... by all to handle issues fairly, take action as necessary, act with integrity and maintain confidentiality as appropriate
Self-aware	... and able to handle difficult situations professionally, setting boundaries and seeking support where needed
Forward thinking	... and able to make recommendations and take action to improve the handling of cases where staff have spoken up, and freedom to speak up culture more generally
Supported	... with sufficient designated time to carry out their role, participate in external Freedom to Speak Up activities, and take part in staff training, induction and other relevant activities ... with access to advice and training, and appropriate administrative and other support
Effective	... monitoring the handling and resolution of concerns and ensuring clear action, learning, follow up and feedback.