

Freedom to Speak up Guardian: Job Description

Purpose of the role

The Freedom to Speak Up (FTSU) Guardian will work alongside regional 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
- Regional Directors and Senior Leaders are 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 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 staff are aware of, and have access to, support to help them speak up.
- Where appropriate, and with support from the national FTSU network, 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 and Organisational Development (OD) professionals and others to ensure that speaking up guidance and processes are easily understood, and address any local issues that may hinder the speaking up process.
- Assess the effectiveness of local 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 appropriate items on speaking up are incorporated into local 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 on the conclusion of any investigation.
- 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 regional leaders

- Develop strong and open working relationships with the regional directors and senior leaders, with direct access to them as required.
- Attend senior management meetings six-monthly to report on Freedom to Speak Up activities. Reports should include trends of the issues that people are speaking up about and barriers affecting ability of people to speak up. Particular attention should be given to concerns which may suggest a link to patient or staff safety and wellbeing.
- Work with the senior leaders to ensure that they are taking appropriate action to create a Freedom to Speak Up culture, understanding trends, and responding 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 and NHS England 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 NHS England's national FTSU Guardian, including if the organisation appears to be failing in its obligations.
- Keep abreast of developments and best practice, assessing their own development and training needs, and seeking support in addressing these.

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 the region's senior leaders, and free to prioritise their actions to create the greatest impact on speaking up culture. 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 and approachable by all, irrespective of discipline or grade
Influential	With direct and regular access to regional board members and other senior leaders
Knowledgeable	In FTSU 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 other staff
Empathetic	To people who wish to speak up, especially those who may be encountering difficulties Able to listen well, facilitate constructive conversations, and mediate to help resolve issues satisfactorily at the earliest possible stage
Trusted	By all to handle issues fairly, take actions 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 FTSU 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.