

Title:	Freedom to Speak Up Annual Report
Report to the:	Trust Board
Meeting date:	22 May 2024
Agenda item:	7
Report author:	Sarah Feal, Trust Secretary and Freedom to Speak-up Guardian
Executive sponsor:	Anita Pisani, Deputy Chief Executive Officer

Assurance level:	Substantial <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reasonable <input type="checkbox"/> Partial <input type="checkbox"/> Minimal <input type="checkbox"/>
Rationale:	The Trust has an approved plan in place, which is monitored for delivery. The 2023 annual NHS staff survey results 'We each have a voice that counts'.
Assurance action:	Not applicable.

## 1.0 Executive Summary

1.1 Speaking up is about anything which gets in the way of providing good care or affects an employee's working life. When things go wrong, we need to make sure that lessons are learnt, and things are improved. If we think something might go wrong, it's important that all staff feel able to speak up to stop potential harm.

Even when things are good, but could be even better, staff should feel able to say something and be confident that their suggestion will be used as an opportunity for improvement.

1.2 Freedom to Speak Up is about encouraging a positive culture where people feel they can speak up and their voices will be heard, and their suggestions acted upon. Speak Up, Listen Up and Follow Up is a key component of the Trust's culture.

## 2.0 Recommendation

- 2.1 The members are asked to:
- **Note** the annual report.

## 3.0 How the report supports achievement of the Strategic Objectives:

Provide outstanding care:	Speaking up can improve the way good care is provided.
Be collaborative:	The Trust is part of the Eastern Network of Freedom to Speak Up Guardians.
Be an excellent employer:	Speaking up can improve an employee's working life.
Be sustainable:	This is not covered in this report.

## 4.0 How the report supports tackling Health Inequalities

- 4.1 This is not covered in this report.

## 5.0 Links to Board Assurance Framework / Trust Risk Register

- 5.1 Risk 3619: staff morale.

## 6.0 Legal and Regulatory requirements

- 6.1 The following legal and regulatory frameworks are applicable:
- Employment Rights Act 1996.
  - Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998.
  - NHS People Promise.

## 7.0 Previous report

- 7.1 Freedom to Speak Up Guardian Annual Report 2022-23, 17<sup>th</sup> May 2023.

## 8.0 Report

### 8.1 How to Speak Up

The Trust has many channels for speaking up within the organisation. Outside the Line Manager and Human Resources route, staff may choose to speak up directly to the Freedom to Speak Up Guardian or through the community of Freedom to Speak Up Champions, who volunteer for the role across different services.

- 8.2 The **annual NHS Staff Survey** also provides staff with the opportunity to speak up. A key theme of the NHS People Promise is 'We each have a voice that counts.' The Trust always scores high in this domain, and in 2023-24 is the best performing Community Trust nationally in this area.



Figure 1. NHS People Promise logo.

People Promise/Theme/Question	2022 Score	Significance	2023 Score	Significance	Sector Score
People Promise 3, Subscore 2 - Raising concerns	7.37	Not Significant	7.41	Significantly Better	7.02
20a. I would feel secure raising concerns about unsafe clinical practice.	85.0%	Not Significant	84.4%	Significantly Better	79.9%
20b. I am confident that my organisation would address my concern.	76.3%	Not Significant	75.6%	Significantly Better	68.9%
25e. I feel safe to speak up about anything that concerns me in this organisation.	76.9%	Not Significant	77.9%	Significantly Better	71.6%
25f. If I spoke up about something that concerned me I am confident my organisation would address my concern.	69.4%	Not Significant	68.1%	Significantly Better	60.8%

Figure 2. People Promise Sub score - Raising Concerns.

### 8.3 Freedom to Speak Up Champions

There is currently 23 Freedom to Speak Up Champions [**Appendix A**] across the Trust, who expressed an interest in becoming an advocate to support staff and have been trained in role. The Champions are **supported** by the Freedom to Speak Up Guardian who is the Trust Secretary.

The work is supported by the Deputy Chief Executive, and the Audit Committee Chair may provide independent support if required. The Champions met with the Guardian, the Deputy Chief Executive, and the Audit Committee Chair 15 June 2023 as part of their annual review to discuss themes and learning, and to inform the agreed actions for the forthcoming year.

#### 8.4 Freedom to Speak Up Reporting

On a quarterly basis the Trust reports all concerns raised directly through the Freedom to Speak Up route to the National Guardian’s Office. The Office leads, trains and supports a network of Freedom to Speak Up Guardians in England and conducts speaking up reviews to identify learning and support improvement of the speaking up culture of the healthcare sector.

#### 8.5 Freedom to Speak Up Concerns

There have been 39 concerns raised during 2023-24, which is an increase from 2022-23 where 18 concerns were raised. October 2023 was Freedom to Speak Up month, which may be associated with the higher number of concerns raised during Quarter 3. The table below sets out the number of cases raised each quarter in comparison with the previous year.

	Quarter 1 April- June	Quarter 2 July- September	Quarter 3 October- December	Quarter 4 January- March	Total
<b>2022-23</b>	4	10*	4	0	<b>18</b>
<b>2023-24</b>	5	3	8	23*	<b>39</b>

Table 1 - \* Cases are calculated by numbers of individuals involved.

8.6 The following chart shows the **themes of concerns** raised and the most prevalent themes related to Service changes and Attitudes and behaviours:

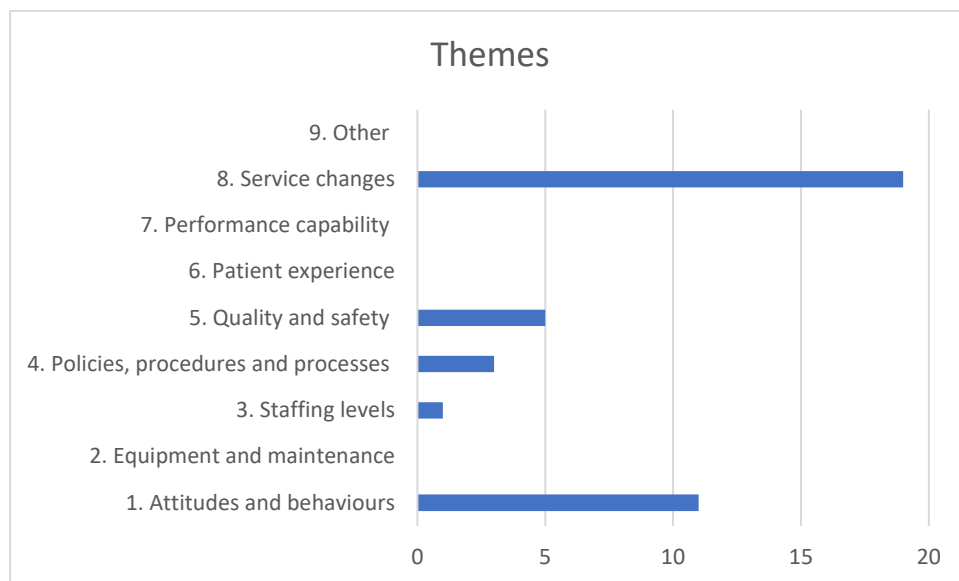


Table 2 - Themes of concerns

## 8.7 Freedom to Speak Up Mandatory Training

All staff complete 'Speak Up' Mandatory Training when they join the Trust. Core training is essential for all employees and covers what speaking up is and why it matters. It will help learners understand how to speak up and what to expect when they do. The annual target is 90% and the Trust achieved this throughout every month during 2023-24, and the table below sets out the compliance attainment per calendar month:

April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March
97%	98%	98%	98%	98%	98%	98%	98%	98%	98%	98%	99%

*Table 3 - Compliance percentage per calendar month*

## 8.8 Collaboration with Peers

The Trust has supported other Trusts to improve their capability in Freedom to Speak Up and the Freedom to Speak Up Guardian is also supported in the East of England region through a Community of Practice peer group.

The Freedom to Speak Up Guardian attended the annual conference hosted by the National Guardian's Office 14<sup>th</sup> March 2024.