

Freedom to Speak up

A reflection and planning tool



Introduction

The senior lead for FTSU in the organisation should take responsibility for completing this reflection tool, at least every 2 years.

This improvement tool is designed to help you identify strengths in yourself, your leadership team and your organisation – and any gaps that need work. It should be used alongside Freedom to speak up: [A guide for leaders in the NHS and organisations delivering NHS services](#), which provides full information about the areas addressed in the statements, as well as recommendations for further reading.

Completing this improvement tool will demonstrate to your senior leadership team, your board or any oversight organisation the progress you have made developing your Freedom to Speak Up arrangements.

You may find that not every section in this tool is relevant to your organisation at this time. For this reason, the tool is provided in Word format to allow you to adapt it to your current needs, retaining the elements that are most useful to you.

If you have any questions about how to use the tool, please contact the national FTSU Team using england.fts-u-enquiries@nhs.net

The self-reflection tool is set out in three stages, set out below.

Stage 1

This section sets out statements for reflection under the eight principles outlined in the guide. They are designed for people in your organisation's board, senior leadership team or – in the case of some primary care organisations – the owner.

You may want to review your position against each of the principles or you may prefer to focus on one or two.

Stage 2

This stage involves summarising the high-level actions you will take over the next 6–24 months to develop your Freedom to Speak Up arrangements. This will help the guardian and the senior lead for Freedom to Speak Up carry out more detailed planning.

Stage 3

Summarise the high-level actions you need to take to share and promote your strengths. This will enable others in your organisation and the wider system to learn from you.

Stage 1: Review your Freedom to Speak Up arrangements against the guide

What to do

- Using the scoring below, mark the statements to indicate the current situation.

1 = significant concern or risk which requires addressing within weeks

2 = concern or risk which warrants discussion to evaluate and consider options

3 = generally applying this well, but aware of room for improvement or gaps in knowledge/approach

4 = an evidenced strength (e.g., through data, feedback) and a strength to build on

5 = confident that we are operating at best practice regionally or nationally (e.g., peers come to use for advice)

- Summarise evidence to support your score.
- Enter any high-level actions for improvement (you will bring these together in Stage 2).
- Make a note of any areas you score 5s in and how you can promote this good practice (you will bring these together in Stage 3).

Principle 1: Value speaking up

For a speaking-up culture to develop across the organisation, a commitment to speaking up must come from the top.

Statements for the senior lead responsible for Freedom to Speak Up to reflect on	Score 1–5 or yes/no
I am knowledgeable about Freedom to Speak Up	5
I have led a review of our speaking-up arrangements at least every two years	5
I am assured that our guardian(s) was recruited through fair and open competition	5
I am assured that our guardian(s) has sufficient ringfenced time to fulfil all aspects of the guardian job description	5
I am regularly briefed by our guardian(s)	5
I provide effective support to our guardian(s)	5
<p>Enter summarised commentary to support your score.</p> <p>Six monthly FTSU report to the Board.</p> <p>FTSU vision and strategy agreed by FTSU guardian, Executive, Non-Executive lead and Chair, with input from JCNP Board.</p> <p>FTSU Guardian discusses cases with Service Directors, if required.</p> <p>FTSU Guardian has direct access to Chief Nurse and Medical Director – Trust patient safety joint leads.</p> <p>Regular examples where the guardian has access to the Chief Executive, Chief Nurse, other Executives and Service Directors.</p> <p>Executive lead/FTSU guardian one to one meetings highlight regular discussions on plans for FTSU in the organisation.</p> <p>FTSU Guardian job description matched against national FTSU JD.</p>	
<p>High-level actions needed to bring about improvement (focus on scores 1, 2 and 3)</p>	

1. To support leaders and managers on improving staff experience and ensure a positive culture of speaking up is embedded in all services.

Statements for the non-executive director lead responsible for Freedom to Speak Up to reflect on	Score 1–5 or yes/no
I am knowledgeable about Freedom to Speak Up	3
I am confident that the board displays behaviours that help, rather than hinder, speaking up	4
I effectively monitor progress in board-level engagement with the speaking-up agenda	3
I challenge the board to develop and improve its speaking-up arrangements	3
I am confident that our guardian(s) is recruited through an open selection process	4
I am assured that our guardian(s) has sufficient ringfenced time to fulfil all aspects of the guardian job description	4
I am involved in overseeing investigations that relate to the board	Yes
I provide effective support to our guardian(s)	3
<p>Enter summarised evidence to support your score. Annual FTSU report to Board Staff stories to Board Staff networks presentation to COBs Attend annual FTSU champions event.</p>	
<p>High-level actions needed to bring about improvement (focus on scores 1, 2 and 3)</p>	
1. Make sure I am aware of the latest guidance form the National Guardian’s Office	
2. Challenge the Board to reflect on what they could do more to create and maintain a healthy and effective speaking up culture	
3. Discuss with the FTSU Guardian what more I can do to provide them with advice and support.	

Principle 2: Role-model speaking up and set a healthy Freedom to Speak up culture

Role-modelling by leaders is essential to set the cultural tone of the organisation.

Statements for senior leaders	Score 1–5 or yes/no
The whole leadership team has bought into Freedom to Speak Up	5
We regularly and clearly articulate our vision for speaking up	5
We can evidence how we demonstrate that we welcome speaking up	5
We can evidence how we have communicated that we will not accept detriment	5
We are confident that we have clear processes for identifying and addressing detriment	5
We can evidence feedback from staff that shows we are role-modelling the behaviours that encourage people to speak up	5
We regular discuss speaking-up matters in detail	5
<p>Enter summarised evidence to support your score.</p> <p>Board development session covering the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is a healthy speak up, listen up and follow up culture? • Exploring the benefits and drivers of a healthy speak up, listen up and follow up culture. • Measures of the effectiveness of the Trust's speaking up culture arrangements • Supporting the Freedom to Speak Up Guardian <p>FTSU vision and strategy agreed by FTSU guardian, Executive, Non-Executive lead and Chair, with input from JCNP Board. Six monthly FTSU report to the Board.</p>	

Staff Survey results indicate safe culture. Nationally, the Trust has scored the highest scores for raising concerns for three consecutive years. The Staff Survey results for 2022, showed that the Trust was the highest rated Community Trust for 'We have a Voice that Counts'.

Highly visible leadership through regular Trustwide question and answer sessions and service visits and communication channels around the organisation.

Regular discussions on bullying and harassment are held during Joint Consultative Negotiating Partnership (JCNP) meetings. FTSU is a standing agenda item for JCNP.

High-level actions needed to bring about improvement (focus on scores 1 ,2 and 3)

1. Further work to capture and share good practice and learning from concerns raised, with the key aim of fostering openness and transparency, such as staff briefings, team meetings and the intranet.

Statements for the person responsible for organisational development	Score 1–5 or yes/no
I am knowledgeable about Freedom to Speak Up	5
We have included creating a speaking-up culture (separate from the Freedom to Speak Up guardian process) in our wider culture improvement plans	5
We have adapted our organisational culture so that it becomes a just and learning culture for our workers	5
We support our guardian(s) to make effective links with our staff networks	5
We use Freedom to Speak Up intelligence and data to influence our speaking-up culture	5

Enter summarised evidence to support your score.

People Strategy 2023-26 includes embedding just and learning culture.

Staff survey results

Workforce Race Equality (WRES) and Workforce Disability Equality (WDES) outcomes.

Just culture approach to learning and development following incident reporting (including near misses).

Civility and respect workshops and leadership development programme.

<p>Freedom to Speak Up Annual event.</p> <p>Staff networks and locality champions.</p> <p>Cultural Ambassador Programme.</p> <p>Implementation of 'No more tick boxes' and 'See Me First approach.'</p>	
<p>High-level actions needed to bring about improvement (focus on scores 1, 2 and 3)</p>	
<p>1. Further work to capture and share good practice and learning from concerns raised, with the key aim of fostering openness and transparency, such as staff briefings, team meetings and the intranet.</p>	
<p>Statements about how much time the guardian(s) has to carry out their role</p>	<p>Score 1–5 or yes/no</p>
<p>We have considered all relevant intelligence and data when making our decision about the amount of ringfenced time our guardian(s) has, so that they are able to follow the National Guardian's Office guidance and universal job description and to attend network events</p>	<p>5</p>
<p>We have reviewed the ringfenced time our Guardian has in light of any significant events</p>	<p>5</p>
<p>The whole senior team or board has been in discussions about the amount of ringfenced time needed for our guardian(s)</p>	<p>5</p>
<p>We are confident that we have appropriate financial investment in place for the speaking-up programme and for recruiting guardians</p>	<p>5</p>
<p>Enter summarised evidence to support your score.</p> <p>The FTSU_Guardian role is in embedded in the Trust Secretary role and therefore the amount of time taken for the role is as needed.</p> <p>CQC inspection feedback (outstanding for Well-led).</p> <p>National Guardian Office FTSU Guardian Survey Report.</p>	

High-level actions needed to bring about improvement (focus on scores 1, 2 and 3)

1.

Principle 3: Make sure workers know how to speak up and feel safe and encouraged to do so

Regular, clear and inspiring communication is an essential part of making a speaking-up culture a reality.

Statements about your speaking-up policy	Score 1–5 or yes/no
Our organisation’s speaking-up policy reflects the 2022 update	5
We can evidence that our staff know how to find the speaking-up policy	5
<p>Enter summarised evidence to support your score. We have revised and updated the Freedom to Speak/Raising Concerns Policy to ensure it is aligned to the national policy. Staff were informed about the revised policy and it is available on the Trust intranet.</p> <p>Intranet information provides details of how to contact the FTSU guardian and champions.</p> <p>Feedback from staff involved in speaking up process is sought and reflected in the policy.</p> <p>FTSU discussed at induction and during senior leadership team meetings.</p>	
<p>High-level actions needed to bring about improvement (focus on scores 1, 2 and 3)</p>	
1.	
Statements about how speaking up is promoted	Score 1–5 or yes/no
We have used clear and effective communications to publicise our guardian(s)	5
We have an annual plan to raise the profile of Freedom to Speak Up	5
We tell positive stories about speaking up and the changes it can bring	5
We measure the effectiveness of our communications strategy for Freedom to Speak Up	4
<p>Enter summarised evidence to support your score.</p>	

We have an annual FTSU champions learning session with the Board leads for FTSU.

Staff survey results.

High-level actions needed to bring about improvement (focus on scores 1, 2 and 3)

1. Further work to capture and share good practice and learning from concerns raised, with the key aim of fostering openness and transparency, such as staff briefings, team meetings and the intranet
2. To continue promoting and publicising the role of our Freedom to Speak Up Champions by providing regular communications to all staff (including volunteers, temporary/ contracted workers and trainees).

Principle 4: When someone speaks up, thank them, listen and follow up

Speaking up is not easy, so when someone does speak up, they must feel appreciated, heard and involved.

Statements about training	Score 1–5 or yes/no*
We have mandated the National Guardian’s Office and Health Education England training	5
Freedom to Speak Up features in the corporate induction as well as local team-based inductions	5
Our HR and OD teams measure the impact of speaking-up training	5
<p>Enter summarised evidence to support your score. All staff are enrolled for Freedom to speak Core-training Module. 97% of our staff have completed the training.</p> <p>All our Board members have completed the listen up, and follow up training.</p> <p>Staff survey results</p> <p>FTSU champions learning event.</p>	
High-level actions needed to bring about improvement (focus on scores 1, 2 and 3)	
1. To promote Freedom to Speak Up e-learning for managers (listen-up e-learning).	
Statements about support for managers within teams or directorates	Score 1–5 or yes/no
We support our managers to understand that speaking up is a valuable learning opportunity and not something to be feared	5
All managers and senior leaders have received training on Freedom to Speak Up	5
We have enabled managers to respond to speaking-up matters in a timely way	5

We are confident that our managers are learning from speaking up and adapting their environments to ensure a safe speaking-up culture	5
<p>Enter summarised evidence to support your score.</p> <p>Staff survey results.</p> <p>Raising concerns log</p> <p>Service directors have regular conversations with FSTU champions.</p> <p>Civility and leadership development sessions.</p>	
<p>High-level actions needed to bring about improvement (focus on scores 1, 2 and 3)</p>	
<p>1. To support leaders and managers on improving staff experience and ensure a positive culture of speaking up is embedded in all services.</p>	

Principle 5: Use speaking up as an opportunity to learn and improve

The ultimate aim of speaking up is to improve patient safety and the working environment for all NHS workers.

Statements about triangulation	Score 1–5 or yes/no
We have supported our guardian(s) to effectively identify potential areas of concern and to follow up on them	5
We use triangulated data to inform our overall cultural and safety improvement programmes	5
<p>Enter summarised evidence to support your score. Workforce KPIs Quality dashboard data Staff survey results.</p>	
<p>High-level actions needed to bring about improvement (focus on scores 1, 2 and 3)</p>	
<p>1. Further work to use triangulated data to inform our overall cultural and safety improvement.</p>	
Statements about learning for improvement	Score 1–5 or yes/no
We regularly identify good practice from others – for example, through self-assessment or gap analysis	4 - Ongoing
We use this information to add to our Freedom to Speak Up improvement plan	5
We share the good practice we have generated both internally and externally to enable others to learn	3 - Not formally
<p>Enter summarised evidence to support your score. WRES/WDES/National index/NHS Survey outcomes. FTSU Champions annual learning event</p>	
<p>High-level actions needed to bring about improvement (focus on scores 1, 2 and 3)</p>	
<p>1. To enhance sharing of good practice with our staff through better communication.</p>	

Principle 6: Support guardians to fulfil their role in a way that meets workers' needs and National Guardian's Office requirements

Statements about how our guardian(s) was appointed	Score 1–5 or yes/no
Our guardian(s) was appointed in a fair and transparent way	5
Our guardian(s) has been trained and registered with the National Guardian Office	5
Enter summarised evidence to support your score.	
FTSU Guardian job description matched against national FTSU JD.	
FTSU Guardian has attended national training and is registered with National Guardians Office.	
FTSU Guardian completed the NGO refresher training in August 2022.	
High-level actions needed to bring about improvement (focus on scores 1, 2 and 3)	
1.	
Statements about the way we support our guardian(s)	Score 1–5 or yes/no
Our guardian(s) has performance and development objectives in place	5
Our guardian(s) receives sufficient one-to-one support from the senior lead and other relevant executives or senior leaders	5
Our guardian(s) has access to a confidential source of emotional support or supervision	5
There is an effective plan in place to cover the guardian's absence	5
Our guardian(s) provides data quarterly to the National Guardian's Office	5

Enter summarised evidence to support your score.

Annual oversight meeting with Executive and Non-Executive Leads

FTSU guardian has direct access to Chief Nurse and Medical Director – Trust patient safety joint leads.

Quarterly reporting to the National Guardian's Office is provided on time.

High-level actions needed to bring about improvement (focus on scores 1, 2 and 3)

1.

Statements about our speaking up process

**Score 1–5 or
yes/no**

Our speaking-up case-handling procedures are documented

5

We have engaged with managers and other key stakeholders on the role they play in handling speaking-up cases

5

We are assured that confidentiality is maintained effectively

5

We ensure that speaking-up cases are progressed in a timely manner within the teams or directorates we are responsible for

5

We are confident that if people speak up within the teams or directorates, we are responsible for, they will have a consistently positive experience.

5

Enter summarised evidence to support your score.

Freedom to Speak up/ Raising Concerns log tracking progress on concerns raised.

Raising Concerns/FTSU Policy outlines the importance of confidentiality.

6-monthly paper discussed at Public Board.

Meetings with Service Directors and Service leads are managed in confidence.

High-level actions needed to bring about improvement (focus on scores 1, 2 and 3)

1.

Principle 7: Identify and tackle barriers to speaking up

However strong an organisation's speaking-up culture, there will always be some barriers to speaking up, whether organisation wide or in small pockets. Finding and addressing them is an ongoing process.

Statements about barriers	Score 1–5 or yes/no
We have identified the barriers that exist for people in our organisation	5
We know who isn't speaking up and why	5
We are confident that our Freedom to Speak Up champions are clear on their role	5
We have evaluated the impact of actions taken to reduce barriers?	5
<p>Enter summarised evidence to support your score.</p> <p>We have three vibrant staff networks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural Diversity and Inclusion • LGBTQIA+ • Long Term Condition and Disability. <p>We also have regular menopause café.</p> <p>Speaking up is a regular agenda item for trainees e.g. preceptorship training.</p> <p>FTSU included in our volunteers' induction.</p> <p>FTSU Champions annual learning event.</p>	

High-level actions needed to bring about improvement (focus on scores 1, 2 and 3)	
1.	
Statements about detriment	Score 1–5 or yes/no
We have carried out work to understand what detriment for speaking up looks and feels like	No
We monitor whether workers feel they have suffered detriment after they have spoken up	5
We are confident that we have a robust process in place for looking into instances where a worker has felt they have suffered detriment	5
Our non-executive director for Freedom to Speak Up is involved in overseeing how allegations of detriment are reviewed	
Enter summarised evidence to support your score. FTSU six-monthly reports to the Board.	
High-level actions needed to bring about improvement (focus on scores 1, 2 and 3)	
1.	

Principle 8: Continually improve our speaking up culture

Building a speaking-up culture requires continuous improvement. Two key documents will help you plan and assess your progress: the improvement strategy and the improvement and delivery plan.

Statements about your speaking-up strategy	Score 1–5 or yes/no
We can evidence that we have a comprehensive and up-to-date strategy to improve the speaking-up culture	5
We are confident that the Freedom to Speak Up improvement strategy fits with our organisation’s overall cultural improvement strategy and that it supports the delivery of related strategies	5
We routinely evaluate the Freedom To Speak Up strategy, using a range of qualitative and quantitative measures, and provide updates to our organisation	5
Our improvement plan is up to date and on track	5
<p>Enter summarised evidence to support your score. FTSU strategy and improvement plan</p> <p>People Strategy 2023-26</p>	
High-level actions needed to bring about improvement (focus on scores 1, 2 and 3)	
1.	

Statements about evaluating speaking-up arrangements	Score 1–5 or yes/no
We have a plan in place to measure whether there is an improvement in how safe and confident people feel to speak up	5
Our plan follows a recognised 'plan, do, study, act' or other quality improvement approach	5
Our speaking-up arrangements have been evaluated within the last two years	5
<p>Enter summarised evidence to support your score.</p> <p>Staff survey results</p> <p>Feedback from staff who raise concerns.</p> <p>Direct feedback to Trust leadership</p> <p>WDES/WRES outcomes</p> <p>Quarterly and annual reporting to the National Guardian's Office</p>	
<p>High-level actions needed to bring about improvement (focus on scores 1, 2 and 3)</p>	
1.	
Statements about assurance	Score 1–5 or yes/no
We have supported our guardian(s) to structure their report in a way that provides us with the assurance we need	5
We have evaluated the content of our guardian report against the suggestions in the guide	5
Our guardian(s) provides us with a report in person at least twice a year	5

We receive a variety of assurance that relates to speaking up	5
We seek and receive assurance from the relevant executives/senior leaders that speaking up results in learning and improvement	5
<p>Enter summarised evidence to support your score.</p> <p>Six monthly FTSU report to the Board.</p> <p>Service visits</p> <p>Feedback from staff</p> <p>Staff survey results</p> <p>Engagement with Trust staff networks.</p> <p>FTSU Champions training and annual learning event.</p>	
<p>High-level actions needed to bring about improvement (focus on scores 1, 2 and 3)</p>	
1	

Stage 2: Summarise your high-level development actions for the next 6 – 24 months.

Development areas to address in the next 6–12 months	Target date	Action owner
1. To support leaders and managers on improving staff experience and ensure a positive culture of speaking up is embedded in all services.	Ongoing	Anita Pisani
2. To continue promoting and publicising the role of our Freedom to Speak Up Champions by providing regular communications to all staff (including volunteers, temporary/ contracted workers and trainees).	Ongoing	Mercy Kusotera
3. To promote Freedom to Speak Up e-learning for managers (listen-up e-learning).	March 2024	Anita Pisani Mercy Kusotera
4. To enhance sharing of good practice with our staff through better communication.	November 2023	Mercy Kusotera
5.		
6.		
Development areas to address in the next 12–24 months	Target date	Action owner
1. Further work to capture and share good practice and learning from concerns raised, with the key aim of fostering openness and transparency, such as staff briefings, team meetings and the intranet.	Ongoing	Mercy Kusotera
2.		
3.		
4.		

Stage 3: Summary of areas of strength to share and promote

High-level actions needed to share and promote areas of strength (focus on scores 4 and 5)	Target date	Action owner
1. Staff survey results		
2. To continue to work with the National Guardians Office to ensure that the Trust learns from national best practice.		
3. Executive lead/FTSU guardian one to one meetings highlight regular discussions on plans for FTSU in the organisation.		
4. Civility and respect workshops and leadership development programme.		
5. Implementation of 'No more tick boxes' and 'See Me First approach.'		
6. Highly visible leadership through regular Trustwide question and answer sessions and service visits and communication channels around the organisation.		
7		
8		