

Audit and Risk Assurance Committee

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Strategic risk deep dive: Freedom to speak up

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What is Freedom to Speak Up

The National Guardian's Office and the role of the Freedom to Speak Up Guardian were created in response to recommendations made in Sir Robert Francis QC's report ["The Freedom to Speak Up"](#) (2015).

These recommendations were made as Sir Robert found that NHS culture did not always encourage or support workers to speak up, and that patients and workers suffered as a result.

National Guardian Office



Freedom to Speak Up Guardians work within their organisation to improve speaking up and to ensure that lessons are learnt and things are improved when workers do speak up.

Freedom to Speak Up Guardians are supported by the National Guardian and the National Guardian's Office who work nationally to improve speaking up within the NHS and healthcare sector in England



HCPC Speak Up Guardians



Freedom to Speak Up Guardians

- Freedom to Speak Up Guardians provide another channel for you to speak up to that is independent
- They can offer support and help you to escalate the matter
- A Guardian will **thank you** and can usually escalate a matter in confidence if you prefer
- A Guardian will ensure you get feedback on how your matter is handled and used for learning. You will also have the opportunity to provide feedback to them.

Core principles

1. Championing a supportive environment

- Actively foster a culture where all workers feel safe, valued, and supported when speaking up.

2. Identifying and overcoming barriers

- Proactively seek out and address obstacles that prevent workers from raising concerns, ensuring inclusive and equitable access to speaking up.

3. Providing timely feedback and follow-up

- Ensure workers who speak up receive timely, respectful, and meaningful responses, including updates on actions taken.

4. Driving organisational learning and improvement

- Use insights from concerns raised to support continuous learning, reflection, and positive change across the organisation.

5. Ensuring robust governance and assurance

- Maintain transparency and accountability through effective reporting, oversight, and integration with wider organisational governance structures.

Speak Up Guardians: Six month reflection

Raising awareness



Attending every
new starter
induction

Attended team
meetings across the
organisation



Planning for
Speaking Up month
in October

What we've learned



Empowering vs
Advocating

Being a bridge



Supporting each
other

Questions?

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