

Simple guides

Speaking Up

In this Simple Guide we explore the issue of speaking up about quality or staff experience concerns.

Everybody who works for the NHS has a duty to raise genuine concerns if they think that something is happening at work which is wrong or illegal and affects other people including patients, members of the public or staff.

Effective speaking up arrangements protect patients and improves the experience of NHS workers. Having a healthy speaking up culture is an indicator of a well-led Trust.

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What is speaking up?

Speaking up about any concern you have at work is vitally important. It will help us to keep improving patient care and staff experience.

When we use the terms 'speaking up', 'raising a matter of concern' or 'whistleblowing' we are referring to the same kinds of things.

Speaking up, or whistleblowing, is when you speak out about something you are concerned about at work because you believe it needs bringing out into the open for the public good. Often, but not always, you may have raised your concern with other routes such as your line manager but your concerns still remain.

If you see something at work that you believe is negligent, improper or illegal then you should report this to the relevant people. The [raising concerns section](#) on the intranet will give you more information about what type of concerns are covered.

“We are committed to building an open and honest culture where staff feel able to speak up”

Why might you need to speak up?

Sometimes it is only through speaking out that concerns come to light and can be addressed before real harm is done.

The harm might be to patient safety, or the health and safety of patients, members of the public or members of staff or to the finances or reputation of the Trust for example. If you have a genuine concern about malpractice, wrongdoing or fraud in the Trust then you have a duty to speak up because speaking up can inform the people who need to know about these concerns.

You might need to speak up if you are aware of any of the following:

- › Unsafe patient care or unacceptable quality of care
- › Unsafe working conditions for you or others
- › Inadequate induction or training for staff
- › Lack of, or poor, response to a reported patient safety incident
- › Lack of, or poor, response to a reported staff experience issue
- › Suspicions of fraud (which can also be reported to our counter fraud team)
- › Poor personal staff experience including harassment, bullying or discrimination



You may feel worried about raising a concern but please don't be put off. The entire Board and our senior leaders are committed to building an open and honest culture where staff feel able to speak up.

Who should I speak to?

You can raise your concern either informally or formally.

The person you report to is likely to be the one you go to first with any concerns such as a line manager, supervisor, lead clinician or tutor.

There may be a reason you feel unable to go to them. If this is the case, you have other options set out below. You may also raise your concern initially anonymously using ext: 5757 or on the [Datix incident reporting system](#).

› Freedom to Speak up Guardian:

The Trust has appointed a Freedom to Speak Up Guardian (Suzie Cro). They act independently and impartially to provide advice and support staff at any stage of raising a concern. You can email suzie.cro@nhs.net in complete confidence.

› Independent confidential advice:

National Whistleblowing Helpline. You can call them on 0800 724 725.

› Trade Union or professional body:

If you are a member of a Trade Union or professional body you can seek advice and support from them.

You need to follow the procedure to make sure you remain protected under the law – this is called the [Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998](#) (PIDA).

Freedom to Speak Up Guardian

Freedom to Speak Up Guardians have been appointed throughout the NHS and have a key role in helping to raise the profile of raising concerns in their organisations.

They provide confidential advice and support to staff in relation to concerns they have, in particular about patient safety and the quality of care. Their role at Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust is to:

- › Work with the Board to create an open culture – listening and learning, not blaming.
- › Develop ways to encourage staff to speak up
- › Work entirely independently of the executive team
- › Review the governance and practice of raising concerns at the Trust
- › Share learning with the wider Trust to develop a positive culture
- › Make sure that there are no repercussions to a staff member who chooses to speak up

Contact your Freedom to Speak Up Guardian:

Email: suzie.cro@nhs.net

Telephone: Suzie Cro – 0300 422 5731 or 07789 864970