

AUGUST 2017

## **YORK TEACHING HOSPITAL NHS FOUNDATION TRUST ENCOURAGING SPEAKING UP THROUGH TRUST WIDE ENGAGEMENT**

### **The organisation**

York Teaching Hospital NHS Foundation Trust provides a comprehensive range of acute hospital and specialist healthcare services to a community of 800,000 across 3,400 square miles, which is one of the largest healthcare geographies in the UK.

8,500 staff work across multiple hospital sites and community settings and the annual turnover of the trust exceeds £400 million.

### **Background**

The appointment of Freedom to Speak Up (FTSU) guardians was recommended by Sir Robert Francis, following his review of Mid Staffordshire Hospitals.

All NHS trusts now have a FTSU guardian in place who is tasked with supporting staff to effectively raise and respond to public interest concerns. Guardians are supported by the National Guardian's Office which is led by Dr Henrietta Hughes.

The guardian role is still evolving and arrangements vary quite significantly across trusts. Some individuals are employed full-time and others part-time, in addition to their existing role. A number of trusts also have a network of champions or ambassadors who assist the guardian to raise the profile of speaking up and signpost staff to key information.

This case study describes how Lisa Smith, Freedom to Speak Up guardian at York Teaching Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, is fulfilling the FTSU guardian role, and how strong engagement with management teams and departments is helping to foster a culture where all staff, across all sites, feel confident and supported to raise public interest concerns.

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## Introducing the role

Lisa was appointed as guardian in autumn 2016 and a lot of work took place initially to raise her profile and visibility to all staff. Lisa is also the trust guardian of safe working, a separate post designed to oversee junior doctor's working hours. This helped raise her profile as FTSU guardian and as later described in the example, reach the medical workforce.

Leaflets, postcards and posters introducing the FTSU guardian role were designed, produced and distributed to all staff across all sites. Lisa took opportunity where possible to attend staff flu clinics to help highlight her role and remit amongst a wide range of staff. She has also attended various professional and operational meetings to raise awareness. A number of drop-in sessions were also arranged, providing ample opportunity for staff to talk to Lisa and understand the remit of the guardian role.

## How we did it

Since March 2017, Lisa has engaged with many departments to raise awareness across all areas of the trust by:

- **Delivering a number of training presentations** to a regional audit committee, nursing associates, nursing preceptorships and health and social care students, both internally and outside of the trust.
- **Working with the learning and research centre team** to develop bespoke raising and handling concerns training which is now part of all the trust leadership programmes.
- **Working with the trust's chief executive** to include her work in his regular staff briefing video which responds to the latest trust staff survey results and reports to the board on a quarterly basis.
- **Attending corporate inductions**, using the chief executive video with new starters as part of induction.
- **Working with the HR team** to share intelligence. Going forwards, Lisa and the HR team plan to undertake an anonymous case review to share learning and where required, implement changes to policies, procedures and processes. For example, use information from concerns that have been raised to assess whether their Personal Responsibility Framework needs to be re-designed and re-launched.
- **Working with trust communications** and raising concerns teams to integrate the Health Education England 'raising and responding to concerns' videos into staff messages and the trust's learning hub, as well as within staff induction.
- **Exhibiting a poster display** on the FTSU role at the 5<sup>th</sup> York Patient Safety Conference in June 2017, attended by over 500 delegates.
- **Jointly presenting** with the chief nurse at the National Deputy Chief Nurse Congress on how to support creating an environment for nurses to speak out.



## Trust FTSU projects

There are a number of projects underway. The role of 'fairness champion' is being designed to further support the FTSU agenda and help tackle some of the issues highlighted in the annual staff survey. The trust intends to recruit a wide, diverse range of staff from all grades and departments who staff can confidently access across sites in addition to Lisa.

The trust plans to introduce **Schwartz rounds** in the autumn and Lisa will be playing a key role on the steering group by providing guidance to departments where a round may be beneficial, and by linking parts of the organisation together to help raise the profile of speaking up. Schwartz rounds provide a space where all staff (clinical and non-clinical) can come together regularly to discuss the emotional and social aspects of their job. Their purpose is to understand the challenges and rewards that are key to providing care, helping staff to feel more supported in their roles, through reflection. Evidence shows use of Schwartz rounds helps reduce stress and isolation along with hierarchies.

### In-house video

The trust is also developing a 15 minute 'in house' training video which will consist of three to four different scenarios where staff raise concerns. The video will aim to prompt discussion amongst staff on future leadership programmes around the correct practice for raising and handling concerns.

### Using the staff survey

Lisa is also part of the action plan group that was established following the results of the latest annual trust staff survey. The survey was designed to promote a culture of feedback, particularly where incidents have been reported through other routes. The trust is also currently designing a raising concerns 'credit card' type flyer, a further reminder and easy reference for staff.

## Successes so far

Since Lisa took up her post, a number of staff concerns have been raised. No concerns have been raised anonymously which suggests staff have confidence in the guardian role. Face-to-face engagement has allowed Lisa to personally feedback to individuals, helping to ensure they feel supported and gauge whether they have received any untoward detriment as a result of speaking up.

Evaluation to date indicates that a wide range of individuals, across professions and departments, are raising concerns which demonstrates communications about the guardian role are reaching all parts of the trust.

There continues to be slight concerns around reaching staff in community settings, given only one individual in this setting has raised a concern. In contrast, a number of junior doctors have spoken up and Lisa's dual role as guardian of safe working may have some impact on this. From regional engagement it is understood many trusts struggle to engage the junior doctor workforce in the FTSU agenda.

## Top tips

- ✓ Raising concerns is an essential part of corporate governance which needs to be lead and embraced by the leadership team– ensure your chief executive is signed up.
- ✓ Employee confidence is key and success requires a positive culture.
- ✓ Avoiding repercussion or detriment to staff is essential.

## Further information

For more information please contact Lisa Smith, Freedom to Speak Up guardian  
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