

## Freedom to Speak Up (FTSU) Update

### Public Board

28<sup>th</sup> March 2024

<b>Presented for:</b>	Information
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<b>Previous Committees:</b>	Update on FTSU assurance presented at the LTHT Workforce Committee on 17 <sup>th</sup> January 2024 and Workforce Management Group on 13 <sup>th</sup> March
<b>Our Annual Commitments for 2023/24 are:</b>	
Effectively develop and deploy new assets (buildings, equipment, IT)	✓
Reduce healthcare associated infections	✓
Improve staff retention	✓
Deliver the financial plan	✓
Reduce average length of stay by 0.5 days per patient	✓
Achieve the Access Targets for Patients	✓
Support a culture of research	✓

Risk Appetite Framework				
Level 1 Risk	(✓)	Level 2 Risks	(Risk Appetite Scale)	Impact
Workforce Risk	✓	Workforce Supply Risk - We will deliver safe and effective patient care through having adequate systems and processes in place to ensure the Trust has access to appropriate levels of workforce supply.	Cautious	↔ (same)
Workforce Risk	✓	Workforce Deployment Risk - We will deliver safe and effective patient care through the deployment of resources with the right mix of skills and capacity to do what is required.	Cautious	↔ (same)
Workforce Risk	✓	Workforce Retention Risk - We will deliver safe and effective patient care, through supporting the training, development and	Cautious	↔ (same)

		H&WB of our staff to retain the appropriate level of resource to continue to meet the patient demand for our clinical services		
Workforce Risk	✓	Workforce Performance Risk - We will deliver safe and effective patient care through having the right systems and processes in place to manage performance of our workforce.	Cautious	↔ (same)
Health & Safety Risk	✓	We will protect the health and wellbeing of our patients and workforce by delivering services in line with or in excess of minimum health & safety laws and guidelines	Cautious	↔ (same)

## 1. Summary

The purpose of this paper is to outline the actions LTHT are taking to strengthen our approach to having a consistent speaking up, listening up and acting up culture, across the organisation and the Assurance Framework to Trust Board.

This paper shares the work programme of the newly created Freedom to Speak Up Steering Group and how that clarifies the distinct accountabilities of the Executive Team, Trust Board and the Freedom to Speak Up (FTSU) Guardian.

## 2. Background

LTHT was required to complete the National Guardian's Office (NGO) self-assessment toolkit in March 2023. This was designed to guide our actions and assess our maturity about achieving a consistent speaking up culture across the organisation.

The FTSU Guardian, along with key Trust stakeholders completed this assessment and identified actions to be undertaken, which was presented to Board in March 2023. The FTSU Guardian provided a further update on progress of actions to Trust Board in January 2024.

The Trust Board had discussed the need for us to reflect on the maturity of our speaking up culture considering the Lucy Letby case and to ensure that the learning and actions that will evolve from the ongoing Thirlwall enquiry and recommendations from NHSE are built into our approach.

For clarity, it is the role of the Trust Board to ensure we have a consistent speaking up culture across the organisation and to ensure assurance mechanisms are in place with regards our maturity and progress.

The role of the Freedom to Speak Up Guardian is crucial to helping progress this work, however for assurance purposes the Guardian is required to report to Trust Board the number of FTSU cases, the themes and any lessons learned for the organisation and not to be held accountable for the actions the Trust puts in place to address and improve.

## 3. Strengthening our approach

A FTSU Steering Group has been established to take responsibility for ensuring an annual self-assessment against the toolkit and the management of recommended improvements are acted upon and to provide assurance on progress and activity to Trust Board. The Trust Board should note we are not required to submit a renewed self-assessment to the NGO until April 2025, but we have taken the decision that an annual refresh is important to ensure

timely improvement and assurance. The terms of reference for the group have been approved and are included in Appendix A.

Led by the Trust's Director of Human Resources & Organisational Development and Director of Nursing, this group oversees the self-assessment against the NGO tool kit, makes recommendations to the Executive Directors Team for improvements and ensures the improvements are made with clear delivery dates. This group has colleagues representing quality, workforce, risk, service delivery, communications and the FTSU guardian.

The FTSU Steering Group have met in February and March 2024 and agreed key activities to strengthen the assurance to the Trust Board in May. Additional activities include:

- Reviewing quality and workforce metrics which will be triangulated for the purposes of focussing action and assurance.
- Strengthening the approach to the self-assessment by engaging the FTSU Leads to undertake the discussions with staff regarding barriers to speaking up and take targeted engagement across hard-to-reach staff groups.
- Developing FTSU metrics for the purposes of the group to inform improvement actions.

It is understood that the NGO intend to refresh the FTSU toolkit considering learning from Thirlwall or any other external review prior to the Trust submitting its next self-assessment in 2025, but there is no clarity yet what that will look like. Therefore, for now, the FTSU Steering Group, will work with the current self-assessment, the NHSE initial actions in response to the Lucy Letby case, and any interim recommendations from the Thirlwall enquiry. *(Due to publish recommendations in Nov 2024).*

## **Assurance**

The Guardian is required to report to Trust Board twice a year; May and November 2024. It is proposed to augment this with an annual assurance report from the FTSU Steering Group regarding the actions and progress on the Trusts recommendations from the refresh of the NGO toolkit. This will also be presented in May 2024.

## **4. Next Steps**

The Group continues to advance this work prior to reporting to the Trust Board in May 2024.

## **5. Communication and Involvement**

Staff engagement and communication is a crucial part of the action plan in the NGO toolkit and will be critical to us embedding a consistently strong speaking up culture across the Trust.

## **6. Publication Under Freedom of Information Act**

This paper has been made available under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

## **7. Recommendation**

This paper is presented to the Trust Board with the intention of providing an update on the approach LTHT is taking to strengthen the Assurance Framework to Trust Board with the newly created Freedom to Speak Up Steering Group, with a work programme that clarifies the distinct accountabilities of the Executive Team, Trust Board and the Freedom to Speak Up (FTSU) Guardian.

## **8. Supporting Information**

**Appendix A – FTSU Steering Group Terms of Reference (Feb 2024)**

