

Bi-Annual Report of the Freedom to Speak Up Guardian

Public Board

27 November 2025

Presented for:	Information
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Previous Committees:	Workforce Committee

Our Annual Commitments for 2025/26 are:				
Recognise and act upon moments that matter to our patients				
Support our patients to get home a day sooner				
Be in the top 25% for patient experience and efficiency in outpatients				
Support each other to act with kindness and compassion				✓
Reduce our carbon footprint by creating greener patient pathways				
Support our staff to manage every £ wisely				
Make best use of our estate, equipment, and digital assets				
Risk Appetite Framework				
Level 1 Risk	(✓)	Level 2 Risks	(Risk Appetite Scale)	Impact
Workforce Risk		Workforce Retention Risk - We will deliver safe and effective patient care, through supporting the training, development, and H&WB of our staff to retain the appropriate level of resource to continue to meet the patient demand for our clinical services	Cautious	Moving Towards
Operational Risk		Business Continuity Risk - We will develop and maintain	Cautious	Moving Towards

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		stable and resilient services, operating to consistently high levels of performance.		
Clinical Risk		Patient Experience Risk - We will comply with or exceed minimum patient experience targets.	Minimal	Moving Towards
Financial Risk		Change Risk - We will deliver change aligned to the Trust's strategy on time and to budget with benefits achieved and no significant adverse impacts, focussing on the delivery of large-scale capital developments and waste reduction programmes.	Cautious	Moving Towards
External Risk		Regulatory Risk - We will comply with or exceed all regulations, retain its CQC registration and always operate within the law.	Averse	Moving Towards

Key points	
1. This report provides a bi-annual update regarding Freedom to Speak Up processes and activity. 2. Key points to note are, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I. The number and type of FTSU cases and associated themes II. The ongoing activity to promote Freedom to Speak Up III. The development of our champion network and community of practice 	Information

1. Summary

This paper provides an update and assurance on the progress for the period quarter 1 and 2 (1 April 2025 – 30 September 2025).

Following discussion at the Workforce Committee on 12/11/25 a breakdown of concerns by CSU/Corporate Area is included at section 3.

2. Background

In line with the requirements of NHS England and the National Guardians Office (NGO), the concerns raised with the Freedom to Speak up Guardian (FTSUG) are included in this report.

3. Activity

The table below displays the themes and number of concerns via the FTSU Guardian for the period 1 April 2025 – 30 September 2025.

In November 2024, the FTSUG hours were temporarily increased from 22.5 w.t.e. to 37.5 w.t.e. in order to deal with the rise in cases, this will remain in place (pending a review) until 31/3/26.

Quarter 1 25/26	
Theme	Numbers
Patient safety/quality	6
Worker wellbeing	12
Bullying and harassment	9
Other inappropriate attitudes and behaviours	22
Reported Negative Impact	0
Not sure*	4
Total	53

Quarter 2 25/26	
Theme	Numbers
Patient safety/quality	11
Worker wellbeing	15
Bullying and harassment	11
Other inappropriate attitudes and behaviours	31
Reported Negative Impact	0
Not sure*	2
Total	70

*On the FTSU system, staff can self-categorise *not sure* when they raise a concern

The numbers of cases are broadly in line with previous quarterly activity with worker wellbeing and inappropriate attitudes/behaviours remaining as the areas of most concern for staff.

The majority of concerns are from nursing, midwifery, and health care support staff (39), followed by clerical workers (16) and medical staff (13). There are several groups that are underrepresented, including estates and facilities, professional and technical, and allied health care professionals.

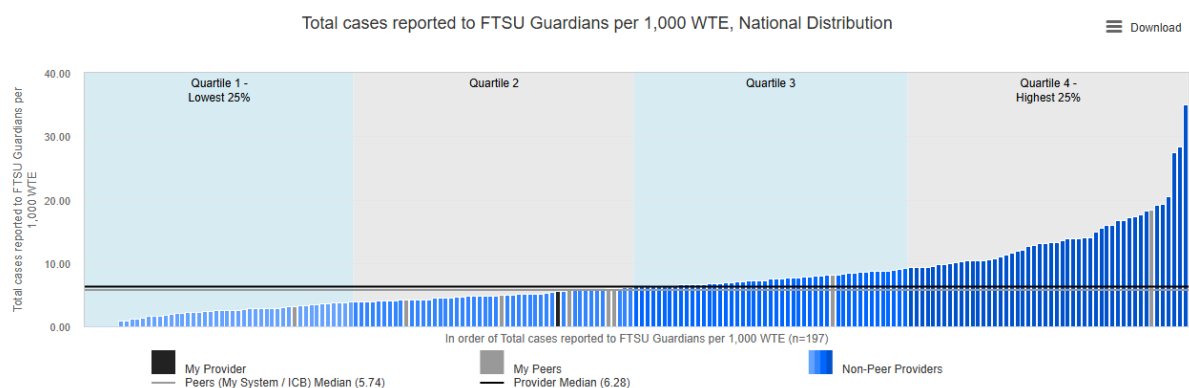
Twenty-four concerns were raised anonymously this is a significant increase on quarter 3 & 4 where there were four anonymous concerns. This may be partly due to the move to an online system where it is easier to remain anonymous and a reluctance to share personal information for fear of reprisals.

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Concerns by CSU/Corporate Area

CSU	Number of Concerns
Abdominal Medicine and Surgery	8
Adult Critical Care	7
Cardiorespiratory	8
Chapel Allerton	3
Chief Nurse	1
Chief Operating Officer	2
Children's	1
DIT	4
Estates and Facilities	5
Head & Neck	6
HR & OD	1
Oncology	4
Neurosciences	2
Leeds Dental Institute	2
MMPS	3
Outpatients	10
Pathology	12
Research and Innovation	11
Radiology	5
Theatres and Anaesthetics	4
Trauma Related Services	2
Urgent Care	3
Women's	9
Not declared	8

Nationally, the latest quarters figures for number of concerns raised with FTSUG was quarter 4 24/25. The chart below shows that the Trust was in quartile two for numbers of concerns raised.



4. Themes

Inappropriate attitudes and behaviours is now the most prevalent theme for concerns raised, this is coupled with a range of concerns that relate to employee relations issues

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including delays in process and lack of communication; a lack of communication from managers around service changes and new ways of working and incivility and rudeness from colleagues all feature as an aspect of concerns raised.

Staff continue to describe a feeling that lines of communication have deteriorated, citing timeliness of communication, depth of decision making and a lack of two-way feedback. In some cases this has led to staff believing that their concerns are not being heard and as a result are seeking to raise these issues elsewhere.

5. Activity to foster a positive culture where staff feel confident to speak up and that their voice will be heard.

The FTSUG has attended internal sessions to promote the service and address the barriers to speaking up, including,

- Bespoke training with Chapel Allerton staff
- Bespoke training for Women's CSU
- Bespoke training for Urgent Care CSU
- Finance team time out session
- Leeds Dental Institute away day
- Pathology specialty Drs induction session
- Awareness sessions for endoscopy staff
- Clinical and Health Psychology away day

6. Champions Infrastructure

The development of a network of champions remains a central part of the strategy to develop a culture of speaking up, listening up and following up across the organisation.

The roll out of the speaking up framework across the organisation has seen an increase in the numbers of champions and several CSUs have identified lead champions.

Refresher training has now been developed as part of a rolling programme for champions, coupled with a dedicated Teams channel and a planned face to face development session on 29 October 2025.

7. Triangulation

The FTSUG now attends the monthly HR performance review huddles where CSU RAG ratings are discussed. This provides a flag for areas where workforce metrics are of concern and highlights areas where focus on staffs' ability to speak up may be an issue.

The FTSUG data, including numbers of open cases, numbers of champions, and training completions are included within the wider metrics to provide triangulation.

8. Forward Plans

- Review of training and champion model
- Consider any learning from Thirlwall inquiry/report
- Continue to build our champion network and speaking up framework
- Await changes to national picture following integration of NGO with NHSE
- Triangulation of FTSU data with patient safety and quality metrics

9. Financial Implications

The work required to deliver the actions identified in this paper are to be achieved within existing resources.

10. Risk

The contents of this report do not significantly impact the risks identified on page one of this report.

It is considered that the FTSU arrangements are within the risk appetite and no specific risks need to be captured on the risk register.

The risk relating to the capacity of the FTSUG has been resolved on the HR risk register as the hours of the Guardian have been increased until 31 March 2026.

11. Communication and Involvement

There is a regular newsletter in place to all champions for dissemination within their work areas.

12. Equality Analysis

Processes are in place to capture protected characteristic data for individuals raising concerns. This demographic information is captured in the Feedback Part A form sent to everyone raising a concern through the Guardian's office. The data is used at a national level to inform trends. Those completing it routinely populate the relevant demographic questions but in common with our Equality and Diversity teams experience, there is a considerable number of those contacted who do not respond.

13. Improving Health Equity

The ability for staff to raise concerns that lead to improvements in service provision and dissemination of good practice in relation to patient safety and staff wellbeing are

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central to improving the health of those that use the service that the Trust provides and for our staff.

14. Publication Under Freedom of Information Act

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

15. Recommendation

The Board is asked to accept the content of this report, noting the number and type of FTSU cases and associated themes and the ongoing activity to reduce barriers to speaking up.