



**Manchester University**  
NHS Foundation Trust

# **Freedom to Speak Up Annual Report**

**April 1<sup>st</sup> 2019 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020**

## Foreword

As the Freedom to Speak Up Guardian Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust (MFT) I am proud to present our annual report on the progress we have been making in 2019 – 2020 to ensure that all our colleagues across MFT feel confident to speak up. Freedom to Speak Up (F2SU) is a national programme that supports staff, students, governors and patients raise concerns. Good speaking up arrangements help to protect patients and improve the working experience of NHS workers.



I am passionate about supporting colleagues, having had a career in the NHS for over 40 years I have seen the impact when colleagues feel they are unable to share their concerns, feel bullied or intimidated. I want everyone at MFT to know how to raise concerns and to feel safe when they do so. All my life I have supported someone close to me who has often not had a voice because of their disability, I want to empower everyone to have a voice and to be heard. In this role I have spoken to lots of people here at MFT, it has been a privilege to hear their stories and work with them to help the organisation build a culture of speaking up. It has been fantastic to see how the Freedom to Speak Up Champions role is being embedded across the Trust and I am proud of the work that they do to support colleagues. A highlight this year was hosting the National Guardian during Freedom to Speak Up Month in October. It was great to have the National Guardian share her aspirations for the Freedom to Speak Up programme across the NHS with colleagues at MFT and other Guardians across the North West.

Covid-19 has had a major impact on all of us, I am so proud of what the NHS has achieved together but I am also aware of the toll this has had on colleagues. We have worked hard to support all colleagues raise their concerns, whether it is access to PPE, social distancing or coping with the pressures. The work we led with the Nightingale Hospital North West showed the strength of our Freedom to Speak Up Programme, but also how important it is for colleagues to be able to speak up and be heard.

Whilst we have made progress in 2019/20 there is still much more to be done. We need to build North Manchester General Hospital's Freedom to Speak Up programme into MFT's and to ensure that the model we have in place is accessible to all colleague, patients, governors and students across MFT. It will be another busy year but the progress we have made this year put us in a strong place to rise to the challenge.

David Cain  
Freedom to Speak Up Guardian



## 1. Introduction

This report provides details of all the activity that took place in 2019/20 across the Trust to deliver MFT's commitment to Freedom to Speak Up. The report provides the details of the number of contacts within the Freedom to Speak Up Programme and the changes we have made throughout the year as part of our philosophy to continually improve.

## 2. Performance Data

### 2.1 Number of Cases raised with the Freedom to Speak up Guardian or Champions

In the last year 69 cases were reported by the Freedom to Speak Up (F2SU) Guardian or Champions. This is down from last year, where 84 cases were raised. The 84 cases were from a reporting cycle of 18 months, as no previous F2SU report had been produced; even with this discrepancy there is a slight reduction in cases raised. It is notable that cases rise after significant Trust wide communication; most recently, a rise in cases has been seen in quarter one of 2020-21 following an all staff Trust wide awareness email. MFT will continue to make sure that all staff can access the F2SU Programme and a working group has been established to develop a communication and engagement kit for champions. It is also worth noting that for consistency the Trust is now reporting cases based on their reported date, the date the champion or guardian raised the issue in the internal reporting system. This clarification of reporting will ensure consistency of quarterly reports and annual reports.

	<b>Total number of cases</b>	<b>Number of Cases Raised Anonymously</b>	<b>Cases included an element of Patient Safety</b>	<b>Cases included an element of bullying / harassment</b>
<b>April - June</b>	26	16	4	11
<b>July - September</b>	11	7	2	5
<b>October - December</b>	13	0	4	8
<b>January - March</b>	19	0	6	16
<b>Total</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>40</b>

58% of the cases raised had an element of bullying and harassment. This is above the national figure for 2018/19 of 41% of all cases featuring bullying and harassment. It should be noted that the National Guardians Office have not yet issued the analysis of cases for the same period, so the comparison is against different reporting years. 23% of the cases included an element of patient safety compared to nationally was 29% of cases.

The Trust reviewed mid-year how it records cases raised anonymously, the Trust has reported all cases where staff did not want their names shared as part of the case being raised as anonymous, after feedback from the National Guardian that it was only cases where the Guardian or Champion did not know the name that should be reported as anonymous. The change in this reporting can be seen between quarter two and quarter three.

## 2.2 Key Performance Indicators

The Trust has set 2 key performance indicators for the Freedom to Speak Up Programme.

Performance Measures					
Indicator	1st October 2017 to 1st October 2018	1st October 2018 to 31st March 2019	1st April 2019 – 31st March 2020	RAG	Comments
Increase in number of people raising a concern through the F2SU Programme	7	77	69		The number of cases raised with the F2SU Guardian and Champions has slightly dropped. Communicating the role of the Guardian and Champion is required on an ongoing basis.
Staff reporting a positive result for the staff survey question – 18 b -I would feel secure raising concerns about unsafe clinical practice	CMFT 2017 – 69% UHSM 2017 – 67%	70.9%	68.7%		Whilst this is not a perfect measurement as there are many factors that would influence how staff feel about raising unsafe clinical practice, the F2SU programme should support an improvement in this score

The National Guardian's Office produces an annual F2SU Index Report based on the combined results of four staff survey questions (17a, 17b, 18a and 18b). The 2020 Index is based on the 2019 Staff Survey results. Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust's index result is 78.1%, which correlates with the national average of 78.7%.

## 3. Roles & Responsibilities

### 3.1 Leadership Roles at MFT

In 2018 MFT reviewed the roles and responsibilities for the Freedom to Speak Up Programme.





David Cain

Freedom to Speak  
Up Guardian

The Guardian's Role is to:

- Protect patient safety and the quality of care
- Improve the experience of workers
- Promote learning and improvement

By ensuring that:

- Workers are supported in speaking up
  - Barriers to speaking up are addressed
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Ivan Bennett

Non-Executive  
Champion

The Non-Executive Champion's role is to:

- Hold the CEO, Executive F2SU lead and the board to account for implementing the speaking up strategy.
  - Role-model high standards of conduct around F2SU
  - Act as an alternative source of advice and support for the F2SU Guardian
  - Oversee speaking up concerns regarding board members
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Gill Heaton

Executive  
Champion

Deputy Chief  
Executive

The Executive Champion's role is to

- Ensure the F2SU Guardian role has been implemented
  - Ensure that the F2SU Guardian has adequate resources
  - Ensure that a sample of speaking up cases have been quality assured
  - Conduct an annual review of the programme
  - Provide the board with a variety of assurance about the effectiveness of the trusts strategy, policy and process
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F2SU Champions

MFT Colleagues

The F2SU Champions' roles are to

- To act as a local resource to support staff who raise concerns
- To ensure that any safety issues are raised appropriately and seek assurance that relevant/appropriate action has been taken and feedback is given to the member of staff who raised it.
- To safeguard the interests of the individual raising a concern, ensuring that there are no repercussions for them either immediately or in the longer term, as appropriate.



## 3.2 Freedom to Speak Up Champions



Across the organisation Champions support the F2SU Guardian in ensuring that staff are aware of and have easy access to F2SU if they need to raise a concern. This year saw the first full year of Champions being in place and has resulted in closer links with the operational management of the organisation enabling a continuous learning cycle.

The Champions Network Meetings, chaired by the F2SU Guardian, provide regular opportunities for practice sharing and Champion development. The Champions work as a network across the organisation to promote the Freedom to Speak Up Programme, talk to colleagues and support people to raise concerns.

10 Champions have been recruited and trained in 2019-20 to give further coverage across the organisation. From our learning over the year it has become obvious that different people feel comfortable

raising concerns to different Champions. Therefore in 2020-21 we will be doing targeted recruitment at particular bands, job roles and protected characteristic groups where Champions are currently underrepresented to ensure that as many people raising concerns as possible have a Champion they feel comfortable approaching. We will also be engaging with the strategic priorities in the NHS People Plan to ensure that Guardians and Champions are well linked into the Trust's work on the Workforce Race Equality Standard.



## 4. Working with the National Guardians Office

This year we have forged closer links with the National Guardian's Office through the North West Guardians Network to enable a flow of best practice from a local to a national level.

October 2019 saw the return of Speak Up Month and this year the Trust marked the occasion with Trust-wide communications and a visit from the National Guardian Dr Henrietta Hughes. Dr Henrietta Hughes gave a presentation on Freedom to Speak Up to an audience of Trust staff, followed by a private question and answer session for our Champions. The event was well received by staff and the Champions and resulted in greater engagement in the Freedom to Speak Up Programme.

## 5. Annual Review

In 2018-19 the Trust committed to reviewing the current Freedom to Speak Up Programme to assess the impact of the Programme and ensure that opportunities for improvement were taken. This review took place in quarter 3 of 2019-20 and engaged with the Champions, F2SU Guardian, and F2SU management team, in addition to reviewing national best practice.

The review found that MFT has employed a robust F2SU model, that could be further strengthened through the addition of site-based Deputy F2SU Guardian roles. This amendment to the model and its operational feasibility will be further explored in 2020. The review found that the Programme's areas of strength were governance, Champion support and communications. The review identified opportunities for MFT to come into line with national best practice in the areas of feedback, recording systems and Champion development. These opportunities for improvement have been built into the 2020-21 action plan.

## 6. Covid-19 and the Nightingale Hospital North West

In quarter 4 of 2019-20 the national response to the Covid-19 pandemic began. This had an impact on Freedom to Speak Up on two fronts: the themes of concerns raised and the establishment of Freedom to Speak Up Governance at the Nightingale Hospital North West.

The themes for concerns raised during the beginning of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic changed to reflect key national issues such as availability of appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE).

The Nightingale Hospital North West, whilst under MFT's Freedom to Speak Up governance, gave the opportunity to collaborate with other organisations across Greater Manchester and the North West. A Lead Champion for the Hospital was identified from the Greater Manchester Health & Social Care Partnership, and two Champions redeployed from MFT also supported staff on site to raise concerns. They all reported into MFT's F2SU Guardian, with weekly reporting to monitor the fast-moving situation. As the Nightingale Hospital North West remained open until June 2020 more detail will be given in the annual report for 2020-21.

## 7. Key Actions for 2020-21

Whilst there has been a considerable amount of work undertaken in 2019-2020 we believe there is more that needs to be done to further embed the Freedom to Speak Up Programme across the whole Trust. Our commitment is in the next 12 months to:

Actions	When
Further exploration of adaptation of the current model to include site-based Deputy F2SU Guardian roles.	December 2020
Engage with the North Manchester General Hospital F2SU Team to ensure smooth transition on April 1 <sup>st</sup> 2021.	August 2020 – March 2021
Align with the NHS People Plan to ensure Guardian and Champions are linked into the Trust's Workforce Race Equality Standard metrics and action plan.	December 2020
Further examine improvements that can be made to the F2SU recording system.	September 2020
Establish a systematic method of asking for feedback from people who have used F2SU to enable a local information source for continuous improvement.	December 2020
Recruit additional Champions focusing on key areas where Champions are under-represented.	December 2020
Introduce a programme of Champion development days to grow their skill sets.	October 2020
Deliver a communications and resources toolkit to develop staff awareness.	Ongoing
Continue to work with the National Guardians Office to ensure that MFT learns from national best practice.	Ongoing



## **8. Conclusion**

The Trust's Freedom to Speak Up Programme continues to build and develop. At the end of the reporting period for this report, the full impact of COVID-19 pandemic was felt, and the Trust has built the Programme into its emergency response and into the Nightingale Hospital. The challenges for 2020-21 will be to maintain the momentum built over the last two years, and support the new culture development lead by the Group Deputy CEO and Group Executive Director of Workforce & Corporate Business to ensure MFT encourages a speaking up culture, whilst reflecting the changing footprint of MFT in a Freedom to Speak Up model that will ensure sustainable growth.