



**Manchester University**

NHS Foundation Trust



# **Freedom to Speak Up Annual Report**

**April 1<sup>st</sup> 2022 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023**

## **1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Board of Directors with an overview of the work of the Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust (MFT) Freedom to Speak Up (FTSU) Team over the period 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023.

## **2. Background**

- 2.1 The roles of FTSU Guardians and the NGO were established in 2016 following events at Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust and the subsequent public inquiry by Sir Robert Francis QC.
- 2.2 FTSU Guardians help protect patient safety and the quality of care, improve the experience of workers, and promote learning and improvement. They do this by ensuring that workers are supported in speaking up and that issues raised are used as opportunities for learning and improvement. They work within their organisations to help ensure that barriers to speaking up are addressed and a positive culture of speaking up is fostered.

## **3. Outline of Roles / Responsibilities for FTSU**

- 3.1 MFT has 1.1 WTE FTSU Guardians who work impartially and independently and have been supported throughout 2022-23 by the Senior Lead for FTSU and Group Deputy Chief Executive, Gill Heaton. A Non-Executive Lead also supports the program; Gaurav Batra has held this position during 2022-23. The Director of Corporate Workforce, Nick Bailey provides formal leadership to the FTSU Guardian.
- 3.3 The FTSU Guardian is also supported by a network of FTSU champions. The role of FTSU champions is voluntary and appointees carry out this important work alongside their substantive posts. Their role is to raise awareness of FTSU by being visible and accessible, role modelling the values and behaviours associated with speaking up and listening up, provide signposting and support to individuals who need to raise concerns and to escalate issues that must be acted on involving safety or safeguarding.
- 3.4 The NGO recommends a clear distinction between the roles of the Champion and Guardian and that “only FTSU Guardian’s, having received National Guardian’s Office training and registered on the NGO’s public directory, should handle [speaking up] cases”.

## **4. Champion Expansion & Development**

- 4.1 During 2022-23, there has been ongoing expansion of the FTSU network of FTSU Champions across MFT. There are now 67 Champions accessible to

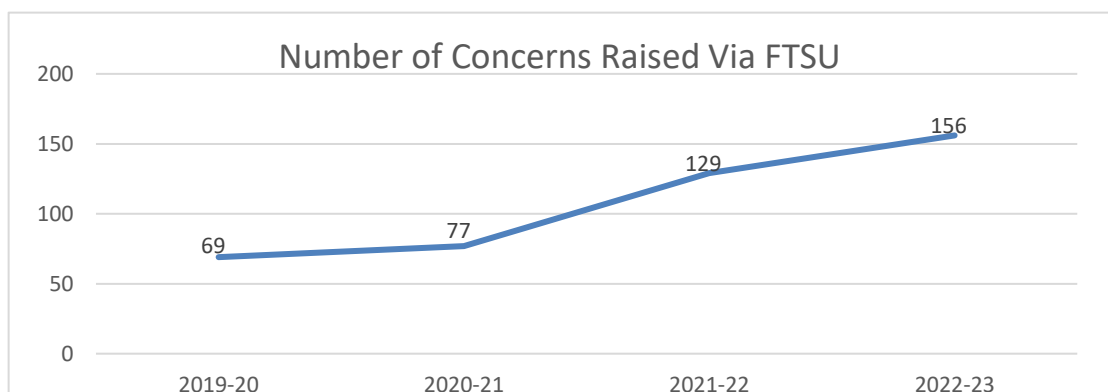
support staff. The following table provides information in relation to location of Champions. Further applications continue to be received and work will be ongoing to ensure parity of Staff : Champion ratios across each organisational area, with a continued aspiration that areas will have a least 1 champion per 250 staff by 2024. Staff are informed they can contact any Champion across MFT regardless of role or location.

Organisational Area	Number of Champions	Ratio of Champions to Staff
Corporate/R&I	10	1: 343
CSS	14	1: 340
Eye/Dental	3	1: 279
LCO	5	1: 590
MRI	11	1: 344
NMGH	5 (includes Jo Williamson, FTSU Guardian, 0.1 WTE)	1: 355
RMCH	4	1: 629
SMH	4	1: 710
WTWA	11	1: 465

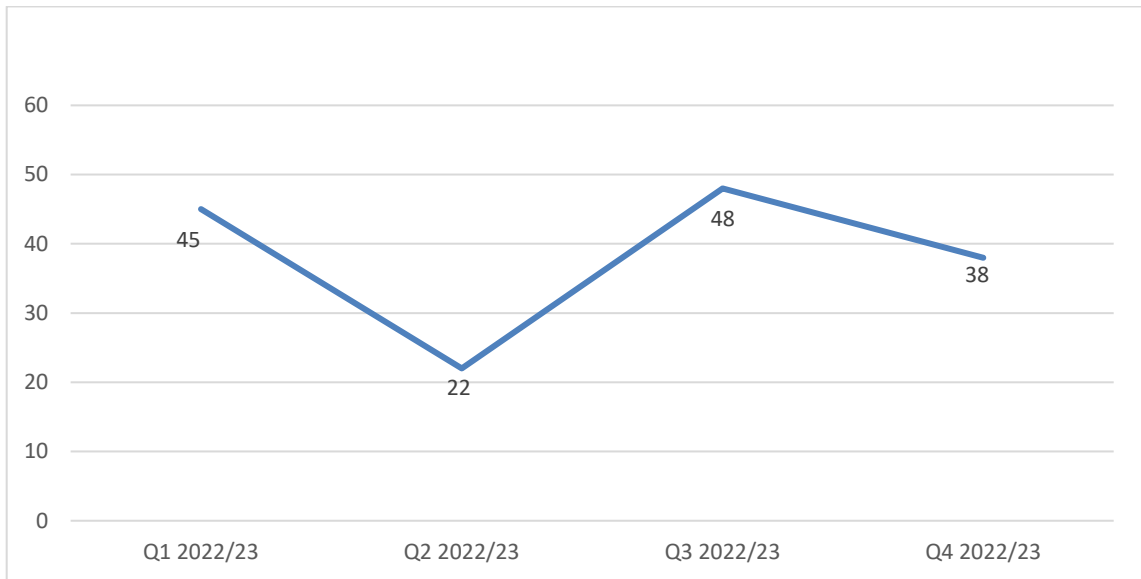
4.3 To support champions in having FTSU Conversations, there is a rolling programme of bespoke training which has been arranged with Organisational Development. Sessions focus on ‘Managing Expectations’, ‘Coaching & Listening’ and ‘Courageous Conversations’. The champions have also been offered training from the EDI team in how to support staff report hate crime.

**5. Assessment of Cases raised via FTSU.**

5.1 During 2022-23, there has been an increase in the number of concerns raised via FTSU. The graph below shows that 156 concerns were reported to the FTSU Team during this period. Comparison numbers from previous years are also provided:

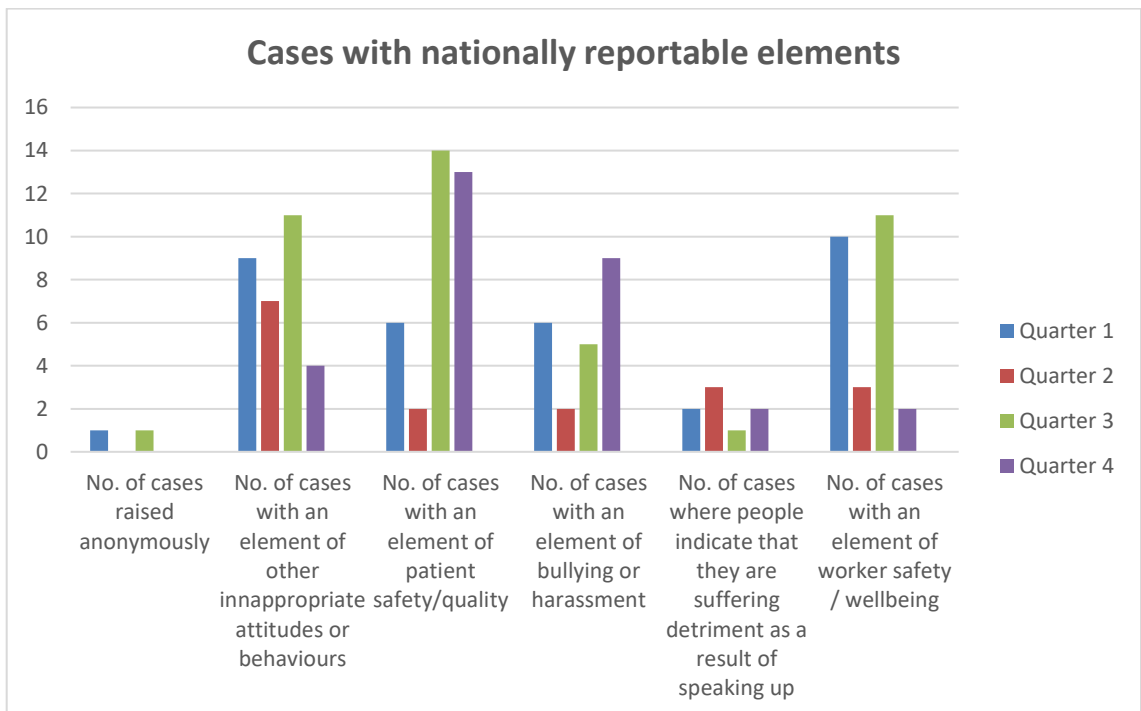


5.2 The graph below illustrates the number of concerns which were reported to FTSU each quarter during 2022/23:



5.3 There is a reduction in contacts received by FTSU during Q2 (22 contacts). This is attributed to Hive Go-Live. Until the launch date, the number of cases was showing a similar upwards trend, but between 8<sup>th</sup> September and 30<sup>th</sup> September only one concern was raised to FTSU.

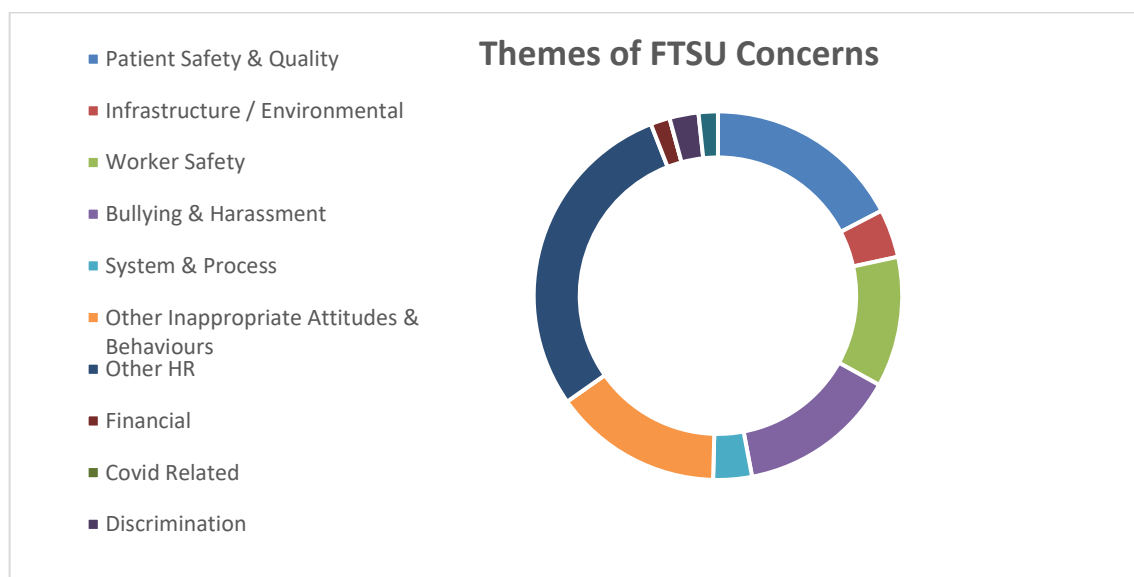
5.3 The graph below illustrates the data for the nationally reportable elements of the cases raised to FTSU each quarter at MFT during 2022/2023:



5.4 36% (56) of the FTSU cases raised at MFT had an element of bullying and

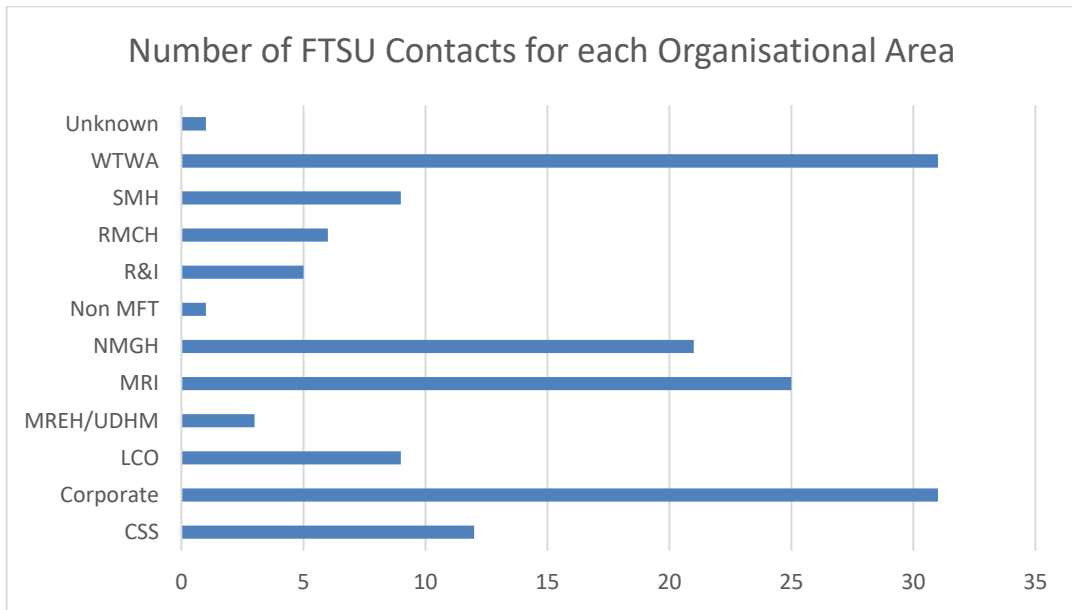
harassment.

- 5.6 23% (30) of the cases included an element of patient safety. Themes of concerns which have been raised via FTSU at MFT have included cultures impacting on patient safety, provision of suitable discharge placements and environments for complex CAHMS patients, staffing levels and skill mix, staff training and development, intensity of work and volume of patients impacting on levels of care which can be provided, triage waiting times in ED, difficulties referring to other specialties, environmental issues, nutrition and hydration issues, waiting times for adults with learning difficulties to receive specialist dental treatment, out of date IT equipment, issues with medical devices and isolated concerns related to clinical management. All concerns have been escalated to the relevant senior teams.
- 5.7 14% (22) of cases raised to FTSU at MFT had an element of worker safety / wellbeing. This has largely been related to staffing and workloads impacting staff morale and wellbeing. There have also been issues raised related to organisation of rotas, temperature of working environments and working with a risk of anger / violence from patients and visitors.
- 5.8 The following chart demonstrates the themes for all the concerns raised via FTSU during 2022/23 (note that each case may have multiple themes):

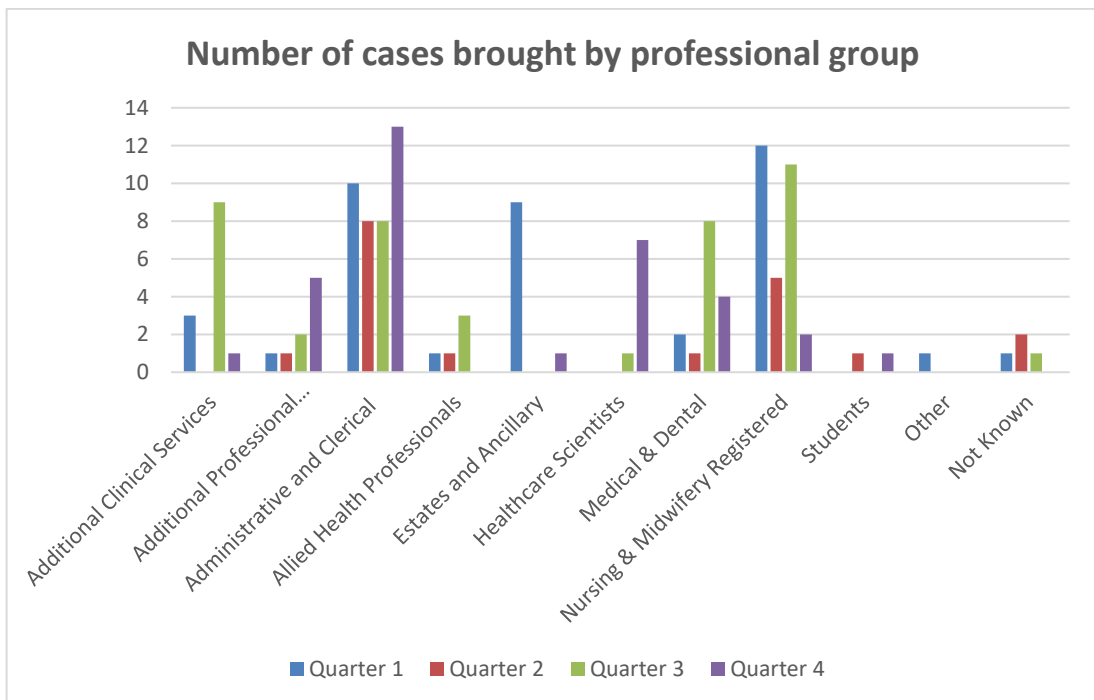


- 5.9 The FTSU Guardian escalates and reports themes of concerns raised to Senior Leadership Teams across the Trust and to the Group Daily Patient Safety Huddle to help triangulation of themes.

5.10 The following chart illustrated where contacts have been made across MFT.



5.11 The following graph illustrates that cases have been across a wide spread of professional groups during 2022/23. Registered Nursing & Midwifery Staff and Administrative & Clerical Workers make up the groups who have contacted FTSU more frequently.



5.12 There are many routes to speaking up at MFT and FTSU should be viewed as an alternative route for when the usual means of raising concerns are too challenging or have failed. The following reasons are cited by staff as being barriers to them raising concerns using the usual routes of escalation:

- Fear of detriment – examples have included worry about the consequences for their employment, fear of being treated differently, fear of bullying behaviours getting worse.
- A perception of concerns not being listened to or welcomed previously.
- Fear of exposing protected characteristics
- Concerns have been raised previously but there has been no satisfactory response or concerns are ongoing

Fear and futility have been reported in the National Guardian's Office Annual report 2021-22 as being the main reasons people stay silent and it is essential that our managers and leaders respond to concerns with a growth mindset, one where concerns are welcomed and seen as an opportunity for learning and improvement. People who raise concerns should routinely be informed as to how the matter has been handled, while respecting confidentiality as needed.

## **6. FTSU User Feedback**

6.1 FTSU request feedback from individuals after a case has been closed. Individuals can now complete the questionnaire anonymously. The responses to one question; "Given your experience of speaking up, would you speak up again?" are required to be collected for the NGO. 75% of responders answered "yes" to this question, 11% of responders answered "maybe" and 14% answered "no" during 2022/23.

6.2 As part of the feedback, FTSU asks responders to rate how satisfied they were with the service from the FTSU team. The rating scale uses numbers from 0 (very unsatisfied) to 10 (very satisfied). The average response was 9.4 (range 1-10)

6.3 Below provides an example of some of the qualitative comments received:

"Safe listening space that empowered me to take next steps that I felt were right"

"Supportive and helped me to explore options to manage my concern without feeling any pressure...helped me to calm my initial frustration and upset at the situation"

"Non-judgemental, showed empathy and support in a safe environment"

“The support was welcome, and the guardian was very compassionate and understanding of the issues raised. The response from the leadership team was reassuring”

“Felt supported with practical advice”

“The Guardian worked with me to aim for a solution/raising the issue to somebody I felt comfortable speaking to in my place of work”

“FTSU was easy to access, there was a quick response from my FTSU Champion who provided a lot of reassurance and support”

“FTSU has provided incredible support to me and my team and worked so hard to make my voice heard, so much that it was finally heard”

6.4 Where people had answered “No” or “Maybe” to the question as to whether they would speak up again, the themes have included:

- being dissatisfied with the response following the investigation into the concern (issues not felt to have been addressed, missing the point, investigation not felt to have been handled appropriately).
- confidentiality not being maintained during the escalation of the concern.
- The process of feedback about how the concern has been handled has taken too long.

These themes highlight the importance of following up and providing feedback in a timely and frequent way during the process of investigation and the importance of clear communication and handling of any investigation once it has passed from FTSU to ensure that people feel the issues they raise have been addressed appropriately. It is important to also provide clarity where it may become inadvertently clear who has spoken up due to the detail of the issue.

## **7. FTSU Policy, Guidance, and Reflection and Planning Tool**

7.1 Together with NHS England, the National Guardian’s Office has published its new and updated national Freedom to Speak Up Policy.

7.2 NHS England state that organisations should adopt this policy, adding their own local information where applicable to ensure those who work in the NHS know how to speak up and what will happen when they do. It is designed to be inclusive and support resolution by managers wherever possible.

7.3 To align with the recommendation, the existing MFT “Raising Concerns At Work and Whistleblowing Policy” is in the process of being amended to reflect the changes to the new national policy.

7.4 The Freedom to Speak Up Guidance published in 2022 will help leaders turn the policy into a healthy and supportive Speak Up, Listen Up and Follow Up culture.



- 7.5 The guide is designed to be used by any senior team or board in any organisation that delivers NHS commissioned services. This audience has been chosen because it is the behaviour of senior leaders that has the biggest impact on organisational culture and behaviours.
- 7.6 The accompanying reflection tool is designed to identify strengths and any gaps and review the FTSU arrangements against the guide. It sets out statements for reflections designed for people in the Board or Senior Leadership Team. It also helps to identify the high-level actions which will be taken to develop FTSU arrangements to help the FTSU Guardian and senior lead for FTSU conduct more detailed planning.
- 7.7 NHSE is asking all trust boards to be able to evidence by the end of January 2024:
- An update to their local Freedom to Speak Up policy to reflect the new national policy template.
  - Results of their organisation's assessment of its FTSU arrangements against the revised guidance
  - Assurance that it is on track implementing its latest FTSI improvement plan.
- 7.8 The reflection tool will be utilised at MFT to provide a gap analysis and contribute to an ongoing development plan.

## **8. FTSU eLearning**

- 8.1 'Speak Up' eLearning has been part of MFT Mandatory training since September 2022. To date, 11,840 staff have now completed this training.
- 8.2 'Listen Up' and 'Follow Up' eLearning is available via the MFT Learning hub. These are not currently part of mandatory training and uptake has been very low.
- 8.3 'Listen Up' eLearning is recommended to be completed by any person in a line management role. The purpose of this training is to focus on listening to concerns and understanding the barriers to speaking up. To date
- 8.4 'Follow Up' is the final eLearning module and completes the full package of training developed by HEE and the National Guardian's Office (NGO) – Speak Up, Listen Up & Follow Up. This final module aims to promote a consistent and effective Freedom to Speak Up culture across the system which enables workers to speak up and be confident they will be listened to and action taken.
- 8.5 The National Guardian's Office expects that senior leaders (including executive and non-executive directors, lay members and governors) will complete all three modules 'Speak Up', 'Listen Up' and 'Follow Up'.

- 8.6 It is recognised that while the introduction of mandatory training in speaking up is a positive step forwards in embedding a speaking up culture, this will not change culture. Support and follow up for staff when they speak up is essential to building a positive and inclusive speaking up culture, one where people feel psychologically safe to speak up. There has been low uptake of 'listen up' training by managers and leaders across MFT. Further work will be done to explore the best way of improving the uptake of this training, including consideration of including it as part of MFT Mandatory Training.

## **9. National Guardian's Office 100 Voices Campaign**

- 9.1 An MFT case study has been written and shared with the NGO and this was published as part of their 100 Voices Campaign. "[Speaking Up Improves Health and Safety and Team Morale](#)" is a great demonstration of the positive action which can happen when staff speak up about their place of work and the difference it can make.

## **10. Freedom to Speak Up Month 2022**

- 10.1 Freedom to Speak Up Month in October provided an opportunity to raise awareness of how much we value speaking up at MFT. This year's theme was 'Freedom to Speak Up for Everyone' with each week having specific focus. Added to the weekly themes, staff were invited to take part in 'Wear Green Wednesdays' throughout October to show their visible support for Freedom to Speak Up. Stories from some of the FTSU Champions were shared and focused on why they volunteer to do this role. A video was circulated via trust-wide comms and twitter showing Gill Heaton, FTSU Exec Lead talking about why speaking up is important at MFT. The video can be viewed via this link: <https://www.veed.io/view/eab8270a-b533-4d5f-8575-f85f5a2302b4/showcase?renderId=85ef8e53-ce48-43fb-a1a0-cac896c98030>
- 10.2 The theme during week 1 was #SpeakUpforSafety. This highlighted the importance of speaking up about anything that is impacting on patient or staff safety, along with the importance of staff feeling psychologically safe to speak up. 'Speak Up' and 'Listen Up' eLearning was promoted during this week and a case example was shared demonstrating the outcomes following an MFT staff member speaking up about staffing levels, equipment issues and health and safety.
- 10.3 Week 2 focused on #SpeakUpforCivility. This was about connecting with colleagues and being civil to those around us. The following message from Civility Saves Lives was promoted: "Almost all excellence in healthcare is dependent on teams, and teams work best when all members feel safe and have a voice". To support FTSU month, the OD team ran 8 Civility Workshops throughout October, open to all staff across MFT. There were 177 places offered and 88 people attended the sessions. The message during week 2 also focused on being kind to ourselves. Links to Health and Wellbeing support and resources at MFT was shared via Trust-wide comms.

- 10.4 #SpeakUpforInclusion during week 3 focused on promoting inclusion and breaking down barriers so everyone feels valued and safe to speak up and be heard. The Be.Inclusive campaign at MFT was promoted via Trust-wide Comms and Twitter. Information about the support available from Staff Networks was also shared.
- 10.5 Week 4 brought the themes together for #SpeakUpforEveryone. This summarised the activities during the month and information was shared related to the National Guardians' office. A video was circulated via Trust Comms and twitter. This showed John Osuagwu speaking about his role as a FTSU champion and why it's important that people feel able to speak up. This can be viewed via the following link:  
[MFT Freedom to Speak Up - John.mp4 on Vimeo](#)
- 10.6 Freedom to Speak Up month coincided with Black History Month. A virtual session was held within the LCO to bring the two campaigns together organised by the LCO FTSU Champions. FTSU Guardian, Jo Williamson, also attended the Trust's Black History Month Workshop on 27<sup>th</sup> October to present 'Freedom to Speak Up as a Positive Action' and a FTSU stall was set up during the 'This is me' exhibition.
- 10.7 Throughout the month there was increased visibility of FTSU during walk rounds and listening events.



## 11. Conclusion

- 11.1 The MFT FTSU team has continue to expand over the past year with a diverse network of champions supporting the 1.1 WTE FTSU Guardians across MFT.

The number of cases raised with FTSU has continued to increase. The new FTSU policy supports staff and, along with mandated Speak Up training for all staff, this helps to support the development of a speaking up culture. Moving forward, embedding the listening up and following up aspects will be essential in ensuring staff can speak up without fear and knowing their concerns have been used for learning and improvement.