Freedom to Speak Up self-review tool for NHS trusts and foundation trusts

April 2019
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How to use this tool

Effective speaking up arrangements help to protect patients and improve the experience of NHS workers. Having a healthy speaking up culture is evidence of a well-led trust.

NHS Improvement and the National Guardian's Office have published a [guide](#) setting out expectations of boards in relation to Freedom to Speak Up (FTSU) to help boards create a culture that is responsive to feedback and focused on learning and continual improvement.

This self-review tool accompanying the guide will enable boards to carry out in-depth reviews of leadership and governance arrangements in relation to FTSU and identify areas to develop and improve.

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) assesses a trust's speaking up culture during inspections under key line of enquiry (KLOE) 3 as part of the well-led question. This guide is aligned with the good practice set out in the well-led framework, which contains references to speaking up in KLOE 3 and will be shared with Inspectors as part of the CQC's assessment framework for well-led.

Completing the self-review tool and developing an improvement action plan will help trusts to evidence their commitment to embedding speaking up and help oversight bodies to evaluate how healthy a trust's speaking up culture is.

Self review indicator (Aligned to well-led KLOEs)	To what extent is this expectation being met?	What are the principal actions required for development?	How is the board assured it is meeting the expectation? Evidence
Our expectations			
Leaders are knowledgeable about FTSU			
Senior leaders are knowledgeable and up to date about FTSU and the executive and non-executive leads are aware of guidance from the National Guardian's Office.	Met		• Director of Workforce & OD Board updates • FTSUG reports to Board • Board development sessions
Senior leaders can readily articulate the trust's FTSU vision and key learning from issues that workers have spoken up about and regularly communicate the value of speaking up.	Partially met	• 6 monthly report to ME & rep. ongoing at Our Big Move briefings • Vision to be developed using focus group • Strategy/ plan to be developed	
They can provide evidence that they have a leadership strategy and development	Not met	• Culture & Leadership	

programme that emphasises the importance of learning from issues raised by people who speak up.		Programme to review vision & values & a leadership strategy	
Senior leaders can describe the part they played in creating and launching the trust's FTSU vision and strategy.	Partially met	• Board review and approval of vision and strategy • Communicating the vision and strategy at relevant meetings and staff briefings	Board reporting Board development sessions
Leaders have a structured approach to FTSU			
There is a clear FTSU vision, translated into a robust and realistic strategy that links speaking up with patient safety, staff experience and continuous improvement.	Not met	• Vision to be articulated & 19/21 strategy developed to go to the May '19 Board • Following Board sign off to be communicated via ME & Our Big Move briefing	
There is an up-to-date speaking up policy that reflects the minimum standards set out by NHS	Met		Policy published on the Intranet

Improvement.			
The FTSU strategy has been developed using a structured approach in collaboration with a range of stakeholders (including the FTSU Guardian)and it aligns with existing guidance from the National Guardian.	Not met	• Have sought out good practice elsewhere • Engagement with staff and staff groups such as the JSC to guide development of the vision and strategy	
Progress against the strategy and compliance with the policy are regularly reviewed using a range of qualitative and quantitative measures.	Partially met	FTSUG will include in the quarterly report an update on progress against the strategy	Quarterly report to the Board
Leaders actively shape the speaking up culture			
All senior leaders take an interest in the trust's speaking up culture and are proactive in developing ideas and initiatives to support speaking up.	Met		• Just Culture approach integrated into QI (quarterly strategy) • Q&R Committee regularly reviewing patient safety & critical interest reviews

			• M&M Meetings • Discussion at Board as part of development session
They can evidence that they robustly challenge themselves to improve patient safety, and develop a culture of continuous improvement, openness and honesty.	Met		*As above*
Senior leaders are visible, approachable and use a variety of methods to seek and act on feedback from workers.	Met		• Staff Survey • Monthly Pulse Survey • PE Rounds • Our Big Move briefings • In Your Shoes • MD & CN do clinical walkabouts • Staff Engagement Champions • JSC • Staff Governors • Exec/Non-Exec Buddying system
Senior leaders prioritise speaking up and work in partnership with their FTSU Guardian.	Met	FTSUG involving the NEDs responsible for speaking up	• Attendance of FTSG at Board • Attendance at forums

			• Funded time allocated • 1 to 1 with CX and DoW
Senior leaders model speaking up by acknowledging mistakes and making improvements.	Met		• Presentations at Trust forums including induction on the importance of learning from mistakes • Just culture environment • Decision Tree • Sierp meets weekly & publishes outcomes • Q&R Group review • Critical incident reports
The board can state with confidence that workers know how to speak up; do so with confidence and are treated fairly.	Partially met	Need to review how this is covered at induction Regular update at Our Move briefing	• Quarterly report from FTSUG • Board development session • FTSUG attends induction

Leaders are clear about their role and responsibilities			
The trust has a named executive and a named non-executive director responsible for speaking up and both are clear about their role and responsibility.	Met		• DoW • Cynthia Conquest (NED)
They, along with the chief executive and chair, meet regularly with the FTSU Guardian and provide appropriate advice and support.	Partially met	Consider whether regular meeting with Chair to be set up	• Regular 1 to 1 with DoW • Meetings with NED, DoW & FTSUG
Other senior leaders support the FTSU Guardian as required.	Met		Executive support for the role as required e.g. approval of increase in funded time
Leaders are confident that wider concerns are identified and managed			
Senior leaders have ensured that the FTSU Guardian has ready access to applicable sources of data to enable them to triangulate speaking up issues to proactively identify potential concerns.	Met		Requests for information provided as requested
The FTSU Guardian has ready access to senior leaders and others to enable them to escalate patient safety issues rapidly, preserving	Met		Board report provides assurance on how the FTSUG is able to fulfil their

confidence as appropriate.			role
Leaders receive assurance in a variety of forms			
Workers in all areas know, understand and support the FTSU vision, are aware of the policy and have confidence in the speaking up process.	Partially met	• Continue with comms. to promote the role • Undertake regular walkabouts • Undertake strategic initiative to promote the role • Add a questions to 2019 staff survey on awareness of the role • Regular feedback on the role and activity of the FTSUG at Our Move Briefing and staff comms channels	• Board report • Staff survey
Steps are taken to identify and remove barriers to speaking up for those in more vulnerable groups, such as Black, Asian or minority ethnic (BAME),	Not met	• Analyse of staff survey data • Discussion with	

		BAME network	
workers and agency workers			
Speak up issues that raise immediate patient safety concerns are quickly escalated	Met		Clinical risk/ governance processes
Action is taken to address evidence that workers have been victimised as a result of speaking up, regardless of seniority	Met		View of the FTSUG based on his experience in the role
Lessons learnt are shared widely both within relevant service areas and across the trust	Partially met	• Improves sharing of FTSUG issues & learning at ME, OEG & Our Big Move briefing	• Clinical governance communication • Regular sierp reports published • Regular report to the Board
The handling of speaking up issues is routinely audited to ensure that the FTSU policy is being implemented	Not met	FTSUG network in C&P developing as peer audit process	
FTSU policies and procedures are reviewed and improved using feedback from workers	Met		• Policy will be reviewed in line with Trust processes for reviewing policies
The board receives a report, at least every six months, from the FTSU Guardian.	Met		• Quarterly report to the Board

Leaders engage with all relevant stakeholders			
A diverse range of workers' views are sought, heard and acted upon to shape the culture of the organisation in relation to speaking up; these are reflected in the FTSU vision and plan.	Partially met	• Culture & Leadership Programme will systematically review this as part of the diagnostic phase	• Regular planned walkabouts by the FTSUG & attendance at forums • Clinical Governance Framework for the Trust
Issues raised via speaking up are part of the performance data discussed openly with commissioners, CQC and NHS Improvement.	Not met	• Not part of the performance data set internally or externally. Consideration to be given to how this could be included in internal performance data sets	• FTSUG reports all information to FTSUG National Guardians Office
Discussion of FTSU matters regularly takes place in the public section of the board meetings (while respecting the confidentiality of individuals).	Met		• Regular report to the public part of the Board
The trust's annual report contains high level, anonymised data relating to speaking up as well as information on actions the trust is taking to	Not met	• Will develop a report for the 18/19	

support a positive speaking up culture.		Annual Report	
Reviews and audits are shared externally to support improvement elsewhere.	Met		• FTSUG part of regional & national network
Senior leaders work openly and positively with regional FTSU Guardians and the National Guardian to continually improve the trust's speaking up culture	Met		• FTSUG supported to participate in regional & national networks & events
Senior leaders encourage their FTSU Guardians to develop bilateral relationships with regulators, inspectors and other local FTSU Guardians	Met		*As above*
Senior leaders request external improvement support when required.	Met		• Discussion at Q&R Committee as appropriate & required • Have made applications for external programmes

Leaders are focused on learning and continual improvement			
Senior leaders use speaking up as an opportunity for learning that can be embedded in future practice to deliver better quality care and improve workers' experience.	Met		- Quality strategy - Regular reports & discussion to Q&R Committee - Regular FTSUG report to the Board - Patient story to the Board
Senior leaders and the FTSU Guardian engage with other trusts to identify best practice.	Met		- FTSUG is part of regional & STP network - Executives are members of regional & national networks e.g. EoE HRD network
Executive and non-executive leads, and the FTSU Guardian, review all guidance and case review reports from the National Guardian to identify improvement possibilities.	Partially met	Trust Secretariat to circulate reports to the Board on a regular basis	
Senior leaders regularly reflect on how they respond to feedback, learn and continually	Met		Executive & non-executive performance review

improve and encourage the same throughout the organisation.			process which includes 360 feedback
The executive lead responsible for FTSU reviews the FTSU strategy annually, using a range of qualitative and quantitative measures, to assess what has been achieved and what hasn't; what the barriers have been and how they can be overcome; and whether the right indicators are being used to measure success.	Partially met	• Working towards a systematic annual review process	• DoW report to the Board
The FTSU policy and process is reviewed annually to check they are fit for purpose and realistic; up to date; and takes account of feedback from workers who have used them.	Met		• Policy has a review date & is published on the Intranet
A sample of cases is quality assured to ensure: • the investigation process is of high quality; that outcomes and recommendations are reasonable and that the impact of change is being measured • workers are thanked for speaking up, are kept up to date though out the investigation	Not met	• Consideration will be given to developing a quality assurance process for the process – possible link with the peer review process being developed by FTSUG	

and are told of the outcome • Investigations are independent, fair and objective; recommendations are designed to promote patient safety and learning; and change will be monitored			
Positive outcomes from speaking up cases are promoted and as a result workers are more confident to speak up.	Partially met	• FTSUG to discuss with clinical governance leads a regular update in their written comms on sharing the learning from incidents etc • FTSUG to feedback in an anonymised way outcomes from cases through appropriate communication channels.	• FTSUG regular report to the Board

Individual responsibilities

Chief executive and chair

The chief executive is responsible for appointing the FTSU Guardian.	Partially met	• The DoW fulfils this responsibility	
The chief executive is accountable for ensuring that FTSU arrangements meet the needs of the workers in their trust.	Met		• DoW & FTSUG regular report to the Board • Regular meetings
The chief executive and chair are responsible for ensuring the annual report contains information about FTSU.	Met	• 18/19 Annual Report will include a section on FTSUG	
The chief executive and chair are responsible for ensuring the trust is engaged with both the regional Guardian network and the National Guardian's Office.	Met		
Both the chief executive and chair are key sources of advice and support for their FTSU Guardian and meet with them regularly.	Met		• 1 to 1s with CX • Regular report to the Board
Executive lead for FTSU			

Ensuring they are aware of latest guidance from National Guardian's Office.	Met		
Overseeing the creation of the FTSU vision and strategy.	Met		
Ensuring the FTSU Guardian role has been implemented, using a fair recruitment process in accordance with the example job description and other guidance published by the National Guardian.	Met		
Ensuring that the FTSU Guardian has a suitable amount of ring fenced time and other resources and there is cover for planned and unplanned absence.	Met		• Recently increased time commitment

Ensuring that a sample of speaking up cases have been quality assured.	Not met	*See previous section*	
Conducting an annual review of the strategy, policy and process.	Met		
Operationalising the learning derived from speaking up issues.	Partially met	• Improvements in sharing the learning needed in order to enable them to be operationalised	
Ensuring allegations of detriment are promptly and fairly investigated and acted on.	Met		Perspective of the FTSUG
Providing the board with a variety of assurance about the effectiveness of the trusts strategy, policy and process.	Met		• DoW report to the Board • Staff survey results
Non-executive lead for FTSU			
Ensuring they are aware of latest guidance from National Guardian's Office.	• New NED has just taken up post		
Holding the chief executive, executive FTSU lead and the board to account for implementing the speaking up strategy	Partially met (as new in post and still in induction)	Induction is in progress which will include the expectation &	• Keeping up to date on guidance from FTSUG office • Review self-

		responsibilities of the role	• assessment • Discussion on the role & responsibilities as part of induction
Robustly challenge the board to reflect on whether it could do more to create a culture responsive to feedback and focused on learning and continual improvement.	In induction period to the role		
Role-modelling high standards of conduct around FTSU.	Met		• Met wutg FTSUG as part of induction • Regular meetings & offering support as needed
Acting as an alternative source of advice and support for the FTSU Guardian.	Met		• Met wutg FTSUG as part of induction • Regular meetings & offering support as needed
Overseeing speaking up concerns regarding board members.	Met		
Human resource and organisational development directors			

Ensuring that the FTSU Guardian has the support of HR staff and appropriate access to information to enable them to triangulate intelligence from speaking up issues with other information that may be used as measures of FTSU culture or indicators of barriers to speaking up.	Met		- Regular one to one meetings. - FTSUG provided with information as requested.
Ensuring that HR culture and practice encourage and support speaking up and that learning in relation to workers' experience is disseminated across the trust.	Met		- Line Managers training on key HR policies and processes - Regular review of policies - Regular reports on Employee relations cases to the Exec Team and the Board
Ensuring that workers have the right knowledge, skills and capability to speak up and that managers listen well and respond to issues raised effectively.	Partially met	- Improve the development for line managers - Implement the Culture & Leadership Programme	

Medical director and director of nursing			
Ensuring that the FTSU Guardian has appropriate support and advice on patient safety and safeguarding issues.	Met		
Ensuring that effective and, as appropriate, immediate action is taken when potential patient safety issues are highlighted by speaking up.	Met		
Ensuring learning is operationalised within the teams and departments that they oversee.	Met		