



Sussex Community
NHS Foundation Trust

Freedom to Speak Up Our Vision and Strategy 2021-2024

Allison Hawes Freedom to Speak Up Guardian

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*Excellent care at the
heart of the community*

Reader Box	
Description	This first SCFT FTSU strategy sets out the ambition for the next three years. A more detailed delivery plan will follow to support the implementation of the strategy based on outcomes. This will be monitored via quarterly executive committee reporting.
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Primary audience	Staff
Secondary audience(s)	Our patients
Notes	Stakeholder engagement has taken place with representatives from the following: Staff-side, HR, OD, Staff networks, Staff governors, Staff who have spoken up, Managers who have worked with the FTSUG, Patient safety specialists, Area nurses and FTSU ambassadors

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FREEDOM TO SPEAK UP – OUR VISION AND STRATEGY 2021 – 2024

Speak Up. We listen

SCFT is committed to a culture and environment where staff are encouraged to speak up about concerns they have about patient care, safety and their work environment.

Speaking up helps us improve our services for all the people we care for and makes the Trust a better place to work for all staff.

We are proud of how far we have come. More staff than ever are accessing our Freedom to Speak Up (FTSU) Guardian and Ambassadors. Our managers and leaders tell us they value the opportunity this provides to learn and improve.

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) recognised an open and honest culture was reflected through all levels of the organisation in their inspection (2018).

This strategy outlines how we will continue to build on that great work and reinforces our commitment to FTSU for all our staff and the communities we serve.

This FTSU Strategy supports the delivery of the trust's strategic priorities and contributes to our trust vision, the workforce strategy and our Quality Improvement Plan. This strategy will also be a key enabler for us to implement a new approach to Patient Safety culture.

This trust is on a journey from good to great and a just and learning culture is vital to safe, responsive and well-led care.

Context

Sir Robert Francis's 'Freedom to Speak Up' review in February 2015 highlighted the need for the creation of the National Guardian and FTSU Guardians at every trust in England as a 'vital step towards developing the right culture and environment for speaking up' and to enable staff to be 'free to speak up about patient safety concerns'

A National Guardian was appointed in July 2016. The National Guardian's Office (NGO) is an independent, non-statutory body with the remit to lead culture change in the NHS so that speaking up becomes business as usual. The office is not a regulator, but is sponsored by the CQC, and NHS England/NHS Improvement.



FTSU Guardians support staff to speak up when they feel that they are unable to do so by other routes. They ensure that people who speak up are thanked, that the issues they raise are responded to, and make sure that the person speaking up receives feedback on the actions taken. Guardians also work proactively to support their organisation to tackle barriers

to speaking up. FTSU Guardians are appointed by the organisation that they support and abide by the guidance issued by the NGO

Our current position

- This trust has had a guardian in post since October 2016. The contribution of their work was acknowledged when the CQC recognised an open and honest culture was reflected through all levels of the organisation in their inspection (2018).
- The trust was recently (July 2020) rated as 6th amongst all community trusts in the NGO FTSU index; a rating based on scores from four questions in the annual NHS staff survey so we are confident in our approach whilst recognising our drive to being an outstanding organisation
- The trust has 15 local FTSU Ambassadors, with 50% of this group currently from the Black Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) staff network.
- The trust has made significant progress in the last two years evidenced by the numbers of staff now accessing this route to raise their concerns
- Whilst the trust is understandably proud of its achievements to date, there continues to be a clear commitment to staff that we will learn from their experiences and take appropriate steps to make improvements and embed change. The FTSU guardian works closely with the HR team and Quality and Safety Team in order to achieve this.

What do we know so far?

We know that low level incivility between staff is commonly reported via FTSU. The NHS staff survey and Human Resources (HR) case work supports this. We have plans to improve this by:

- FTSU guardian sharing learning and engaging with a new taskforce for violence and aggression (set up to identify and agree actions for the next year)
- FTSU guardian working closely with HR and OD team to share learning and feedback to influence leadership training offer
- New reflective discussions taking place quarterly between FTSU, HR, OD, Staff side and management team in each area to look at softer intelligence to inform earlier intervention and targeted support.

Leadership

- The trust board provides leadership to this role; modelling behaviours to promote a positive culture in the organisation as well as having oversight to ensure the policy and procedures are being effectively implemented.
- The trust has a non-executive director lead that is an alternative source of advice and support for our FTSU Guardian and provides leadership and challenge to the executive lead, chief executive officer and board to reflect on whether more can be done to create a healthy and effective speaking up culture.
- The executive lead is the Chief Nurse who is responsible for role-modelling high standards of conduct around FTSU, ensuring learning is operationalised and providing the board with assurance of the effectiveness of our strategy and policy
- The trust is fully engaged with the NGO and the network of FTSU Guardians to learn and share best practice

- Our trained and supervised FTSU ambassador network, is growing and providing opportunity for greater reach of the messages across the organisation.
- Leaders at all levels in our trust recognise that having a well embedded FTSU process is positive for them as managers of their services. The gift of feedback from their teams, however they hear it, enables them to make improvements.

Governance

- All speaking up cases are currently reported on a local database; with plans for this to transition to datix during 2020/2021. This will be in addition to the main datix system and access is to the FTSU Guardian only. Numbers, services and themes from cases are reported quarterly to the Executive Committee.



Our vision

Our vision is for the voice of our staff to be heard and acted upon, as a means to improve both the patient and staff experience.

We are committed to promoting an open and transparent culture across the organisation to ensure that all members of staff feel safe and confident to speak out and that learning happens as a result of speaking up. Our staff need to know that speaking up is welcomed and actions result from speaking up.

The trust will take the following actions, using the four pillars of leadership, governance, culture and learning to ensure this vision is delivered.

Thriving staff

The Trust strategy highlights 'Thriving Staff' as a strategic goal and this FTSU strategy will support the delivery of this. We recognise we cannot improve our services without the active participation of our staff, patients and their families or carers. The FTSU guardian is regularly engaged in facilitating conversations with staff and managers about inclusive and compassionate leadership and in addition:

- Supports an inclusive, diverse and fair workplace
- Supports staff retention by being an impartial and independent place for staff to share concerns when they haven't been able to speak up using normal routes
- Provides further opportunity for two way engagement with our teams
- Provides feedback from learning to the Organisational Development (OD) team to influence the content of leadership development with the trust

Leadership	Governance
Annually review our position against the National Guardians Office expectations for Boards	Ensure policies, procedures and reporting arrangements are in place and reviewed annually, taking into consideration national and local learning
Provide support for the Guardian and ambassadors in their roles with access to executive and non-executive leads	Ensure systems are in place to record disclosures and that they protect a person's confidentiality when a concern is raised
Participate in relevant Integrated Care System programmes in line with The NHS People Plan. For example Workforce race equality and FTSU joint training	Bi-annually audit the trust's FTSU strategy and policy Audit of staff awareness of FTSU processes
Review opportunities for developing the FTSU culture within the Sussex Health and Care Partnership	Report outcomes through the Executive Committee
	Provide an annual report for the trust board presented in person by the guardian

Learning	Culture
Deliver the national training programme at three levels; all staff, managers and the board	Develop a communications and training plan which raises the profile and understanding of our speaking up arrangements and learning
Share good practice and learning from concerns raised through a variety of fora, with the key aim of fostering openness and transparency	Ensure people who raise concerns are supported through the process, receive feedback and are thanked for their action
Review and strengthen plans to address learning from NGO case reviews	Ensure that all staff are treated fairly and consistently when speaking up or raising concerns, including those who are being spoken up about
Review internal case management through reflection	Develop a plan to ensure staff from minority groups feel able to access speaking up support
Seek opportunity to triangulate learning from FTSU concerns with patient safety, patient experience and HR data.	Develop, implement and support FTSU ambassadors to promote speaking up as business as usual at all levels
Participate in an audit with another NHS trust	Every member of staff will have completed FTSU training and will understand how to speak up and if in a line manager role, how to listen up and take action

Outcomes

As a well led organisation we will report progress with the following measures to the trust board, via the executive committee at least annually:

- FTSU index rating
- Data on activity and themes (quarterly)
- Continued positive feedback from staff who raise concerns
- Learning from local and national cases (quarterly)
- Our self-assessment against NGO expectations for boards

Responsibility for delivery of this strategy sits with the Chief Nurse, supported by the FTSU Guardian, the Chief Executive Officer and the Non-Executive lead for FTSU and monitored by the CQC.

What will be different as a result of this strategy?

- The learning from FTSU concerns will be incorporated with other business intelligence to inform actions to promote patient and staff safety and quality of clinical services.
- Learning from concerns will be articulated to all staff in an open and transparent manner (while respecting confidentiality) with a 'You said, We did' approach
- Improvement in staff survey response and therefore NGO FTSU Index



