National Guardian
Freedom to Speak Up

NHS
Improvement

Chief Executive and Chair's Office
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To: NHS Foundation Trust and Trust Chief Executives

Dear colleagues

Expectations of boards and board members on Freedom to Speak Up

Today we are pleased to jointly publish a guide that sets out our expectations of boards and board members on Freedom to Speak Up. This is such a vital issue for boards to get to grips with and this guide is designed to help you to do that.

We strongly believe that effective speaking up arrangements really do help to protect patients and improve the experience of NHS workers. Having a healthy speaking up culture is an indicator of a well-led trust, and this guide is aligned with the good practice set out in the well-led framework.

The guidance will help boards ensure the speaking up culture in their organisation is healthy and the guardian role is effective. The relationship between boards and their guardians is key to ensuring workers have confidence in the process and trust that speaking up will be taken seriously and handled appropriately.

Meeting the expectations set out in this guide will help a board to create a culture responsive to feedback and focused on learning and continual improvement. This guide is accompanied by a self-review tool.

NHSI's regional teams will be contacting you shortly to ask you to confirm your commitment to using the guide and self-review tool, and the National Guardian's Office will be sharing the guidance with your Freedom to Speak Up Guardians. We will then be jointly running webinars to help trusts with implementation.

If you have any questions about, please email enquiries@improvement.nhs.uk or call 020 3747 0900.

Yours sincerely

Ian Dalton CBE
Chief Executive, NHS Improvement

Dr Henrietta Hughes
National Guardian for the NHS

NHS Improvement is the operational name for the organisation that brings together Monitor, NHS Trust Development Authority, Patient Safety, the National Reporting and Learning System, the Advancing Change team and the Intensive Support Teams.