

12 October 2016

Dear colleague

Sir Robert Francis QC's '*Freedom to Speak Up*' report recommended that every NHS Trust and Foundation Trust in England has a Freedom to Speak Up Guardian. Their role is to ensure that concerns raised are taken seriously, acted upon, and that any potential risks to patients are highlighted and prevented.

As the National Guardian for the NHS, I am setting up regional networks of Freedom to Speak Up Guardians, to establish best practice guidance for NHS trusts and to ensure that in future the process of speaking up is encouraged and well supported. At present, my role covers secondary care staff, who may previously not have had access to a Freedom to Speak Up Guardian.

I am working closely with NHS Improvement and NHS England to ensure staff in other parts of the health service can access similar levels of support, if they want to raise a concern. My office is not set up to provide support and guidance for historic whistleblowing cases or to offer an appeal service but I am listening to people who are willing to share their experiences, to help develop the standards where all staff can speak up freely. Together with an external advisory group, I will select a small number of cases for discretionary review against these standards, to identify learning and reinforce good practice.

You may find the published information on the following webpages useful:

- [National Guardian content \(currently on the CQC website\)](#)
- [NHS Employers: Freedom to Speak Up Guardian hub](#)

Staff should always feel listened to regardless of where they work within the NHS. As the National Guardian, I want to support real improvements in staff experience and patient safety.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require any further information about Freedom to Speak Up in the NHS, or would like to arrange a meeting.

Yours sincerely



Dr Henrietta Hughes  
National Guardian for the NHS