

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

May 2021

# 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?	Proposed Deadline	How is the board assured it is meeting the expectation? Evidence	Areas that will be addressed by Vision and Strategy
<b>Our expectations</b>						
<b>Leaders are knowledgeable about FTSU</b>						
1	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.	Partially	FTSU metrics to be added to quarterly integrated performance reports  Embed NGO training	July 2021	Regular Board reports from the FTSUG  Regular 1:1's with Chief Executive, Chairman and Non-Executive Director  Board workshop October 2020  Vision and Strategy to be discussed at HMC	

2	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	<p>Vision and strategy drafted, comments being received in preparation for final approval</p> <p>Strengthen processes for sharing lessons learnt</p> <p>Increase engagement with HMC through use of integrated performance reports</p>	July 2021	<p>Regular Board reports from the FTSUG</p> <p>Regular 1:1's with Chief Executive, Chairman and Non-Executive Director</p> <p>Regular awareness and promotion events as per the FTSU communication plan</p> <p>FTSU month</p>	
3	They can provide evidence that they have a leadership strategy and development programme that emphasises the importance of learning from issues raised by people who speak up.	Partially	FTSUG to work with relevant teams delivering leadership development	October 2021	<p>Outstanding leadership work stream to provide evidence of FTSU in leadership development programmes</p> <p>FTSU presentation at registered</p>	

					practitioner induction, HCA induction and junior doctor induction	
4	Senior leaders can describe the part they played in creating and launching the trust's FTSU vision and strategy.	Partially met	Strategy and Vision amended following comments received  Vision and Strategy approved by the board	June 2021	Strategy and Vision is finalised and approved  Evidence of wider engagement in development of Strategy	
<b>Leaders have a structured approach to FTSU</b>						
5	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.	Partially met	As item 4	June 2021	Vision and Strategy is finalised and approved	
6	There is an up-to-date <a href="#">speaking up policy</a> that reflects the minimum standards set out by NHS Improvement.	Fully	Policy will need reviewing to ensure fit for purpose and in alignment with		Raising Concerns in a Safe Environment Policy	

			vision and strategy			
7	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.	Partially	Vision and strategy to be approved  Implementation of vision and strategy and monitor year one objectives	June 2021	Board development workshop  Vision and Strategy shared with the following groups for feedback:  FTSU Champions  NMAG  EDI Group  Staff Networks  Trust Partnership Group	
8	Progress against the strategy and compliance with the policy are regularly reviewed using a range of qualitative and quantitative measures.	Partially	Review of metrics outlined in vision and strategy  Feedback from relevant surveys	October 2021	Regular Board reports  Regular meetings with CEO, Chair, NED Champion and other Executives	

Leaders actively shape the speaking up culture					
9	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.	Fully	Regular engagement with divisional and corporate leadership through HMC and performance meetings.		Regular presentations at Board and Board reports  Engagement with HMC  1:1 with CEO, Chairman and Non-Exec lead
10	They can evidence that they robustly challenge themselves to improve patient safety, and develop a culture of continuous improvement, openness and honesty.	Partially	Agree process for divisions to evidence learning and continuous improvement	July 2021	Regular Board reports  Divisions to articulate evidence in divisional plans
11	Senior leaders are visible, approachable and use a variety of methods to seek and act on feedback from workers.	Fully			Quarterly cultural barometer  Feedback from staff who have raised concerns

					<p>FTSUG assessment of evidence</p> <p>Evidence of concerns raised via Chief Nurse, Chairman and Chief Executive.</p> <p>1:1s with CEO, Chairman and Non-Exec lead</p>	
12	Senior leaders prioritise speaking up and work in partnership with their FTSU Guardian.	Partially	Strengthen engagement with broader leadership team	December 2021	<p>Engagement with Non-Executive director</p> <p>Regular meetings with Chairman and CEO</p> <p>Meetings with other Executives as required</p> <p>1:1 with line manager</p>	
13	Senior leaders model speaking up by acknowledging mistakes and making improvements.	Fully	Feedback from lessons learnt		<p>Feedback from lessons learnt</p> <p>Post Covid learning</p>	

			<p>Post Covid learning</p> <p>Regular engagement with divisional and corporate leadership through HMC and performance meetings.</p>		<p>Outcome from cases</p> <p>Cultural barometer results</p> <p>Regular meetings with Chairman and CEO</p> <p>Meetings with other Executives as required</p> <p>Regular Board reports</p> <p>Wider engagement in development of strategy.</p>	
<b>14</b>	The board can state with confidence that workers know how to speak up; do so with confidence and are treated fairly.	Fully	<p>FTSU month</p> <p>Raising awareness through ongoing communication</p>		<p>Lessons learnt being embedded</p> <p>National staff survey</p> <p>Cultural barometer</p> <p>Regular Board reports</p>	

<b>Leaders are clear about their role and responsibilities</b>						
15	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.	Fully				CEO named Executive Gareth Tipton Named NED
16	They, along with the chief executive and chair, meet regularly with the FTSU Guardian and provide appropriate advice and support.	Fully				Quarterly meetings with Chair and CEO Monthly meetings with NED
17	Other senior leaders support the FTSU Guardian as required.	Fully	Regular meetings with triumvirate leadership teams			The FTSUG feels well supported across the Trust as evidenced through cases raised
<b>Leaders are confident that wider concerns are identified and managed</b>						
18	Senior leaders have ensured that the FTSU Guardian has ready access to applicable sources of data to enable them to triangulate speaking up issues	Fully	Identify which additional sources of data will be useful and work with others			Board report FTSU strategy metrics

	to proactively identify potential concerns.		to enable triangulation			
19	The FTSU Guardian has ready access to senior leaders and others to enable them to escalate patient safety issues rapidly, preserving confidence as appropriate.	Fully			Quarterly meetings with Chair and CEO Monthly meetings with NED	
<b>Leaders receive assurance in a variety of forms</b>						
20	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	Engagement in formulating the FTSU vision and policy will promote confidence in FTSU	September 2021	Staff survey results Vision and strategy Feedback Policy in place and embedded. Wider engagement in development of new strategy.	
21	Steps are taken to identify and remove barriers to speaking up for those in more vulnerable groups, such as Black, Asian	Fully	Development of diverse group of FTSU champions		Demographics of staff raising concerns as measured as part of the vision and strategy metrics	

	or minority ethnic (BAME), workers and agency workers		Information regarding FTSU is being translated into different languages		reflect our workforce demographics FTSUG sits on staff networks FTSUG works closely with EDI lead FTSU engagement with Staff Side and workforce team	
22	Speak up issues that raise immediate patient safety concerns are quickly escalated	Fully	Risk matrix used to risk assess concerns raised		Regular meetings with CEO Access to Chief Nurse and Medical Director	
23	Action is taken to address evidence that workers have been victimised as a result of speaking up, regardless of seniority	Fully	System in place but untested as never had any concerns raised		Action taken to deal with this if it occurs	
24	Lessons learnt are shared widely both within relevant service areas and across the trust	Partially	Cascade FTSU lessons learned via divisional dashboards and ask divisions to	July 2021	Divisional action plans	

			update on actions taken			
25	The handling of speaking up issues is routinely audited to ensure that the FTSU policy is being implemented	Fully	Audited three yearly as part of internal audit plan		Audit report presented to audit committee	
26	FTSU policies and procedures are reviewed and improved using feedback from workers	Fully	Engagement with development of the policy		Policy in place that reflects the feedback gathered	
27	The board receives a report, at least every six months, from the FTSU Guardian.	Fully	Board report		Board report	
<b>Leaders engage with all relevant stakeholders</b>						
28	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.	Fully	Vision and strategy widely consulted on and amended to reflect views		Vision and strategy approved	
29	Issues raised via speaking up are part of the performance data discussed openly	Fully	FTSUG interviewed as		FTSU report presented at public board	

	with commissioners, CQC and NHS Improvement.		part of CQC inspection			
30	Discussion of FTSU matters regularly takes place in the public section of the board meetings (while respecting the confidentiality of individuals).	Fully	FTSUG attends public board meeting at least three times per year		Minutes of board meetings	
31	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 support a positive speaking up culture.	Fully	Work ongoing to include a high level summary in the annual report		Summary in annual report	
32	Reviews and audits are shared externally to support improvement elsewhere.	Fully	Quarterly data uploaded to National Guardian Office  Information shared with CQC as part of inspections  Regular meetings with network of local guardians		Information on National Guardian's office website	

33	Senior leaders work openly and positively with regional FTSU Guardians and the National Guardian to continually improve the trust's speaking up culture	Fully	Relevant communication received by senior leaders shared with FTSUG			
34	Senior leaders encourage their FTSU Guardians to develop bilateral relationships with regulators, inspectors and other local FTSU Guardians	Fully	FTSUG belongs to local and regional network of Guardians  FTSUG interviewed as part of well led inspection			
35	Senior leaders request external improvement support when required.	Fully	External OD support used in a variety of areas		Trust can provide evidence where external OD support has been sought	
<b>Leaders are focused on learning and continual improvement</b>						
36	Senior leaders use speaking up as an opportunity for learning that can be embedded in future practice to deliver	Partially	See number 24	July 2021		

	better quality care and improve workers' experience.					
37	Senior leaders and the FTSU Guardian engage with other trusts to identify best practice.	Fully	See number 33 & 34			
38	Executive and non-executive leads, and the FTSU Guardian, review all guidance and case review reports from the National Guardian to identify improvement possibilities.	Fully	Shared in Board reports with actions identified		Presentations at Board and information in Board reports	
39	Senior leaders regularly reflect on how they respond to feedback, learn and continually improve and encourage the same throughout the organisation.	Fully	Ongoing work with regards to lessons learnt  Data on divisional dashboard with actions identified		Information in Board reports  Quarterly meetings with Chair and CEO  Monthly meetings with NED  Meetings with other executives.  Engagement with HMC on new strategy.	

40	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	Plan to update the Board during August Board meeting on implementation of strategy and progress made	August 2021	Board report and presentation at August Board meeting  Vision and strategy approved which includes measures  Agreed cycle for reporting to Board	
41	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.	Fully	Policy updated as required if changes are recommended		Policy reflects current guidance	
42	A sample of cases is quality assured to ensure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the investigation process is of high quality; that outcomes and recommendations are reasonable and that the impact of change is being measured</li> </ul>	Fully	Embed best practice for FTSU systems and processes  Utilise examples of processes working well to share learning		Internal Audit Report on review of FTSU.	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>workers are thanked for speaking up, are kept up to date though out the investigation and are told of the outcome</li> <li>Investigations are independent, fair and objective; recommendations are designed to promote patient safety and learning; and change will be monitored</li> </ul>					
43	Positive outcomes from speaking up cases are promoted and as a result workers are more confident to speak up.	Partially	<p>Communication plan in place</p> <p>Learning through Divisional dashboard shared</p>	July 2021		
<b>Individual responsibilities</b>						
<b>Chief executive and chair</b>						
44	The chief executive is responsible for appointing the FTSU Guardian.	Fully			FTSUG in post	

45	The chief executive is accountable for ensuring that FTSU arrangements meet the needs of the workers in their trust.	Fully	Policy in place  Vision and Strategy in process of being approved  Regular reports to the Board		Policy and strategy that is approved by the Board is in place	
46	The chief executive and chair are responsible for ensuring the annual report contains information about FTSU.	Fully	See number 31		Information contained in annual report	
47	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.	Fully	See number 34 & 38			
48	Both the chief executive and chair are key sources of advice and support for their FTSU Guardian and meet with them regularly.	Fully			Monthly meetings with CEO and quarterly with CEO and Chair	

		Executive lead for FTSU				
47	Ensuring they are aware of latest guidance from National Guardian's Office.	Fully	FTSUG emails relevant information			
48	Overseeing the creation of the FTSU vision and strategy.	Fully	In progress		Vision and strategy that is approved by the Board	
49	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.	Fully			FTSUG appointed through open and competitive interview process	
50	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.	Fully			WTE Guardian in post	

51	Ensuring that a sample of speaking up cases have been quality assured.	Fully	Internal audit conducted as part of internal audit cycle		Internal audit report	
52	Conducting an annual review of the strategy, policy and process.	Partially	Policy in place, strategy in consultation process and process to be written	June 2021	Policy, process and strategy in place	
53	Operationalising the learning derived from speaking up issues.	Partial	Plan to include lessons learnt on divisional dashboard	July 2021	Lessons learnt are shared widely and acted upon	
54	Ensuring allegations of detriment are promptly and fairly investigated and acted on.	Fully	See point 23		All reports are investigated fully and impartially	

55	Providing the board with a variety of assurance about the effectiveness of the trusts strategy, policy and process.	Partially	Vision and strategy being finalised	June 2021	Board report/presentation Staff Survey results Quarterly cultural barometer Policy management arrangements and document control policy. Divisional performance meetings	
<b>Non-executive lead for FTSU</b>						
56	Ensuring they are aware of latest guidance from National Guardian's Office.	Fully	Include information in Board reports		Board reports	
57	Holding the chief executive, executive FTSU lead and the board to account for implementing the speaking up strategy.	Partially	Strategy still in development	July 2021	Board reports	
58	Robustly challenge the board to reflect on whether it could do more to create a culture responsive to feedback and	Fully				

	focused on learning and continual improvement.					
59	Role-modelling high standards of conduct around FTSU.	Fully				
60	Acting as an alternative source of advice and support for the FTSU Guardian.	Fully			Monthly meetings	
61	Overseeing speaking up concerns regarding board members.	Fully			Investigation of cases raised	
<b>Human resource and organisational development directors</b>						
62	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.	Fully			Monthly one to ones with Chief People Officer	
63	Ensuring that HR culture and practice encourage and support speaking up and that learning in relation to workers'	Partially	Lessons learnt to still be embedded in line with the actions above	December 2021	Evidence of lessons learnt and actions in divisional dashboard reporting	

	experience is disseminated across the trust.					
64	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	Embed FTSU training across the Trust	December 2021	Compliance with training is high	
<b>Medical director and director of nursing</b>						
65	Ensuring that the FTSU Guardian has appropriate support and advice on patient safety and safeguarding issues.	Fully	See point 22 FTSUG sits on both safeguarding and patient safety committees.		FTSUG has ready access to Chief Nurse/Medical Director	
66	Ensuring that effective and, as appropriate, immediate action is taken when potential patient safety issues are highlighted by speaking up.	Fully			FTSUG has ready access to Chief Nurse/Medical Director to action concerns immediately if deemed necessary	

67	Ensuring learning is operationalised within the teams and departments that they oversee.	Partially	Lessons learnt to still be embedded in line with the actions above	July 2021	Evidence of lessons learnt and actions in divisional dashboard reporting	
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