



<b>Meeting:</b>	Trust Board – Public Meeting	<b>Date:</b>	06.11.2024
<b>Report Title:</b>	Freedom to Speak Up Report		
<b>Agenda Item:</b>	PUB24/11/4.1		
<b>Author:</b>	Kimberley Gillingham & Danielle Marshall, The Guardian Service		
<b>Lead Director:</b>	Neill Moloney, Chief Executive Officer		

<b>Purpose:</b>	Decision Approval		Discussion Review		Information Noting	<b>X</b>
<b>Assurance:</b>						
	None	Limited	Reasonable	Substantial		
<b>Link to CQC domain</b>	<b>Link to Strategic Objective</b>					
Caring	Be an exceptional place to work, volunteer and learn					
Responsive	Provide outstanding quality of care and performance					
Effective	Be excellent collaborators and innovators as system partners					
Well Led	Be an environmentally and financially sustainable organisation					
Safe						
<b>Link to Strategic Risk:</b>						
SR2: If we do not deliver operational and clinical standards then there is a risk of poor patient outcomes and experience						<b>X</b>
<b>Equality Impact Assessment:</b>						
No negative impact identified:						
Negative impact identified:						
Age		Sexual Orientation				
Disability		Gender Reassignment				
Gender		Religion/Belief				
Race		Pregnancy and Maternity				
Marriage and civil partnership						
<b>Previously considered by:</b>						
N/A						
<b>Recommendation:</b>						
Recommendations will be made within the 6-monthly and annual report.						
<b>Purpose:</b>						
The purpose of this report is to inform the Board of the number of Freedom to Speak Up concerns raised via The Guardian Service in August 2024, and any identified themes.						
<b>Executive Summary:</b>						
The full report is attached, data for October will not be available until later in November but early indications demonstrate an increasing number of contacts.						
The September and August data shows a gradual increase in case numbers and contacts. Following an intense engagement programme during October, a further increase is predicted for October data.						
The Guardians continue to visit multiple sites and attend team meetings to improve their profile including 27 site visits during the month of October.						

Importantly, all the cases raised have been responded to within the agreed timescales.

The main themes for cases are systems and processes, behaviour and relationships, and management issues. Given the number of process-themed cases evolving, the Chief of Staff intends to review in more depth for further discussion at the Raising Concerns Forum.

Of the 26 cases reported for August and September, only 6 have been closed which is detailed in the report for a number of reasons but will be monitored.

**Introduction / Background:**

The Guardian Service has been working in partnership with the East of England Ambulance Service Trust since 05 August 2024.

**Key Issues / Risks:**

Please see report

**Options:**

N/A

**Summary:**

This paper gives an overview of Freedom to Speak up concerns for the month of August through to October 2024.



THE EAST OF ENGLAND AMBULANCE SERVICE NHS TRUST

SEP - 2024

Cases

New cases this month	13
Cases closed this month	4
Open cases year to date	20
Closed cases year to date	6
Total cases year to date	26

RAG status

	Open Cases This Month	Total Cases This Year
Red	0	0
Amber	2	9
Green	9	15
White	0	2
	<u>11</u>	<u>26</u>

Outcomes

	This Month	This Year
Written / Verbal	2	4
Chose not to pursue	2	2
No further contact	0	0
	<u>4</u>	<u>6</u>

Themes

	Primary only		All themes inc. primary	
	Month	Year	Month	Year
Patient safety / quality	0	0	1	1
Worker safety or wellbeing	0	0	1	1
Bullying or harassment	0	4	0	4
Other inappropriate behaviour or attitudes				
Behaviour / relationship	2	4	5	8
Discrimination and inequality	0	0	0	0
Management issue	1	4	1	4
Additional Themes				
System and Process	10	13	10	13
Other	0	1	0	1
Totals	<u>13</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>32</u>

Activity / Visits

	This Month	This Year
Promotion	6	13
Site briefing	5	8
Online briefing	5	7
Site meeting	2	4
Online meeting	8	11

Case-related activity

	This Month	This Year
Email	33	46
Telephone	21	41
Face to face	4	6

Cases raised anonymously

	This Month	This Year
	0	2

Detriment

	This Month	This Year
	0	0



**The Guardian  
Service**  
Here to listen

**Bimonthly Board report  
October 2024**

**Circulation:**

**Liz Cunnell – Chief of Staff**

**Prepared by: Kimberley Gillingham & Danielle  
Marshall**

**Guardian  
The Guardian Service Ltd.**

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## 1. Executive Summary

The Guardian Service Limited began providing the Freedom to Speak Up Service for East of England Ambulance Trust (EEAST) on 5<sup>th</sup> August 2024.

We would usually provide a 6 monthly and annual report however due to EEAST running a quarterly public board paper, this report will give an overview of the past 11 weeks.

The efforts by the Trust to help promote The Guardian Service have remained positive and collaborative. The Guardians have spent considerable amounts of time meeting more and more staff of all levels, both in person and virtually, Attending regular meetings and forums.

With October being Speak up Month the Guardians have made extra efforts to reach all staff members, briefing them on the service and the importance of speaking up. For the month of October, the Guardians have attended more than 27 visits.

Since 5th August, a total of 34 cases have been recorded, with a noticeable increase in concerns raised each month. This rise may be attributed to the Guardians' efforts in reaching more staff and raising awareness about the transition to an independent service. The majority of concerns fall under "Systems and Process," with 15 cases recorded, followed closely by "Behaviour and Relationships" and "Management Issues." This may suggest that staff members are primarily concerned with how processes are followed, and many feel they are being treated unfairly by both colleagues and management.

Systems and process can cover a range of concerns from feeling of dissatisfaction or HR or Recruitment processes to how a manager or trainer might carry out their duties when dealing with a concern internally. Some of the concerns that the staff members wished for us to raise have been about their experiences with recruitment processes and how fair or unfair they feel the process may have been followed.

Half of the staff members choosing to contact the Guardian service are wanting to keep their concerns confidential and not be escalated, wishing for impartial support. Over 30% have raised a concern before, but do not feel they have been listened to and over 20% have said to be fearful of reprisal.

The agreed Rag protocol is set so that the Guardian receives a response from the trust on behalf of the staff member. All concerns that have been raised have been responded to within the agreed times scales.

Cases remain open due to a number of factors, including staff members reflecting on escalation decisions. Open cases are continually monitored and regular contact is maintained by the Guardian with members of staff who have raised a concern to establish where ongoing support continues to be required. This can be via follow up phone calls and/or face to face meetings with staff who are in a situation where they feel they cannot escalate an issue for fear of reprisal. Guardians will also maintain contact until the situation is resolved or the staff member is satisfied that no further action is required. Where there is a particular complex case, setbacks or avoidable delays in the progress of cases that have been escalated, these would be raised with the organisational lead for the Guardian Service at regular monthly meetings.

Within the future 6 monthly and annual report, we will offer recommendations, to address themes that arise from concerns raised, with a comprehensive over-view which the Trust is asked to consider.

## 2. Background to Freedom to Speak Up

Following the Francis Inquiry<sup>1</sup> 2013 and 2015, the NHS launched 'Freedom to Speak Up' (FTSU). The aim of this initiative was to foster an open and responsive environment and culture throughout the NHS enabling staff to feel confident to speak up when things go or may go wrong; a key element to ensure a safe and effective working environment.

## 3. The Guardian Service

The Guardian Service Limited (GSL) is an independent and confidential staff liaison service. It was established in 2013 by the National NHS Patient Champion in response to The Francis Report. The Guardian Service provides staff with an independent, confidential 24/7 service to raise concerns, worries or risks in their workplace. It covers patient care and safety, whistleblowing, bullying, harassment, and work grievances. We work closely with the National Guardian Office (NGO) and attend the FTSU workshops, regional network meetings and FTSU conferences. The Guardian Service is advertised throughout EEAST as an independent organisation. This encourages staff to speak up freely and without fear of reprisal. Freedom to Speak Up is part of the well led agenda of the CQC inspection regime. The Guardian Service supports EEAST's Board to promote and comply with the NGO national reporting requirements.

The Guardian Service Ltd (GSL) was implemented in EEAST on 5<sup>th</sup> August 2024.

Communication and marketing have been achieved by meeting with senior staff members, joining team meetings, site visits, the Intranet and the distribution of flyers and posters across the organisation. All new staff will become aware of the Guardian Service when undertaking the organisational induction programme.

## 4. Access and Independence

Being available and responsive to staff are key factors in the operation of the service. Many staff members, when speaking to a Guardian, have emphasised that they would be more likely to Speak Up and contact The Guardian Service due to the service being external to the Trust.

## 5. Categorisation of Calls and Agreed Escalation Timescales

The following timescales have been agreed and form part of the Service Level Agreement.

Call Type	Description	Agreed Escalation Timescales
Red	Includes patient and staff safety, safeguarding, danger to an individual including self-harm.	Response required within 12 hours
Amber	Includes bullying, harassment, and staff safety.	Response required within 48 hours
Green	General grievances e.g. a change in work conditions.	Response required within 72 hours
White	No discernible risk to organisation.	No organisational response required

For this date period, all escalated cases were responded to within the agreed RAG protocols.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/report-of-the-mid-staffordshire-nhs-foundation-trust-public-inquiry>

Open cases are continually monitored and regular contact is maintained by the Guardian with members of staff who have raised a concern to establish where ongoing support continues to be required. This can be via follow up phone calls and/or face to face meetings with staff who are in a situation where they feel they cannot escalate an issue for fear of reprisal. Guardians will also maintain contact until the situation is resolved or the staff member is satisfied that no further action is required. Where there is a particular complex case, setbacks or avoidable delays in the progress of cases that have been escalated, these would be raised with the organisational lead for the Guardian Service at regular monthly meetings.

Escalated cases are cases which are referred to an appropriate manager, at the request of the employee, to ensure that appropriate action can be taken. As not all employees want their manager to know they have contacted the GSL, they either progress the matter themselves or take no further action. There are circumstances where cases are escalated at a later date by the Guardian. A staff member may take time to consider options and decide a course of action that is right for them. A Guardian will keep a case open and continue to support staff in such cases. In a few situations contact with the Guardian is not maintained by the staff member.

## **6. Purpose of the paper**

The purpose of this paper is to brief EEAST on the first 4 weeks of working in partnership with The GSL

The Guardians are aware of the vast geographical area that EEAST covers and have spent the month of August visiting staff at various locations to conduct briefings. The Guardians have attended Leadership forums, attended Emergency Operations Centre's and have connected with many Sectors via virtual meetings. Guardians have attended 'ride along' to gain further understand of operational staff. The commissioning phase included meetings with Senior Leaders from The GSL & EEAST, which includes collaborating with marketing and introductions with the Chair and NED's.

The report follows the guidance from the NGO on the content FTSU Guardians should include when reporting to their Board which include: Assessment of cases, Action taken to improve speaking-up culture and Recommendations.

Dashboard summary from 5<sup>th</sup> August 2024 to September 30<sup>th</sup> 2024

Cases	
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Themes				
	Primary only		All themes inc. primary	
	Month	Year	Month	Year
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Worker safety or wellbeing	0	0	1	1
Bullying or harassment	0	4	0	4
Other inappropriate behaviour or attitudes				
Behaviour / relationship	2	4	5	8
Discrimination and inequality	0	0	0	0
Management issue	1	4	1	4
Additional Themes				
System and Process	10	13	10	13
Other	0	1	0	1
Totals	<u>13</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>32</u>

  

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	This Year
This Month	0
This Year	2

  

Detriment	
	This Year
This Month	0
This Year	0