

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

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# 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?	How is the board assured it is meeting the expectation?  Evidence
<b>Our expectations</b>			
<b>Leaders are knowledgeable about FTSU</b>			
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.			
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.			
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.			
Senior leaders can describe the part they played in creating and launching the trust's FTSU vision and strategy.			
<b>Leaders have a structured approach to FTSU</b>			
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.			
There is an up-to-date <a href="#">speaking up policy</a> that reflects the minimum standards set out by NHS Improvement.			
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.			
Progress against the strategy and compliance with the policy are regularly reviewed using a range of qualitative and quantitative measures.			
<b>Leaders actively shape the speaking up culture</b>			
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.			
They can evidence that they robustly challenge themselves to improve patient safety, and develop a culture of continuous improvement, openness and honesty.			
Senior leaders are visible, approachable and use a variety of methods to seek and act on feedback from workers.			

Senior leaders prioritise speaking up and work in partnership with their FTSU Guardian.			
Senior leaders model speaking up by acknowledging mistakes and making improvements.			
The board can state with confidence that workers know how to speak up; do so with confidence and are treated fairly.			
<b>Leaders are clear about their role and responsibilities</b>			
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.			
They, along with the chief executive and chair, meet regularly with the FTSU Guardian and provide appropriate advice and support.			
Other senior leaders support the FTSU Guardian as required.			
<b>Leaders are confident that wider concerns are identified and managed</b>			
Senior leaders have ensured that the FTSU Guardian has ready access to applicable sources of data to enable them to triangulate speaking up issues to			

proactively identify potential concerns.			
The FTSU Guardian has ready access to senior leaders and others to enable them to escalate patient safety issues rapidly, preserving confidence as appropriate.			
<b>Leaders receive assurance in a variety of forms</b>			
Workers in all areas know, understand and support the FTSU vision, are aware of the policy and have confidence in the speaking up process.			
Steps are taken to identify and remove barriers to speaking up for those in more vulnerable groups, such as Black, Asian or minority ethnic (BAME), workers and agency workers			
Speak up issues that raise immediate patient safety concerns are quickly escalated			
Action is taken to address evidence that workers have been victimised as a result of speaking up, regardless of seniority			

Lessons learnt are shared widely both within relevant service areas and across the trust			
The handling of speaking up issues is routinely audited to ensure that the FTSU policy is being implemented			
FTSU policies and procedures are reviewed and improved using feedback from workers			
The board receives a report, at least every six months, from the FTSU Guardian.			
<b>Leaders engage with all relevant stakeholders</b>			
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.			
Issues raised via speaking up are part of the performance data discussed openly with commissioners, CQC and NHS Improvement.			
Discussion of FTSU matters regularly takes place in the public section of the board meetings (while respecting the confidentiality of individuals).			

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.			
Reviews and audits are shared externally to support improvement elsewhere.			
Senior leaders work openly and positively with regional FTSU Guardians and the National Guardian to continually improve the trust's speaking up culture			
Senior leaders encourage their FTSU Guardians to develop bilateral relationships with regulators, inspectors and other local FTSU Guardians			
Senior leaders request external improvement support when required.			
<b>Leaders are focused on learning and continual improvement</b>			
Senior leaders use speaking up as an opportunity for learning that can be embedded in future practice to deliver better quality care and improve workers' experience.			

Senior leaders and the FTSU Guardian engage with other trusts to identify best practice.			
Executive and non-executive leads, and the FTSU Guardian, review all guidance and case review reports from the National Guardian to identify improvement possibilities.			
Senior leaders regularly reflect on how they respond to feedback, learn and continually improve and encourage the same throughout the organisation.			
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.			
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.			
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</li> </ul>			

<p>and that the impact of change is being measured</p> <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>			
<p>Positive outcomes from speaking up cases are promoted and as a result workers are more confident to speak up.</p>			
<p><b>Individual responsibilities</b></p>			
<p><b>Chief executive and chair</b></p>			
<p>The chief executive is responsible for appointing the FTSU Guardian.</p>			
<p>The chief executive is accountable for ensuring that FTSU arrangements meet the needs of the workers in their trust.</p>			

The chief executive and chair are responsible for ensuring the annual report contains information about FTSU.			
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.			
Both the chief executive and chair are key sources of advice and support for their FTSU Guardian and meet with them regularly.			
<b>Executive lead for FTSU</b>			
Ensuring they are aware of latest guidance from National Guardian's Office.			
Overseeing the creation of the FTSU vision and strategy.			
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.			

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.			
Ensuring that a sample of speaking up cases have been quality assured.			
Conducting an annual review of the strategy, policy and process.			
Operationalising the learning derived from speaking up issues.			
Ensuring allegations of detriment are promptly and fairly investigated and acted on.			
Providing the board with a variety of assurance about the effectiveness of the trusts strategy, policy and process.			
<b>Non-executive lead for FTSU</b>			
Ensuring they are aware of latest guidance from National Guardian's Office.			
Holding the chief executive, executive FTSU lead and the board to account for implementing the speaking up			

strategy.			
Robustly challenge the board to reflect on whether it could do more to create a culture responsive to feedback and focused on learning and continual improvement.			
Role-modelling high standards of conduct around FTSU.			
Acting as an alternative source of advice and support for the FTSU Guardian.			
Overseeing speaking up concerns regarding board members.			
<b>Human resource and organisational development directors</b>			
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.			

Ensuring that HR culture and practice encourage and support speaking up and that learning in relation to workers' experience is disseminated across the trust.			
Ensuring that workers have the right knowledge, skills and capability to speak up and that managers listen well and respond to issues raised effectively.			
<b>Medical director and director of nursing</b>			
Ensuring that the FTSU Guardian has appropriate support and advice on patient safety and safeguarding issues.			
Ensuring that effective and, as appropriate, immediate action is taken when potential patient safety issues are highlighted by speaking up.			
Ensuring learning is operationalised within the teams and departments that they oversee.			