National Guardian
Freedom to Speak Up

Appendix 1

Freedom to Speak Up Guardian Survey 2018

National Guardian's Office

October 2018

Freedom to Speak Up Guardian Survey 2018

Progress with the implementation of the Freedom to Speak Up Guardian role and perceptions of Freedom to Speak Up Culture in the NHS in England

October 2018

Foreword

Freedom to Speak Up Guardians are a trusted pillar of support for NHS workers. They provide a route through which they can speak up about any matter that could get in the way of delivering high quality patient care, or that prevents the workplace being the supportive, caring environment that hard working NHS staff should expect.

The number of cases that Freedom to Speak Up Guardians have dealt with over the last two years, and the excellent feedback that they have received from workers who have sought their support, demonstrates that a much needed and trusted route for speaking up, outside the normal line management chain, has been developed. The findings of this survey emphasise the apparent correlation between highly rated organisations and the best speaking up cultures, of which the guardian role is a central component.

It is essential that, wherever the guardian role is established, it is given the authority, credibility and support it needs to ensure that it meets the needs of the workforce. It is disappointing, therefore, that **46%** of appointments to a guardian or supporting role happens without any form of interview. The guardian role is a difficult one, requiring a wide range of skills and capability and, importantly, needs to be carried out by someone who workers can have faith in, often at a point when those that approach them are in difficulty. Without the assurance of a robust appointment process, workers may harbour doubts.

Most importantly, if a job is to be done, those carrying out that job need the time to do it. My survey published last year set out a series of ten principles for the guardian role, with time being identified as a key factor. The results were shared with the CEOs of all NHS trusts and foundation trusts in England. Many organisations have increased the ring-fenced time available to guardians as they see the positive impact that their role is having. I am disappointed and concerned, therefore, that **42%** of guardians have no ring-fenced time to carry out their duties. This is not acceptable and does a disservice to those working hard to carry out this challenging role.

It also does a disservice to all those working in the organisations concerned, and the patients that they care for because the survey clearly shows that the quality of how the role is carried out suffers and, in many cases, basic standards are not reached:

- There is a **47 percentage point** difference between the likelihood of a guardian collecting feedback on their performance when comparing guardians who carry out the role full-time with those that have no ring-fenced time.
- Only half (**51%**) of guardians without ring-fenced time present their board papers in person – an essential element of the NHS Improvement and National Guardian Office Board Guidance on Freedom to Speak Up.
- As might be expected, only **39%** of guardians without ring-fenced time feel that they are meeting the needs of workers.

I am therefore calling on all NHS organisations where the Freedom to Speak Up Guardian role is in place that they must give ring-fenced time to those carrying it out. I am also alerting regulators to the fact that I consider any organisation where ring-fenced time for the guardian role has not been allocated falls short of demonstrating the qualities of a well-led organisation.

Those responsible for NHS trusts, and other organisations delivering NHS services, should sit up and take notice of the views of their workers, their guardians and those who support them. I also ask that regulators and arm's-length bodies consider the speaking up culture in their own organisations – our results indicate that this may not be as positive as they would wish.

I am, however, delighted that **84%** of respondents felt that Freedom to Speak Up culture in their organisation had improved, and that **83%** felt that Freedom to Speak Up culture in the NHS had improved, over the last 12 months. It is fair to say, however, that given that the starting point of the speaking up culture in the NHS has historically been very poor, there is significant progress to be made.

Dr Henrietta Hughes, National Guardian for the NHS

October 2018

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank all those who took the time to complete the survey. We would also like to thank Picker Institute Europe for their expertise and support in running the survey, and our partner organisations for their support with data analysis.

Key findings

- **44%** of Freedom to Speak Up Guardians responding to the survey are **appointed without an interview**
- **32%** of Freedom to Speak Up Guardians responding to the survey have been **in post for 18 months or longer**
- The Freedom to Speak Up network represents a **broad range of professional backgrounds and seniority**
- **49%** of people in a Freedom to Speak Up role who responded to the survey **have personal experience of speaking up**
- **42%** of Freedom to Speak Up Guardians responding to the survey have no ring-fenced time for the role
- **61%** of Freedom to Speak Up Guardians responding to the survey **gather feedback on their performance**
- **Positive speaking up cultures,** as measured by the perceptions of those responding to the survey, **are indicative of organisations that receive the best CQC ratings**
- Respondents from **independent providers of healthcare respond most positively** to questions about Freedom to Speak Up culture. **Respondents from non-provider organisations**, such as health arm's-length bodies and regulators, **tend to respond the least positively**
- **83%** of people in a speaking up role responding to the survey **believe that the Freedom to Speak Up culture in the NHS has improved over the last 12 months.**

Summary of recommendations

- We continue to recommend that appointments to the Freedom to Speak Up Guardian role are made in a fair and open way.
- We recommend that Freedom to Speak Up Guardians undertake 'refresher' training, provided by the National Guardian's Office or guardians trained by the National Office to provide this training, every 12 months.
- We recommend that all Freedom to Speak Up Guardians regularly assess their training and development needs using the National Guardian Office's Education and Training Guide and that their employers support them by providing the resources needed to enable them to continually develop their skills, knowledge and abilities.
- We recommend that regional Freedom to Speak Up Guardian networks seek local opportunities to enable all guardians to learn and improve, including sharing skills and knowledge amongst peers and seeking the support of local partners.
- We recommend that those in a speaking up role make an assessment of the possible conflicts that any other role that they have may bring. Following this assessment, appropriate action should be taken to mitigate against any conflict. In all cases, where the details of a particular case brought to someone in a Freedom to Speak Up role may indicate the potential for conflict, this should be made clear to the individual bringing the case and an alternative route for speaking up offered.
- We recommend that all organisations with a Freedom to Speak Up Guardian make a local assessment of any groups that face particular barriers to speaking up and take action to ensure that those barriers are tackled.
- Where a local Freedom to Speak Up network is established, action should be taken to ensure that it reflects the diversity of the workforce that it supports.
- We recommend that all organisations with a Freedom to Speak Up Guardian make a full and honest assessment of the time required by a guardian to carry out their role and meet the needs of workers. All guardians must have the ring-fenced time they need to satisfy these basic requirements.
- We recommend that all organisations review their mechanisms for seeking feedback on cases raised to Freedom to Speak Up Guardians, take action to ensure that these are compliant with NGO guidance, and ensure that sufficient time is allocated to ensure that this essential activity is undertaken.
- We recommended that all organisations with a Freedom to Speak Up Guardian assess arrangements for their guardian to have direct access to their CEO and Non-Executive Director with speaking up as part of their portfolio (or equivalent roles for organisations which do not have these posts as part of their board structure). In all cases Freedom to Speak Up Guardians should have direct access to these posts.

- We recommend that all organisations review their Freedom to Speak Up reporting mechanisms and take action to ensure that Freedom to Speak Up Guardians report to their board in person, and are allocated sufficient time to ensure that this is done.
- We recommend that guardians attend regional meetings regularly and work to ensure that their organisation is represented at every regional meeting by a guardian, or a representative of their local network. Senior leaders within their organisation should ensure that time and any necessary resource is made available to ensure that this can be achieved.

Background

The requirement to appoint a Freedom to Speak Up Guardian has been part of the NHS standard contract for two years. Over that time, training and guidance for the those in the role has been developed and refined. Many organisations have also taken action to establish local networks of ‘champions’ or ‘ambassadors’ to support their Freedom to Speak Up Guardian, or appointed more than one guardian, to help ensure that the needs of their diverse and often geographically spread workforce are met. Many organisations for whom there is no contractual requirement to establish the role have, nonetheless, appointed guardians and others to support them, as they see the benefits the role can bring. This means that there are now **over 800** individuals in a guardian or supporting role across a range of organisations from NHS trusts, independent providers of healthcare, arm’s-length bodies, and regulators.

Appointments to the guardian and supporting role are made locally. The National Guardian’s Office (NGO) provides training, guidance and other support. Ten regional networks, two cross-regional networks, and a network for non-provider organisations have also been established to encourage learning and the sharing of best practice across the NHS.

This survey was designed to look at how the guardian role is being implemented and supported locally. It also sought the views of those in Freedom to Speak Up roles about elements of Freedom to Speak Up culture in their own organisations, and the NHS. It has expanded on a similar survey carried out last year and, for the first time, includes responses from people in Freedom to Speak Up roles in independent providers of healthcare and in other organisations such as healthcare arm’s-length bodies.

The survey is designed to look at the guardian role in a systematic way to enable patterns and potential areas for improvement to be identified so that recommendations can be made to ensure that the role continues to be effective and, where necessary, changes can be made to support continuous improvement.

The survey questions can be found in the annex to this report.

The survey was distributed to **725** contacts and was open between 4 and 22 June 2018. A total of **361** responses was received (a **50%** response rate).

Respondents

67% of respondents were Freedom to Speak Up Guardians, with **33%** of respondents describing themselves as having a supporting role, such as 'Freedom to Speak Up Champions'.

Most responses were received from trusts, though a range of other organisations were represented:

Organisation type	**% responses**
NHS trust or Foundation Trust	73%
Independent provider	9%
Regulator, arm's-length body or other organisation in the health and care system (e.g. CCGs, professional representative bodies etc)	13%
Other (descriptions include charity and social enterprise)	5%

Appointment to the Freedom to Speak Up role

Appointment to the Freedom to Speak Up role was made in a number of ways. **46%** of respondents were appointed after being personally approached, volunteering, or being nominated but without taking part in any form of interview, despite our recommendation that appointments should be made in a fair and open way. However, it is encouraging to note that **25%** of respondents were recruited through open competition.

Those in a supporting role are often appointed to a network to increase the visibility of the Freedom to Speak Up message across an organisation, and the diversity of the contacts that workers can use when they speak up. Appointments are therefore often made from existing staff networks and other voluntary roles so it is not surprising to note that, proportionally, more individuals in a supporting role are appointed without interview. How supporting roles are implemented must be based on local need; we would, however, caution that organisations must reassure themselves that workers can have as much confidence in those carrying out a supporting role as they have in the guardian themselves.

We still see, however, that appointments that are made to the guardian role, in a way that may not be seen as fair and open, may diminish the trust and confidence that workers have in their guardian.

Appointment process	**Overall**	**Guardian**	**Supporting role**
Approached, volunteered or nominated without interview	46%	44%	52%
Approached, volunteered or nominated with interview	20%	15%	31%
Open competition	25%	34%	6%

We continue to recommend that appointments to the Freedom to Speak Up Guardian role are made in a fair and open way.

Length of time in the role

As might be expected, compared to last year, more respondents have been in post for longer than 18 months (**25%** compared to **17%** last year), with **61%** of guardians being in post for more than one year and **64%** of respondents now being in post for longer than 6 months (compared to **59%** last year).

This points to a maturing network with increasing numbers of experienced individuals to support those who are more recently appointed, whilst also indicating the need to ensure that there is sufficient refresher training and opportunities for further development for this group of more experienced individuals.

Length of time in post	Overall	Guardian	Supporting role
Not yet started	4%	3%	8%
Less than 3 months	15%	12%	23%
3 – 6 months	17%	11%	28%
7 – 12 months	17%	14%	24%
13 – 18 months	22%	29%	9%
18 months or longer	25%	32%	9%

We recommend that Freedom to Speak Up Guardians undertake 'refresher' training, provided by the National Guardian's Office or guardians trained by the National Office to provide this training, every 12 months.

We recommend that all Freedom to Speak Up Guardians regularly assess their training and development needs using the National Guardian Office's Education and Training Guide and that their employers support them by providing the resources needed to enable them to continually develop their skills, knowledge and abilities.

We recommend that regional Freedom to Speak Up Guardian networks seek local opportunities to enable all guardians to learn and improve, including sharing skills and knowledge amongst peers and seeking the support of local partners.

The NGO will continue to offer a range of development and learning opportunities nationally, including webinars, national events, and sharing good practice through regular communications such as the Guardian Bulletin and Newsletter.

Who is in the role

Other roles

A large proportion of respondents continue to indicate that they have another role (**88%**). Though, as might be expected, those in a supporting role are more likely to have another role, compared to guardians (**98%** compared to **84%**).

	Do you have another role?	
	Yes	**No**
Overall	88%	12%
Guardians	84%	16%
Supporting role	98%	2%

Occupational group

A wide range of occupational groups continue to be represented in the network overall, with registered nurses and midwives being the most represented professional group (**23%**), and those in central functions and corporate services being the second largest group (**19%**).

The diversity of professional background of individuals in Freedom to Speak Up roles continues to be a strength of the network and gives assurance that the diverse NHS workforce is represented.

Whilst it is difficult to make direct comparisons to NHS workforce data, we have looked at differences between responses of those in provider organisations and recognised workforce data where we can. This analysis has indicated an over-representation of individuals who work in central functions or who describe themselves as managers, compared to recent NHS workforce data. At this stage, we offer this as an observation. We recognise that many of the skills that individuals in these roles have are also essential to the guardian role, whilst also encouraging individuals in these roles to consider any possible barriers to speaking up that their non-guardian role may present.

Interestingly, whilst nurses are well represented in the network overall, this group is under-represented when comparisons are made to NHS workforce data, as are scientific, therapeutic and technical staff

Job Type	% survey respondents from trusts, FTs, and other provider organisations	% workforce data*
Central Functions	26%	15%
Managers	17%	4%
Nurses and health visitors	36%	54%
Scientific, therapeutic & technical staff	21%	27%

*NHS Workforce data

Banding

All NHS bands are represented in the network and, amongst non-NHS respondents, a broad range of banding is represented. Those in a supporting role tend to represent lower band ranges reflecting the fact that this role is often used to ensure that there is appropriate reach across an organisation, particularly amongst staff groups in lower banded roles who can face particular barriers to speaking up.

Band / Grade	Overall	Guardians	Supporting role
NHS Very Senior Manager	4%	5%	2%
NHS band 9	1%	2%	-
NHS band 8d	4%	5%	2%
NHS band 8c	6%	8%	3%
NHS band 8b	5%	5%	5%
NHS band 8a	11%	15%	3%
NHS band 7	21%	23%	18%
NHS band 6	8%	6%	12%
NHS band 5	2%	1%	5%
NHS band 4	4%	1%	8%
NHS band 3	3%	<1%	8%
NHS band 2	1%	-	3%
NHS volunteer	<1%	-	1%
NHS band: other	4%	5%	2%
Non NHS: Operational	6%	2%	13%
Non NHS: Middle management	10%	11%	8%
Non NHS: Senior management	6%	6%	4%
Non NHS: very senior management	2%	2%	1%
Non NHS: other	3%	2%	5%

The varied professional background and grading of those in a freedom to speak up role brings strength to the network. The development of local networks, and the increased diversity this can bring, also gives assurance that there are a range of individuals that anyone who wants to use the Freedom to Speak Up route can approach. However, individuals in a Freedom to Speak Up role must be mindful of any real or perceived conflicts that the other roles that they have may bring – either in general terms or in relation to the specific circumstances of particular speaking up cases.

We recommend that those in a speaking up role make an assessment of the possible conflicts that any other role that they have may bring. Following this assessment, appropriate action should be taken to mitigate against any conflict. In all cases, where the details of a particular case brought to someone in a Freedom to Speak Up role may indicate the potential for conflict, this should be made clear to the individual bringing the case and an alternative route for speaking up offered.

Personal experience of speaking up

49% of respondents said that they had personal experience of speaking up. We are grateful for this experience being made available to the Freedom to Speak Up network and commend those for whom this experience will not have been an easy one but who are now taking action to make speaking up better for others.

Demographics

We asked respondents for various demographic information. Overall, the guardian network is predominantly female and white.

Characteristic	**Overall**	**Freedom to Speak Up Guardian**	**Supporting role**
Gender			
Male	30%	28%	31%
Female	70%	70%	68%
Ethnicity			
White	89%	90%	88%
Any other ethnic background	11%	10%	12%

However, when comparing between responses from individuals in provider organisations, and NHS workforce data, males are over-represented. Analysis of ethnicity is limited but indicates that white individuals are over-represented, and those describing themselves as Black or Black British are under-represented.

Characteristic	Overall	Freedom to Speak Up Guardian	Supporting role	% Workforce Data
Gender				
Male	30%	28%	37%	23%
Female	70%	72%	63%	77%
Ethnicity				
White	93%	-	-	81%
Black or Black British	4%	-	-	6%

*NHS Workforce data

Many organisations are developing local networks of 'champions', often tapping into existing staff networks, to increase the diversity of individuals available to support workers to speak up, but our survey suggests that these efforts have had only marginal impact at this stage.

Whilst there is no evidence to suggest that the gender, ethnicity or any other personal characteristic of someone in a Freedom to Speak Up role translates into a barrier to individuals speaking up to them in practice, there is always the possibility that this is the case in some circumstances. We therefore believe that further action should be taken to increase the diversity of local Freedom to Speak Up networks and, in particular, the needs of any group that may face particular barriers to speaking up, be that based on a protected characteristic, a working pattern, or other factors such as geographic isolation.

We recommend that all organisations with a Freedom to Speak Up Guardian make a local assessment of any groups that face particular barriers to speaking up and take action to ensure that those barriers are tackled.

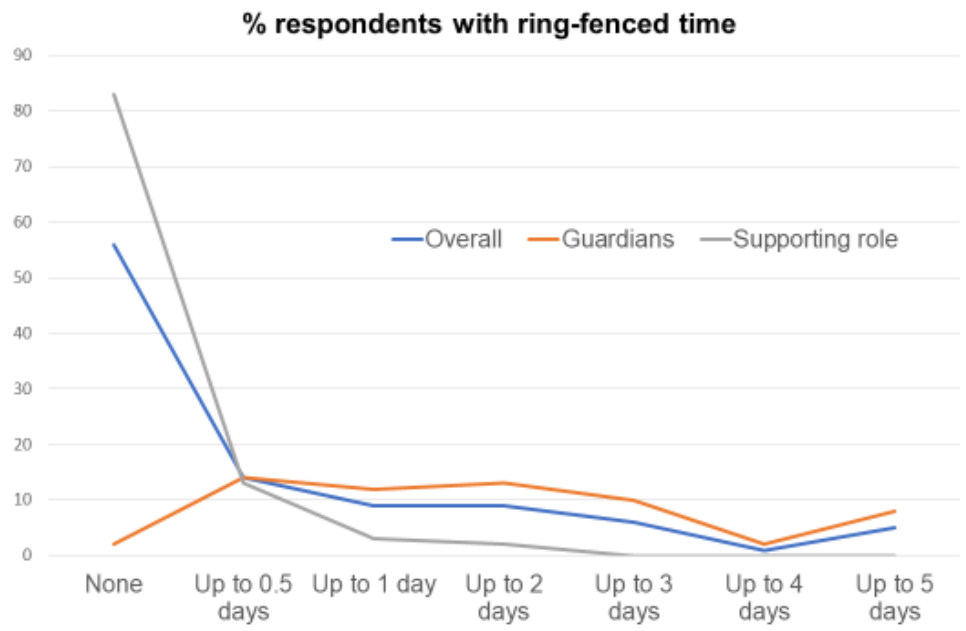
Where a local Freedom to Speak Up network is established, action should be taken to ensure that it reflects the diversity of the workforce that it supports.

How the role is being implemented

Ring-fenced time

Over half of respondents (**56%**) said that they had no ring-fenced time for their Freedom to Speak Up role, though this figure is lower for guardians (**42%**). This compares to **51%** of respondents to last year's survey indicating that they had no ring-fenced time for the role.

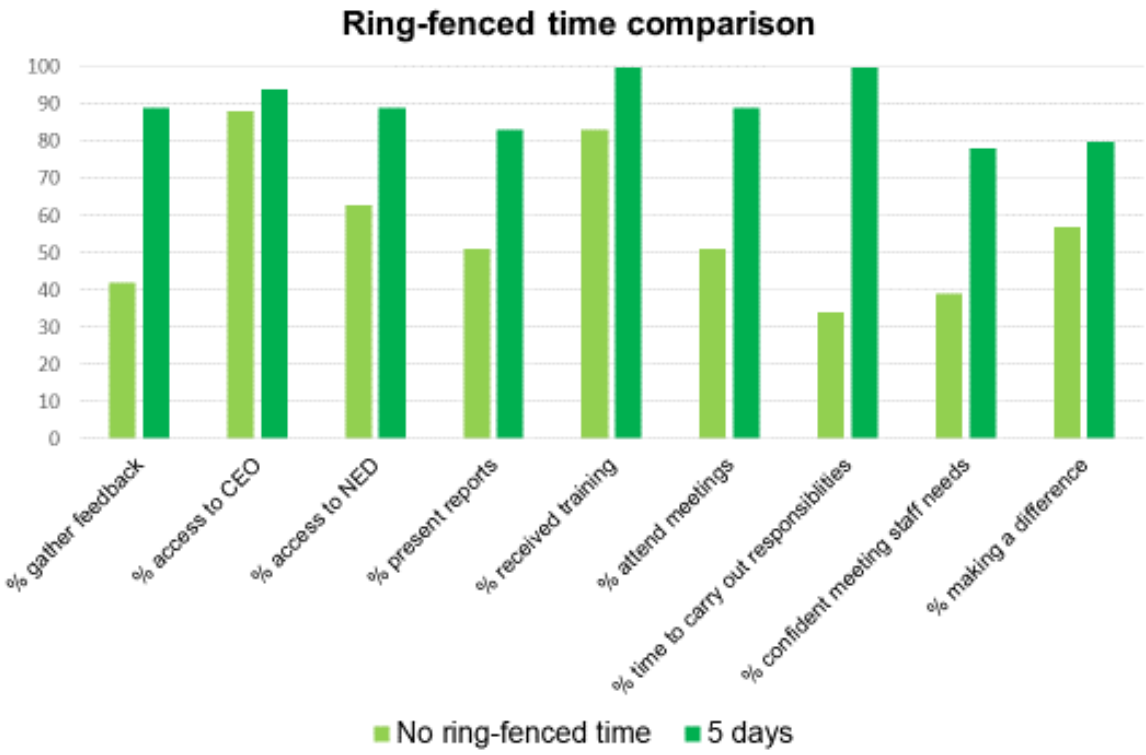
Ring fenced time	Overall	Guardians	Supporting role
None	56%	42%	83%
Up to 0.5 days per week	14%	14%	13%
Up to 1 day per week	9%	12%	3%
Up to 2 days per week	9%	13%	2%
Up to 3 days per week	6%	10%	-
Up to 4 days per week	1%	2%	-
Up to 5 days per week	5%	8%	-



This continues to be a point of concern. It is a matter of common sense that if a job is to be done well, time needs to be set aside for the job to be done. In addition, those in a speaking up role who have no ring-fenced time are less likely to fulfil some of the basic requirements of the role, such as: collecting feedback on their performance,

having direct access to their CEO and Non-Executive Director, reporting to their Board in person, attending training, or attending Freedom to Speak Up network meetings. They are also less likely to answer positively to a number of perception based questions including '*I have sufficient time to carry out my Freedom to Speak Up responsibilities'*, *'I am confident that I am meeting the needs of staff in my trust'*, and *'The Freedom to Speak Up Guardian role is making a difference'*.

Question	**% responding positively ('yes' OR 'agree' + 'strongly agree')**							
	Overall	**No ring-fenced time**	**Up to 0.5 days per week**	**Up to 1 day per week**	**Up to 2 days per week**	**Up to 3 days per week**	**Up to 4 days per week**	**Up to 5 days per week**
Do you gather feedback on your performance?	55%	42%	46%	71%	91%	86%	-	89%
Do you have direct access to your CEO (or equivalent)?	91%	88%	88%	100%	91%	100%	-	94%
Do you have direct access to the Non-Executive Director who has speaking up as part of their portfolio?	79%	63%	91%	83%	94%	91%	-	89%
Do you present reports to Board meetings in person?	68%	51%	71%	75%	78%	100%	-	83%
Have you received training in relation to your Freedom to Speak Up role?	87%	83%	90%	81%	97%	96%	-	100%
Do you regularly attend regional FTSUG network meetings?	68%	51%	47%	76%	97%	100%	-	89%
I have sufficient time to carry out my Freedom to Speak Up responsibilities	44%	34%	39%	41%	59%	52%	-	100%
I am confident that I am meeting the needs of staff in my trust	45%	39%	51%	53%	47%	48%	-	78%
The Freedom to Speak Up Guardian role is making a difference	68%	57%	72%	78%	94%	87%	-	80%



We recommend that all organisations with a Freedom to Speak Up Guardian make a full and honest assessment of the time required by a guardian to carry out their role and meet the needs of workers. All guardians must have the ring-fenced time they need to satisfy these basic requirements.

<u>Communication and training activities, and working in partnership</u>

In line with last year's results, respondents to the survey indicated that they took part in a wide range of communication and training activities, and work in partnership across their organisations.

Communication and training activities

- **83%** of respondents publicised their role through internal communications channels such as staff newsletters
- **66%** attend team meetings
- **52%** attend or incorporate Freedom to Speak Up messages into staff induction sessions
- **21%** carry out surveys about Freedom to Speak Up

Parts of the organisation regularly worked with

- **74%** work regularly with senior leaders and the Board
- **64%** work regularly with HR

- **57%** work regularly with communication teams
- **51%** work regularly with training and development teams

Feedback

Only **55%** of respondents said that they gather feedback on their performance, though this figure rises to **61%** for guardians.

Do you gather feedback on your performance?	**Overall**	**Guardians**	**Supporting role**
Yes	55%	61%	43%
No	45%	39%	57%

The provision of feedback to workers who speak up, and providing them with the opportunity to provide feedback on the response they received, and the support that was provided, is a fundamental aspect of good speaking up practice. In addition, the NGO has issued guidance on how to gather feedback which all guardians are expected to follow. Whilst this figure is an improvement on last year's (where **46%** of respondents indicated that they gathered feedback on their performance), this result is disappointing: guardians who do not gather feedback on their performance are not following the NGO's guidance and fall short of the NGO's expectation of those in the role.

Our results indicate that a lack of ring-fenced time may be a significant factor in whether someone in a speaking up role gathers feedback or not (there is a **47 percentage point** difference between respondents who say they gather feedback and are in post five days a week, compared to those who say they gather feedback but have no ring-fenced time).

We recommend that all organisations review their mechanisms for seeking feedback on cases raised to Freedom to Speak Up Guardians, take action to ensure that these are compliant with NGO guidance, and ensure that sufficient time is allocated to ensure that this essential activity is undertaken.

Local networks

82% of respondents said that they were part of a local Freedom to Speak Up network within their organisation. As might be expected, respondents in larger organisations were more likely to be part of a local network.

Are you part of a network of Freedom to Speak Up Guardians / champions / ambassadors etc in your organisation?	Overall	Small (<1,000 staff)	Medium (1,000 – 5,000 staff)	Large (5,000 – 10,000 staff)	Very large (>10,000 staff)
Yes	82%	58%	79%	90%	90%
No	28%	42%	21%	10%	10%

The development of local Freedom to Speak Up networks helps ensure that workers who need to speak up can do so easily by tackling a number of challenges posed by factors such as geographic spread and workforce size, whilst giving workers choice about the individual they would want to approach. It is important, however, that those within a local network receive the training and support they need to ensure that they can provide a quality service that is consistent with the NGO's guidance for Freedom to Speak Up Guardians.

Access to CEO and NED

91% of guardians responding to the survey said that they had direct access to their CEO and **79%** said that they had direct access to their Non-Executive Director with speaking up as part of their portfolio. Whilst these results are encouraging, it is the NGO's expectation, and an expectation set out in joint guidance with NHS Improvement, that guardians have direct access to their CEO and relevant Non-Executive Director.

We recommended that all organisations with a Freedom to Speak Up Guardian assess arrangements for their guardian to have direct access to their CEO and Non-Executive Director with speaking up as part of their portfolio (or equivalent roles for organisations which do not have these posts as part of their board structure). In all cases Freedom to Speak Up Guardians should have direct access to these posts.

Board reports

68% of guardians responding to the survey said that they present reports to their Board meetings in person.

This is another aspect of the guardian role that is not being carried out consistently, and therefore a source of concern to the NGO, particularly as the presentation of reports to Boards by guardians forms an important element of NHS Improvement and NGO guidance.

This is also another aspect of the role that appears to be influenced by the amount of ring-fenced time available (**51%** of responding guardians with no ring-fenced time indicated that they presented their board reports in person, compared to **83%** of those who have 5-days a week allocated to the role).

We recommend that all organisations review their Freedom to Speak Up reporting mechanisms and take action to ensure that Freedom to Speak Up Guardians report to their board in person, and are allocated sufficient time to ensure that this is done.

Training

87% of respondents said that they had received training related to their Freedom to Speak Up role, with the vast majority of respondents indicating that they had received training within the last year or less (**81%**).

Whilst this result is encouraging, training should be provided to everyone in a Freedom to Speak Up role. Foundation training sessions for guardians are regularly held by the NGO, and can also be put on locally by the recently trained network of guardian trainers. Training of champions / ambassadors and those supporting guardians needs to reflect how those roles are being implemented locally but should always reflect up-to-date NGO guidance.

As Freedom to Speak Up is still a relatively new initiative, and learning from experience and case studies continues and is used to inform NGO guidance, it is recommended that guardians who have not undertaken any training in the role for a year or more undertake 'refresher' foundation training, held by the NGO or its network of regional guardian trainers (see previous recommendation).

Regional networks

68% of guardians responding to the survey said that they attend regional guardian network meetings regularly. Regional network meetings provide a vital mechanism for guardians to be kept up-to-date with developments in speaking up, interact with, support, and learn from their peers, and contribute to wider developments in speaking up. It is for these reasons that the NGO expects all guardians to regularly attend regional network meetings and for their organisation to provide the necessary time and resource to enable this. Guardians who do not attend network meetings regularly fall short of the standards expected by the NGO.

We recommend that guardians attend regional meetings regularly and work to ensure that their organisation is represented at every regional meeting by a guardian, or a representative of their local network. Senior leaders within their organisation should ensure that time and any necessary resource is made available to ensure that this can be achieved.

Successes and challenges

We asked respondents for examples of successes that they have had, and challenges that they face. There were some clear themes in the responses given.

Successes

The most common examples of success given related to the number of cases that respondents were dealing with and the successful outcomes that these brought. Increasing levels of awareness of the role and a range of promotional activities that were taking place were another common theme, as was progress with the appointment of more guardians or champions to create a local network to help ensure that all workers had easy access to support when speaking up. Another common theme to responses in this section illustrated that senior management were gaining confidence in, and engaging more with, guardians.

Illustrative responses:

- *"Visited many teams throughout the county, been part of every induction for the last twelve months, seen a 100% increase in the number of people raising concerns …"*
- *"Gaining support from senior leadership team, commitment to quarterly meetings with the CEO, and bi-monthly meetings with the Chair, monthly meetings with the NED"*
- *"I had an individual being bullied by a manager who was verbally aggressive. We were able to set up facilitated meetings which allowed the manager to see the impact of their behaviour and [they] apologised."*
- *"Developing a FTSU ambassador network which has a diverse range of professionals and non-professionally qualified staff throughout the organisation."*
- *"Bringing some senior leaders round to the benefits of staff speaking up."*

Challenges

In line with other responses to the survey, a lack of time was by far the most cited challenge. Other challenges being experienced included reaching across widespread geographies, dealing with the complexity that some cases involved, gaining feedback from workers who have spoken up, and generally being able to gain the confidence of workers. It is concerning that some guardians are still facing challenges getting support and buy-in from their executives.

Illustrative responses:

- *"Finding the time to give full justice to the role …"*
- *"Current lack of capacity to be as proactive as I believe the role can / could be."*

- *“The size of the county, number of teams, and awful transport links.”*
- *“Lack of buy-in / support from the executive level”*
- *“Having the time to be any more than reactive”*
- *“Obtaining feedback and sometimes trying to get to the ‘grass roots’ of what the concern is …”*

Support from the National Guardian’s Office

We asked respondents to rate the support they received from the NGO on a 0 – 10 scale where 0 represented ‘not at all supported’ and 10 represented ‘fully supported’. The mean score was **7.1,** compared to a mean score of **5.7** last year**.**

There were three clear themes to the feedback respondents gave: tardiness in response times to queries, a desire for more guidance accompanied by a more directive approach to certain issues, and a request for more training.

The NGO is a small office and was set up to meet what was, to a large extent, an unknown demand. The responses to this question clearly show that we are failing to respond to queries from guardians in a timely way and we are sorry for the frustration this must cause. The office is recruiting two new members of staff which we hope will help improve our service to guardians and we will look again at how the office is structured and processes are managed with a view to improving response times.

Requests for guidance on a wide range of subjects were listed and this was often linked to a desire for more central direction on these matters. Similarly, there were general and specific requests for further training on a range of subjects. We hope that the joint guidance for Boards on Freedom to Speak Up Governance issued earlier this year, and the development day which is scheduled for later in the year, will help address some of these requests. We will also look at this area in more detail as part of our business planning process for 2019/20.

Perceptions of speaking up

We asked respondents to comment on a series of statements related to Speaking Up. Overall, the proportion of respondents responding positively to these statements increased compared to last year, though in some cases this increase is marginal and in three cases a decrease in positive response was recorded.

CQC rating

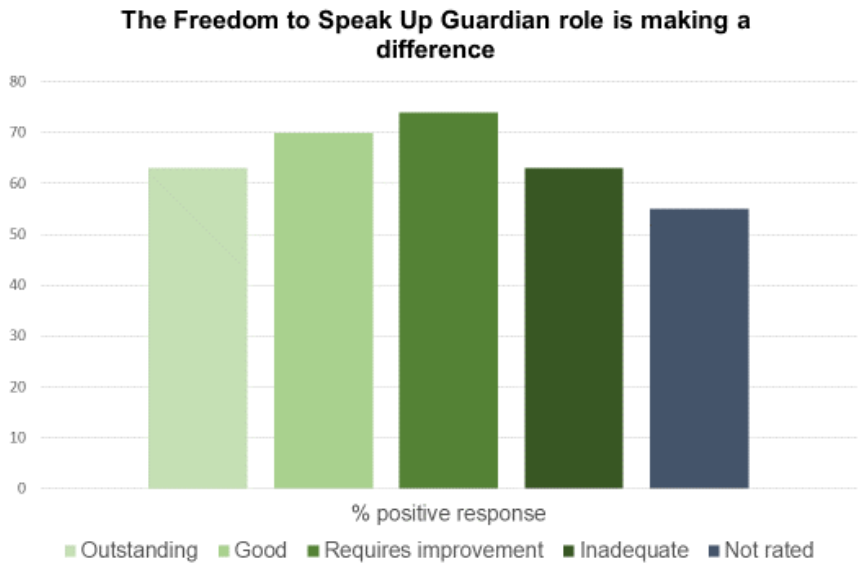
As observed last year, overall, there is a positive correlation between CQC rating and perceptions of speaking up culture. We hope this incentivises trusts and other organisations to invest in their approach to speaking up. **Put simply, the best organisations have the best speaking up cultures.**

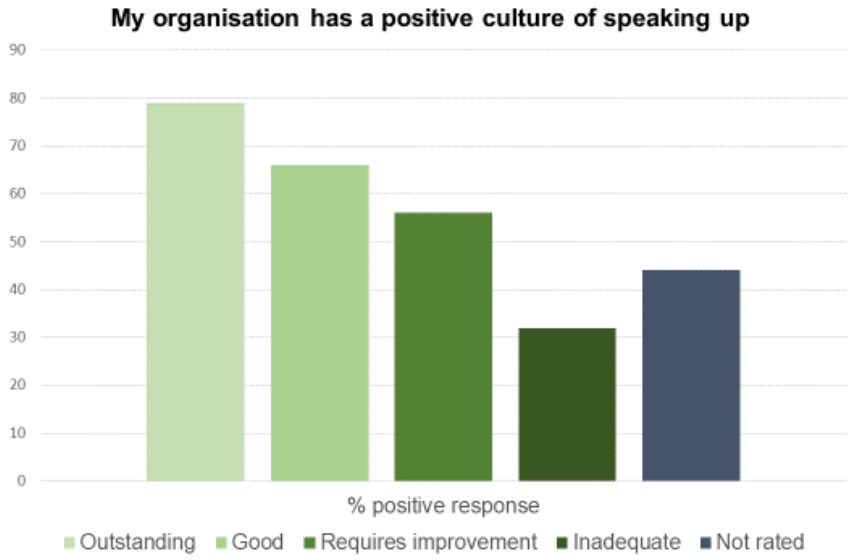
This year, the survey was sent to guardians and those in a supporting role in organisations other than trusts. Some of these organisations, specifically arm's-length bodies and regulators, are not CQC rated. Responses to the survey enable a comparison to be made between these organisations and provider organisations which are rated by the CQC. Of the eight questions, responses from these organisations are:

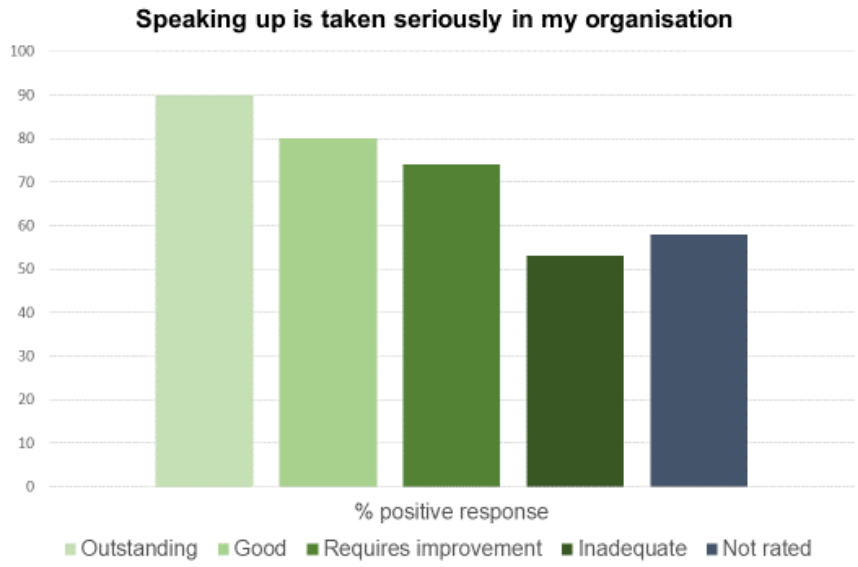
- less positive than those given by respondents in inadequate trusts in three cases
- equal to those from trusts requiring improvement in one case
- lie between responses from inadequate trusts and those that require improvement in four cases

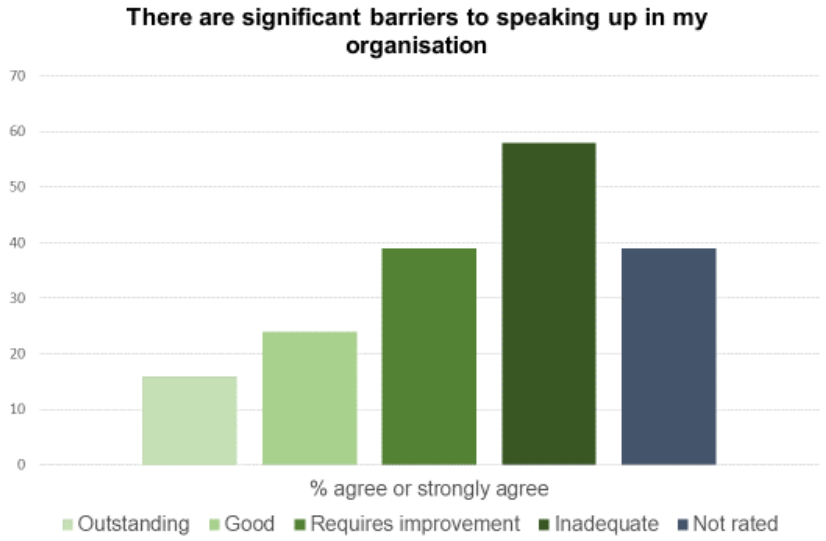
We welcome the fact that regulatory and other organisations that have no contractual requirement to appoint a guardian are embracing the Freedom to Speak Up agenda. The responses to these questions indicate that there is much work to be done to improve the Freedom to Speak Up culture in organisations that give direction to, or regulate, provider organisations. We hope that the NGO and the guardian network can offer support and encouragement to guardians in these other organisations as they work hard with their leadership teams to tackle barriers to speaking up, and create a culture which embraces this agenda.

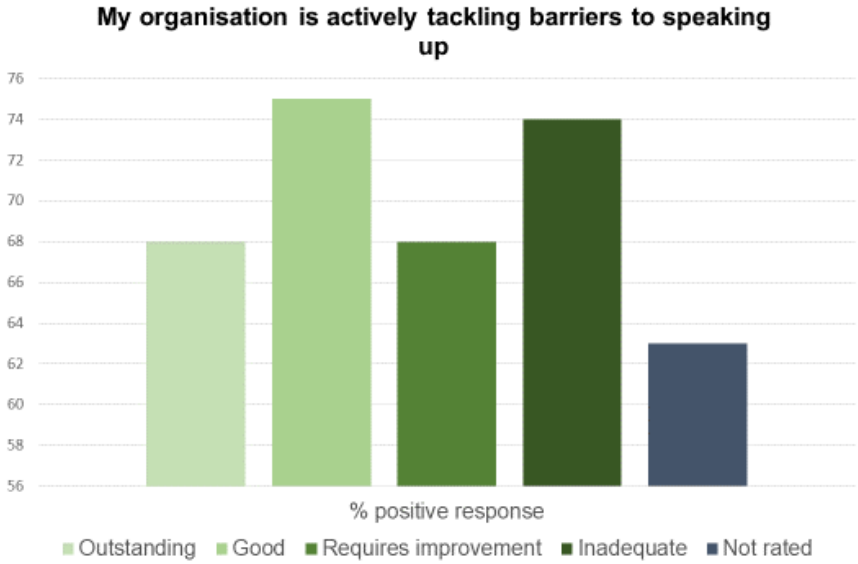
Statement		Proportion of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement					
		CQC rating					
	Overall 2017	Overall 2018	Outstanding	Good	Requires Improvement	Inadequate	Not rated
The Freedom to Speak Up Guardian role is making a difference	60%	68%	63%	70%	74%	63%	55%
My organisation has a positive culture of speaking up	55%	58%	79%	66%	56%	32%	44%
Speaking up is taken seriously in my organisation	72%	74%	90%	80%	74%	53%	58%
There are significant barriers to speaking up in my organisation	25%	32%	16%	24%	39%	58%	39%
My organisation is actively tackling barriers to speaking up	70%	71%	68%	75%	68%	74%	63%
People in my organisation do not suffer detriment as a result of speaking up	43%	39%	47%	43%	40%	32%	27%
Managers support staff to speak up	41%	45%	69%	48%	46%	11%	39%
Senior leaders support staff to speak up	67%	66%	84%	74%	67%	47%	50%

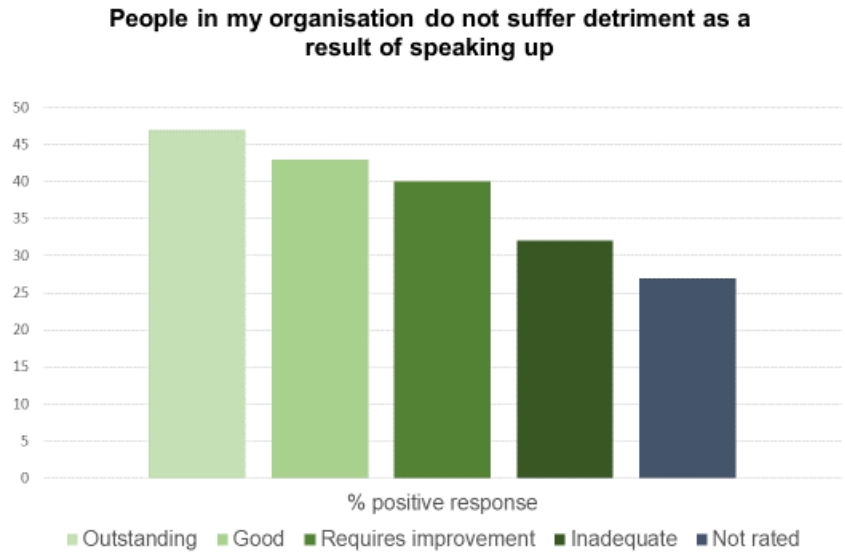

The Freedom to Speak Up Guardian role is making a difference
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
% positive response
Outstanding
Good
Requires improvement
Inadequate
Not rated


My organisation has a positive culture of speaking up
90
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
% positive response
Outstanding
Good
Requires improvement
Inadequate
Not rated

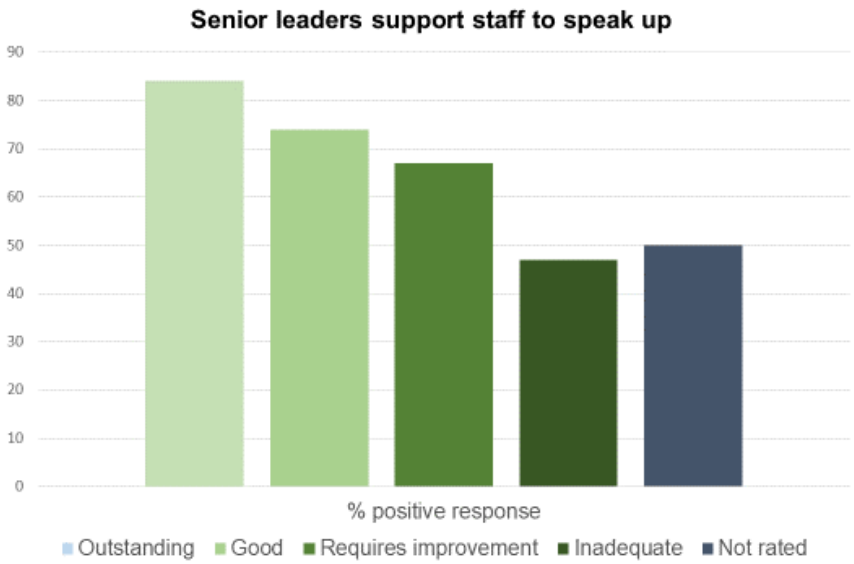

Speaking up is taken seriously in my organisation
100
90
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
% positive response
Outstanding
Good
Requires improvement
Inadequate
Not rated


There are significant barriers to speaking up in my organisation
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
% agree or strongly agree
Outstanding
Good
Requires improvement
Inadequate
Not rated


My organisation is actively tackling barriers to speaking up
76
74
72
70
68
66
64
62
60
58
56
% positive response
Outstanding
Good
Requires improvement
Inadequate
Not rated


People in my organisation do not suffer detriment as a result of speaking up
50
45
40
35
30
25
20
15
10
5
0
% positive response
Outstanding
Good
Requires improvement
Inadequate
Not rated

Managers support staff to speak up
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
% positive response
Outstanding
Good
Requires improvement
Inadequate
Not rated


Senior leaders support staff to speak up
90
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
% positive response
Outstanding
Good
Requires improvement
Inadequate
Not rated

Trust service provision

Looking at different types of trust there is a mixed picture though, generally, combined mental health / learning disability / community trusts give more of the most positive responses to statements about speaking up culture, and combined acute and community trusts give more of the least positive responses to the same statements.

Statement	**Type of service**							
	Overall	Acute specialist	Acute	Ambulance	Combined acute and community	Combined mental health / learning disability and community	Community	Mental health / Learning disability
The Freedom to Speak Up Guardian role is making a difference	68%	68%-	72%	75%	87%*	82%	75%	75%
My organisation has a positive culture of speaking up	58%	53%-	54%	63%	53%-	85%*	55%	65%
Speaking up is taken seriously in my organisation	74%	79%	69%-	75%	74%	91%*	85%	85%
There are significant barriers to speaking up in my organisation	32%	42%-	33%	25%	42%-	30%	20%*	25%
My organisation is actively tackling barriers to speaking up	71%	95%*	71%	88%	68%-	73%	75%	75%
People in my organisation do not suffer detriment as a result of speaking up	39%	53%	36%	50%	24%-	58%*	45%	35%
Managers support staff to speak up	45%	53%*	43%	50%	26%-	36%	50%	45%
Senior leaders support staff to speak up	66%	68%	62%-	75%	71%	70%	70%	80%*

* most positive response to each statement - least positive response to each statement

Organisation type

Comparing the responses of trusts, independent providers, and other organisations (regulators, arm's-length bodies etc), independent providers tended to give the most positive responses to questions about speaking up culture. As the guardian network expands we hope that good practice is spread between individuals and organisations and welcome the increasing presence of independent providers at regional network meetings.

Statement	**Proportion of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement**			
	Type of organisation			
	Overall	Trusts and FTs	Independent providers of healthcare	Regulators, arm's-length bodies, or other organisations in the health and care system
The Freedom to Speak Up Guardian role is making a difference	68%	75%*	42%	56%
My organisation has a positive culture of speaking up	58%	59%	82%*	44%
Speaking up is taken seriously in my organisation	74%	76%	91%*	60%
There are significant barriers to speaking up in my organisation	32%	33%	9%*	40%
My organisation is actively tackling barriers to speaking up	71%	73%*	67%	71%
People in my organisation do not suffer detriment as a result of speaking up	39%	39%	67%*	27%
Managers support staff to speak up	45%	42%	76%*	42%
Senior leaders support staff to speak up	66%	62%	97%*	52%

*most positive response to each statement

Changes in speaking up culture

For the first time, we asked two new questions this year concerning changes in Freedom to Speak Up culture over the last year:

- **84%** of respondents felt that Freedom to Speak Up culture in their organisation had improved over the last 12 months.
- **83%** of respondents felt that Freedom to Speak Up culture in the NHS had improved over the last 12 months.

Statement	**% response**				
	.... improved considerably	… improved slightly	… not changed	… become slightly worse	… become considerably worse
Which of these statements best describes how Freedom to Speak Up culture **in your organisation** has changed in the last 12 months?	26%	58%	15%	1%	0%
Which of these statements best describes how you think Freedom to Speak Up culture **in the NHS** has changed in the last 12 months?	22%	61%	17%	<1%	<1%

Comparing between trusts, independent providers, and other organisations in the health system, trusts and foundation trusts provide the most positive responses to these statements.

Statement	**% stating improved considerably or improved slightly**			
	Overall	Trusts and FTs	Independent providers of healthcare	Regulators, arm's-length bodies, or other organisations in the health and care system
Which of these statements best describes how Freedom to Speak Up culture **in your organisation** has changed in the last 12 months?	84%	89%	83%	66%
Which of these statements best describes how you think Freedom to Speak Up culture **in the NHS** has changed in the last 12 months?	83%	86%	59%	73%

The NGO will continue to support both provider and non-provider organisations as they seek to support workers to speak up and improve speaking up culture. The NGO will also continue to challenge, and share best practice, across the healthcare system with the aim of continually improving speaking up culture in the NHS.

Annex

Survey questions

ABOUT YOU AND WHAT YOU DO

- Are you a Freedom to Speak Up Guardian, or in a role that supports a Freedom to Speak Up Guardian (champion etc.)?
- How were you appointed?
- How long have you been in post?
- Do you have another role?
- What grade or band are you?
- How much time is ring-fenced for you to carry out your Freedom to Speak Up role (please choose the category that reflects most closely the amount of ring-fenced time you have)?
- What communication and training activities do you take part in that are related to your Freedom to Speak Up role (select all that apply)?
- Which parts of your organisation do you regularly work with (select all that apply)?
- Do you gather feedback on your performance?
- What success have you had in your Freedom to Speak Up role? Please describe your achievements over the last 12 months
- What are the most challenging aspects of your Freedom to Speak Up role?
- Do you have personal experience of speaking up?

SUPPORT AND NETWORKING

- Are you part of a network of Freedom to Speak Up Guardians / champions / ambassadors etc. in your organisation?
- Do you have direct access to your CEO (or equivalent)?
- Do you have direct access to the Non-Executive Director who has speaking up as part of their portfolio?
- Do you present reports to Board meetings in person?
- Do you know whether or not there is a non-pay budget for FTSU activities in your organisation?
- What is the budget?
- Have you received any training in relation to your Freedom to Speak Up role?
- When was the last time you received training in relation to your Freedom to Speak Up role?
- Do you regularly attend regional FTSUG network meetings?
- On a scale of 0 to 10 where 0 is ‘not at all’ and 10 is ‘fully supported’ please indicate your response to the following statement: I am sufficiently supported by the National Guardian’s Office

- What further support from the National Guardian's office would you find helpful?

ABOUT YOUR ORGANISATION

- What sort of organisation to you work in?
- What service/s does your organisation provide?
- What is the size of your organisation, in terms of numbers of workers?
- How many sites is your organisation based on?
- What is your organisation's current CQC rating?

CASE REVIEWS

- Have you read any of the National Guardian's Office case review reports?
- Has your organisation implemented any recommendations from the National Guardian Office's case review reports?
- How many recommendations has your organisation implemented?

FREEDOM TO SPEAK UP IN YOUR ORGANISATION AND THE NHS

- How far do you agree or disagree with the following statements?
    - I have sufficient time to carry out my Freedom to Speak Up responsibilities
    - I am confident that I am meeting the needs of staff in my trust
    - My senior management team supports me
    - My Chief Executive (or equivalent) supports me
    - I have access to the support I need
    - I have access to the budget I need
    - The Freedom to Speak Up Guardian role is making a difference
    - My organisation has a positive culture of speaking up
    - Speaking up is taken seriously in my organisation
    - There are significant barriers to speaking up in my organisation
    - My organisation is actively tackling barriers to speaking up
    - People in my organisation do not suffer detriment as a result of speaking up
    - Managers support staff to speak up
    - Senior leaders support staff to speak up
- Which of these statements best describes how Freedom to Speak Up culture in <u>your organisation</u> has changed in the last 12 months?
    - Freedom to Speak Up culture in my organisation has improved considerably over the last 12 months
    - Freedom to Speak Up culture in my organisation has improved slightly over the last 12 months
    - Freedom to Speak Up culture in my organisation has not changed over the last 12 months

    - Freedom to Speak Up culture in my organisation has become slightly worse over the last 12 months
    - Freedom to Speak Up culture in my organisation has become considerably worse over the last 12 months
- Which of these statements best describes how you think Freedom to Speak Up culture in the NHS has changed in the last 12 months?
    - Freedom to Speak Up culture in the NHS has improved considerably over the last 12 months
    - Freedom to Speak Up culture in the NHS has improved slightly over the last 12 months
    - Freedom to Speak Up culture in the NHS has not changed over the last 12 months
    - Freedom to Speak Up culture in the NHS has become slightly worse over the last 12 months
    - Freedom to Speak Up culture in the NHS has become considerably worse over the last 12 months