

Whistleblowers' Support Scheme – overview of pilot scheme for secondary care

February 2018



Background to the scheme

- In 2015 *Freedom to speak up – a review of whistleblowing in the NHS* provided advice and recommendations to ensure that NHS staff feel it is safe to raise concerns.
- The review set out principles to be followed to bring about change, and actions which follow from these.
- Principle 12 is support to find alternative employment in the NHS for NHS workers who have raised a concern and cannot continue in their current employment as a result.

What the scheme should provide



Improvement

The freedom to speak up review said as a minimum the scheme should provide:

- training or work experience for staff who have been away from the workplace for long periods of time;
- advice and assistance in relation to applications for appropriate employment in the NHS;
- the development of a 'pool' of employers prepared to offer opportunities for work experience, training and employment;
- guidance and support to employers to encourage them to consider a history of having raised concerns as a positive characteristic in a potential employee.

Pilot scheme

- NHS Improvement have developed a pilot scheme for secondary care workers, with input from some whistleblowers in the design.
- The pilot scheme includes
 - An application process which includes an independent panel assessment of each application
 - Support to successful applicants from a external provider (contract awarded to Working Transitions)
 - Independent/external evaluation of the scheme and processes (contract awarded to John Moore's University)

Service offering from Working Transitions

- A dedicated coach for each participant
- Redeployment support e.g. access to personal telephone redeployment coach; workshops and seminars
- Outplacement support e.g. support to plan and map out of future career path
- Practical and psychological support e.g. psychometric testing; independent financial advice and personal career management
- Coaching support and training
- Action plan to be agreed within 3 coaching sessions

Support from NHS employers

- Employer workshops were held (jointly with NHS England) around the country in late 2017; over 100 NHS employers attended and have registered their commitment and support as a result
- Support offers from NHS employers include:
 - work placements
 - access to journals and work publications
 - work shadowing
 - commitment to interview if applicant meets essential criteria for vacancy
- Guidance and process are currently being designed to facilitate these options

Pilot – progress to date

- **11** expressions of interest for the scheme
- Panel meetings to assess the applications are largely complete
- Applicants on the scheme are undertaking a number of coaching sessions with Working Transitions to agree an action plan
- Any employers local to those on the pilot scheme who have not already committed their support are being contacted and encouraged to do so
- Applicants, panel members and those with an interest in the scheme are being asked to contact John Moore's University to provide feedback and observations for evaluation purposes

Working with other organisations

In addition to working with employers NHSI are liaising with other organisations to encourage a more cohesive response to the Francis recommendations. This includes working with:

- NHS England
- National Guardians Office
- Care Quality Commission
- Health Education England
- NHS Providers
- NHS Employers
- NCAS
- Staff side/ Trade Unions

Communication

Dedicated, confidential email address for all enquiries:

NHSI.wbss@improvement.nhs.uk

We also update our WSS web page on a regular basis:

<http://improvement.nhs.uk/resources/freedom-to-speak-up-whistleblowers-support-scheme>

We issue a WSS newsletter every 2 months, these are available on the webpage.

Our communication/newsletters and updates are circulated via the Freedom To Speak Up Network, HRD networks and various member lists of charitable support organisations such as Patient First, Whistleblowers UK, Care Right Now etc