

## **NEW SCHEME LAUNCHED TO HELP NHS WHISTLEBLOWERS**

A nationwide pilot to help NHS whistleblowers back into work is being launched today by NHS England.

The Whistleblowers Support Scheme will offer a range of services including career coaching, financial advice and mediation for primary care staff who have suffered as a result of raising concerns about NHS practice. Working Transitions has been appointed to run the pilot until March 2018.

The scheme has been designed with the help of former staff who have also had experience of whistleblowing and the impact it can have on staff.

**Sir Malcolm Grant, Chair of NHS England**, said: “It is simply inexcusable that talented, experienced staff should be lost to the NHS as the result of raising the legitimate concerns that help the health service improve.

“We have already implemented new measures in the wake of the Francis report and this scheme further demonstrates our commitment to ensuring openness and transparency are welcomed in the NHS.”

Today’s announcement is part of NHS England’s work in response to Sir Robert Francis’ *Freedom to Speak Up* report which highlighted that “some individuals who have raised concerns experience severe

difficulties when seeking re-employment in the health service. This means they are effectively excluded from the ability to work in their chosen field.”

Those taking part in the programme will be contacted by Working Transitions who will arrange for them to have an occupational health assessment and meet their coach. They will then design a package of support that means their specific needs.

Tracy is one person that knows first-hand about blowing the whistle. She said:

“In 2010 my career as an HR Director in the NHS came to a very abrupt end after I raised concerns. None of my previous career experience or skills prepared me for what was about to follow and led to me becoming extremely ill and eventually being diagnosed with PTSD.

“The experience affected me hugely. Not only due to the fact that I lost a career I loved but the response and the treatment I received was brutal and still goes on to this day. That treatment had a significant impact on my health and is something that I still receive treatment for seven years on.

“I was lucky however. I had two amazing daughters that despite only being 13 and 14 at that time responded with a maturity and compassion that not only makes me so proud but provided amazing support and gave me something to carry on for. In addition I also

came across the organisation Patients First who provided considerable support.

“It was through Patients First that I heard about the work NHS England is doing on the Whistleblowers Support Scheme and NHS England were looking for whistleblower input so I agreed to help.

“It was a massive leap of faith for me to consider working in the NHS system again, especially with my condition, yet I desperately wanted to do something useful and help others who are still even to this day finding themselves in difficult situations for doing the right thing.

“Although it is in the pilot stage I only wished there had been such a scheme for me seven years ago. I have no doubt there will be changes and improvements as a result.”

**Lynne Hardman, CEO of Working Transitions** said: “Working Transitions is very proud to have been selected to support this important initiative. Over the last twenty five years we have supported around 750,000 people, from widely diverse situations, to overcome barriers and move forward with their careers. We are looking forward to playing a key role in ensuring that all participants achieve success.”

The pilot will be evaluated by Liverpool John Moores University to help shape the scheme in future.

